

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB Bulletin No. 456



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

## Welcome to the January / February 2018 Edition

### Bulletin Changes ?

This is my penultimate edition as editor of the bi-monthly CBC Bulletin; because of other commitments I will be stepping down after the next issue. Council is hoping that a new editor will be in place soon, and if you are interested to find out what the job entails please get in touch with me. The e-Bulletin will of course continue as at present.

This change provides an opportunity to consider how the Bulletin could be improved:

Is the balance right between the main sections – Records, Articles, Club News? Which should be expanded or reduced? What if anything is missing from the current style? Is the frequency right?

So on behalf of the Council and the next editor, I invite all readers to email me or the Chairman, with your views on this format of the CBC Bulletin.

*Chris Brown*

### *In this issue:*

**Research** – opportunities to make your bird records count in 2018 are set out on page 9 - Sand Martins, Grey Wagtails, Spotted Flycatchers, and 'Wiffwaffs'. Also don't forget to submit records of breeding activity of any of our rare breeders, especially wildfowl, direct to the county recorder; with these, please exercise the usual restraint about posting sightings anywhere else.

**Evening meetings** - Urban Birds, and Social Learning by Great and Blue Tits – see page 11.

**Field meetings** – the first is on June 8<sup>th</sup> and booking is essential – see page 12.

### RECENT BIRD REPORTS – *Headlines*

**AMERICAN WIGEON\*** **Feb:** Nene Washes (March Farmers) a drake on the 11<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**RING-NECKED DUCK\*** **Feb:** Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) a drake on the 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER\*** **Jan:** Grafham Water on the 12<sup>th</sup>, presumably the December bird.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE\*** **Jan:** Fen Drayton Lakes on the 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>.

**ICELAND GULL** **Jan:** Cottenham Long Drove on the 5<sup>th</sup>, then 2 at Waterbeach on 6<sup>th</sup>, Milton / Waterbeach a single on several subsequent dates, Ouse Washes on 14<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Grafham Water an immature on 4<sup>th</sup> and a 2 C.Y. on 14<sup>th</sup>, Cottenham Long Drove/Cambridge Research Park a 2 C.Y. on several dates, Nene Washes (March Farmers) a 2 C.Y. on 11<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes a 3 C.Y. on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD\*** **Jan:** two individuals, a female centred in the north near and around Thorney, and a male centred around the Holme / Woodwalton area. **Feb:** Wryde Croft Thorney on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**GOSHAWK\*** **Feb:** Redmere (Littleport) on the 25<sup>th</sup>, an immature female seen with a Buzzard.

**WILLOW TIT\*** **Feb:** Redmere 2 on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

## Other records

Records in this bulletin are unchecked and may be revised at a later date. Asterisks indicate species for which it is necessary to send a description to the County Recorder for records to be accepted. The term 'reported from' and 'also at' give an indication of distribution. Some species give maxima when a number of counts have been received. Where no numbers are given the record relates to a single bird.

**Weather:** the first few days of January were mixed but generally wet. A gale overnight on the 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> caused local damage, and was followed a few days later by some snowfall. The final third remained quite variable. February continued this winter's pattern of days of cool, wet weather; a relatively mild mid-month gave way to a very cold spell at the end with easterly winds and snow.

### Wildfowl

**Mute Swan Jan:** Ouse Washes 220 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Feb:** Stanground Wash 76 on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Bewick's Swan Jan:** Grafham Water 2 – 3 from the 10<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm max 32 on 26<sup>th</sup> and Redmere max 52 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 216 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 110+ on 31<sup>st</sup>. **Feb:** Nene Washes March Farmers 150 on 11<sup>th</sup> and c140 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Mepal 100 on 19<sup>th</sup>; see box below.

**Whooper Swan Jan:** Littleport May Farm max 251 on the 27<sup>th</sup> and Redmere max 212 on 29<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 3525 dawn roost on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nene Washes 1588 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Prior's Fen c560 on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Littleport May Farm max 147 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and Redmere max 83 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 12 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 4290 dawn roost on 21<sup>st</sup>, Fortrey's Hall 1800 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes c240 on 17<sup>th</sup>.

Winter swans began to come here annually in the late 1940s; until then they had visited occasional and in small numbers; even in 1968 the maximum number of Whoopers was 19. This began to change in the 1970s and by the mid-1980s Bewick's came in their thousands, but Whoopers still only in hundreds. In February 1997 for example the count of Bewick's on both washes combined was 1881 and of Whoopers just 85. By 2008, just ten years ago, Bewick's numbers were still much the same at 1749 yet Whoopers had gone up markedly to 2219. So, while Whooper numbers have stayed at the levels of ten years ago, Bewick's have declined. In addition to this global decline, in some winters many stay further east on the flyway. PB/CGB

