

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB Bulletin No. 457



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

Welcome to the March / April 2018 Edition

From the Editor

As previously signalled, this is my last edition. No-one has come forward to take on this role, so this may be your last paper bulletin in the current format. The county recorder intends to produce a very short summary 4 times per year from now on.

If you wish to receive more comprehensive news, you can subscribe to our monthly e-bulletin, or alternatively volunteer to take on the paper bulletin production. I would be happy to explain how I have compiled it, but with no obligation to stick to that! I would like to thank Peter Bircham whose e-bulletin generates much of the content, Louise Bacon and Howard Slatter whose digest of BirdTrack reports adds to the Reports section, and all those involved in distribution. CB

RECENT BIRD REPORTS – Headlines

RING-NECKED DUCK* Mar: Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) the drake from February until 30th.

RED-THROATED DIVER* Mar: Thorpe Meadows Rowing Lake Peterborough on the 3rd – 5th, then at Ferry Meadows CP from 6th until at least 12th, Grafham Water on 19th – *possibly the same bird*.

PURPLE HERON* Apr: Burwell Fen a 2 C.Y. from the 11th – 13th.

WHITE STORK* Mar: Ramsey heights a flyover on the 28th – *possibly an escaped bird*. Apr: Two, both escapes. Firstly at Stretham on the 10th, with blue rings on each leg, and presumed same at Stuntney on 18th. Another (red ring) at Sutton Gault and Wardy Hill on 20th also seen at Ely on 24th, then at or around Fen Drayton Lakes for the rest of the month.

SPOONBILL Apr: Ouse Fen a sub-adult on the 30th.

SLAVONIAN GREBE* Apr: Grafham Water 2 on the 1st, one on 2nd.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE* Mar: Grafham Water on the 26th – 27th. Apr: Ouse Washes 2 on the 21st, one on 22nd.

BLACK KITE* Apr: Abbotsley a flyover on the 25th.

GOSHAWK* Apr: Nene Washes March Farmers an immature on the 7th, Ramsey one over on 14th.

BLACK WINGED STILT Apr: Nene Washes on 28th until the end of the month.

STONE CURLEW Apr: Cambridge a night-time flyover on the 10th.

BONAPARTE'S GULL* Apr: an adult in summer plumage first seen at Witcham Gravel on the 11th then at Fen Drayton Lakes on 14th. *These are the first records for Cambridgeshire. According to the Rare Birds Report for 2016 (British Birds October 2017) there have been around 225 records in Britain since 1950 with an annual occurrence of 7 – 8 records.*

ICELAND GULL Mar: Cottenham a 3 C.Y. on the 2nd, Ouse Washes Oxloode a 4 C.Y. on 24th, Witcham Gravel a small C.Y. and a large 3 C.Y. on 28th. Apr: Ouse Washes an adult on the 1st, 2 on 7th, Grafham Water a 2 C.Y. on 1st, Witcham Gravel a 2 C.Y. on 4th, 14th and 15th, and an adult on 6th.

PIED FLYCATCHER Apr: Marsh Lane GP (permit only) on the 23rd.

Other records

Weather: March began with the 'Beast from the East' and storm Emma bringing sub-zero temperatures and snowfall until the 4th. Not unexpectedly the harsh conditions took a toll on birds and many people reported unusual visitors to urban gardens, and sadly, corpses found. Mild conditions then prevailed until the third weekend when a 'mini beast' brought another brief freeze followed by mild wet weather. April continued cool and wet until mid-month when a long-awaited warmer spell arrived; the hitherto slow migrant arrival suddenly gave way to a rush. April closed with a return to the unsettled pattern with winds from every direction except the South.

Editor's note on the records: once again so many records were available for this period that I have had to exercise a fairly harsh editorial process to keep this section within bounds; apologies to those whose records do not appear below. 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. In order to give some protection to rare breeding birds in the county, specific locations are not given in spring / summer bulletins for certain vulnerable species. Please remember to report rare breeding birds to the Recorder who will advise you on the level of confidentiality.

Wildfowl

Bewick's Swan **Mar:** Littleport 15 on the 12th, Ouse Washes 3 on 17th.

Whooper Swan **Mar:** Ouse Washes 1000+ on the 4th, 400 on 17th, Nene Washes 627 on 21st, 250 on 25th, Knarr Fen 52 on 25th. **Apr:** West Cambridge site on 3rd and 5th, Nene Washes 51 on 4th, Ouse Washes 2 on 29th.

Pink-footed Goose **Mar:** Fen Drayton Lakes one with Greylags on the 11th, Ouse Fen 3 on 18th. **Apr:** Barleycraft GP 4 on 23rd.

White-fronted Goose **Mar:** Ouse Washes 4 on 4th, Burwell Fen on 6th, Needingworth GP 4 on 10th.

Greylag Goose **Mar:** Kingfishers Bridge 224 on 4th. **Apr:** Burwell Fen 49 on 18th including a brood of 2, Kingfishers Bridge max 97 on 21st, Wicken Fen 28 on 22nd with a brood of 7.

Canada Goose **Apr:** Burwell Fen 27 on 18th, Kingfishers Bridge max 183 on 21st.

Barnacle Goose **Apr:** Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 28th.

Brent Goose **Apr:** a passage on the 12th with c12 at Coveney Byall Fen, and singles at Ferry Meadows CP and Wimpole; then Ferry Meadows CP 7 on 13th, Swavesey Middle Fen on 14th.

Egyptian Goose **Mar:** Maxey GP 2 on the 1st, Paxton Pits 2 on 24th, Kingfishers Bridge a brood of 2 on 29th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month. **Apr:** Burwell Fen Kingfishers Bridge and Cam Washes area 1 – 3 on several dates.

Shelduck **Mar:** Burwell Fen max 46 on the 24th, Grafham Water 10 on 9th, Nene Washes 76 on 21st, Cam Washes Waterbeach 10 on 29th. **Apr:** Wicken Fen 6 on 1st, Kingfishers Bridge max 8 on 5th, Burwell Fen max 32 on 18th, Paxton Pits 9 on 19th, Cam Washes Upware 9 on 26th.

Mandarin **Mar:** Littleport May Farm on the 7th, Fowlmere NR on 16th, Ferry Meadows CP on 23rd, Little Shelford on 25th, Wimpole Park 7 on 25th. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP on 4th and 16th, Little Shelford a pair flying over on 25th, Castor Hanglands on 14th, Woodwalton Fen on 20th.

