

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 372



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

RECENT REPORTS JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2004

These are unchecked reports rather than confirmed records, and comments are made by Bruce Martin (Grebes to Wildfowl), Mark Hawkes (Raptors to Coot), Jonathan Taylor (Waders), Steve Cooper (Skuas to Near Passerines and Hybrids and Exotica), Stuart Elsom (Larks to Thrushes), Mike Foley (Warblers to Tits) and David Wege (Wood Nuthatch to Buntings). If you have valid reasons to dispute comments (e.g. further records) please forward these to the relevant county recorder (addresses on back page).

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

In a relatively quiet period, 140 species were recorded, compared to 136 last year. In contrast to Jan–Feb 2003, there were no records of Mealy Redpoll or Common Crossbill species this year. 2002–2003 seems to have been a particularly good finch winter. At the very end of the period, a Northern Fulmar appeared at Grafham Water. Around that time records came from several inland counties, and unusually high numbers of dead Fulmars were washed up on the coasts of Norfolk, Northern France and Belgium.

BULLETIN by EMAIL

Would you like to receive your bulletin by email? If so please send your email address to the bulletin editor, Vicki Harley, (vicki.harley@care4free.net). Initially, we will continue sending the bulletin to all members the traditional way, and assess if electronic delivery is successful.



Numbers in brackets indicate January and February maximums.

DIVERS TO HERONS

Red-throated Diver A single bird was present at Ferry Meadows CP on Jan 2nd.

Black-throated Diver A bird flew north along the river at Paxton Pits on Feb 15th.

Little Grebe Birds were recorded at 13 sites with double figure counts at, Mepal GP (12), Ouse Washes (16) and Shropshire's Reservoir (15).

Great Crested Grebe At Fen Drayton GP (37, 16), Grafham Water (463, 450), the Ouse Washes (11, 23) and Paxton Pits (31, 13). Single figures were noted at 11 other sites.

Red-necked Grebe One bird was seen at Paxton Pits on Jan 18th with 2 further possible sightings up to Feb 7th.

Northern Fulmar A bird was seen for an hour at Grafham Water during the afternoon of Feb 29th. This was part of a pattern of inland birds also reported in 4 other counties whilst a wreck of birds was noted along the coast.

Great Cormorant At Fen Drayton GP (82, 130), Grafham Water (113, 193), Kingfishers Bridge (15, 15), Ouse Washes (72, 25), Paxton Pits (288, 282), Shropshire's Reservoir (7, 13) and Wicken Fen (80, 68). The above figures include some roost counts. Birds were also reported from 8 other sites.

European Shag The bird seen last month on the River Nene by the Dog in a Doublet was still present into the New Year but unfortunately was found dead on Jan 5th. Three juvenile birds took up temporary residence on the River Great Ouse at Ely from Jan 2nd to 11th. They were often to be seen roosting under the over-hanging walkway in front of the Babylon Gallery. One of the birds had a ring which showed that it had been ringed as a chick on the Isle of May, Firth of Forth on June 3rd 2003.

Great Bittern Fen Drayton GP and Wicken Fen had 2 birds each during the period and singles were reported from 7 other sites.

Little Egret From mid-January to early February, up to 3 birds roamed the Newborough/Peakirk/Werrington area of Peterborough and 2 birds were noted at Grafham Water on Feb 24th. Single birds were noted at 8 other sites.

Grey Heron At Fen Drayton GP (12, 10) and the Ouse Washes (11, 7). Also reported from 11 other areas.

White Stork Sadly the bird that was first seen at Long Drove Cottenham in September 2002 and has given pleasure to many people during its travels around the county and beyond was found dead in a ditch at Chittering on January 3rd where it could possibly have been lying for over a week. The injury it sustained to its leg may have been a contributory factor to its death.

WILDFOWL

Mute Swan At Block Fen (28, 74), Fen Drayton GP (37, 16), Ouse Washes (431, 116) and Paxton Pits (113, 71). Other notable flocks were at Northey (64), Over Fen (60), Prior's Fen (58) and Smithey Fen (60). Smaller numbers were noted at 11 other sites.

Tundra Swan A maximum of 1208 birds were counted on the Cambs section of the Ouse Washes during the period, though the total Ouse Washes figure was 6330. The Nene Washes maximum was 739. The largest feeding flock noted away from the Washes area was 720 at Shippea Hill.

Whooper Swan At the Ouse Washes 553 was the maximum count with 3624 for the total Ouse Washes. The Nene Washes maximum was 98. Included in the smaller numbers from 5 other sites was a family party of 2 adults and 1 young at Swaffham Prior Fen that had been ringed in Iceland. They were present from early January until early February. During that time the male bird died and, at first, the remaining adult and young were reluctant to leave the area.

Bean Goose Up to 2 birds of the tundra race were at the Ouse Washes from January 7th to 31st. Nene Washes on Jan 4th and 1 on Feb 12th, 1 at Prior's Fen on Jan 1st and 11th and 2 at Paxton Pits on Jan 18th.

Greater White-fronted Goose The flock of 13 birds present at the Ouse Washes to the end of the year had increased to 15 by Jan 7th and remained in the area until Jan 26th.

Greylag Goose At Brownhills Staunth (134, 32), Kingfisher's Bridge (355, 115), the Ouse Washes (203, 48), Paxton Pits (224, 379) and Wicken Fen (250, 198). The only other 3 figure count was 150 at Prior's Fen on Feb 10th.

Canada Goose At Kingfisher's Bridge (186, 95). Three figure counts were at the Cam Washes (500+), the riverside meadows at Ely (140) and the Ouse Washes (429).

Barnacle Goose One bird was at Paxton Pits throughout the period. And up to 2 birds at the Ouse Washes from Jan 1st to the 5th.

Egyptian Goose A single bird was recorded at the Ouse Washes on Jan 1st.

