

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 446



Opinions expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of the Club.

Welcome to the May / June 2016 Edition

RECENT BIRD REPORTS: *May – June Headlines*

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER **May:** Paxton Pits a male on 13th.
SPOONBILL **May:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 7th, Paxton Pits on 15th.
CATTLE EGRET* **June:** Ouse Washes from 20th to 22nd.
WHITE STORK* **May:** Soham Mere a flyover on 17th. **June:** Cottenham midday on 5th, then near Godmanchester late afternoon. *These sightings are almost certainly of the bird that escaped in March from Welney where it was being rehabilitated.*
BLACK KITE* **June:** Grafham Water a flyover on 2nd.
MONTAGU'S HARRIER* **June:** Knapwell an immature on 2nd.
STONE CURLEW **May:** Ouse Washes on 14th.
TEMMINCK'S STINT **May:** Paxton Pits on 6th.
WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN* **May:** March Farmers 2 on 14th, Grafham Water on 18th.
HOOPOE **May:** Fen Drayton Lakes briefly on 20th.
WRYNECK **May:** Paxton Pits, one possibly two on 1st.
RED-BACKED SHRIKE* **June:** Gorefield a female on 13th – 14th. *Only 17 records since it last bred in the county.*
RED-FOOTED FALCON* **May:** a female on 30th.
WOOD WARBLER* **May:** Paxton Pits on 4th.
MARSH WARBLER* **June:** Wicken Fen one singing by the far end of the reedbed from 8th to 12th at least. *Only 23 records, the last in 2001.*
GREAT REED WARBLER* **May:** Paxton Pits 14th to the end of the month. **June:** Paxton Pits the same bird present until at least 16th. *Only 3 records, the last as long ago as 1982.*

Weather

May was at last a kinder month with some warm sunshine, very warm for a few days early in the month, and mainly southerly or westerly airstreams. This led to a more obvious arrival of migrants, for example the number of waders on and around 10th. As well as being warm the month was largely dry and places with shallow standing began to dry out; but in the final days a storm passed over the county with wind and rain aplenty and temperatures more akin to winter. This stormy weather continued into the first days of June, which then turned fine and warm with a week of real summer; but after the first ten days the weather reverted to a long wet spell, with one or two cold days, and the amount of rainfall leading to comparisons with 2012, which was one of the wettest Junes on record.

Other Records

The records in this bulletin are unchecked and may be revised at a later date. An asterisk after the name of the species indicates that it is necessary to send a description to the County Recorder before the record will be accepted. Some

species are 'reported from' to give an indication of distribution. Some entries (particularly wildfowl) have maxima given when a number of counts have been received. Where no numbers are given the record relates to single birds.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan **May:** Ferry Meadows CP 31 on 18th. **June:** Burwell Fen 15 (including a brood of 5 young) on 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes 104 on 22nd.

Whooper Swan **May:** Ouse Washes 6 on 1st including 2 injured birds, March Farmers on 14th, presumably an injured bird. **June:** Wicken Fen area the escaped bird still around.

Greylag Goose **May:** Burwell Fen maximum 62 on 4th and several broods later in the month, Cam Washes 127 including 9 broods on 6th, Wicken Fen Baker's Fen maximum 48 on 8th including 5 broods, Trumpington Clay Farm 14 on 17th, Hinxton 33 including 4 broods, Burghley Park 49 with 9 broods. **June:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 63 on 5th, and 15 (7 broods 26 young) on 27th, Burwell Fen 16 (2 broods with 12 young) on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 15 on 22nd; moulting flocks at Godmanchester GP 410 on 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes 279 on 22nd, and Sutton North Fen 315 on 26th.

Canada Goose **May:** Kingfishers Bridge 90+ on 2nd, Burwell Fen maximum 28 on 4th and 2 broods later in the month, Trumpington Clay Farm 8 on 17th plus a brood of 4. **June:** Trumpington Clay Farm 27 on 22nd, Wimpole Park 30 on 25th, Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 7 on 27th (1 brood).

Barnacle Goose **May:** Whittlesford GP 4 on 4th, Burwell Fen on 4th, Paxton Pits on 30th. **June:** Sutton North Fen 13 on 26th.

Egyptian Goose **May:** Paxton Pits a pair on 3rd, Hauxton a pair with young on 28th. **June:** Great Shelford – an extraordinary sight of a pair with 3 goslings walking along the footpath beside the Cambridge Road on the 6th, almost certainly the same birds at Trumpington Clay Farm on 22nd but with two young, Paxton Pits on 20th, Fen Drayton Lakes 8 on 22nd, Sutton North Fen 2 on 26th.

Shelduck **May:** reported from the Burwell Fen / Wicken Fen / Cam Washes area (at least 10 pairs), Grafham Water a pair with 5 young on 24th, Nene Washes 50 on 7th, Ouse Washes 60+ on 14th.

June: Wicken Fen Baker's Fen on several dates maximum 4, Burwell Fen 5 on 19th and a brood seen on 21st.

Mandarin **May:** Berry Fen on 7th – 13th, Lt Shelford 3 on 12th, Grafham Water on 18th. **June:** Hauxton Pits 6 on 10th.

Wigeon **May:** Nene Washes 70 on 1st, Burwell Fen on several dates maximum 5 on 5th, Berry Fen 2 on 9th, Paxton Pits a drake on 18th. **June:** Paxton Pits on 6th and 20th, 2 drakes on 17th.