Wigeon **Mar:** Wicken Fen max 1433 on 5th, Godmanchester GP 345 on 12th, Burwell Fen 837 on 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 200 on 19th, Ouse Washes 8693 on 19th, Nene Washes 9201 on 21st. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge shows the gradual departure with 88 on 1st, 38 on 7th, 8 on 12th, and one on 26th.

Gadwall **Mar:** Cambourne 18 on 4th, Wicken Fen 27 on 5th, Great Fen Project 11 on 16th, Nene Washes 221 on 21st, Burwell Fen 51 on 25th. **Apr:** Wicken Fen 23 on 5th, Grafham Water 20+ on 13th, Kingfishers Bridge max 25 on 21st, Cam Washes Upware two pairs on 26th.

Teal **Mar:** Nene Washes 1193 on 21st was the stand-out count; many sites with counts of 20+. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm 112 on 3rd, Wicken Fen 29 on 5th, Kingfishers Bridge max 112 on 7th, Great Fen Project 65 on 14th, Cam Washes Upware 6+ on 26th.

Mallard **Mar:** Farcet Fen 160+ on the 1st, Wicken Fen max 37 on 5th, Great Fen Project 38 on 16th, Kingfishers Bridge 50 on 19th, Ouse Washes 624 on 19th, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Redmere 200+ all month. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge max 42 on 12th, Great Fen Project 25 on 14th.

Pintail Mar: largest counts Ouse Washes 200 on 4th, Nene Washes 398 on 21st; elsewhere small numbers e.g. Farcet Fen 8 on 1st, Wicken Fen 16 on 5th, Paxton Pits 7 on 18th. **Apr:** Nene Washes Eldernell 80+ on 2nd, Fen Drayton Lakes 8 on 11th, Swavesey Middle Fen 9 on 16th.

Garganey Mar: Kingfishers Bridge a pair on the 17th – *the first of the year*, Woodwalton Fen a pair on 28th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 1st, Nene Washes 3 on 7th, Cam Washes Upware 2 on 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on 15th, Swavesey Middle Fen 2 on 16th, Wicken Fen max 6 on 16th.

Shoveler Mar: Cambridge Research Park c30 on the 3rd, Fen Drayton Lakes 30 on 3rd, Grafham Water 40+ on 9th, Great Fen Project 35 on 16th, Nene Washes 639 on 21st, Burwell Fen max 107 on 25th. **Apr:** Burwell Fen 135 on 9th, Berry Fen 77 on 7th, Ouse Washes 99 on 16th.

Red-crested Pochard Mar: Holme Fen a pair on the 2nd, Paxton Pits a pair on 20th and 7 from 24th – 31st. **Apr:** Paxton Pits 5 on 8th, 4 on 9th, one on 24th and 25th, Earith a male on 25th.

Pochard Mar: Ferry Meadows CP 12 on 2nd, Wicken Fen 20 on 17th, Burwell Fen max 15 on 19th, Ouse Washes 687 on 19th, Grafham Water 15 on 20th. **Apr:** Wicken Fen 2 on 1st and 29th, Kingfishers Bridge 28 on 1st, 11 on 21st and 7 on 26th, Ouse Washes 30 on 16th.

Tufted Duck Mar: Ferry Meadows CP 111 on 3rd, Grafham Water 139 on 18th, Ouse Washes 484 on 19th. **Apr:** Redmere 47 on 1st, Grafham Water 40+ on 13th, Ouse Washes 385 on 16th.

Scaup Mar: Milton CP female still present until the 24th, Grafham Water 3 females from 9th to 19th, one on 25th and 29th, St Ives GP a drake on 18th, Cambridge Research Park a female on 24th (maybe the Milton CP bird), Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on 31st. **Apr:** Grafham Water a female on 13th.

Common Scoter Mar: An influx on the 25th: Beebys BP 4, CEGB Reservoir Peterborough, Ely BF 3, Fen Drayton Lakes 3, Grafham Water 20, then Fen Drayton Lakes 14 on 31st. **Apr:** Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 8th, Grafham Water max 24 on 9th, Paxton Pits 2 on 8th, Nene Washes March Farmers 5 on 14th, Sutton North Fen on 15th; *several nocturnal recordings as well as these sightings.*

Goldeneye Mar: Fen Drayton Lakes 10 on the 3rd, Buckden 4 on 3rd, Bainton Fisheries 10 on 8th, Grafham Water c85 on 9th, 154 on 19th, Ouse Washes 2 on 10th, Needingworth 3 on 20th, St Ives GP 3 on 22nd. **Apr:** Fen Drayton Lakes 39 on 11th, 2 on 28th, Grafham Water 20+ on 13th.

Smew Mar: Needingworth GP a male and 4 females on the 4th, 3 males and 3 females on 18th, Bainton Fisheries a redhead on 8th, St Ives GP a redhead on 18th and a pair on 19th, Ouse Washes a redhead on 29th. **Apr:** Needingworth GP 4 on 1st, Colne Fen GP a redhead on 8th, 12th and 15th.

Red-breasted Merganser Mar: Burwell Lode on the 4th.

Goosander Mar: Maxey Cut 2 on the 2nd, Buckden on 3rd, 6 on 17th, and one on 31st, Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 4th and one on 17th, Little Shelford 2 males displaying and a single female on 5th, Grafham Water 9 on 9th, Etton GP 17 on 12th.



Tufted Duck and Goldeneye at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge Mar: Nine Wells 22 on the 14th, Fowlmere 2 on 26th, Littleport May Farm 70 all month. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 4th, Great Fen Project on 14th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Cormorants, egrets, herons and grebes

Cormorant Mar: largest counts at Burwell Fen (6), Kingfishers Bridge (12), Littleport May Farm (8) and Wimpole Park (5). **Apr:** Grafham Water (20+), Redmere (26) and Wicken Fen (14 into roost).

Shag Mar: Cambridge Research Park from the 9th until the 25th.

Bittern Mar: reported from Orton BP, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen. **Apr:** reported from eight sites across the county, all north of Cambridge.

Little Egret Mar: reported from Burwell Fen (8), Littleport May Farm (6), Little Shelford (15), Wicken Fen (14), and 5 other sites. **Apr:** also at Cam Washes, Ouse Washes (11), and Paxton Pits (6).

Great White Egret Mar: Ouse Washes on the 10th and 24th, Ouse Fen on 18th, Kingfishers Bridge on 24th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm on the 1st – 4th, Redmere on 1st, Houghton on 10th, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 15th, Little Paxton a flyover on 23rd, Ouse Washes on 29th.