Common Shelduck Reported from 12 sites, most in single figures but an impressive 119 were counted at the Nene Washes on Feb 12th. The only sites with double figures were the Cam Washes (17) and the Ouse Washes (13).

Mandarin A bird flew over the observer's house at Elton near Peterborough on Jan 2nd. A pair present at Grafham Water in January was joined by another male in February. Another pair was seen in the Jesus Green area during mid February and 2 birds flew over Monks Wood on Feb 26th.

Eurasian Wigeon At the Cam Washes (252, 447), Fen Drayton GP (1658, 772), Grafham Water (146, 57), Kingfisher's Bridge (1360, 1020), Ouse Washes (25 768, 11 478), Nene Washes (8150, 10

330), Paxton Pits (3850, 980), Shropshire's Reservoir (150, 232) and Wicken Fen (1150, 1210). Other 3 figure counts were 876 at Needingworth GP and 300+ at Hinchingsbrooke CP.

Gadwall At Fen Drayton GP (165, 85), Grafham Water (31, 75), Kingfisher's Bridge (23, 21), Ouse Washes (277, 83), Paxton Pits (339, 211) and Wicken Fen (45, 24). Notable counts were recorded at Needingworth GP (80) and Mepal GP (63). Five other sites had double figures below fifty.

Eurasian Teal At the Cam Washes Upware (100, 218), Fen Drayton GP (753, 181), Grafham Water (570, 322), Kingfisher's Bridge (362, 182), Long Drove Cottenham (40, 113), Nene Washes (2730, 4330), Ouse Washes (2375, 851), Paxton Pits (174, 9) and Wicken Fen (499, 152). Double figures were also noted at 5 other sites.

Mallard At Fen Drayton GP (278, 125), Grafham Water (353, 206), Kingfisher's Bridge (225, 95), Ouse Washes (1729, 1527) and Wicken Fen (550, 221). Double figures noted at 11 other sites.

Northern Pintail At Fen Drayton GP (160, 50), the Nene Washes (1799, 2730) and Ouse Washes (1522, 297). Small numbers noted at 13 other sites.

Garganey A very early (or over-wintering?) male was present at Woodwalton Fen from February 12th to at least the 26th.

Northern Shoveler At Fen Drayton GP (115, 75), Grafham Water (63, 61), Kingfisher's Bridge (32, 13), Ouse Washes (158, 16), Paxton Pits (29, 30), and Wicken Fen (29, 44). Small numbers were noted at 7 other sites.

Red-crested Pochard A female at Paxton Pits from the turn of the year was still present during January where a male was also seen on the 27th. A pair was noted at Needingworth GP on Jan 12th to the 17th and 2 birds were at the Ouse Washes on Jan 26th.

Common Pochard At Fen Drayton GP (230, 141), Grafham Water (443, 8), Ouse Washes (1080, 1073) and Paxton Pits (446, 194). Small numbers were also noted at 10 other sites.

Tufted Duck At Fen Drayton GP (413, 258), Grafham Water (305, 82), Ouse Washes (506, 821) and Paxton Pits (653, 458). Double figures were also noted at 10 other sites.

Greater Scaup It has been a good 2 months in the county for this species. The 3 birds at Grafham Water from the turn of the year were joined by a fourth and were present throughout the period. A female was at Godmanchester GP for the same period. Another female was at Kingfisher's Bridge from Jan 24th to Feb 9th. A female was at the Sixteen Foot Drain from Feb 10th to the 19th.

Common Goldeneye At Fen Drayton GP (78, 95), Grafham Water (58, 26) and Paxton Pits (103, 145). Double figures were also noted at the Ouse Washes (10 in Feb) and Buckden GP (25+ in Feb). Single figures were noted at 7 other sites.

Smew Once again Fen Drayton GP attracted the largest number of this species. The highest count was 19 on Jan 18th, which included 4 males. On

Jan 3rd, 17 birds were seen and only included one male, so the total number during the period would have been at least 20 different birds. Paxton Pits achieved double figures with 10 in both months. Other site maximums were Godmanchester GP (2), Maxey Pits (1), Needingworth GP (1), Orton BP (2), Ouse Washes (4), Prior's Fen GP (1) and River Lane GP, Brampton (1).

Goosander Double figure counts were recorded at Maxey GP (18, 31) and Paxton Pits (14, 15). Other counts were at Grafham Water (9, 7) and single birds at Carr Dyke Werrington, Fen Drayton GP and the Ouse Washes.

Ruddy Duck The maximum of 12 at Grafham Water was the only site with double figures. Single figures were noted at 5 sites.

RAPTORS

Red Kite Just 2 records, both typically from the west of the county. A single over the A1 near Sawtry on Feb 21st, and several on the Northants border at Morborne Hill on Feb 23rd.

Marsh Harrier Recorded at 2 typical sites, 3 were at Eldernell on Jan 1st, with singles there on 2nd, and again on Feb 12th and 21st. Also seen at Wicken Fen on Jan 18th and Feb 14th.

Hen Harrier Somewhat surprisingly, there were no reports from the Nene Washes (a further indicator of this upland species' continued decline?). The Wicken Fen roost peaked at 5 in January and 4 in February, with birds from this roost being noted at Cam Washes (Upware) on Jan 12th, Swaffham Prior Fen on 21st and 22nd, Dimmock's Cote Farm on 26th, Kingfisher's Bridge on 29th and Lode on Feb 5th. Also a ringtail was at Chippenham Fen on Jan 7–8th and a male at Over Fen on Feb 25th.

Sparrowhawk Recorded at 38 sites, all involving 1–3 birds. One at Toft on Feb 15th was seen to snatch a House Sparrow (possibly helping to ensure this species its current name for sometime to come, unless the BOU decide to play "Devil's Advocate" and re-name it Passerinehawk!).

Buzzard Recorded at 33 sites, generally involving 1–2 birds, but 3 were recorded from 3 sites, and 4 from a single site.