Gadwall **May:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen maximum 8 on 8th, Burwell Fen maximum 56 on 29th, Ouse Washes 80 on 16th. **June:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 6 on 5th and 9 on 27th, Ouse Washes RSPB 40 on 15th, Fowlmere NR 4 on 18th, Burwell Fen 49 on 19th.

Teal **May:** Ouse Washes 60 on 1st. **June:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 14 on 5th, Paxton Pits a pair on 2nd and 6 on 6th, Fowlmere NR a drake on 8th then 3 on 17th, Littleport May Farm 32 on 17th.

Mallard **May:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen maximum 35 on 8th. **June:** Burwell Fen 81 on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 13 on 22nd, Sutton North Fen 162 on 26th, Littleport May Farm 200 on 30th.

Pintail **May:** Nene Washes a pair on 1st, Burwell Fen on 2nd and 4th, 2 on 13th, and 3 on 27th.

Garganey **May:** reported from Berry Fen (3), Burwell Fen (4), Fen Drayton Lakes (4), March Farmers (4), Ouse Washes RSPB (3) and Wicken Fen. **June:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Wicken Fen and Earith Washes.

Shoveler **May:** Paxton Pits a pair on 4th, Burwell Fen maximum 10 on 4th, Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 4 on 8th, Ouse Washes 34 on 18th. **June:** Fowlmere NR a drake on 5th – 6th, Paxton Pits 4 on 6th, Burwell Fen 12 on 10th, Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 11 on 27th.

Pochard **May:** Kingfishers Bridge 15+ on 2nd, Paxton Pits 4 on 5th, Berry Fen 4 on 9th, Nene Washes 13 on 27th. **June:** Kings Dyke NR a brood on 21st and Burwell Fen a brood on 21st; *this is a rare breeding bird in Cambs.*

Tufted Duck **May:** Burwell Fen maximum 22 on 4th, Kingfishers Bridge 35+ on 8th, Colne Fen GP 48 on 8th, Trumpington Clay Farm 16 on 17th. **June:** Paxton Pits 40 on 1st, Fowlmere NR 1 – 3 adults and a brood of 8, Trumpington Clay Farm 10 on 22nd Cottenham Long Drove a brood on 22nd.

Goldeneye **May:** Nene Washes on 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes on 7th, Grafham Water a female on 15th and a 'young male' on 25th.



Tufted Duck female attacking a Little Grebe at Dunkirk: photo by Tony Martin

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge **May:** reported from Cam Washes Waterbeach, Burwell Fen, Wicken Fen, Nine Wells, Gt Wilbraham Common, Foxton, Littleport May Farm. **June:** also at Fowlmere NR, Comberton, and Sutton North Fen.

Quail **May:** Grafham Water one heard on 6th, the first of the year, and another or the same on May 18th. **June:** Ouse Washes on 21st, Devils Dyke on 27th.

Cormorants, egrets, herons and grebes

Cormorant **May:** Paxton Pits 38 on 8th, Burwell Fen max 10 on 14th.

Bittern **May:** reported from a number of fenland sites. **June:** reported from March Farmers, Kings Dyke NR, and Wicken Fen.

Little Egret **May:** reported from Burwell Fen (8), Cam Washes Upware, Cam Washes Waterbeach (2), Cottenham, Fowlmere NR, Ouse Washes (30+ on 14th), Paxton Pits (4) and Wicken Fen (4).

June: reported from Burwell Fen (14), Fowlmere NR, March Farmers a total of 112 on 11th, Paxton Pits (9), Wicken Fen (15+).

Great White Egret **May:** Burwell Fen on 14th, Ouse Washes RSPB on 14th. **June:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 8th, March Farmers on 11th and 12th, then 2 on 14th – 16th, Wicken Fen on 12th.

Little Grebe **May:** Burwell Fen maximum 5 (2 pairs) on 4th, Colne Fen GP 5 pairs on 8th, Trumpington Clay Farm 3 on 17th. **June:** breeding recorded at Dunkirk, Wicken Fen, Burwell Fen and Barway.

Great Crested Grebe **May:** Drysides BP 13 on 3rd, Burwell Fen maximum 6 on 29th (2 pairs + 2 young), Trumpington Clay Farm a pair on 17th, Whittlesford GP a pair on 18th, Roswell Pits 14 on 18th. **June:** Burwell Fen a pair with young on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on 22nd, Fen Drayton Lakes 48 adults on 22nd.

Red-necked Grebe* **May:** Crown Lakes Farcet on 6th – 7th, Bradley Fen on 9th.

Black-necked Grebe **May:** Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 21st.

Raptors

Red Kite **May:** reported from Fulbourn, Paxton Pits, Berry Fen, Great Fen, Wicken Fen, Over, Cam Washes Waterbeach, Grafham Water (3) and Littleport (2). **June:** reported from Wicken Fen,

Abbots Ripton, Paxton Pits, Fowlmere NR (4), Oakington, Barton, Cottenham Long Drove and Stilton (8).

Marsh Harrier **May:** reported from Cam Washes, Cottenham, Needingworth GP, Paxton Pits, and Wicken Fen (6). **June:** reported from Chippenham Fen (4), Fowlmere NR (2), March Farmers, Ouse Washes RSPB, Lt Wilbraham Fen (4), Littleport (2), and Wicken Fen (4).