**Tundra Bean Goose Feb:** Colne Fen one with Whitefronts on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 5 on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Pink-footed Goose Jan:** Coveney Byall Fen 4 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. **Feb:** Barleycraft GP 4 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 21<sup>st</sup>, Nene Washes on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**White-fronted Goose Feb:** Fen Drayton Lakes 26 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, Colne Fen GP 4 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes Fortrey's Hall 22 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes and Swaffham Prior Fen on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Greylag Goose Jan:** Kingfishers Bridge 350 – 400 and Cam Washes Upware 178 on the 4<sup>th</sup> (*these counts were within minutes of each other so could not refer to the same birds*); Trumpington Hobson's 46 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Whittlesford GP 60+ on 30<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 165 on 31<sup>st</sup>. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge max 467 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Colne Fen GP 370 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 175 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR130 on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Canada Goose Jan:** Cam Washes Upware 185 on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 279 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 197 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 36 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Holme Fen 26 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Barnacle Goose Jan:** Granta Park 13 on the 26<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Sutton North Fen 23 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Egyptian Goose Jan:** Kingfishers Bridge 4 on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 6 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Barleycraft GP 8 on 20<sup>th</sup>, and 1 – 2 at Burwell Fen, Cam Washes, Littleport May Farm and Redmere. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge max 9 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Godmanchester GP 6 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Shelduck Jan:** Burwell Fen 12 – 15 on several dates max 27 on the 30<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 13 on 14<sup>th</sup>, and 1 – 2 reported at Littleport May Farm and Redmere, Paxton Pits, Kingfishers Bridge, Cam Washes, Grafham Water and Great Fen Project. **Feb:** Paxton Pits 2 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen max 20 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 40 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Mandarin Jan:** Wimpole Park maximum 22 (17 males) on the 15<sup>th</sup>, Eye on 10<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Wimpole Park at least 7, Eye on 17<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm a male on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Eaton Socon on 21 – 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Wigeon Jan:** Fen Drayton Lakes 3000 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Cam Washes Upware 500 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen max 690 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 15880 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ouse Washes 4977 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Prior's Fen 280 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 225 on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge max 153 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 11414 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 7906 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen c260 on 24<sup>th</sup>, CEBB Reservoir Peterborough 100 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Gadwall Jan:** Milton CP 50 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wicken Fen 38 on 18<sup>th</sup>, St Ives GP 11 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Nene Washes 43 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 155 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Wicken Fen max 43 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge max 26 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 96 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 157 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 428 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Teal Jan:** Cam Washes Upware 200 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen 200 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 151 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 375 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nene Washes max 4154 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Woodwalton Fen 120 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge max 164 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Nene Washes 1000 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 410 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Mallard Jan:** Kingfishers Bridge max 72 on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 46 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 1611 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Littleport May Farm 747 on 29<sup>th</sup>, Redmere 200+ all month. **Feb:** Wicken Fen max 48 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge max 58 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 62 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Colne Fen GP 67 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Pintail Jan:** Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 672 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Lt Paxton 16 on 5<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Nene Washes 1047 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes Fortrey's Hall 140 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 – 5 at other sites.

**Shoveler Jan:** Cam Washes Upware 24 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 100 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 32 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 258 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Wicken Fen max 40 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Prior's Fen 280 on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Fen Drayton Lakes 215 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen max 65 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 281 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 223 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Red-crested Pochard Jan:** Grafham Water a pair on 1<sup>st</sup>, a female on 11<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits a pair on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Pochard Jan:** Grafham Water 11 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ouse Washes 1267 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Cambridge Research Park 24 on 19<sup>th</sup>, St. Ives GP 8 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Whittlesford GP 34 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Redmere 12 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ouse Washes 1180 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 3 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Needingworth GP 3 on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Tufted Duck Jan:** Grafham Water 800 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, St Ives GP 129 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Ouse Washes 537 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Redmere 54 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Whittlesford GP 28 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 70 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** St Ives GP 104 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 83 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 804 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Milton CP 37 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Scaup Jan:** Peterborough Milking Nook on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Grafham Water 2 from 25<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Godmanchester GP a female on 29<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** St Ives GP a drake on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water a drake on 4<sup>th</sup>, a pair on 14<sup>th</sup>, Milton CP a female from 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes a drake on 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldeneye Jan:** Grafham Water 30+ on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 80 on 27<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 19 (10 males 9 females) on 26<sup>th</sup>, St Ives GP 6 on 21<sup>st</sup>. **Feb:** Holme Fen 3 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water 61 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 209 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 6 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 6 on 21<sup>st</sup> and Bainton GP 6 on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Smew Jan:** Fen Drayton Lakes 2 'redheads' on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ouse Fen/Needingworth GP 3 on 13<sup>th</sup> and a redhead on 19<sup>th</sup>, St Ives GP 5 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 9 on 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Feb:** St. Ives GP 3 redheads on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Needingworth GP 12 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 4 redheads on 25<sup>th</sup>, Colne Fen GP on 18<sup>th</sup>, Bainton GP on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Goosander Jan:** Maxey GP on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water 7 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11 on 31<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Wisbech North Brink 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Grafham Water 6 on 4<sup>th</sup> and 14 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 5<sup>th</sup>, Little Shelford 2 on the river on 25<sup>th</sup>, Drysides BP 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Gamebirds

**Red-legged Partridge Jan & Feb:** Littleport May Farm 50+ and Lt Wilbraham Fen 40+ throughout.

**Grey Partridge Jan:** Clopton 11 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Nine Wells 25 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 23 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 24 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Castor 9 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm up to 70 all month. **Feb:** Heydon 24 on 7<sup>th</sup>.

### Cormorants, egrets, herons and grebes

**Cormorant Jan:** reported from Nene Washes (roost of 43), Whittlesford GP (6), and Wicken Fen (33). **Feb:** also at Barleycraft GP (c50), Burwell Fen (6), Holme Fen (22) and Kingfishers Bridge (19).