Kestrel Recorded from 19 sites, generally involving 1–3 birds, although up to 10 were noted along the Ouse Washes in early January. This species is still under reported, but hopefully this is just a reflection of its widespread and common nature. All confirmed breeding records welcome.

Merlin Recorded in January at Nene Washes on 1st, Goosetree on 2nd, Ouse Washes on 2nd and 17th, Reach on 4th, Chrishall Grange and Farcet Fen on 6th, Whittlesey on 9th, Ely on 10th, Swaffham Prior Fen on 21st, Block Fen on 23rd, Grafham Water on 24th and Kingfishers Bridge on 25th. In Feb at Grafham Water on 5th, Cambridge on 9th, Priors Fen on 10th, Farcet Fen on 12th and Stretham on 12th and 24th, Isleham on 17th, Soham on 19th, Wicken Fen on 19th and 23rd,

Nene Washes on 21st, Littleport on 29th and almost daily at the end of the month at Witcham.

Peregrine Regular on the Nene Washes (2, 2) and Ouse Washes (2, -). Elsewhere, singles in Jan at Ferry Meadows on 2nd, Wicken Fen on 9th, Grafham Water on 17th, Flag Fen on 22nd and Kingfisher's Bridge on 26th, and in Feb 2 at Priors Fen on 2nd, and singles at Wicken Fen on 4th and 23rd, Rampton and Soham on 17th.

GAMEBIRDS TO COOT

Red-legged Partridge Recorded from just 12 sites, with coveys ranging from 5–35 birds.

Grey Partridge Recorded from 15 sites, with numbers ranging 1–24 birds.

Pheasant Reported from 8 sites, with 2–41 birds.

Water Rail Recorded at 11 sites, with generally 1–3 birds. Peak counts included 10 at Fen Drayton in Jan, 17 at Kingfisher's Bridge in Jan, Wicken Fen (5, 10), and 6 at Woodwalton Fen in Feb.

Moorhen Recorded at 16 sites, with peak counts including; Fen Drayton GP (14, 20), Grafham Water (30, 40), Landbeach (5, 26), Ouse Washes (70, 54) and Paxton Pits (18, 12).

Coot Recorded at 16 sites, with peak counts including; Bassingbourn (80, 50), Fen Drayton GP (819, 271), Grafham Water (94, 117), Mepal/Block Fen (305, -), Ouse Washes (624, 821) and Paxton Pits (1050, 377). Also, one at Grafham Water was rescued from the water, entangled in discarded fishing line, and hooked through its eye-brow, it was later released, apparently none the worse. However, this serves as a reminder as to the possible dangers of discarded fishing tackle.

WADERS

Eurasian Oystercatcher Three at Fen Drayton GP on Jan 22nd were early, singles at 4 sites in February.

Ringed Plover First at Paxton Pits with 8 on Feb 7th with 2 soon taking up territorial activities, elsewhere 1–3 at Grafham Water, Ouse Washes, Nene Washes and Priors Fen GP.

European Golden Plover Highest counts: Fenstanton and Swaffham Prior Fen (3500), Holt Fen (2900), Padney Fen (2000), Barleycroft GP 1450, Over Fen, Barton, Fen Drayton GP, Fowlmere (over-head), Kingfisher's Bridge, Toft all (1000), Caxton, Comberton, Hampton (Peterborough) and Ouse Washes (600).

Lapwing Quite low numbers: Ouse Washes (4375), Chatteris/Sutton Gault (3000), Paxton Pits GP (2500), Barleycroft GP (2390), Fen Drayton GP (2000), Stretham (1400), using winter wheat. Territorial birds were noted at Kingfisher's Bridge and Nene Washes from end of February.

Dunlin Most birds in the Ouse valley. Highest at Ouse Washes 80+ on Feb 29th, also 70 on flooded field at Fen Drayton GP, Barleycroft GP 39, up to 60 at Nene Washes at end of February, 1–7 at Grafham Water

Ruff Three hundred and five at Nene Washes on Feb 12th was a winter period record for the site, highest Ouse Washes count was 184 on Jan 5th and Barleycroft GP 81 on Feb 6th elsewhere 7 at Fen Drayton GP, 4 at Wicken Fen 2 at Grafham Water and single on Cam Washes.

Jack Snipe Scarce compared to recent winters. Up to 3 resident at Kneesworth, singles at Kings Dyke BP and Nene Washes.

Snipe Widely reported in small numbers. Highest from Paxton Pits (22), Kingfisher's Bridge (20), Kneesworth (19), Barleycroft GP (15), Orton BP (14), Ouse Washes (11), Long Drove, Cottenham (7) and Grafham Water (7).

Woodcock Up to 2 at Wicken Fen and Monks Wood and singles at 11 sites.

Black-tailed Godwit At Nene Washes 145 on Jan 26th rising to 226 on Feb 12th, at Ouse Washes up to 29 through Jan–Feb and 550 north at Chain Corner on Feb 29th, also 7 at Kingfisher's Bridge on Jan 29th.

Bar-tailed Godwit Twelve at Grafham Water on Jan 9th seen to fly off west was a rare winter sighting.

Eurasian Curlew Four at Ouse Washes on Jan 5th with singles there on a further 3 dates and Nene Washes on Feb 13th.

Spotted Redshank A bird in first-winter plumage at Ouse Washes on Jan 2nd.

Redshank Highest count from Nene Washes with 288 on Feb 12th, Ouse Washes 105 on Jan 5th, Barleycroft GP up to 100, Over Fen 46.

SKUAS TO TERNS

Mediterranean Gull In January noted at Ferry Meadows on 4th, Grafham Water on 4th, 10th and 17th, Ouse Washes 2 on 16th and a single on 25th, Shropshire's reservoir on 26th and a French/Belgian colour ringed adult at Godmanchester GP on 30th. In February noted on the Ouse Washes on 11th, Grafham Water on 15th, 26th and 27th, Long Drove Cottenham on 18th–19th, Milton Tip on 20th and Dogsthorpe Star pit on 22nd.