Hen Harrier **June:** Wicken Fen a male was reported on 5th and a 'grey harrier' was seen on the 7th. *This late date is still a fair way short of the all-time record of June 30th 2007, also at Wicken Fen.*

Buzzard **May:** reported from Cambridge Research Park, Chippenham Fen, Fowlmere NR, Great Shelford, Little Shelford, Lolworth, Needingworth GP, Pampisford, Sawston (3), and Grafham Water (max 14). **June:** also at Abbots Ripton, Babraham (2), Barton (4), Bottisham, Chippenham Fen (2), Comberton, Great Abington, Horseheath, Paxton Pits (2), and Six Mile Bottom, and Wicken Fen.

Osprey **May:** Grafham Water on 5th, Burwell Fen a flyover on 8th, Little Wilbraham Fen a flyover on 8th, Whittlesford GP a flyover on 11th, Ferry Meadows CP on 22nd. **June:** Wicken Fen 2 on 5th, Fowlmere NR a flyover on 5th.

Rails and crane

Water Rail **May:** reported from Chippenham Fen, Woodwalton Fen, Lt Wilbraham Fen, and Paxton Pits.

Spotted Crake **May:** Nene Washes up to 3 calling on several dates. **June:** 2 on 7th.

Corncrake **June:** reported calling from both the Ouse and Nene Washes.

Coot **May:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen maximum 13 on 8th, Burwell Fen maximum 70 on 29th. **June:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 23 on 5th and 8 on 27th (2 broods and 2 nests), Colne Fen GP 98 on 12th, Burwell Fen 89 (8 young) on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 12 on 22nd.

Common Crane **May:** Ouse Washes RSPB 2 on 9th, 3 on 14th, Wimblington 2 flying over on 12th.

Waders

Local observations show that there was a significant movement of waders of many species around 10th May. For example, there was clear evidence of Redshank passage on the 10th with the 18 reported from Paxton Pits (5pm) seen to depart in a north-east direction, and then 18 reported at Burwell/Wicken Fen at 6pm, the timing of the sightings suggesting the same flock; in addition 18 were seen in Bedfordshire earlier in the afternoon of 10th. Similarly, totals for Grey Plover within the county peaked at 21 on 9th and 23 on 10th, for Ringed Plover 74 on 10th and 70 on 11th, Whimbrel 6 on 10th, Ruff 21 on 11th and 16 on 14th, Dunlin 13 on 10th, Common Sandpiper 9 on 10th, and Greenshank 32 on 10th. The Birdtrack reporting rate graphs (that is, the % of complete lists submitted nationally which include a particular species) also show peaks for these dates and species.

Avocet **May:** Cam Washes Upware 18 on 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on 3rd, Ouse Washes RSPB 19 on 9th, 16+ on 14th, Grafham Water 3 on 9th, Burwell Fen 2 on 12th, Maxey Pits on 26th. **June:** Wicken Fen on 6th, 11th and 2 on 16th and 20th, Grafham Water 2 on 22nd and 29th.

Oystercatcher **May:** reported from Burwell Fen, Cam Washes (10), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Grafham Water (2) and Paxton Pits (4). **June:** Paxton Pits (maximum 6, and a pair with chicks on 17th), Burwell Fen on 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes 6 on 22nd, Sutton North Fen 2 on 26th.

Grey Plover **May:** Burwell Fen 2 on 6th, one on 13th, Paxton Pits on 6th, 2 on 7th, 3+ on 10th, one on 13th – 14th, March Farmers on 7th, 14 on 9th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 7th – 9th and 4 on 10th, Eldernell on 9th, Ouse Washes RSPB 5 on 9th, 7 on 10th, 6 on 11th, one on 14th, Berry Fen 6 on 10th.

Lapwing **May:** Trumpington Clay Farm 6+ on 17th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum 7 on 8th, Burwell Fen maximum 21 on 19th. **June:** Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 9 on 5th and c100 on 27th, Paxton Pits 8 on 2nd, 68 on 6th, c20 on 17th, and c50 on 25th, Nene Washes 80 on 7th, Fowlmere NR a pair bred with up to 4 young, Wicken Fen 8 on 18th, Burwell Fen 6 on 19th (possibly breeding).

Little Ringed Plover **May:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 4th, Paxton Pits 1 – 2 on several dates, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 6th, Ouse Washes 60 on 9th, Burwell Fen on 14th, 2 on 21st, Wicken Fen on 16th, 17th, and 2 on 26th, Grafham Water on 21st. **June:** Paxton Pits 1 – 2 on several dates, May Farm Littleport 2 on 7th, March Farmers 7 on 15th.

Ringed Plover **May:** a distinct passage of 'tundra' subspecies as follows: March Farmers 19 on 6th, Ouse Washes 60 on 9th, 69 on 10th, c70 on 11th, one on 14th, Grafham Water 2 on 9th, one on 10th and 15th; elsewhere, Burwell Fen on 6th, 21st – 22nd, Paxton Pits on 9th, 6+ on 10th, Wicken Fen 2 on 16th, 9 on 17th. **June:** Paxton Pits on 4th (tundra) and 20th, Maxey GP on 10th and 12th.