Grey Heron Mar: Wicken Fen max 9 on the 19th, Littleport May Farm 8 all month.

Little Grebe Mar: counts of 10+ at Kingfishers Bridge (11), Littleport May Farm (10+) and Ouse Washes (25). **Apr:** also at Cam Washes (4), Paxton Pits (2).

Great Crested Grebe Mar: highest counts at Grafham Water (20+) and Ferry Meadows CP (36).

Apr: reported from Cam Washes (2), Hobson's Park, Kingfishers Bridge (12), Orton BP, Ouse Washes (36) and Redmere (12).



Cormorant at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith

Raptors

Red Kite Mar: reported from Cam Washes (2), Great Fen Project (4), Littleport May Farm (2), Paxton Pits (3), Werrington, Whittlesford and Woodwalton Fen (2). **Apr:** also at Grafham Water (4), Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Swaffham Bulbeck and Wimpole Park.

Marsh Harrier Mar: reported from suitable sites including Burwell Fen (4), Kingfishers Bridge (4), Littleport May Farm (6), Redmere (12), Wicken Fen (7) and Woodwalton Fen (4). **Apr:** reports for the above sites plus Nene Washes Eldernell (10+) and 5 other sites.

Hen Harrier **Mar:** Cottenham a male on the 3rd, Upware/Wicken Fen a female on 6th, Littleport May Farm 2 males 16th – 18th and one 27th – 31st, Bottisham a male on 22nd, Cam Washes a male on 29th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm a male on 1st, Wicken Fen a male and a female into roost on 2nd, a female on 7th, Comberton a male on 11th, Burwell Fen a female on 15th, Paxton a male on 21st.
Buzzard **Mar:** reported from 18 sites, largest counts at Sawston (14), Littleport May Farm (10) and Redmere (10+). **Apr:** reported from 17 sites.
Osprey **Mar:** Grafham Water on the 19th and 23rd – *the first of the year*. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP on 4th, Hemingford Grey a flyover on 9th, Sawston one GPS tracked over on 15th, Eltisley on 19th.

Rails and crane

Water Rail **Mar:** reported from Cambridge Stourbridge Common and Coe Fen (2), Cambourne, Cherry Hinton Brook (2), Ferry Meadows CP (5), Fen Drayton Lakes, Littleport May Farm (4), Milton CP (2), Redmere (4), Trumpington Hobson's Park, and Woodwalton Fen (10+). **Apr:** also at Kingfishers Bridge and Wicken Fen (3).

Moorhen **Mar:** Trumpington Hobson's Park 18 on the 16th, Farcet 28 on 17th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Coot **Mar:** Ouse Washes 895 on 19th, Burwell Fen max 173 on 25th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 54 on 1st, Wicken Fen 40 on 5th, Ouse Washes 707 on 16th, Burwell Fen 105 on 18th.

Common Crane **Mar:** Great Fen Project 2 on the 3rd, Nene Washes up to 21 on several dates, Wicken Fen 2 on 10th and 22nd. **Apr:** Dog-in-a-Doublet 10 flying over on 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP 11 flying over on 5th, elsewhere 1 – 4 reported from seven sites.

Waders

Avocet **Mar:** Isleham Washes max 57 on the 19th, Godmanchester GP on 12th, Cam Washes 2 on 14th, Grafham Water 2 – 4 from 18th to 30th. **Apr:** Isleham Washes 41 on 30th, reports of 1 – 2 at six sites and Grafham Water 4 on 16th.

Oystercatcher **Mar:** reported from 16 sites including Maxey GP, Buckden, Paxton Pits, Isleham Washes, Ouse Washes (15), Cam Washes (4), Needingworth GP, Nene Washes (14), GEGB Reservoir Peterborough and Fen Drayton Lakes. **Apr:** similar range of sites with highest counts at Kingfishers Bridge (7), Littleport May Farm (10) and Paxton Pits (6) and Swavesey Lake (6).

Shelduck and Oystercatcher – estuary birds?

These two classic estuarine species are relatively recent colonists of Cambridgeshire. Shelducks began to visit Cambs regularly around the early post-war years. There is some evidence that they were to be found inland in the nineteenth century but were persecuted for taking up residence in rabbit holes when rabbits were an important economic commodity (as in the Brecks); they were also shot for sport. With greater protection they returned inland, and in Cambs after sporadic breeding in the 1930s and 40s regular breeding began in the late 1960s, mainly on the washes. Oystercatchers began to move inland along the rivers of Scotland about the middle of the 19th century and gradually the habit spread south through England. In Cambridgeshire individuals appeared more regularly in the 1960s and breeding was first confirmed in 1971. So the colonisation is relatively recent and centred mainly on gravel pits.

Golden Plover **Mar:** Ouse Washes 140 on the 10th, Nene Washes 700 on 11th, Maxey GP 60 on 12th, Great Shelford 60 flying south on 15th, Littleport May Farm max 157 on 16th, Fen Drayton Lakes 600 on 24th and 31st, Witchford 430 on 26th. **Apr:** Fen Drayton Lakes c600 on 3rd.

Grey Plover **Mar:** Ouse Washes flyovers on the 2nd and 31st.

Lapwing **Mar:** Upware/Wicken Fen 120 on the 6th, Littleport May Farm maximum 400 on 11th, Redmere max 226 on 16th, Burwell Fen max 90 on 25th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 38 on 1st.

Little Ringed Plover **Mar:** Bradley Fen and Grafham Water on the 18th – *the first of the year*. **Apr:** Paxton Pits from 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP on 6th, Sutton North Fen 3 on 15th, Maxey GP 2 on 20th and 27th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month.

Ringed Plover **Mar:** Grafham Water on the 8th, Ouse Washes on 10th, Paxton Pits on 18th, Littleport May Farm on 27th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm on 9th – 13th, Paxton Pits max 7 on 27th.

Whimbrel **Apr:** Berry Fen on the 7th – *the first of the year*, Burwell Fen on 18th, 20th and 2 on 27th, Grafham Water on 18th, Littleport May Farm 4 on 19th, Paxton Pits on 20th, Fowlmere NR on 28th, Ouse Washes on 29th.

Curlew **Mar:** Kingfishers Bridge on the 4th, Nene Washes 2 on 7th, 3 on 19th, Maxey GP on 5th, Ouse Washes 2 on 17th. **Apr:** Paxton Pits 3 over on 8th, Swavesey 5 on 14th, Great Fen Project on 14th, Woodwalton Fen 2 over on 19th, Wicken Fen on 21st, Dullingham on 26th.