**Bittern Jan:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Nene Washes and Wicken Fen. **Feb:** also at Woodwalton Fen, Kings Dyke NR, and Ouse Washes (3).

**Little Egret Jan:** reported from Burwell Fen (5), Earith (4), Fordham, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (26), Waterbeach and Wicken Fen (12). **Feb:** also at Grafham Water, Great Fen Project (4), Holme Fen, Nene Washes (37 in a roost) and Teversham (9).

**Great White Egret Jan:** Godmanchester on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Nene Washes Eldernell on 14<sup>th</sup>, Bar Hill on 15<sup>th</sup>, Redmere on 13<sup>th</sup> and May Farm on 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, and Fowlmere NR on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Littleport May Farm 1<sup>st</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> and Nene Washes on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Heron Jan:** Cottenham Long Drove 8 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 16 on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Ouse Washes 9 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Littleport May Farm 8+ throughout.

**Little Grebe Jan:** Barleycraft GP (11), Littleport May Farm (10) and Trumpington Hobson's Park (4).  
**Feb:** Bradley Fen (7), Colne Fen GP (23), Holme Fen (13), and Kingfishers Bridge (5).  
**Great Crested Grebe Jan:** reported from Grafham Water (156 on 2<sup>nd</sup>), and 1 – 4 at a few other sites. **Feb:** Ferry Meadows CP (25), Kingfishers Bridge (4), Milton CP (6), and Ouse Washes (11); Grafham Water numbers down to 30.

### Raptors

**Red Kite Jan:** few reports but Great Fen Project 11 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Redmere on 17<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 29<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 2 – 3 all month. **Feb:** more widely reported – Great Fen Project (15), Norman Cross/Yaxley (35), Grafham Water (4), Great Shelford, Paxton Pits (2), Pymoor, Royston SW, Soham, Stirtloe SW (2), Weston Colville (2) and Wicken Fen.

**Marsh Harrier Jan:** two or more at Chippenham Fen (2), Earith (2), Littleport May Farm (12) and Redmere (10) and Wicken Fen (9). **Feb:** also at Cam Washes (2), Dogsthorpe Star Pit (2), Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project (10), Kingfishers Bridge (3), Nene Washes (5).

**Hen Harrier Jan:** Wicken Fen generally 3 males and a ringtail reported during the month but with one report of 8 birds, Littleport May Farm a female on 14<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes a ringtail on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Wicken Fen max 3 males and 2 ringtails, Littleport May Farm a female 1<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Buzzard Jan:** many reports of 1 – 3 but also Earith (4), Littleport May Farm (10+) and Woodwalton Fen (4). **Feb:** also Great Abington (12), Great Fen Project (13), Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (5), Nene Washes (22), Weston Colville (12) and Thorney Wryde Farm (10).

### Rails and crane

**Water Rail Jan:** reported from Fowlmere NR, Littleport May Farm (10+), Lt Wilbraham Fen (4), Needingworth GP, Redmere (3) and Wicken Fen. **Feb:** also at Bainton GP, Kingfishers Bridge, Linton, Trumpington Clay Farm (2) and Wicken Fen (3).

**Moorhen Jan:** Littleport May Farm 100+ all month. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 15 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Wimpole Park 23 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Hobson's Park 25 on 6<sup>th</sup> and Stanground Wash 26 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Coot Jan:** Ouse Washes 914 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Grafham Water 500 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 72 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 47 on 18<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Ouse Washes 1285 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen 116 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 37 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 107 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 56 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Crane Jan:** Ouse Washes/Nene Washes groups of 3 – 20 and a few at other fenland sites (e.g. Burwell Fen 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>). **Feb:** Wicken Fen 2 on 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>, Manea 8 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 2 over on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, Nene Washes 7 – 19 on several dates and max 24 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Waders

**Avocet Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Oystercatcher Jan:** Fen Drayton Lakes on the 7<sup>th</sup> (*this bird was pursued by a peregrine but escaped by submerging in the water*), Godmanchester GP on 29<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Paxton Pits on 4<sup>th</sup>, Colne Fen GP on 18<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 4 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 4 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Stretham 4 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Ringed Plover Feb:** Ouse Washes Chain Corner on the 20<sup>th</sup> – *the first of the year*, Ouse Washes Earith-Sutton 3 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Trumpington Hobson's Park on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden Plover Jan:** Ouse Washes 500+ on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 5000 on several dates, Trumpington c1600 on 16<sup>th</sup> and 450 – 500 from 20<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Ely BF 1000+ on 1<sup>st</sup>, Nene Washes March Farmers max 8177 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 1270 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Lapwing Jan:** Cam Washes Upware 400+ on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Earith c3000 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Isleham Washes c500 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 8000 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Tubney Fen 400 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen c1000 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Barleycraft GP 800 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 1000 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes max 12719 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 3257 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Redmere 1000 on 27<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 633 on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Curlew Feb:** Nene Washes on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Black tailed Godwit Jan:** Portholme Meadow 66 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 32 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes max 2400 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Feb:** Nene Washes max 3124 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 1500 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruff Jan:** Nene Washes 168 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Barleycraft GP on 19<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes 6 on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 14 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 8 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 114 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes Chain Corner 20 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin Jan:** Earith 5 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 61 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nene Washes max 141 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Ouse Washes 94 on 21<sup>st</sup> and Nene Washes 104 on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper Jan:** reported from Cambridge Science Park, Earith, Nene Washes (2) and Paxton Pits. **Feb:** also at Cam Washes (2), Colne Fen GP, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (3), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Ouse Washes Earith-Sutton, Stretham and Thorney Wryde Croft.