Whimbrel **May:** Paxton Pits on 3rd, 6 on 10th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 6th, March Farmers 2 flying over on 14th, Grafham Water a flyover on 14th.

Curlew **June:** Fowlmere NR a flyover on 22nd.

Black-tailed Godwit **May:** Ouse Washes 32 *L. islandica* on 1st, Paxton Pits on 9th, Ouse Washes 16 on 11th, Berry Fen on 13th, Cam Washes Waterbeach 3 on 18th, 7 on 22nd, Nene Washes 17 *L. limosa* on 27th. **June:** Burwell Fen 3 on 10th.

Bar-tailed Godwit **May:** Eldernell on 2nd, Paxton Pits on 5th – 8th, 2 on 10th, March Farmers on 9th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 10th.

Turnstone **May:** Paxton Pits on 8th, 4 on 10th, Ouse Washes on 10th. **June:** Paxton Pits on 2nd – 4th.

Knot **May:** March Farmers 2 on 6th, Ouse Washes 2 on 9th – 10th, Berry Fen on 10th.

Ruff **May:** Nene Washes 3 on 5th, Ouse Washes 12 on 9th – 10th, 21 lekking males on 11th, Berry Fen on 13th and 21st. **June:** Maxey GP on 3rd, March Farmers 3 on 11th.

Sanderling **May:** Grafham Water 2 on 9th, 10 on 10th, one on 12th, 5 on 13th, 3 on 14th and 15th, 2 on 18th, 3 on 19th, then 19 on 21st, single on 24th and 5 on 25th, Paxton Pits 3 on 10th, one on 11th, 2 on 13th, one on 15th, Maxey GP on 10th.

Dunlin **May:** reported from Berry Fen, Burwell Fen (3), Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water (2), Nene Washes (10), Ouse Washes (14), Paxton Pits (11) and Wicken Fen (3).

Little Stint **May:** Ouse Washes on 9th.

Common Sandpiper **May:** Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 2nd, Cam Washes Waterbeach on 6th and 10th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 6th, Ouse Washes 2 on 9th, Berry Fen on 10th, Burwell Fen on 10th 12th and 14th, Grafham Water on 9th, 4 on 10th, one on 11th and 13th, Wicken Fen on 12th, Paxton Pits on 13th. **June:** Burwell Fen on 7th.

Green Sandpiper **June:** Burwell Fen 3 briefly on 1st, one on 7th and 19th, 5 on 21st, March Farmers on 11th, Sutton North Fen on 26th, Bradley Fen on 30th.

Spotted Redshank **May:** March Farmers on 6th and 9th, Cam Washes Waterbeach on 6th, Eldernell on 9th.

Greenshank **May:** Eldernell 2 on 2nd, Paxton Pits on 3rd, 4 on 5th, one on 6th – 8th, 2 on 9th, 3 on 11th, 2 on 13th – 14th, one on 15th, Nene Washes March Farmers 5 on 5th, 6 on 6th, 20 on 7th, 14 on 8th, 12 on 9th, 3 on 14th, Kingfisher Bridge on 6th, Berry Fen on 7th, Eldernell 10 on 9th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 9th – 14th, Ouse Washes RSPB 2 on 9th, 15 on 10th, one on 14th, Cam Washes 5 on 10th, Wicken Fen 3+ on 10th, one on 8th, 8 on 12th, one on 15th – 16th and 21st, Berry Fen on 10th, Burwell Fen 2 on 14th and 17th, Cam Washes Waterbeach on 18th, 2 on 25th. **June:** Maxey GP on 10th, March Farmers on 12th and 15th.

Wood Sandpiper **May:** Cam Washes Upware on 2nd, Nene Washes March Farmers 7 on 5th, 2 on 9th, Maxey GP on 5th, Burwell Fen 2 on 5th and one on 6th, Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 2 on 6th, Berry Fen on 7th, Ouse Washes 3 on 9th, one on 10th, 2 on 11th.

Redshank **May:** reported from Burwell Fen (mostly 1 – 2 but 18 on 10th), Cam Washes (6), Grafham Water, Paxton Pits (mostly 1 – 2 but 23 on 10th) and Wicken Fen (7). **June:** Nene Washes 20+ on 9th, Ouse Washes RSPB 12 on 15th, Paxton Pits 2 – 3 on several dates, Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 7 on 5th and 18th (3 pairs), Burwell Fen on 19th.

Woodcock **May:** roding birds at Chippenham Fen (6+ and 3 more on the ground), Fordham Wood (2), Monks Wood, and Wicken Fen (2).

Snipe reported from Chippenham Fen and Wicken Fen (3+ drumming birds on 26th), Cam Washes and Littleport May Farm (10+). **June:** reported from Wicken Fen (6), Ouse Washes (13) and Nene Washes (10+).

Terns and gulls

Little Tern **May:** Grafham Water on 25th. **June:** Berry Fen on 4th.

Black Tern **May:** Burwell Fen 2 on 5th, 9 on 6th, one on 11th – 13th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 5th, 4 on 6th, 4+ on 7th, one on 8th, 4 on 10th, singles on 12th 13th & 14th, Paxton Pits maximum 37 on 5th and 10 on 8th, Grafham Water 31 on 6th, 7 on 8th, 4 on 9th, 2 on 13th, one on 14th and 15th, Ferry Meadows CP 5 on 6th, one on 13th, Barleycroft GP 4 on 7th, March Farmers on 9th, 15 on 14th, Cam Washes on 10th, Ouse Washes on 10th, undisclosed site in South Cambs 4 on 11th, Berry Fen 7 on 13th, Meadow Lane pits on 14th.