Black-tailed Godwit **Mar:** Ouse Washes 2300 on 4th, 700 on 10th, Nene Washes 700 on 7th. **Apr:** Berry Fen c650 on 1st, Nene Washes Eldernell 800 on 3rd, Berry Fen 1500 on 7th, Fen Drayton Lakes 1000+ on 11th, Swavesey Middle Fen 1000 on 14th.

Bar-tailed Godwit **Mar:** Nene Washes on the 19th – *the first of the year*. **Apr:** Cam Washes on 16th, Ouse Washes on 22nd, 5 on 29th, Paxton Pits 28 on 27th, Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 30th.

Knot **Mar:** Paxton Pits on the 18th.

Ruff **Mar:** Waterbeach Fen on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 10 on 10th and 50 on 29th, Nene Washes 39 on 19th and 119 on 21st. **Apr:** Nene Washes March Farmers 92 on 3rd, Littleport May Farm 11 on 9th and 7 on 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 7th, Ouse Washes 7 on 19th.

Dunlin **Mar:** Hard weather reports – on 1st at Chesterton Cambridge, Maxey GP 5, Milton CP 2+, and on 2nd on the River Cam, at Barton and CEGB Reservoir Peterborough (2). After the thaw: Paxton Pits 4 on 4th, Ouse Washes 20 on 29th, Nene Washes 146 on 21st, Littleport May Farm 2 on 27th. **Apr:** Paxton Pits on 19th and 24th – 27th, Maxey GP on 20th, Ouse Washes 2 on 28th, one on 29th.

Common Sandpiper **Mar:** Grafham Water on the 9th. **Apr:** *A distinct passage in the last week* – Grafham Water 2 on 24th, Kingfishers Bridge on 26th, Paxton Pits on 27th, Cam Washes on 28th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 28th, Trumpington Meadows on 29th.

Green Sandpiper **Mar:** reported from Cam Washes, Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water, Littleport May Farm (3), Maxey GP (3), Paxton Pits (3), and Waterbeach Fen. **Apr:** also reported from Burwell Fen (5), Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge (3).

Spotted Redshank **Mar:** Kingfishers Bridge one reported on the 17th – 18th, Lt Wilbraham Fen on 25th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm on 19th, Paxton Pits on 19th, Eldernell on 28th, Ouse Washes on 29th.

Greenshank **Mar:** Littleport May Farm 2 on the 7th. **Apr:** May Farm on 5th and 19th, Burwell Fen one over on 18th, Ouse Washes on 19th, Paxton Pits 2 on 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 20th – 21st.

Wood Sandpiper **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge on 22nd – *the first of the year*.

Redshank **Mar:** reported from Burwell Fen (4), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Grafham Water (5), Littleport May Farm (4), and Nene Washes (114). **Apr:** also at Cam Washes Waterbeach (8+), Ferry Meadows CP (2), Kingfishers Bridge (18), Maxey GP (5), Paxton Pits (5) and Ouse Washes (45).

Jack Snipe **Mar:** Cambridge Coe Fen on the 2nd, Waterbeach Fen on 2nd, Isleham Washes on 9th, Paxton Pits on 31st. **Apr:** Paxton Pits on 8th and 25th, Littleport May Farm on 13th, Trumpington Meadows on 18th.

Woodcock **Mar:** Widely spread by date and distribution e.g. Waterbeach Fen on 1st, Cambridge Coe Fen on 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 3rd, Barton on 7th, Ditton Park Wood 4 on 8th, Great Abington on 13th, Paxton Pits on 25th and Woodwalton Fen 3 on 28th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge on 1st, Woodwalton Fen 5 on 14th, Wicken Fen on 14th, Littleport May Farm 4 – 6 all month.

Snipe **Mar:** *Very noticeable during the hard weather, including reports from in and around Cambridge and from gardens:* on 1st at Chesterton, Milton CP 3, River Cam 2+, Ferry Meadows CP 3 and Maxey GP 12, on 2nd at Barton 6, Cherry Hinton brook, Milton CP 4, Soham 9 and Waterbeach Fen 14, and on 3rd at Buckden 14, Cambridge Coe Fen 14, Cambridge Research Park, Cottenham 20, Fen Drayton Lakes, and Fowlmere NR 7. *After the thaw reports from Beeby's Pit (5), Cambridge Research Park (12), Fowlmere NR (7), Great Fen Project (10), Kingfishers Bridge (10), Littleport May Farm (50+), Ouse Washes (c60) and Wicken Fen (20).* **Apr:** 5+ at Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (9), Littleport May Farm (50), Tetworth Hall Estate (31), Paxton Pits (5).

Terns and gulls

Little Tern Apr: Nene Washes March Farmers on the 4th – *the first of the year, and 15 days earlier than the previous record of April 19th 1952.* Ferry Meadows CP on 18th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 28th.

Black Tern Apr: Grafham Water one and Paxton Pits 4 on the 20th – *the first of the year.*

Sandwich Tern Apr: Grafham Water 3 on 3rd – *the first of the year,* Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 6th, Paxton Pits on 7th and 10th, Grafham Water 2 on 16th, Ouse Washes on 2 – 5 on 19th – 22nd.

Common Tern Apr: Ferry Meadows CP and Grafham Water on the 4th and 5th – *the first of the year,* thereafter reported from Ferry Meadows CP (42), Grafham Water (6), Kingfishers Bridge (8), Paxton Pits (21), Woodwalton Fen (3), and Fen Drayton Lakes 100 on 30th.

Arctic Tern Apr: Paxton Pits 2+ on the 16th – *the first of the year,* Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 17th, 10 on 26th, 2 on 28th, Ouse Washes 2 on 19th, 5 on 21st, 4 on 22nd, 7 on 29th, Maxey GP 5 on 20th, Ferry Meadows CP 5 on 20th, Paxton Pits on 20th and 7 on 22nd, Wicken Fen 9 on 29th.

Kittiwake Mar: Chesterton a flyover on the 2nd, Fen Drayton Lakes an adult on 16th, Grafham Water 7 flying over on 18th, Barleycraft GP an adult on 25th.

Black-headed Gull Mar: Wicken Fen c550 on the 16th, Burwell Fen 113 on 19th, Cam Washes Upware 280 on 29th, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Kingfishers Bridge and Wicken 550 on 16th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge max 213 on 7th, Ferry Meadows CP c700 over on 6th, Ely 150 in a flooded field on 11th and Fen Drayton Lakes 1500 on 15th.