**Redshank Jan:** reported from Grafham Water (10), Littleport May Farm (2), Barleycraft GP (2), and Nene Washes (110). **Feb:** also at Maxey GP, Ouse Washes Earith-Sutton (25), Stretham (2) and Thorney Wryde Farm.

**Jack Snipe Jan:** Maxey GP 2 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Kings Dyke NR on 11<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 8<sup>th</sup>, Dogsthorpe Star Pit 4 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes on 17<sup>th</sup>, Kings Dyke NR on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodcock Jan:** Nene Washes on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Eversden Wood on 1<sup>st</sup>, Soham 2 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen on 7<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 2 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Bedford Purlieus 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm up to 20 all month. **Feb:** Wicken Fen on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 3 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Kneesworth on 5<sup>th</sup>, Colne Fen GP on 18<sup>th</sup>, Wennington and Holland Woods 9 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Barton on 21<sup>st</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Orton on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Snipe Jan:** reported from Barton, Cam Washes (18), Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (100+), Swavesey (17), and Wicken Fen (3). **Feb:** Kneesworth (22), Tetworth Hall (58 on 23<sup>rd</sup>), Trumpington Hobson's Park (16), and in hard weather on 28<sup>th</sup> Lt Wilbraham Fen (17) and Ferry Meadows CP (23).



*Snipe in a Barrington garden: photo by Diana Leech.*

### Gulls

**Kittiwake Jan:** Grafham Water an immature on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Black-headed Gull Jan:** Grafham Water 6000 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ely c350 in a shallow flood on the 25<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen c250 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 5000 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month. **Feb:** Wicken Fen c1400 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 1000 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough CEGB Reservoir 4500 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Mediterranean Gull Jan:** Ouse Washes on the 14<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Grafham Water a 2 C.Y. on 14<sup>th</sup>, Wimpole Park an adult on 18<sup>th</sup>, Melbourn an adult with common gulls following the plough on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Gull** **Jan:** Peterborough CEGB Reservoir 300 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 3000 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 110 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Redmere 14 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 8 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Melbourn 320 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Milton CP on 28<sup>th</sup> with a Norwegian ring.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** **Jan:** Cottenham Long Drove 130 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm max 111 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 300 on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Littleport Redmere max 131 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and May Farm 142 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Herring Gull** **Jan:** reported from Ouse Washes (200), Peterborough CEGB Reservoir (200), Cottenham Long Drove (1200), Pymore (300). **Feb:** Nene Washes (400).

**Yellow-legged Gull** **Jan:** Cambridge Research Park on 1<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Feb:** Grafham Water 3 on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Caspian Gull** **Jan:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes and Cambridge Research Park. **Feb:** also at Grafham Water, Cottenham Long Drove (4) and Milton CP (2). *A 3 C.Y. bird at Milton carried a darvic ring – this bird had been ringed as a pullus at Jerzioro Wytyckie POLAND in summer 2016, seen at Beddington SF (Greater London) later that year and on the Netherlands coast in May 2017.*

**Great Black-backed Gull** **Jan:** Cottenham Long Drove 600 on 6<sup>th</sup> and 220 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Littleport May Farm 5 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 9 on 4<sup>th</sup>.

### Doves, owls and Kingfisher

**Stock Dove** **Jan:** Earith 50 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Landbeach 10 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month and Redmere 20+ all month. **Feb:** Great Fen Project 1000+ on several dates.

**Woodpigeon** **Jan:** Littleport May Farm 1000 all month, Redmere 1000 all month. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 516 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Pampisford c1000 on oilseed rape on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Dove** **Jan:** Burwell Priory Farm c60 on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

**Barn Owl** **Jan:** reported from Girton A14/M11 junction, Godmanchester GP, Haslingfield, Littleport May Farm (8), Redmere (4), and Wicken Fen (4). **Feb:** also Bainton GP, Burwell Fen (2), Nene Washes Eldernell (4), Fowlmere NR (2), Great Fen Project (3) and Kingfishers Bridge (2).

**Little Owl** **Jan:** reported from Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Hinxton, Horseheath New Shardlow's Farm and Landbeach. **Feb:** also at Wimpole Park and Swavesey.

**Long Eared Owl** **Jan & Feb:** Reports from two sites in Cambs and one in Peterborough.

**Short-eared Owl** **Jan:** reported from Cam Washes Upware, Littleport May Farm (2), and Nene Washes (7+). **Feb:** Nene Washes Eldernell (6), Great Fen Project (2).

**Kingfisher** **Jan:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (6), and Wimpole Park. **Feb:** also Cambridge, Kings Dyke NR and Woodwalton Fen.

### Falcons and parrots

**Kestrel** **Jan:** Great Fen Project 8 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Littleport May Farm (15 – 20). **Feb:** Great Fen Project (10).