Common Tern **May:** reported from Berry Fen (16), Burwell Fen (4), Cambridge Midsummer Common (2), Cambridge Research Park, Cam Washes, Grafham Water (maximum 54 on 5th), Kingfishers Bridge (15), Paxton Pits (maximum 93 on 8th), Trumpington Clay Farm (8) and Wicken Fen. **June:** Burwell Fen pair bred (maximum 9), Fowlmere NR (2), Paxton Pits (c 40 pairs), Trumpington Clay Farm (2), Wicken Fen Baker's Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes 70 on 2nd.

Arctic Tern **May:** Paxton Pits on 2nd, 2 on 5th, one on 14th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 5th & 6th, c12 on 10th, one on 13th and 14th, Grafham Water 5 on 10th, 7+ on 11th, 10+ on 13th, 29 on 14th, 5+ on 18th, Berry Fen 14 on 10th, Peterborough North Bank 13 flyovers on 10th, Ouse Washes 16 flyovers on 10th, Burwell Fen on 10th and 21st, Ely BF 21 flying over on 13th, March Farmers on 14th.



Black Terns at Paxton Pits: photo by Martin Davis.

Black-headed Gull **May:** Kingfishers Bridge 350+ on 2nd, Trumpington Clay Farm 69 on 17th, Burwell Fen maximum 35 on 29th. **June:** Burwell Fen 15 on 19th, Bradley Fen 60 on 21st, Trumpington Clay Farm 36 on 22nd.

Little Gull **May:** Paxton Pits on 5th & 6th, Grafham Water on 7th, March Farmers an immature on 31st.

Mediterranean Gull **May:** Nene Washes on 20th and 23rd.

Lesser Black-backed Gull **May:** Paxton Pits 80 on 5th, Bradley Fen 60 on 23rd, Tanholt GP 50 on 14th. **June:** Cottenham Long Drove 425 on 26th, Godmanchester GP c 30 pairs on 19th.

Herring Gull **May:** Bradley Fen 150 on 16th, Drysides BP 60 on 9th. **June:** Cottenham Long Drove 13 on 26th.

Yellow-legged Gull **May:** Paxton Pits on several dates up to 18th, Cam Washes 4 on 25th. **June:** Burwell Fen 3 on 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on 6th, 3 on 17th, Sutton North Fen a 2 c.y. on 26th, Cottenham Long Drove 6 on 26th, Grafham Water 6 on 29th.

Caspian Gull **May:** Paxton Pits a 2 c.y. on 10th – 23rd (maybe 2 on 23rd), March Farmers on 22nd, Burwell Fen on 25th. **June:** Cottenham Long Drove a 2 c.y. on 26th.

Great Black-backed Gull **May:** Cam Washes 5 on 19th. **June:** Cottenham Long Drove 7 on 26th.

Doves, cuckoo, owls, and kingfisher

Turtle Dove **May:** reported from 17 sites including Barleycraft GP (3), Croydon, Fen Drayton Lakes, Girton, Grunty Fen, Needingworth GP (3), Over (2), Paxton Pits, Ramsey and Upwood. **June:** reports from 20 sites including Abbots Ripton (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR (3), Reach (2) and Wicken village (2) and Wicken Fen (2).

Cuckoo **May:** reported from Berry Fen (2), Burwell Fen (3), Chippenham Fen, Eldernell, Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Great Fen (5+), Landbeach, Littleport May Farm, Little Wilbraham Fen, Monks Wood (2), Paxton Pits (4), Wicken Fen (5) and Woodwalton Fen (2). **June:** reported from Burwell Fen, Kneesworth, Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits (2), Waterbeach and Wicken Fen (3).

Barn Owl **May:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Cam Washes Upware/Waterbeach (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (2) and Wicken Fen (several pairs). **June:** reported from Fowlmere NR, Nene Washes March Farmers (7), and Wicken Fen at least two nests.

Little Owl **May:** seven widely scattered reports including Milton, Ickleton, Littleport, Coates and Woodwalton Fen. **June:** at Newborough, Tubney Fen and Littleport.

Tawny Owl **May:** reported from 9 sites including two breeding records. **June:** reported from Wicken Fen, Nine Wells and Wimpole.

Short-eared Owl **May:** Burwell Fen on 2nd 5th and 2 on 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes on several dates maximum 2 on 7th, Castor Hanglands on 6th, Clopton on 7th, Yaxley on 7th and 23rd, Paxton Pits on 10th, Lolworth on 11th, March Farmers 4 on 27th, Ouse Washes RSPB on 14th, Littleport May Farm on 18th. **June:** Burwell Fen on 6th and 14th, Littleport May Farm on 2 on 30th.

Nightjar **June:** Chippenham Fen a possible on 22nd.

Swift **May:** Wicken 136 on 1st, Burwell Fen 100 on 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP 45 on 2nd then Burwell Fen c200 on 14th, Grafham Water 200+ on 24th and Nene Washes c300 on 27th.