Little Gull Five adults and a 2cy roosted on Grafham Water on Jan 4th; birds noted heading inland from the Norfolk coast on the same day.

Black-headed Gull Counts undertaken for the BTO winter gull roost survey totalled 14470 at Grafham Water and 7480 on the Ouse Washes on Jan 16th. Godmanchester Tip attracted 2000 birds Jan 30th and 2400 were noted at Haddenham on Feb 29th. The leucistic individual was still present at Grafham Water/ Godmanchester GP during the period.

Common Gull A conservative estimate of 10000+ birds roosted on the Ouse Washes between Welches Dam and the Railway Bridge only on Jan 25th and the roost at Grafham Water held 5000+ birds on Jan 4th. Such numbers illustrate well just how common this gull really is at this time of year, they dilute from roost sites into predominately

arable land where numbers reported rarely reach into three figure's.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Record numbers were reported during the period, 800+ roosted on the Ouse Washes (Welches Dam–Railway Bridge only) on Jan 4th rising to 1000+ birds by the end of the month.

Herring Gull A massive roost of 7000+ formed on the Ouse Washes on Jan 2nd. Large numbers (2500+) also roosted at Grafham Water during January, the race *argentatus* accounted for 75% of birds at both roosts.

Western Yellow-legged Gull Reported from 14 sites, with 6–7 regularly noted in the Ouse Washes roost and up to 5 in the Grafham roost. A county total of possibly over 30 individuals reported during the period.

Caspian Gull In January reported from Dogsthorpe Star Pit, Fen Drayton GP, Grafham Water, Grunty Fen Tip, Landbeach GP, Milton Tip and the Ouse Washes possibly involving a total of 10+ individuals. In February only reported from Grafham Water an adult on the 8th.

Iceland Gull A 2cy first noted at Prior's Fen on Jan 31st was regularly noted at Dogsthorpe Star Pit throughout February. During February 2cy birds were also noted at Godmanchester GP on 12th roosting on Grafham Water the same day and at Milton on 20th–21st. This species has been recorded annually in the county during the past decade; previously it was a very rare bird!

Glaucous Gull A good period for this species with 2cy birds noted at Eye Tip / Prior's Fen from Jan 2nd–31st with possibly the same noted on Feb 20th? Another roosted on Grafham Water on Feb 7th and a well-watched bird at Long Drove Cottenham on Feb 18–27th at least.

Greater Black-backed Gull Numbers roosting at Grafham Water increased from 300+ on Jan 4th to a county record of 1050+ on Jan 17th. Elsewhere 400+ roosted on the Ouse Washes on Jan 2nd and 250 noted at Godmanchester Tip on Jan 24th.

NEAR PASSERINES

Feral Pigeon Reported from 3 sites in Cambridge – Drummer Street (60), Elizabeth Bridge (80) and at the Railway Station (120), and 140+ regular in Wisbech town centre.

Stock Dove In January, 200 at Pymoor Bridge on 12th and 80 roosting at Paxton Pits on 1st. Largest February count was 60 at Landbeach on 5th.

Wood Pigeon A huge count of 6400 at Farcet Fen on Jan 28th must have been an impressive sight. Other large counts from Block Fen 1500 on Jan 2nd and Melbourn 1200 on Jan 27th.

Collared Dove 30+ at Elm throughout was the largest count received.

Barn Owl Forty-five records received from 26 sites

Little Owl Records of 1–2 from only 11 sites.

Tawny Owl Records received from 16 sites.

Long-eared Owl. Recorded again at Ferry Meadows CP (2 on Jan 13th) also at 2 other sites.

Short-Eared Owl Up to 7 birds noted on the Ouse Washes only 1–2 noted on the Nene Washes. A single was seen at Paxton Pits on Jan 4th.

Kingfisher Forty-two records received from 15 sites. Up to 3 birds noted at Milton CP, Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits and Roswell Pits.

Green Woodpecker Forty-six records received from 28 sites. Up to 6 noted around Paxton Pits.

Great Spotted Woodpecker Over 50 records received including up to 10 noted around Paxton Pits! Drumming was noted from 3 sites in January the earliest on 11th.

Lesser-Spotted Woodpecker Surprisingly there were no January records. In February, noted at Castor Hanglands, Ferry Meadows CP and Monks Wood.

PASSERINES

Skylark Recorded from 12 sites with a maximum of 130 at Paxton Pits on Jan 28th

Meadow Pipit Records were received from 8 sites with the highest count coming from Ouse Washes with 294 present on Jan 5th.

Rock Pipit A single was recorded at Ouse Washes on Jan 4th.

Water Pipit As would be expected all records originated from the Ouse and Nene Washes and records were evenly spread throughout the period. The maximum count was an impressive 11 at Ouse Washes on Feb 8th.

Grey Wagtail Reports received from at least 20 sites with most of records concerning 1–3 birds. The maximum was 8 at Paxton Pits on Feb 5th

Pied Wagtail Noted from at least 12 sites with some impressive counts received. The maximum recorded was 400+ at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge on Jan 26th. Another sizeable count was from Ely with 225 at the Maltings on Jan 10th.

Bohemian Waxwing Recorded from 4 sites during the period with 10–15 visiting various sites in Peterborough between Jan 5th–24th. Others were noted at Crown Lakes, Farcet (3) on Jan 1st–2nd, Godmanchester (3) on Jan 10th and a single was present for a few hours in an Eynesbury garden on Jan 11th providing a much wanted garden tick!

Stonechat Recorded from at least 7 sites. The maximum was 7 at Ouse Washes on Jan 26th.

Blackbird Records were received from 8 sites. The maximum count came from Elm with at least 50 present throughout the period.

Fieldfare This species was seen in good numbers during the period with many high counts received. The highest count was from Fen Drayton with 600 on Feb 3rd. Many other groups of 200+ were noted across the county.