**Merlin** **Jan:** Fowlmere NR on the 20<sup>th</sup>, Royston SW on 28<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Project on 30<sup>th</sup>, and at 5 other sites. **Feb:** Fowlmere NR on 5<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Project on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen on 7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge a female on 11<sup>th</sup>, Barton on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Peregrine** **Jan:** Nene Washes on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm a female on 25<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, Redmere a female on 7<sup>th</sup>, Needingworth GP on 19<sup>th</sup>, Cambridge on 20<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR a female on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Great Fen Project on 1<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 4<sup>th</sup>, Sutton North Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>, Cambridge on 21<sup>st</sup>, Littleport May Farm a female on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nene Washes on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Ring-necked Parakeet\*** **Jan:** Fowlmere NR on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough on 10<sup>th</sup> and Ouse Washes on 14<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Sawston on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### Corvids

**Magpie** **Jan:** Littleport May Farm 30+ all month, Sawston 20 on 15<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Witchford 17 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Jackdaw & Rook** **Jan:** Wicken Fen a mixed Jackdaw / Rook roost of 1000+ on 12<sup>th</sup>, 4300 on 13<sup>th</sup> and c8000 on 31<sup>st</sup>; Great Fen Project a mixed flock of 1000 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Carrion Crow** **Jan:** Ferry Meadows CP c200 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Gamlingay 161 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 100+ and Redmere 40+ all month. **Feb:** Melbourn 41 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 35 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Raven Jan:** Eversden Wood on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Wimpole Park on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a pair on 14<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Wimpole Park several reports of 2 flying over, Fen Drayton Lakes on 4<sup>th</sup>, Weston Colville on 6<sup>th</sup>, Histon 2 on 9<sup>th</sup>, Swavesey on 17<sup>th</sup> and Six Mile Bottom on 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### Crests, tits and larks

**Firecrest Jan:** Wicken Fen on the 5<sup>th</sup>, Wimpole Park on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Tit Jan:** reported from Bedford Purlieu, Godmanchester GP, Knapwell Wood and Monks Wood. **Feb:** also at Hayley Wood (3), Hardwick Wood, Ditton Park Wood and Tetworth Hall Estate.

**Bearded Tit Jan:** 3 – 4 reported from Fen Drayton Lakes, Kings Dyke NR, and Kingfishers Bridge.

**Feb:** also at Wicken Fen (2).

**Skylark Jan:** Nine Wells 100 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Project 39 on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Comberton 77 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

#### Warblers

**Cetti's Warbler Jan:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Fowlmere NR (2), Littleport May Farm (4) and Redmere (2), and Prior's Fen. **Feb:** also at Drysides BP, Ferry Meadows CP, Kingfishers Bridge, Nene Washes (5), Overcote Lane SW and Wicken Fen (7).

**Chiffchaff Jan:** Stirtloe SW 5 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Barford Pocket Park on 19<sup>th</sup>, Royston SW 3 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 5 – 6 all month. **Feb:** Royston SW on 5<sup>th</sup>, Barleycraft GP 5 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen on 12<sup>th</sup>, Earith on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, Overcote Lane SW 5 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Siberian Chiffchaff Jan:** Stirtloe SW from the 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Stirtloe SW still present from 1<sup>st</sup> until at least the 16<sup>th</sup>, Ely SW on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Royston SW on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Blackcap Jan:** Ramsey on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Rampton 6 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Great Shelford on 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, Waterbeach on 26<sup>th</sup>, Orwell on 27<sup>th</sup>, Cottenham 2 on 27<sup>th</sup>, singles in 3 Cambridge gardens, and Littleport May Farm 2 – 4 all month. **Feb:** also at Haddenham and Haslingfield; *mostly males in both months.*

#### Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

**Nuthatch Jan:** reported from 5 sites, maximum Bedford Purlieu (5). **Feb:** also at Chippenham Fen (2), Ditton Park Wood, Madingley Hall (2), and Wimpole Park.

**Starling Jan:** Fowlmere NR roost of 150 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Barleycraft GP 3000 into roost on 1<sup>st</sup>, Rampton a roost of 2000 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 215 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm up to 3000 all month. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 491 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen c150 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes Sutton 300 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Blackbird Jan:** Littleport May Farm 50+ all month. **Feb:** Stanground Wash 30 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Fieldfare Jan:** Wimpole Park c300 on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 200 over on 14<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 400 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm max 300 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Swavesey 260 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 585 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 289 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows 471 on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Song Thrush Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge 12 on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Redwing Jan:** Wimpole Park c500 on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Cottenham Long Drove 100 on 13<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Wimpole Park 200+ on 9<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 30 on 4<sup>th</sup> and 42 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Mistle Thrush Jan:** Kingfishers Bridge 5 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 6 – 8 singing all month.

**Feb:** also at Ferry Meadows CP, Kingfishers Bridge (4), Swavesey (5) and Wimpole Park (2).

#### Starts and chats

**Black Redstart Feb:** Brampton on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Stonechat Jan:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Littleport May Farm (2), Nene Washes (11), Ouse Washes (2), Paxton Pits (2) and Wicken Fen (3). **Feb:** also at Bainton GP, Ferry Meadows CP (3), Great Fen Project (4), Kingfishers Bridge (5), Ouse Washes Earith-Sutton (3) and Wicken Fen (2).

#### Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

**House Sparrow Jan:** Stanground Wash 40 on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 39 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Foxton 30 – 40 in an observer's garden on 30<sup>th</sup>, Redmere 30+ all month and May Farm 50+ all month.

**Tree Sparrow Jan:** Thriplow (10), Foxton 7 in an observer's garden; *from a number of different observers the recommended food source to entice Tree Sparrows to feeders seems to be red millet, PB.* **Feb:** Foxton area (11), Littleport Redmere 30+ all month and May Farm 30+ all month.