Kingfisher **May:** reported from 15 sites including Burwell Fen, Cam Washes Upware, Great Fen, Haddenham (2), and Roswell Pits. **June:** reported from Fowlmere NR (pair), Kingfishers Bridge, Paxton Pits, Wimpole Park and Wicken Fen (a juvenile ringed on 7th).

Falcons

Merlin **May:** Blackbush Drove 2 on 1st, Nene North Bank a male on 9th, Wicken Fen on 13th. **June:** Comberton on 3rd.

Hobby **May:** reported from Berry Fen, Burwell Fen (3), Chippenham Fen, Eldernell (5+), Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water (2), Great Fen (5+), Littleport May Farm (2), Lolworth, Orton BP (4), Ouse Fen (10), Paxton Pits (7) and Wicken Fen (9+). **June:** Wicken Fen 7 on 5th, Littleport May Farm 8 on 7th, Fowlmere NR up to 3 on several dates, Paxton Pits on 12th, March Farmers on 15th, Ouse Washes on 15th, Waterbeach on 25th, Sutton North Fen on 26th.

Peregrine **May:** reported from Cambridge several sites, Cottenham, Ouse Washes and Wicken Fen. **June:** Fowlmere NR on 2nd and 11th, Comberton on 3rd, Abbots Ripton on 4th, Wicken Fen on 8th, March Farmers a male on 11th, and Cambridge on 23rd.

Corvids

Jackdaw **May:** Burghley Park 50+ on 3rd, Paxton Pits c300 on 27th.

Jackdaw/Rook **June:** Chippenham Fen 500 out of roost on 22nd.

Raven **May:** Castor Hanglands 2 flying over on 14th, Paxton Pits a flyover on 14th and 15th, Southey Wood 2 on 22nd. **June:** Longstowe 3 on 1st, Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on 2nd, Impington on 26th.

Crests, tits and larks

Firecrest **May:** Impington on 8th. **June:** Fowlmere NR on 7th and 10th.

Marsh Tit **May:** reports from 5 woods in south and east Cambridgeshire, and from Great Fen and Paxton Pits. **June:** Chippenham Fen a juvenile caught and ringed on 22nd, Wicken Fen a juvenile caught and ringed on 25th may have been raised on the Fen or a bird dispersing from Fordham Wood or even Chippenham Fen.

Bearded Tit **May:** Wicken Fen 6 ringed during the month. **June:** Good breeding seasons at Wicken Fen and Kingfishers Bridge revealed by the numbers ringed in June (mostly juveniles) i.e. 36 at Wicken Fen and 27 at Kingfishers Bridge.

Skylark **June:** Nine Wells 33 on 7th.

Hirundines and warblers

Sand Martin **May:** Kingfishers Bridge 80+ on 8th. **June:** Earith GP 20 nests on 12th, Sutton North Fen 120 nest holes on 26th.

Cetti's Warbler **May:** reported from Cambridge Research Park, Burwell Fen, Kingfishers Bridge, Needingworth GP, Orton BP (5), Paxton Pits (3), Wicken Fen (4) and Woodwalton Fen (3). **June:** reported from Fowlmere NR (3), March Farmers, Littleport May Farm, and Fen Drayton Lakes (6).

Long-tailed Tit **June:** Six Mile Bottom a party of 30 on 9th.

Willow Warbler **May:** reported from 15 sites, maximum Castor Hanglands (9 singing) and Ditton Park Woods (9), Paxton Pits (7), and Kings Dyke NR (6).

Garden Warbler **May:** reported from Castor Hanglands (13), Ferry Meadows CP (12), Great Fen (5), Paxton Pits (17), and Ditton Park Wood (6).

Grasshopper Warbler **May:** reported from Castor Hanglands, Chippenham Fen (5), Eynesbury, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Grafham Water, Over, Dogsthorpe Star Pit (2), Wicken Fen (3) and Woodwalton Fen (5+). **June:** reported from Chippenham Fen (recently fledged juvenile ringed on 22nd), Fowlmere NR, Ouse Washes, Swaffham Prior Fen and Wicken Fen.

Sedge Warbler **June:** Wicken Fen 31 birds handled in June and Kingfishers Bridge 27 handled.

Reed Warbler **June:** Wicken Fen 38 birds handled in June and Kingfishers Bridge 45. *The ratio of Sedge to Reed Warblers in June at these two sites suggests a recovery in Sedge Warbler numbers; it remains to be seen how productive they are.*

Nuthatch, starling, thrushes and spotted flycatcher

Michael Holdsworth reports:

'The Club's Spotted Flycatcher survey has gone well. Most pairs returned to their traditional sites, and the number of nests found has been boosted by reports from non-birders responding to publicity in parish magazines and on websites. Fieldwork has been very intense during the final weeks of June when nests - quite extraordinarily synchronised - nearly all at once had large young and were more easily located. Over forty pairs have been located, with birds (though often just solo unrequited males) at another twenty or so sites. As usual, the species is mainly concentrated in Old Hunts and in the south of Old Cambs, often in clusters, sometimes almost like loose colonies. Substantial numbers of pulli have been ringed, as have adults, several of which have had geolocator tags fitted. This BTO tagging project, the first of its kind for the species anywhere, uses tags weighing 0.34gm, less than 3% of a flycatcher's weight. Flycatchers thus join Grafham Nightingales and Fowlmere Swifts as the County's representation at the cutting edge of this important new kind of migration research. At present, we have absolutely no idea where British flycatchers winter in Africa.'