Song Thrush Counts were received from 9 sites. The maximum recorded was 8 present at Elm throughout the period.

Redwing Seen throughout period in reasonable numbers. The peak count of 180 was from Elm during January.

Mistle Thrush Reports were received from 17 sites with 1–2 being the norm. Maximum count was from Elm with 6 during February.

Cetti's Warbler One was singing on the bank of the Great Ouse at Black Horse Drove on Feb 14th. Singles were recorded at Fen Drayton GP on Jan 11th and Jan 18th, and one was noted at the Ouse Washes on Jan 5th.

Dartford Warbler The reported male, first located at Stanground Wash on Dec 10th, was again observed on Jan 2nd and Jan 4th.

Blackcap Small numbers were reported from 5 locations within Cambridge City and at 7 sites elsewhere. Up to 4 were seen at Eaton Socon.

Chiffchaff Notes at 13 locations, sightings consisted of 1 or 2 individuals – with a maximum of 3 at Needingworth on Jan 17th. One Siberian Chiffchaff (*P. collybita tristis*) was found around Needingworth sewage works from about Feb 11th (Bob Frost) and was present up to Feb 29th at least.

Goldcrest Reported from 25 sites, several were present in gardens. Maximum number was 20 (Paxton Pits, Jan 4th).

Firecrest One was present at Fen Drayton GP from Jan 8th to 12th, and one was seen at Holywell on Jan 9th. Several sightings of single birds were made at Paxton Pits between Jan 1st and Jan 29th.

Bearded Tit One calling bird was present at the lagoons, Grafham Water, on Feb 27–29th, and one was observed at Wicken Fen on Feb 12th.

Long-tailed Tit Observed at 20 sites, Paxton Pits boasted the highest count (60 birds in 12 groups) on Jan 29th.

Marsh Tit Records consisted of occurrences at Castor Hanglands, Chippenham Fen, Fordham Woods, Grafham Water, Great Chishill (2 on bird feeders, 1 elsewhere), Hardwick Wood, Hayley Wood, Kingston Wood, Paxton Pits, and Wimpole (Cobb's Wood; "The Belts"; The Gloucesters). The highest site-count, 5, was made at The Gloucesters on Jan 23rd.

Willow Tit One, possibly 2, birds came in to bird-feeders mid-January at Great Chishill. One was seen regularly at RSPB Welches Dam, Ouse Washes, until Jan 24th (probably the bird that was present in the latter part of 2003). A second bird was also present at that site on Jan 11th.

Coal Tit This was recorded at low numbers at Anglesey Abbey, Comberton, Fordham Woods, Grimeshawe Wood (3, the highest site-count), Haddenham, Hayley Wood, Lode, Melbourn, Newnham (Cambridge), and The Gloucesters (Wimpole).

Blue Tit Reported from 12 sites, the maximum number at one site was 30+ at Hayley Wood on Feb 15th. Other high counts were made at RSPB Ouse Washes, Kingfisher's Bridge, Stibbington GP, and the Gloucesters Wimpole.

Great Tit Reported from 12 sites, higher numbers featured at Hayley Wood (20+, Feb 15th), The Gloucesters, Wimpole (14, Feb 8th), Ouse Washes

(WeBS, 9 on Jan 26th, 9 on Feb 9th), Westfield Farm, Comberton (8, Feb 9th). A melanistic individual seen in Witcham on Feb 21st had been present in the village for the previous 3 years.

Wood Nuthatch Recorded from 7 sites. Records of 5 birds at Grimeshawe Wood on Jan 17th and 4 at Monks Wood on Feb 19th are noteworthy.

Treecreeper Records received from 20 sites. Most records were of 1–4 birds, although 3 pairs were noted at Hardwick Wood on Feb 29th.

Jay Records from 16 sites all refer to counts of 1–4 birds.

Maggie Reported from just 11 sites. Counts of 45 at a Fen Drayton roost on Jan 24th, 22–27 at Ouse Washes throughout the period, and 25 from Connington (Cambs) on Feb 24th are all noteworthy.

Jackdaw Records received from 10+ sites, with 1500+ at a Grafham Water roost on Jan 3rd, 560+ at Long Drove (Cottenham) on Feb 10th, 396 at Hardwick on Feb 2nd, and 1470 over Paxton Pits on Jan 10th all being notable. A Nordic race bird was seen at Long Drove (Cottenham) on Jan 23rd.

Rook Recorded from just 8 sites. Two thousand over Trumpington Road (Cambridge) on Feb 2nd was the highest count.

Carrión Crow Recorded from just 8 sites. Records of 70–220 from Wicken Fen throughout January represent the highest counts.

Hooded Crow Single birds were present at Eye Tip on Jan 2nd, 10th, and Feb 15th, Ferry Meadows CP on Jan 13th, Dogsthorpe Tip on Jan 19th and 24th, Dogsthorpe Star Pit LNR on Feb 9th, and Willow Hall Lane (Prior's Fen) on Feb 10th.

Starling Highest counts received were of 1465 at Ouse Washes on Jan 5th, and 800+ at Elm on Jan 31st.

House Sparrow Records received from 9 sites with maximum counts of 110+ at Elm and 25–40 at Steeple Morden throughout the period.

Tree Sparrow Recorded from an impressive 15 sites, although unlike this period in 2003, there were no records from gardens. Maximum counts included up to 85 at Witcham (Burnt Hill) throughout January, 85 at Burnt Fen on Jan 6th, 70 at White House Farm on Jan 29th, up to 35 at Ouse Washes (RSPB) by mid-Feb, 30 at Colneny Farm on Feb 12th and 24 Langwood Farm East on Feb 12th.

Chaffinch Records received from 15 sites. Highest counts involved 45–151 at Ouse Washes throughout the period, 50 at Elm throughout the period, 50 at Colneny Farm on Feb 2nd, and 40 at Long Drove (Cottenham) on Feb 19th.