**Grey Wagtail** **Jan:** reported from Cambridge, Cherry Hinton, Littleport May Farm, Paxton Pits (2), and Stirtloe SW (3). **Feb:** also at Ferry Meadows CP, Overcote Lane SW, and Royston SW (3).

**Pied Wagtail** **Jan:** Stirtloe SW 100 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Whittlesford roost 250 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Royston SW 80 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month. **Feb:** Royston SW 100+ on 12<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month and Redmere 20+ all month.

**Meadow Pipit** **Jan:** Stirtloe SW 30 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month. **Feb:** Trumpington 66 on 8<sup>th</sup> and Lt Wilbraham Fen 33 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Water Pipit** **Jan:** Swavesey Mare Fen 3 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Earith 3 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Royston SW on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Kingfishers Bridge on 4<sup>th</sup>, Stretham 4 on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Chain Corner on 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Royston SW on 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 4 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 5 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### Finches and buntings

**Chaffinch** **Jan:** Great Fen Project 30 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Lark Rise Farm 40+ on 14<sup>th</sup>, Swavesey c70 on 21<sup>st</sup>, Littleport May Farm 300+ all month, Redmere 100+ all month.

**Brambling** **Jan:** reported from Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Great Fen Project, Hare Park, Lark Rise Farm (10+), Littleport May Farm (max 56), Shepreth, and Thorney Wryde Farm (10). **Feb:** also at Barrington, Cottenham, and Wimpole Park.

**Greenfinch** **Jan:** Cambridge Science Park a roost of c65 on the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 20+ most of the month but over 400 from 25<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Littleport May Farm 250+ all month.

**Goldfinch** **Jan:** Wimpole Park 100 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Great Fen Project 40 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Witchford 60 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Caxton 60 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 35 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month and Redmere 50+ all month. **Feb:** Great Fen Project 100+ on 14<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 100 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Comberton 40 on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Siskin** **Jan:** reported from Fowlmere NR (20), Great Fen Project (20) and Stirtloe SW (42). **Feb:** Great Fen Project 20 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Chippenham Fen a vocal group of 90+ passing through on 14<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham 2 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR max 12 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 100 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Linnet** **Jan:** Littleport May Farm 900 on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Manea c1200 in a bird-seed mix crop on 14<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Project 175 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Castor Mill c50 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Littleport Redmere 200+ all month. **Feb:** Great Fen Project max 1000+ on 14<sup>th</sup>, Stonea 200 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm max 1000+ on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Lesser Redpoll** **Jan:** reported from Cam Washes, Ferry Meadows CP (6), Great Abington (5), Littleport May Farm (7) and Stirtloe SW. **Feb:** also at Great Fen Project (70) and Wicken Fen (22).

**Mealy Redpoll** **Jan:** Great Abington on the 24<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Great Shelford 3 males on 23<sup>rd</sup> and a single male on 25<sup>th</sup> and Ferry Meadows CP 7 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Hawfinch** **Jan:** Wimpole Park several records of up to 5 and a maximum of 18 on 14<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Wimpole Park present all month (max 16), Madingley Hall 8 on 10<sup>th</sup> and 4 – 5 on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Yellowhammer** **Jan:** Hinxton 150 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Comberton 83 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Tubney Fen 35 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 12+ all month. **Feb:** Barway 60+ on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Burwell Fen 75 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham / Aldreth Fens 12+ on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Corn Bunting** **Jan:** Earith 19 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 82 on 14<sup>th</sup> and 101 on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Feb:** Haydon 34 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Foxton c40 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes Earith-Sutton 30 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Shepreth L Moor 60 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 13 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 70 – 112 all month.

**Reed Bunting** **Jan:** Fowlmere NR c500 into roost on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 300+ on 28<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Project 82 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month. **Feb:** Barway 50+ on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Fowlmere NR 420 roosting on 9<sup>th</sup>, Kings Dyke NR 36 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### Exotica

The previously reported **Black Swan, Ross's Goose, and Harris Hawk** were all still present.

The 2018 E-bulletin list: The starting total for January was 126 (not including exotics), down 11 on January 2017, so a slow start. February's new species were Bean Goose, Pink-footed Goose, White-fronted Goose, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Goshawk, Ringed Plover, Willow Tit and Mealy Redpoll, making a total of 135, compared to 141 in 2017.

Contributors: Colin Addington, Jill and Jeremy Aldred, Richard Allison, Louise Bacon, David Barr, Ian Barton, Andy Bayes, Peter Beckenham, Guy Belcher, Peter Bircham, Paul Bolton, Alan Brimmell, Richard Broughton, Chris Brown, Philip Bubb, Roger Buisson, Ian Burfield, Nigel Butcher, Howard Butler, James Cadbury, Josh Carter, Pete Cook, Ade