Little Gull Mar: Little Paxton a flyover on the 4th, 2 adults on 24th – 31st. **Apr:** Paxton Pits 2 on 2nd, 1 – 4 from 19th to 22nd, Ely BF 3 adults on 3rd, Kingfishers Bridge on 6th, Burwell Fen 8 adults on 14th, 12 on 15th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 14th, 11 on 15th, 3 on 16th and 2 on 21st, Grafham Water 2 on 15th.

Mediterranean Gull Mar: Littleport May Farm an adult on the 15th, Ouse Washes on 4th 17th and 18th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm 2 on 7th, Paxton Pits on 7th, 2 on 15th, Witcham Gravel 2 on 14th, Ouse Washes a 2 C.Y. on 29th.

Common Gull Mar: Redmere 14 on the 15th, Fowlmere (near the reserve) c200 following the plough on 16th, Devil's Dyke 200 on 16th, Littleport May Farm 17 on 15th. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP 80 flying over on 6th, Portholme Meadow 350 on 9th, Grafham Water 6+ on 13th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Mar: Six Mile Bottom 47 in a ploughed field on the 5th, Redmere 21 on 16th, Milton 370 on 18th, Great Fen Project 6 on 25th. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP 30 on 3rd, 55 on 6th, Littleport May Farm 16 on 3rd, Godmanchester GP 135 on 18th, Fowlmere NR 12 on 29th.

Herring Gull Mar: reported from Great Fen Project, Littleport May Farm, Redmere (3) and Wicken Fen. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP 30 on 6th, Great Fen Project 9 on 14th, Hobson's Park a pair on 26th.

Yellow-legged Gull Mar: reported from Milton CP on 1st and 18th, and Sutton North Fen on 25th. **Apr:** Paxton Pits on 20th.

Caspian Gull Mar: reported from Milton CP and Ouse Washes. **Apr:** Burwell Fen a 2 C.Y. on the 15th, 16th and 19th.

Great Black-backed Gull Mar: Kingfishers Bridge 34 on the 4th, Littleport May Farm 7 on 12th, Grafham Water on 15th and 21st, Redmere 3 on 16th, Great Fen Project on 25th. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 6th, Littleport May Farm on 3rd, Grafham Water 3 on 13th, Wicken Fen on 19th.

Doves, cuckoo, owls and kingfisher

Stock Dove Mar: Barton 27 on the 2nd, Great Fen Project 5 on 16th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere 20+ all month. **Apr:** Great Fen Project 12 on 17th, Kingston 2 on 19th.

Turtle Dove Mar: Newton one probable on the 16th. **Apr:** Hardwick on 15th, Fowlmere NR on 20th, Balsham on 21st, Cambridge Research Park on 22nd.

Cuckoo Apr: Grafham Water on 11th – *the first of the year,* Paxton Pits on 15th, Wicken Fen on 16th, 2 on 17th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 18th, Paxton Pits 2 from 18th, Cottenham on 19th, Ouse Washes on 19th, Woodwalton Fen on 20th, then at c20sites in the following week.

Barn Owl Mar: reported from Barton, Great Abington, Great Fen Project (5), Isleham Washes, Littleport May Farm (8), Maxey GP, Ouse Washes (2), Redmere (4), Waterbeach Fen, Wicken Fen (2) and Woodwalton Fen (2). **Apr:** also at Burwell Fen, Kingfishers Bridge, Eldernell and Stow cum Quy.

Little Owl **Mar:** reported from Burwell, Ferry Meadows CP, Great Fen Project (2) and Littleport May Farm (4). **Apr:** also at Great Staughton, Kingfishers Bridge, West Cambridge and Wicken Fen.
Tawny Owl **Mar:** reported from Hare Park (2 calling), Littleport May Farm (2) and nine other sites. **Apr:** also at Gamlingay, Kingfishers Bridge and Woodwalton Fen (2).
Long-eared Owl **Mar:** reported from two undisclosed sites.
Short-eared Owl **Mar:** Great Fen Project 4 on the 6th, Upware 2 on 6th, Fulbourn Fen on 18th, Wicken Fen 2 on 12th, Redmere on 15th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm on 5th, Nene Washes 4 on 14th.
Swift **Apr:** Burwell 2 flying over on the 17th – *an early record*; the next 2 on 22nd at Fowlmere NR, then Wicken Fen on 23rd, Paxton Pits 6 on 24th, 4 on 27th, Marsh Lane GP 9+ on 25th, Grafham Water 25 on 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes c20 on 26th and 28th, Wisbech 2 on 27th, Ouse Washes on 29th.
Kingfisher **Mar:** reported from Cherry Hinton Brook, Fowlmere NR and Littleport May Farm (6). **Apr:** reported from Holme Fen, Milton CP, Orton BP, Redmere (2), Stow cum Quy, and Wicken Fen.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel **Mar:** counts of 5+ at Great Fen Project, Grafham Water, Cam Washes, Littleport May Farm and Redmere. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 5 on the 1st, Grafham Water 5 on 24th.
Merlin **Mar:** Whittlesford on the 3rd, Upware/Wicken Fen a male on 6th, Nene Washes Eldernell on 7th, Stuntney on 17th, Ramsey a female on 19th, Eldernell on 25th and Foxton on 25th.
Peregrine **Mar:** Cambridge on the 1st and 29th, Littleport May Farm a female on 7th and male on 16th, Nene Washes on 7th, Wicken Fen on 12th, Ouse Washes on 29th. **Apr:** Nene Washes March Farmers on 3rd, Littleport May Farm a male on 4th, Castor Mill on 6th, Ferry Meadows CP male on 7th.
Hobby **Apr:** Trumpington Meadows on the 15th, Kings Dyke NR on 16th, Littleport May Farm on 19th and 2 on 26th, Wicken Fen on 22nd and 23rd, Paxton Pits on 25th and 27th, Maxey GP 2 on 28th, Fowlmere NR on 29th.
Ring-necked Parakeet* **Mar:** Ouse Washes on 30th, Wandlebury on 25th, Great Shelford on 30th. **Apr:** Swaffham Bulbeck on 15th, Peterborough on 19th, Impington on 19th, Ouse Washes on 28th.