Brambling Records received from 15 sites. In stark contrast to the same period last year, the maximum count was of 8 birds at Ouse Washes (Welches Dam) between mid-Jan and Feb 4th. Six birds were recorded from Chippenham Fen on Jan 7th and Brampton Wood on Feb 20th.

Greenfinch Noted from 14 sites. Maximum counts were of 100–150 at Elm throughout the period, 100+ at Ouse Washes on Jan 24th, and 100 at

Colneny Farm on Feb 2nd.

Goldfinch Noted from 15 sites. Highest counts were from Burwell Farm with c.100 on Jan 9th, Ouse Washes with 91 on Jan 5th, 40 at Paxton Pits on Jan 1st and 30+ at Elm throughout the period.

Siskin Recorded from 20 sites. Maximum counts were of 50–100 at Woodwalton Fen in late Feb, 50 at Holme Fen on Feb 19th, and 30 at Fordham Woods on Jan 15th. The records suggest fewer birds at fewer sites than the same period last year.

Linnet Records were received from 15 sites. Peak counts received included 240 at Oxlode on Jan 10th, 120–160 at Ouse Washes, and 140 at Landbeach on Feb 5th.

Lesser Redpoll Records were received from 13 sites. A maximum count of 13 at Nene Washes (Eldernell) on Jan 4th was the only record of more than 10 birds.

Bullfinch Reported from 29 sites. Records of 12–24 birds (including at least 20 males) at Paxton Pits throughout Jan 22 were the only records of more than 10 individuals.

Hawfinch A single bird at Castor Hanglands from Feb 15–25th entertained a few lucky observers.

Yellowhammer Recorded at 21 sites. High counts of up to 60 at Barton throughout the period, 55 at Waterbeach on Feb 19th, and 40 at Paxton Pits on Jan 18th are noteworthy.

Cirl Bunting A report of an individual feeding on a bird table at Paxton Pits on Feb 8th awaits verification.

Reed Bunting Recorded at 16 sites. Counts of up

to 60 birds at Paxton Pits in Jan were the highest.

Corn Bunting Records were received from 15 sites. 85 at Chatteris (Sutton Gault) on Jan 9th, 85 at Soham on Feb 19th, and up to 74 at Foxton throughout the period were the highest counts.

HYBRIDS

Greylag x Canada Goose A single noted at Kingfishers Bridge on Jan 17th and 27th.

Teal x Gadwall A drake noted at Wicken Fen on Feb 4th (see photos on CBC website).

Pochard x Tufted Duck The regular drake Lesser Scaup type was at St Ives on Jan 12th then back at Fen Drayton as usual on Feb 3rd–10th at least.

Glaucous x Herring Gull A 3cy noted at Long Drove Cottenham on Feb 24th–29th.

EXOTICA

Black Swan Regular birds remained at Cambridge (3), Ely (2) and the Nene Washes (2).

Bar-headed Goose A single bird remained at Paxton Pits to Feb 5th.

Muscovy Duck Numbers increased to 40 at Ely during January.

Saker A bird with jesses was again seen on the Nene Washes on Jan 7th and 9th.

Harris Hawk A single remained around Paxton Pit to Jan 24th.

Purple Swamp Hen Still at large around Overcote during Jan–Feb.

Budgerigar A single at St Ives on Jan 22nd.



Bird BAPs

*Vince Lea*¹ and *Catherine Weightman*²
1CBC member. 2Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan Co-ordinator

No – not a new sandwich option from Malta but an introduction to Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and particularly the way they operate for Cambridgeshire's birds.

In June 1992, the Convention of Biological Diversity was signed by 159 governments at the Rio Earth Summit. It was the first treaty to provide a legal framework for biodiversity conservation. It called for the creation and enforcement of national strategies and action plans to conserve, protect and enhance biological diversity. In 1993, the UK government consulted with over three hundred organisations throughout the UK and held a two day seminar to debate the key issues raised at the Biodiversity Convention. The product of this was the launch of *Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan* in 1994. Nationally, there are now 436 biodiversity action plans (BAPs), comprising 391 species action plans (SAPs) and 45 habitat action plans (HAPs). As well as having national priorities and targets, action was also to be taken at a local level (1).

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership was set up in 1997. The first Co-ordinator, Britt Cordi, was appointed in 1999. Catherine Weightman has been in post as co-ordinator for the last 2 years. We were one of the first County Partnerships to launch with 45 habitat and species plans in 2000. There are about 40 partner organisations, the Cambridgeshire Bird Club being one of them. Originally the partner organisations were included in the discussions in the writing of the BAPs. The main partners of the BAP Steering Group now are English Nature, Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust, Defra, District, City and County Councils. Working groups focus on 5 main habitat groups: Wetland, Woodland, Grassland, Farmland and Urban. The BAPs were reviewed last year and it was decided to prioritise them, as there were over 400 actions. We now have about 50 priority actions (2). An essential part of implementing the action plans is the need to monitor our progress.

Within Cambridgeshire's habitat groups, there are a range of levels of action plans. Taking Wetlands as an example, there are four generic actions e.g. "large wetland habitat projects – Great Fen, Wicken Fen, Ouse Washes, Needingworth", and four broad habitat categories under consideration, including, for example, "Mineral Restoration Sites". Within that category there is a plan to "Ensure that restoration and landscaping plans for mineral sites include the creation of appropriate wetland habitats." In addition there are 6 SAPs under the Wetland banner, comprising Bittern, two mammals, two invertebrates and one plant species. Under Bittern, there are two specific actions; "Creation of new habitat" and "Monitoring". Both of these actions have been given high priority. This shows how the different levels of the planning process can interact, as clearly the restoration plan will have very wide benefits, and the Bittern is likely to be one of the species that are included in that. There are a total of 25 plans under the broad heading of Wetlands, each of which goes into several pages of detail.