Nuthatch **May:** Burghley Park 3 on 1st, Ditton Park Wood 2 on 27th. **June:** New Shardlow's Farm on 17th, Orton Longueville on 25th.

Starling **June:** Burwell Fen c130 on 19th.

Mistle Thrush **May:** reported from Chippenham Fen, Paxton Pits and Burghley Park (8). **June:** Diddington c10 on 17th.

Ring Ouzel **May:** Moonshine Gap on 1st, Little Wilbraham on 1st.

Spotted Flycatcher **May:** Paxton Pits on 8th *the first of the year*, Monks Wood on 15th, Southey Wood 6 on 22nd. **June:** reported from Abbotsley(2), Fowlmere NR and Ramsey.

Nightingale **May:** reported from Castor Hanglands (22), Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water, Orton BP, Paxton Pits (8) and Wicken Fen (3 – 4).

Starts and chats

Black Redstart **May:** Kings Dyke NR on 9th, Cambridge on 26th. **June:** Cambourne on 3rd, Cambridge a singing bird reported on several dates.

Redstart **May:** Eldernell on 1st.

Whinchat **May:** Burwell Fen on 1st, Maxey GP 2 on 3rd, Little Wilbraham Fen on 4th.

Stonechat **May:** Paxton Pits on 9th, Wicken Fen on 5th, 15th and 16th, a pair on 30th. **June:** Wicken Fen Baker's Fen 3 on 5th (including one juvenile) 2 on 6th. *Another rare breeding bird in Cambridgeshire; the birds at Wicken have bred for several years after a county absence of over fifty years.*

Wheatear **May:** Cottenham on 1st, Little Wilbraham 3+ on 1st, Blackbush 5 on 2nd, Paxton Pits a pair on 2nd, a single on 5th, Over on 2nd, Burwell Fen on 5th, Fen Drayton Lakes a male on 6th, Great Fen 3 on 7th, Great Fen on 12th.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

Tree Sparrow **June:** Ouse Washes RSPB 4 on 6th and 2 on 15th.

Yellow Wagtail **May:** Cam Washes 5 on 1st, Foxton 6 on 2nd, Littleport May Farm c30 on 18th. **June:** Earith Washes 8 on 18th, Sutton North Fen 2 broods seen in a potato field.

Grey Wagtail **May:** reported from Foxton, Great Shelford, Hinxton, Lode, Ferry Meadows CP and Paxton Pits. **June:** Linton on 11th (bred), Byron's Pool 2 on 15th, Clayhithe on 27th.

White Wagtail **May:** Nene Washes 4 on 1st, Burwell Fen on 6th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 8th.

Tree Pipit **May:** Over a flyover on 2nd. **June:** Wicken Fen on 18th.

Finches and buntings

Brambling **May:** Kimbolton a pair on 1st, *the latest date*.

Siskin **May:** reported from Woodwalton Fen and Southey Wood. **June:** Haddenham a juvenile seen on a garden feeder. *This bird may have been a result of juvenile dispersal or equally, given the extent of the invasion in the winter, it may have been the progeny of a local breeding pair. Siskin breeding records in Cambridgeshire remain few and far between, and none were reported in 2014.*

Linnet **May:** Littleport May Farm 60 on 18th.

Lesser Redpoll **May:** Ouse Washes 6 on 1st, Castor Hanglands 8 on 6th.

Crossbill **May:** Swaddywell Pit 3 flew over on 15th. **June:** Glinton a flyover on 25th.

Corn Bunting **May:** Littleport May Farm c35 on 18th. **June:** Nine Wells 9 on 7th.

Contributors:

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Jonathan Taylor, Paul Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Gary Thornton, Bob Titman, Andrew Tongue, Calum Urquhart, Hugh Venables, Luke Wake, David Walsh, George Walthew, Mark Ward, Robin Ward, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, John Wells, Peter Wells, Steve West, M.K. Wightman, Kevin Wilson, David Withrington, Ken Wolstencroft, Hugh Wright, Julian Young, and Christoph Zöckler.

CBC Conference – Rare Breeding Birds

This year's Cambridgeshire Bird Club Conference will be held on Sept 24th at Cottenham Village College on the theme of Rare Breeding Birds. Many of us are motivated to see rare birds, but when they are breeding they present a dilemma. If we announce it to the world, will the extra attention they receive cause additional stress and disturbance? Will someone try and get too close for that photograph? Worse still, will news get to egg-collectors or other miscreants? But if we don't tell anyone, will we be accused of suppressing information? Should site managers or landowners be told so that the breeding site can be protected? If the progress of the breeding attempt is to be monitored, do we need helpers? Monitoring is of crucial importance if we are to learn anything about the status of our breeding birds.

Our Rare breeders are changing - in the last few years we have added Bittern, Little Egret & Crane to the regular list, while Black-winged Stilt and Great White Egrets are making their first steps to possible breeding; at the same time Lesser Spotted Woodpecker has nationally been added to the RBBP list, locally we have lost Willow Tit in recent years, and Golden Oriole has not bred since the last century.