Corvids

Magpie **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 17 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 30 all month.
Carrion Crow **Mar:** reported from Barton (57), Kingston (41), Littleport May Farm (100) and Redmere (40+). **Apr:** also at Barton (65), Kingfishers Bridge (14), Great Fen Project (14), and Stanground (40).
Raven **Mar:** Paxton Pits on the 25th, Fowlmere NR a flyover on 26th, Littleport May Farm on 27th. **Apr:** Paxton Pits 2 on 15th, one on 16th, Nene Washes Eldernell on 14th, Littleport May Farm on 25th.

Crests, tits and larks

Firecrest **Mar:** Fowlmere (village) on the 4th, Wisbech on 25th.
Marsh Tit **Mar:** reported from Buff Wood, Chippenham Fen, Ditton Park Wood, Southey Wood (2 pairs) and four other sites. **Apr:** reports Bluebell Wood and Great Fen Project.
Bearded Tit **Apr:** reported from Ouse Fen and Nene Washes (2).
Skylark **Mar:** Barton 100 on the 2nd, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month. **Apr:** Great Fen Project 66 on 14th, 52 on 15th, 28 on 20th (*local site counts, not the whole project area*).

Hirundines and warblers

Sand Martin **Mar:** Ouse Washes 5 on the 17th – *the first of the year*, then Fen Drayton Lakes on 18th, Nene Washes 3 on 25th, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 26th, 12+ on 28th, Fowlmere NR 7 on 26th. **Apr:** Fen Drayton Lakes 200+ on 2nd, Paxton Pits c40 on 8th.
Swallow **Mar:** Wicken Fen on the 31st – *the first of the year*. **Apr:** early arrivals Grafham Water on 2nd, Ferry Meadows and 5 other sites on 4th; thereafter increasingly reported including Kingfishers Bridge 34 on 12th, Burwell Fen c200 on 27th, Ouse Washes c500 on 29th.
House Martin **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP on the 5th – *the first of the year*, Ferry Meadows CP 2 – 3 on 12th, Roswell Pits 10 on 12th; thereafter a slow arrival including Littleport May Farm 40+ from 25th – 30th, Fen Drayton Lakes 50 on 28th, Godmanchester GP c70 on 29th.

Cetti's Warbler **Mar:** reported from Cambridge Research Park, Ferry Meadows CP, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR (2), Godmanchester GP, Littleport May Farm (4), Paxton Pits, Redmere (2), Sutton, and Woodwalton Fen (3). **Apr:** also at Burwell Fen (2), Kingfishers Bridge (3), Marsh Lane GP (3), Maxey Cut (2), Nene Washes (3), Orton BP (3) Wicken Fen (6+) and Woodston Ponds.

Chiffchaff **Mar:** Fowlmere and Sutton on the 10th, Ferry Meadows CP and Godmanchester GP on 12th, Dry Drayton on 14th, Maxey GP on 16th, Wicken Fen on 16th, thereafter widespread. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 11 on 21st, Milton CP 16 on 16th, Ditton Park Wood 13 on 26th.

Willow Warbler **Apr:** Wicken Fen on the 6th – *the first of the year*, Fowlmere NR and Paxton Pits (3) on 7th, Woodston Ponds on 9th.

Blackcap **Mar:** in the first half of the month at Cambridge (Lovell Rd), Cottenham, Dry Drayton, Haslingfield (male), Soham (female), Orwell (2 males). **Apr:** Grafham Water 5 on 13th, Kingfishers Bridge 14 on 21st.

Garden Warbler **Apr:** Paxton Pits on the 19th – *the first of the year*, Maxey GP on 20th, Ferry Meadows CP on 21st, Littleport May Farm 2 on 22nd, Wicken Fen 2 on 26th.

Lesser Whitethroat **Apr:** Castor Hanglands NR, Ferry Meadows CP and Fowlmere NR 3 all on the 14th – *the first of the year*, then Upware and Paxton Pits on 15th, followed by a general arrival e.g. Witchford Long Drove 9 singing on 22nd.

Whitethroat **Apr:** Fen Drayton Lakes on the 11th – *the first of the year*, Trumpington Meadows on 15th, then Cam Washes (3+), Fen Drayton Lakes, Ferry Meadows CP and Paxton Pits on 16th indicating a more widespread arrival.

Grasshopper Warbler **Apr:** Wicken Fen on 8th – *the first of the year*, 2 on 17th, Paxton Pits on 18th, Woodwalton Fen on 19th, Burwell Fen on 20th, Swaffham Bulbeck on 26th, Fowlmere NR on 28th.

Sedge Warbler **Apr:** Fowlmere NR, Nene Washes (3) and Paxton Pits on the 7th – *the first of the year*, Fen Drayton Lakes on 8th, Wicken Fen 3 on 8th, Ferry Meadows CP and Woodston Ponds on 9th; thereafter reported from most wetland sites.

Reed Warbler **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP and Woodston Ponds on the 9th – *the first of the year*, Fen Drayton Lakes on 16th, Fowlmere NR 3 on 17th, Paxton Pits on 19th, Woodwalton Fen on 19th, then more numerous at the usual wetland sites.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch **Mar:** reported from Wimpole Park, Southey Wood and ten other sites. **Apr:** reported from eight additional sites but never exceeding 4 in number.

Starling **Mar:** Kingfishers Bridge 474 on 4th, Wicken Fen c300 on 16th, Devils Dyke 880 on 21st, and elsewhere several counts of 200+.

Ring Ouzel **Mar:** Earith a male and Woodwalton Fen both on the 25th – *the first of the year*. **Apr:** Conington Airfield on 2nd, Burwell Fen on 6th, Witcham Gravel on 9th, Steeple Morden a male on 10th, Coveney Byall Fen 3 on 12th, Ferry Meadows CP 4 on 14th, Nene Washes Eldernell on 14th, Paxton Pits on 16th and 21st.

Fieldfare **Mar:** Littleport May Farm max 1000 on 10th, Cam Washes Waterbeach 300 on 14th, Fen Drayton Lakes 190 on 16th, Maxey GP 300 on 21st, Woodwalton Fen 300 on 25th, Fowlmere 370 on 28th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 104 on 7th but none by 12th, Redmere 200 on 1st, 14 on 5th, Ferry Meadows CP 9 on 15th, Cam Washes 4 on 14th, Bradley Fen on 21st – *the latest reported*.

Song Thrush **Mar:** Buckden 40+ on the 3rd.

Redwing **Mar:** Fowlmere NR 30+ on the 3rd, Cam Washes Waterbeach c200 on 14th, Great Shelford 30+ on 14th, c30 flying NE on 26th, Fen Drayton Lakes 45 on 16th, Great Fen Project 60 on 25th, Ferry Meadows CP 68 flying NE on 25th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 135 on 1st, Cam Washes Upware 13 on 6th, Helpston on 8th, Orton Brimbles on 12th, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 17th.