With respect to birds, Grey Partridge, Bittern, Stone Curlew, Skylark and Song Thrush have their own SAP's. All the habitat groups thus have a representative bird species with the exception of Woodland (Song Thrush being considered an Urban species). Each bird SAP will feature in a regular article in forthcoming bulletins. A review is planned for the next Annual Report if these prove popular. Of the BAP birds there has been limited work apart from Song Thrush which has had awareness raising activities. The Skylark was picked as a representative of farmland birds and through the Countryside Stewardship some gains have been made. Grey Partridge should also benefit from this scheme, while Bittern will benefit from the fenland restoration programmes underway. Stone Curlew remains extinct as a breeder in Cambridgeshire but as the Brecks population expands with targeted action there, it is hoped that we can provide suitable habitat in the county to accommodate surplus birds.

It is probably the fault of the Steering Group that all the smaller partners have not been encouraged to fully play their part in the BAP Process. One of the current concerns is that a good monitoring process is not in place; clearly this is an area where CBC could be more fully involved. Getting the BAPs

implemented is a difficult process, primarily due to lack of funding and finding people who have the time to help. Obviously CBC can't really help with funding, but it is possible that we could help in more practical ways. We may also be able to suggest additional species worth including, as a consequence of our detailed knowledge of the County's avifauna. Willow Tit, for example, could be considered as flagship species for the woodland plans in the light of the recent survey results.

(1) The UK Biodiversity Partnership homepage can be found at: <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/default.htm>

(2) Cambs BAP page: <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/sub/cntryside/biodiv/plans/index.html>

Bardsey in 2003

John Le Gassick

Bardsey Island lies just off the Lleyn peninsular at the northern end of Cardigan Bay. The Welsh name of Ynys Enlli translates as island in the current, gives a clue that in certain conditions the crossing from Pwllheli can be, to say the least, exciting. I have visited the Island on two previous occasions in 1982 and 1984 and to my delight found it virtually unchanged. The ferry to the Island was up-dated in 1991 and is now fast and comfortable, capable of 20 knots. As well as the regular sailings from Pwllheli it also will, on request, pick up from Aberdaron. Another change is that the Observatory Warden now stays on the Island all year round. When I last visited it was only from April through October. The present Warden Steve Stansfield, his partner Emma and their small son Connor live in a cottage beside 'Cristin' the farmhouse that was converted into an observatory in 1953. The mathematicians reading this will have worked out that 2003 was the Observatory's 50th Anniversary. A party was held to celebrate this attended by nearly everyone connected with Bardsey and its birds over the years, as well as this Steve planned to ring 2003 Manx Shearwater. This target was exceeded long before our visit. Our party consisted of eleven people, ten members of RAFOS (The Royal Air Force Ornithological Society) and one from the AOS (The Army Ornithological Society), the sort of odds we like. Also staying in the Observatory, in the double-bedroom, were Steve's parents over on a visit.



The lighthouse at the southern tip of the Island is now fully automated and the accommodation once inhabited by the two lighthouse-keepers is now used by the Observatory assistant warden and researchers working on the Island. The Bardsey Island Trust that owns the Island also has a full time warden and his wife in residence, so if you add to this the tenant farmer and his wife there is the nucleus of a small community. The Island covers some 450 acres and this is divided into a patchwork of 130 small fields. The main crop today is hay, to feed the sheep and the Black Welsh cattle through the winter. The Island also has a beautiful Methodist chapel completed in 1875 and the ruins of the Abbey of St Mary that dates from the thirteenth century. Bardsey as well as being a magnet for naturalists interested in birds, butterflies, moths (160 recorded species), botany (the clean air allows 350 different species of lichen to flourish) and cetaceans is also a retreat for the religious.

Early September when our visit took place had clear skies and sunny weather which was not perhaps ideal for recording migrants, though flycatchers, a few warblers and Goldcrest were ringed. The Manx Shearwaters were still in residence, the young leaving the burrows at night to exercise their wings in readiness for their long first flight to the South Atlantic. Bardsey has an estimated breeding population of between 10 and 16,00 pairs of Manx Shearwater that lay their single egg in burrows beneath the grass covered old stone walls throughout the island. During the daily sea watches large movements of shearwater were observed, careful scrutiny was rewarded with the sighting of a member of the Western Mediterranean (Balearic) race *P.p.mauretanicus*. A number of young Shearwater were ringed at night when they left their burrows and most mornings two or three were brought in from the Lighthouse where they had been found on the ground having flown into the light. These were released, after ringing, that night. Unfortunately during our stay weather conditions were not right for the trapping and ringing of the other pelagic breeding species still present, the Storm Petrel. Seven pairs of Chough breed on Bardsey and these vocal birds, most of them colour ringed are an everyday sight all over the Island.

If anyone fancies the idea of staying at the Observatory on this most pleasant and tranquil of islands the cost for a week in 2003 was £90, with Students and OAPs £75. Alicia Normand, 46 Maudlin Drive, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8SB is the Booking Secretary.

Recollections of a Vice President

Colin Kirtland

Over the fifty years that I have been birdwatching there have been many changes in local bird populations. These have generally been well-documented elsewhere, most recently in articles by Graham Easy and Bill Jordan in "Seventy five years of birdwatching and bird studies in Cambridgeshire". The decline of species highly dependent on arable land for nesting or feeding, such as Stone Curlew, Corn Bunting and Tree Sparrow, can reasonably be attributed to modern agricultural practices, but why should Whinchat, Tree Pipit and Willow Tit have disappeared without any obvious changes or reduction in habitat? Why have House Martins deserted so many of their former haunts?