This conference will have speakers from the National Rare Breeding Bird Panel, as well as experts who have studied some of these species. We will also hear from the BTO and from site managers with a suite of RBBP species on their reserves, and find out how they manage their reserves and monitor progress. If anyone has any studies would like to present (poster or talk) please contact Vince Lea. [Further details and a booking form accompany this bulletin.](#)

And a reminder about uncommon breeding birds...

Writing up my section of the Systematic List for the Annual Report it is noticeable how few records the Club receives of proven breeding from uncommon species such as owls or species like Kestrel or Grey Wagtail. These are not exotic but nevertheless interesting, especially since these kinds of species are subject to obvious population variations.

So here is a reminder of the simple ways in which you can establish breeding using the Atlas criteria:

A pair in territory,

Copulating pair,

A nest site (obviously), but this can also be established by distraction behaviour of adults, you don't have to locate the nest,

A bird carrying food,

Recently fledged young – particularly easy in water birds with precocial young.

In whatever way you submit your records (Birdtrack – use the breeding codes, or direct to Recorder), adding 'breeding pair' or 'carrying food' or 'brood of xx' enhances the Club's records no end, and many of these criteria are things you see without any effort.

Peter Bircham

The Birds of Nine Wells

This is a summary of a comprehensive survey undertaken by John Meed, of an area of farmland on the edge of Cambridge, very relevant given the level of development and the incursion into green belt. A full account is likely to appear in the Cambridgeshire Bird Report for 2015. *Ed.*

Introduction

For the last four years I have surveyed breeding populations of farmland birds on a square kilometre of green belt south of Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge (grid reference TL4654), to assess the levels of biodiversity in an area close to the city.

The area studied is largely arable land, with 2.5km of mature hedgerows, 1km of streams/ditches, and 4+ha of scrub and woodland, including the Nine Wells nature reserve. It includes a cycle path and footpath, and sensitive land management has created several permissive footpaths, flower-rich field margins and additional woodland. It is widely used by walkers, cyclists, families and dog owners.

Breeding red list species (9)

- 22 pairs of Skylarks
- 15 pairs of Linnets
- 13 pairs of Grey Partridges
- 11 pairs of Yellowhammers
- 3 pairs of Corn Buntings
- 2 pairs of Starlings
- 2 pairs each of Song and Mistle thrush
- 1 probable pair Yellow Wagtails

Red list visitors include: Lapwing, Herring Gull and in winter, Fieldfare and Redwing.

Merlin visited in January 2016.

Breeding amber list species (7)

- 10 pairs of Whitethroats
- 8 pairs of Dunnocks
- 3 pairs of Swallows and 2 pairs green Woodpecker
- 1 pair each of Reed Bunting, Bullfinch and Stock Dove
- Kestrels, Swifts and House Martins nest nearby and visit regularly.

Amber list visitors include: Mallard, Mute Swan, Red Kite, Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gull, and in winter, Little Egret, Kingfisher, Snipe, Golden Plover and Meadow Pipit. *John Meed*

Outdoor Meetings

Friday 12th August, Paxton Pits (north end)

A trip to the north end of Paxton Pits with site ranger, Jim Stevenson; start time 7pm. Booking is essential and the meeting place will be provided to those who book, but expect a reasonable walk to be part of this visit. Book with Louise Bacon (recorder@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk); places are limited to 15.

Saturday 27th August, Kingfishers Bridge Wetland Creation Project Open Day, 10am – 10 pm.

Presentations, walks, ringing, refreshments; full details at www.kingfishersbridge.org

Next Indoor meeting

Friday 9th September, Cottenham Village College

Climate Change and Local Wildlife by Brian Eversham

In this talk, Brian will discuss how wildlife has responded to past climates, including the series of Ice Ages, how plants and animals are being affected by changes now, and how climate interacts with

other threats to local wildlife. He will consider the 'winners' and 'losers' in the face of climate warming, and will conclude by explaining how we should respond to the threats, and what the local Wildlife Trust is doing already.

Brian Eversham is Chief Executive of the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants. He was previously conservation director, responsible for nature reserves, wider countryside conservation, and training. He introduced landscape-scale conservation to the Trust, helping launch the Great Fen, and schemes in the Nene Valley, the North Chilterns and Cambridgeshire's ancient woodlands. He is author of the Atlas of the Dragonflies of Britain and Ireland and author of over 200 scientific papers and reports.

New Members We welcome Jonathan Roe of Grafham and John Wilson of Soham.

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The Cambridgeshire Bird Club exists to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats in the county, identify areas of conservation value, and advance the education of the public in the study of birds.

www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

The editors would welcome contributions to the E-Bulletin and print edition, on topics such as identification problems, behaviour, summaries of club talks, and book reviews. Contact us at cbcbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk, and use this address to let us know if you would like to receive your bulletin in e-mail format rather than paper.

Bird Records, sightings and news

If you have seen a scarce or local bird, please submit the news to the '[What's about](#)' page on the Club website via [Pete and Paul](#) who maintain an up-to-date selection of recent highlights. You can also report interesting sightings on the [Cambirds](#) email group (not run by the Club, but we access the records).

Full lists of your records should continue to be submitted monthly, either via BirdTrack by the end of the month in question, or to **Louise Bacon** the County Recorder, preferably using the [spreadsheet](#) available on the Records section of the website, **by the 5th of the following month**. There is no need to duplicate records across both channels.

GOOD BIRDING!