Mistle Thrush **Mar:** reported from Great Shelford, Haddenham, Hemingford Grey, Littleport May Farm (8), Melbourn, Redmere (4) and Southey Wood (4). **Apr:** reported from Barton, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (6 – 8), Redmere (2 – 4) and Wicken Fen.

Nightingale **Apr:** Wicken Fen on the 13th – *the first of the year*, Marsh Lane GP 2 on 18th and 20th then up to 8 on 23rd, Paxton Pits 2 on 19th.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart **Mar:** Waterbeach a female on the 14th, Earith on 25th. **Apr:** Grafham Water on 6th, Godmanchester Wood Green on 8th, Pondersbridge on 8th, Littleport May Farm a male on 23rd.

Redstart **Apr:** Fowlmere NR and Wicken Fen (a male) on the 14th – *the first of the year*, Ferry Meadows CP a male on 20th.

Whinchat **Apr:** Coveney Byall Fen on the 28th – *first of the year*, Cam Washes on 29th.

Stonechat **Mar:** reported from Cambourne (2 pairs), Great Fen Project (pair), Littleport May Farm, Redmere and Wicken Fen (pair). **Apr:** again at Littleport May Farm, Redmere and Wicken Fen.

Wheatear **Mar:** Maxey GP on the 12th – *the first of the year*, Godmanchester NR on 13th. **Apr:** Littleport May Farm on 1st, 3 on 2nd, Cam Washes on 5th, Witcham Gravel on 6th, then none until Sutton North Fen on 15th, and *the main movement from the 17th – 28th with reports from* Reach, Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Paxton Pits, Ouse Washes (3), Nene Washes, Ferry Meadows CP (3), Wicken Fen, Burwell Fen (10), Pymoor (6), Maxey GP (2) and Coveney Byall Fen (6).

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow **Mar & Apr:** Littleport May Farm 50, Redmere 50+ throughout.

Tree Sparrow **Apr:** Ouse Washes 2 on 28th, Littleport May Farm 30+ and Redmere 50+ all month.

Yellow Wagtail **Apr:** Grafham Water on the 4th – *the first of the year*, 3 on 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on 8th and 10th, Burwell Fen 11 over on 11th, Upware 10 on 12th, Nene Washes Eldernell 40+ on 21st.

Grey Wagtail **Mar:** reported from Buckden, Cambridge, Cherry Hinton Brook and Peterborough (2). **Apr:** reported from Anglesey Abbey, Bradley Fen, Cam Washes Upware and Lode Mill.

Pied Wagtail **Mar & Apr:** Littleport May Farm 50 and Redmere 20+ throughout.

White Wagtail **Mar:** Grafham Water on the 23rd. **Apr:** Ferry Meadows CP 3 on 6th, one on 16th and 17th, Grafham Water on 17th.

Meadow Pipit **Mar:** Great Fen Project 24 on the 25th, Ferry Meadows CP Vis Mig 12 on 25th, Littleport May Farm 100 all month. **Apr:** Great Fen Project 55 on 14th and 36 on 15th.

Rock Pipit **Mar:** Paxton Pits flying over on the 25th and one on 31st, Grafham Water 2 on 29th.

Water Pipit **Mar:** Buckden on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 2 – 4 all month, maximum 11+ on 4th. **Apr:** Paxton Pits 2 on 13th, Nene Washes Eldernell on 15th.

Finches and buntings

Brambling **Mar:** reported from Barton Lark Rise Farm (4), Folksworth, Grafham Water (10), Littleport May Farm (17) and Southey Wood. **Apr:** reports from 14th – Bait's Bite Lock, Fowlmere NR, Little Shelford and Castor Hanglands NR, and then Paxton Pits 2 on 20th.

Greenfinch **Mar & Apr:** Littleport May Farm 50 all month.

Goldfinch **Mar:** Maxey GP 52 on the 3rd, Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Apr: Kingfishers Bridge 53 on 1st, Hinxton 60+ on 5th, Great Fen Project 34 on 20th.

Siskin **Mar:** reported from Barton, Ferry Meadows CP, Grafham Water (4), Holme Fen (50+), Milton CP (20+), Soham (2), Southey Wood (20+) and Wicken Fen. **Apr:** also at Fen Drayton Lakes, Hemingford Grey (7) and Ouse Washes (12).

Linnet **Mar:** Devil's Dyke 120 on 24th, Great Fen Project 291 on 25th. **Apr:** Kingfishers Bridge 92 on 1st, Ferry Meadows CP 70 on 6th, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Redmere 200 all month.

Lesser Redpoll **Mar:** reported from Great Fen Project (11), Great Shelford (7), Wicken Fen (5), Southey Wood, Upware/Wicken Fen an exceptional 73 on 6th and Cambridge (Trumpington Road) 38 on 24th. **Apr:** reported from Castor Hanglands (6), Ferry Meadows CP (2) and Wicken Fen (20+).

Common (Mealy) Redpoll **Mar:** Upware/Wicken Fen on the 6th.

Hawfinch **Mar:** Wimpole Park at least three reported all month. **Apr:** St. Ives one on a garden feeder on 3rd, Castor Hanglands NR 2 on 14th.

Yellowhammer **Mar:** Comberton 30 on the 4th, Devil's Dyke 48 on 16th, Grafham Water 7 on 20th, Littleport May Farm maximum 11 on 27th. **Apr:** Burwell Fen 24 on 2nd.

Corn Bunting Mar: Shepreth L-Moor 40 on the 1st, Aldreth 20+ on 22nd, Littleport May Farm max 127 on 27th, Devil's Dyke 38 on 30th. **Apr:** Redmere 30 on 1st, Littleport May Farm 84 on 2nd.
Reed Bunting **Apr:** Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Redmere 50 all month.
Hybrids **Apr:** Cam Washes and Burwell Fen an Australian Shelduck type hybrid on 21st – 22nd.



Fieldfare at Rampton: photo by Brendan Doe.

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The E-bulletin list: new birds in March were Garganey, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Shag, Black-necked Grebe, Osprey, Avocet, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Little Gull, Sand Martin, Swallow, Ring Ouzel, White Stork, Long-eared Owl, Turtle Dove and Wheatear. New birds in April were: Purple Heron, Slavonian Grebe, Black-winged Stilt, Whimbrel, Little Tern, Black Tern, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Bonaparte's Gull, Cuckoo, Swift, Hobby, House Martin, Willow Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Nightingale, Redstart, Whinchat, and Yellow Wagtail. The 2018 list is now **181** species.