Cooper, Steve Cooper, Paul Craske, Mike Crosby, Martin Davis, Tim Dee, Ian Dickerson, Sheila Dickerson, Nina Dimitrova, Joy Dingley, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, David Ellis, Mike Everett, Tristan Fenton, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Ian Gordon, Richard Gregory, Ben Greig, Richard Grimmett, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Vicki Harley, Dean Harlow, Ron Harold, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, Pete Holt, John Hoppett, Bob Humphries, Mark Jackson, Sue Jarrett, Richard Johnson, Terry Jones, Annabel Keeler, Colin Kirtland, Charlie Kitchin, Ann Knowles, Mike Knowles, Marcus Kohler, Nick Laughton, Stella Laughton, Vince Lea, Martin Leader, Christina Leadlay, Diana Leech, Jeremy Lindsell, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin, Tony Martin, Andy Massey, Dave McCarthy, Duncan McNiven, Matt Mellor, Andy Merryweather, Steve Mumford, Martin O'Leary, Richard Palmer, Paul Pateman, Richard Patient, Jenny and Pam Peacock, Mark Peck, Rob Pople, Doug Radford, Norman Ratcliffe, Gary Rawlings, Petru Rednic, Mike Redshaw, Graeme Reed, Gareth Rees, Chris Rider, Sacha Riley-Smith, Tony Roberts, John Roote, Kathleen Rosewarne, Rosemary Setchfield, Norman Sills, Bill Simmonds, Clive Sinclair, Bob Smith, Phil Smith, Henry Stanier, Jonathan Taylor, Kevin Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Keith Tinworth, Erica Towner, Hugh Venables, George Walthew, Mark Ward, Mat Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, John Wells, Sue Wells, Kevin Wilson, David Withrington, Patrick Woods, Hugh Wright, Barbara York and Christoph Zöckler.

### ***Club Research in 2017 -18***

Last year we launched two research projects, on Sand Martins and the single day Raptors watch. Results for Sand Martins were a little thin but the response for Raptors was excellent; the initial findings are set out below but I will carry out further analyses and report again.

#### **Raptor Survey 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The southern part of the county was well covered, northern and Fenland areas less so. The weather on the day was windy with some heavy showers, and several observers reported that they would have expected to see more on a better day.

The Common Buzzard was the species most often recorded. Several observations could well have related to family groups. The results give hard evidence of the spread of Buzzards in the last couple of decades, something that seems to be increasingly controversial.

The same applies to the Red Kite. There were fewer observations in the south than I would have expected. In my part of the county, the north-west, it is the most frequently seen bird of prey. I was delighted that Kestrels were recorded by several observers throughout the county. Some Hobbies were still present and it was pleasing that a good number of Sparrowhawks were seen. One observer saw a Peregrine which interacted briefly with a family of five Buzzards.

The heartening aspect of the day was that it demonstrated that we have a healthy range of raptors in the county, a welcome contrast to the situation 50 years ago. Yet there are threats apparent. I am frequently told that there are "too many" Kites; that there reintroduction is "interfering with nature". We need to keep the situation monitored so I would like to repeat the survey on a regular twice yearly basis. I hope you were able to take part on the (previously announced) spring date, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

#### **Sand Martins**

I had far fewer responses for the Sand Martin Survey but the Nene Park Trust gave me access to some impressive ringing work. I hope to be able to link this with surveys elsewhere and produce some meaningful results.

Part of the problem is that colonies of Sand Martins are naturally ephemeral. Many of the sites they choose are on unstable land. It has also been said that parasites build up in the nest to such an extent that after a few years the site becomes untenable. My own experience reflected the short term aspects of the colonies. The site at Town Bridge Peterborough has now been abandoned, probably because it is next to a major redevelopment. A report was received that there was a colony of 40 birds in the quarry east of the Bedford Purlieu forest. I visited in late July and saw some superb Silver Washed and Dark Green Fritillaries but no Martins. I also failed to find the colony at Kings Dyke; plenty of birds were feeding but I could not find the nests – very frustrating!

## Research Projects for 2018

**Sand Martins.** I would like to repeat the 2017 survey. I hope the Nene Park Trust will share their ringing results again and that there are few more reports from elsewhere in the county. So if you spot a Sand Martin colony could you report, in addition to the grid ref, date and time,

- The number of nests.
- The nature of the ground the colony was in – “active sand quarry” or such.

In addition, if any of you have any additional information for 2017, could you forward it to me? It may be a link to another source. I’m particularly interested in the colonies at Sutton North Fen, Kingfishers Bridge and the elusive Kings Dyke.

### **Grey Wagtails - New for 2018!**

Why are Grey Wagtails of specific interest? It’s to do with their range and distribution which has fluctuated and is enigmatic. John Clare wrote of “little trotty wagtail” (perhaps not his best line) but he would not have been seeing Greys. Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they were mainly confined to upland areas with fast flowing streams. About then they began to expand their range north and west in Europe and to the east in Britain. The first confirmed breeding in Cambridgeshire was in 1935 and in Huntingdonshire in 1955. I never used to see them along the Nene in the 1960s. This changed in the 1990s and I suspected they were breeding in several areas. Since then, they seem to have retreated but this is all subjective and hence the need for a survey.

The methodology will have two parts. The first relates to the breeding season. The Wagtails need steep banks to nest in. They also favour fast moving water, ideally fringed by deciduous trees. In Cambridgeshire, this in the main restricts them to locks and weirs. So, do you have a lock or a weir near you that you could survey over the breeding season? Ideally, it would be helpful if you could visit the site every three weeks or so, but more or less frequent visits would still be valuable. It’s a matter of trying to get a picture of where the birds are breeding in 2018. The check list is

- The location with a grid reference and type of habitat
- The date and time of your visit, and weather conditions.
- The number of birds present.
- If possible the age and gender of the birds.
- Their behaviour, and any evidence of breeding or attempted breeding.