More from the editor

I have generally resisted the temptation to sound off about 'the state of birding', but two subjects covered in this edition give me the excuse to resist no longer.

The advent of night time sound recording seems to open a route to new understandings of bird movements – who would have thought that Common Scoters would be moving unseen over our towns and cities? There have of course been indications of such movements from the unexpected remains of wader species found below urban Peregrine nests, but the opportunity for 'citizen scientists' to record and document these movements is a new and exciting one.

Far less positive is the continuing persecution of raptors in areas of driven grouse shooting. There is a note below on Hen Harriers and a contribution from Paul Bray of Birders Against Wildlife Crime. The May issue of *British Birds* also carries a major article on the persecution of Peregrines and Goshawks on Grouse moors in the Peak District. I suspect that I am not alone in feeling that 'this has got to stop'. My personal view is that the RSPB should be doing a great deal more than it is. Yes we do acknowledge the skill and dedication of its investigations teams, but my belief is that at *corporate* level the RSPB is not giving raptor persecution the priority and resources it deserves. The RSPB is arguing for a licencing scheme, but appears to me (an ordinary RSPB a member), to have done nothing to mobilise its one million members to lobby ministers and MPs on this. Before I am accused of shouting from the side lines, I have indeed written to Martin Harper (Conservation Director) on this subject, but received only an anodyne response from 'Supporter Services'. So I say, come on RSPB Council, the P is for Protection – make it your Priority too. *Chris Brown*

Night time migration

Simon Gillings has been carrying out night time recordings over Chesterton (Cambridge). For anyone thinking of starting nocturnal audio recording he has started a website with Nick Moran covering some of the basics. It's still in development but hopefully will start to answer some of the questions people have. Take a look at <https://nocmig.wordpress.com/>

As an example his overnight list for 13th/14th March 2018 was Common Scoter (3 groups), Ring Ouzel (3), Redwing, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Wigeon, Teal, Shelduck, Golden Plover, Curlew and Oystercatcher.

On the same night, Jon Heath also in Cambridge logged Common Scoter (4 groups), Avocet (2+), Redshank (1+), Water Rail, Golden Plover (1), Moorhen (5), Redwing (49), Song Thrush (13) and Fieldfare (7).

James Hanlon has also begun recordings and writes: "Spurred on by Jon's and Simon's success in Chesterton, I've been carrying out nightly sound recording from my home in Cambourne throughout April. I missed only 4 nights and managed 150+ hours of recording, which involved about 20 hours of processing work. Though I didn't get anything as rare as stone curlew, there was plenty passing over and I've learnt much about bird calls of species I previously thought I'd known well. The following numbers relate to number of records rather than number of calls or individuals: Common Scoter 2 (15th & 23rd), Wigeon 2, Teal 2+, Water Rail 1, Oystercatcher 3, Golden plover 2, Redshank 2, Dunlin 2, Ringed Plover 1, Tawny Owl 2, Barn Owl 1, Redwing 2.

My set up was inexpensive, a £75 recorder plus £25 accessories, and it can be done for less than that. It's great for building your garden list but I realise many people wouldn't count anything they

didn't hear in real time! I have no such qualms and am pleased to report no less than 7 new birds here, taking me to 98 species. Not bad for my first 3 years living here!

Hen Harriers

We are very fortunate to have winter Hen Harriers in the county with traditional roosting sites. The numbers vary from year to year and are rarely high but nevertheless there are usually at least one or two grey males which are splendid birds. Members will be aware of the conflict between these birds and the grouse shooting fraternity. The April issue of *British Birds* reports the loss of contact with a satellite-tagged young bird. Data shows the loss of tag activity on February 5th over a driven grouse moor. Conservationists are also challenging the plan to remove eggs from nests to raise young artificially see <http://bit.ly/2Fv2of3>. Both Mark Avery and the RSPB are challenging this Defra decision. *PB*

Birders Against Wildlife Crime

Hopefully you will have come across BAWC over the past few years and will have heard about our wildlife crime conferences (Eyes In The Field) in 2015 and 2016 and the Hen Harrier Days (2013 to date). Since we started our grass roots movement, we recognised that helping folk who go into the countryside to Recognise, Record and Report potential wildlife crime was a key element in stepping up the battle against those who commit such crime. We produced a 3Rs leaflet to help nature lovers / walkers / birders do just that. We are reaching out to bird clubs to raise awareness. By joining in and spreading the word you would be helping in the fight against wildlife crime. More information can be found on our work at birdersagainst.org/ and [facebook.com/BAWCUK/](https://www.facebook.com/BAWCUK/)
Paul Bray

The 300 club

April's Bonaparte's Gull enabled two of the County's stalwarts to pass the magic 300 species seen in Cambridgeshire – Bruce Martin and Richard Patient. According to Mark Hawkes – the List Master, the County species total is 343.

Paul Mason

The editors were saddened to learn of the death of Paul Mason. He may not have been known to all the current members but he was a very important advocate for Golden Orioles in the 1980s and 90s. As a result of his urging I visited the site now known as Cambridge Research Park and, somewhat to my surprise found a pair nesting in the poplars. For a few years Golden Orioles seemed to be colonising almost every poplar wood in Cambridgeshire, spreading out from their hotspot at Lakenheath Fen. But then, as if to spite Paul's efforts, they declined. The reason remains a little puzzling but if you want to know more about Golden Orioles then read the Poyser monograph that Paul wrote with Jake Alsop. Paul was also the man behind the Haddenham Conservation Society, an example of what a group of caring people can do within a village. He was a regular contributor to *Cambirds* and as he became less mobile and his health declined he would post his thoughts on many of the more controversial topics. Although I never knew him well I found him to be a thoroughly kind man devoted to his causes. *PB*

Outdoor Meetings

8th June: Chippenham Fen (booking will be essential) A chance to enjoy a permit-only national Nature reserve with the site manager. Places limited so book soon. Contact/booking via Louise Bacon, cbcrecorder@gmail.com

Due to significant periods of absence this summer, the team of Recorder & Chairman who have organised previous field trips do not have time to do so this summer, so unfortunately, unless someone steps in at very short notice we will not have July or August trips. A volunteer to organise these for next summer is needed.

New Member: We welcome Sean Irving of Fulbourn.

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.

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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 5th of the following month**. There is no need to duplicate records across both channels.

GOOD BIRDING!