Wagtails have a long breeding season, lasting from late March to the end of August so this phase of the survey covers the period from 17/3/18 to 1/9/18. Are you up for this? I know it sounds a lot but, come on, it will just add a bit of zest to a nice walk by the river!

If it does appeal, please let me know as soon as possible which locks or weirs you would like to survey. I have some volunteers for the Nene so far (and a press gang out for a couple of others) but nobody at present for the south. The chalk streams in this area might also be of interest.

The second aspect of the survey is more casual. Grey Wagtails appear to be both long and short range migrants. They seem to disperse from the breeding sites in autumn, but the range of non-breeding habitats mentioned as “suitable” is vague. I for one saw a juvenile Wagtail apparently happily living for several weeks alongside a minor road with very little water at all. Hence, it would be interesting to see where they are in Cambridgeshire outside the breeding season. So, if you see a Grey Wagtail between 2/9/18 and 31/3/19 could you report it?

The contact address is [Research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk](mailto:Research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk)

*Robert Brown*

### **AND.....Continuing Spotted Flycatchers - Michael Holdsworth writes:**

We will continue this project for its third season in 2018. Cambridgeshire (with Devon) has been piloting ground-breaking geo-locator research with the BTO and this will also continue, subject to funding. Quite simply, we need EVERY record of SpotFlies in the county, from arrival in mid-May to departure. There are more details on the Club's Research web-pages.

**PLUS.....Reports of Wiffwaffs wanted -Tony Fulford writes:**

"I am extremely grateful for members helping me locate Wiffwaffs in the county last year. These allowed a rigorously designed playback study that yielded very clear-cut results: 30% of normal Willow Warblers but 100% of Wiffwaffs respond to Chiffchaff song; Chiffchaffs rarely respond to Willow Warbler song but always recognise the Chiffchaff elements of Wiffwaff song.

I plan to follow this up with further studies this year. I am once again putting out the call for reports of mixed-singing Willow Warblers, especially those that include Chiffchaff notes in their song. Last year, with the help of members' reports, I found and recorded the songs of 15 mixed singing males in the county, mostly in the Cambridge area. These were sufficient to carry out a very informative playback study. This year I plan further studies designed to home in further on the reasons why some members of this species do this.

So please listen out for any off-sounding Willow Warbler or overly fast Chiffchaff song - it may turn out to be a mixed singer. I would again be extremely grateful to receive reports of such birds heard this spring: please send details of where and when as soon as you can to [tonyfulford@gmail.com](mailto:tonyfulford@gmail.com) (or tel 0774 666 5195).

### ***Next indoor meetings***

**Friday 13th April at Cottenham Village College; 7.30 for 8.00pm start**

**How our individual decisions collectively affect urban birds by Mark Fellowes**

Today, we have become a truly urban society, with around 90% of British people living in towns and cities. Biodiversity, and our societies' connection with nature, is threatened by urbanisation, and our gardens provide a vital link between people and wildlife. In this talk, Mark will share his group's most recent research on how the decisions made by every garden owner affect the birds that share their gardens. We try to help birds by providing food and nest boxes, while at the same time we introduce their predators. What are the consequences of these decisions? Can we learn lessons that will help garden birds? From Blue Tits to Red kites, Grey Squirrels to domestic cats, each story provides insights into the unexpected consequences of our individual decisions.

Mark Fellowes is Professor of Ecology at the University of Reading. While here he will focus on birds, his research encompasses groups as diverse as leopards, fungal pathogens, grass-free lawns, aphids, and (after birds) the most interesting species on Earth, parasitoids. Mark's work has been widely featured in the print and broadcast media, including appearances on Autumnwatch and Countryfile Diaries. For more information visit his research group's webpages ([www.reading.ac.uk/people-and-wildlife](http://www.reading.ac.uk/people-and-wildlife)) or find him on twitter (@BaobabJ)

**Friday 11th May at Cottenham Village College; 7.30 for 8.00pm start**

**Social learning in Great Tits and Blue Tits – how birds use information about defended prey by Liisa Hämäläinen**

Birds can gather information about their food from two sources, through personal experience and by observing the foraging behaviour of others (social information). Many insects have evolved chemical defences against predators and Liisa's research focuses on how birds use social information when learning to avoid these chemically defended prey. She uses Great Tits and Blue Tits as model predators and conducts learning experiments both in the wild, and with birds in captivity. She will present the results from these studies, describing how Great Tits and Blue Tits use social information in their food choice, and how this can influence the evolution of prey defences.

Liisa Hämäläinen is a third year PhD student at the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, working in the behavioural ecology group.

### ***Field meetings***

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> June: Chippenham Fen.** Booking is essential – please contact Louise Bacon.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July and Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August: venues to be announced.

## New Members

We welcome Carole Baber, Raj Banerjee, Emma Bruce and Meryl Griffiths.

### Subscriptions Reminder

Club subscriptions were due on 1st January 2018 and few remain outstanding. Membership rates remain unchanged at Full £17, Senior/Concessionary £12, Student £8. Please contact the membership secretary to confirm your membership for 2018.

### Bulletin Delivery

A reminder that Bruce Martin is retiring from his role organising the delivery of the bulletin. If you are able to take on this vital role please contact the Chairman.

**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](http://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](mailto: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.

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### 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 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month**. There is no need to duplicate records across both channels.

# GOOD BIRDING!