One bird that I miss more than most is the Red-backed Shrike. To see a handsome male sitting on top of a bush watching for passing insects, then darting out to catch one, was always exciting. I can well remember my first ever. A young lad, out for a walk with my mother, I saw one perched on telephone wires along Coldham's Lane, opposite the present-day Sainsbury's. It was a chance encounter; I later learned that they bred on the adjacent common. The species was already in decline, but we knew of others in the Newmarket area, along the Devil's Dyke and in an overgrown stud. Owen Marks and Bob Mansfield shared my enthusiasm for the birds and we widened our search, spending many hours exploring suitable habitat in the Breck and eventually discovering over thirty pairs. Their demise is often blamed on egg-collectors, but although they were a threat and a contributory factor, taking clutches here and there, they were not ultimately responsible. We would regularly record pairs raising four or five young, a figure normally more than sufficient to maintain their numbers, yet would return the following year to find sites deserted.

The probable reason is that few bird populations are ever entirely stable. Most are subject to fluctuations due to climate, food availability or more obscure causes and any retraction in a species' range is more marked on the periphery. We have to accept that the British Isles are merely an outpost for birds like the Red-backed Shrike, Wryneck and even Nightingale. When their core population level is high they can expand their range, but at other times contract. An abundance of suitable habitat here makes no difference. Contrary to what one might expect, the gains actually outnumber the losses, although this is often overlooked because the species concerned are not considered particularly interesting, or are so successful that familiarity breeds contempt.

The growing number of gravel pits, the construction of reservoirs and the establishment of reserves on the Ouse and Nene washes have all greatly benefited wildfowl. Some, such as Canada and Greylag Geese and Cormorants, once local rarities, are now so numerous that they are regarded as a nuisance in many places, even by birdwatchers ! Avocets are another success story but over forty years ago their only breeding site was on Havergate Island. On a few occasions we scootered to the Suffolk coast near Orford just to get a glimpse of the rare and distinctive waders as they flew above the sea-wall or left the island to feed in the River Alde. How things have changed ! Little did we then realise that they would one day be breeding in Cambs ! Another species that required a special trip was Mediterranean Gull. I saw my first with Tony Vine and Graham Easy at Lowestoft in January 1958 (also my first Glaucous Gull and Bean Goose the same day!) Subsequently the only regular East Anglian site that we knew was at Benacre, where an adult returned for several winters.

One bird however stands alone as an example of a species' capacity to exploit a niche and increase beyond all expectations. Imagine the scene: a bird that did not feature in our books, most of us had never heard of and none of us had ever seen, not only arrived in Britain but was found to be nesting ! Yes, you've guessed. Incredible as it may seem now, the most remarkable ornithological episode in the last fifty years has been the spread of the Collared Dove ! I first heard about it on one of my holidays to the Norfolk coast in 1955 when Richard Richardson was broadcasting the wonderful news that a pair was nesting at Cromer. A raw, young beginner, I was still quite happy to see the common birds and resisted the temptation to dash off to see them. By 1958 however I had become a little more rarity conscious and decided it was time to add the species to my list, particularly as Graham and Tony had already made the pilgrimage. The doves were still confined to the same area of Norfolk, so the expedition needed a bit of planning.

One warm September weekend I took my bike on the train to Hunstanton, saddlebag bulging with cheese and pickle sandwiches and a bottle of drink, cycled up to Holme and spent the night in a caravan belonging to Mr Gee who owned The Firs, the house now occupied by the NNT warden. The caravan was kept in an open garage, since converted to the NOA observatory. I had no bedding with me, so wrapped myself in my yellow cycling cape - a big mistake, as I woke early next morning drenched in perspiration! Eagerly I set off on my quest, pedalling along the narrow coast road through pleasant flint-walled villages and passed only by the occasional car. I stopped to rest (and eat some of the sandwiches) at Cley, where I was thrilled to see a "new" bird - a Spoonbill ! Pressing on, I reached Cromer and found the churchyard where I'd heard the Collared Doves were nesting. I looked around, peering up hopefully into the conifers but found nothing. Perhaps it was the wrong churchyard ! Eventually I had to give up as I still had quite a journey ahead of me. Along the leafy lanes of Norfolk I cycled in the fading light to Norwich and caught the train back to Cambridge. I had failed in my mission but still felt a sense of achievement - it had been a memorable ride and at least I'd seen the Spoonbill.

It was not until October 1961 that I at last managed to see one, when we heard of a pair nesting in Littleport, the first record for the county. By now I had the comparative luxury of a pillion ride on friends' scooters or motorbikes and trips to Norfolk became a regular feature of our birdwatching. When we heard that Collared Doves were nesting in King's Lynn we would break our journey to see the still exciting newcomers. The only problem was that they were in the grounds of a large house occupied by student nurses ! Imagine a gang of youths on the pavement at eight in the morning, staring upwards through our binoculars and calling out "Here's a good one !" or "I've got one in full view here !" Luckily we were never arrested !

The phenomenal spread was now gaining impetus. The first local ones were seen at Great Shelford in '62, followed by records from Cambridge the next year. Every new locality was recorded in the club reports of the early 60s but so rapid was the increase that by 1966 it was said to be a "widely distributed breeding species". By 1968 it was already so common that it no longer merited inclusion in the systematic list ! We now take them for granted and may even resent their eating most of the bird food we put out. Indeed the writer of a recent article referred scathingly to the "wretched" Collared Dove. They surely however deserve our admiration for their adaptability and success. They certainly provided us with some excitement all those years ago.

The Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme

Heath Malcolm

The Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme is a long-term, national monitoring scheme that quantifies the concentrations of contaminants in the livers and eggs of selected species of predatory birds in Britain. The programme has been running since 1963, and early work contributed to the banning of using organochlorines in this country and abroad. The research continues to the present day and has provided evidence of the effectiveness of the regulatory bans on reducing the exposure of predatory birds to these pesticides. The monitoring programme now includes polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), mercury and anticoagulant rodenticides (the latter in Barn Owls, Kestrels and Red Kites only), compounds that can all be highly toxic to wildlife. We currently analyse sparrowhawks and herons for organochlorine pesticides, PCBs and mercury, and barn owls, kestrels and red kites for rodenticides. The present species have been selected because they are especially vulnerable to pesticides, or because their distribution or prey-preference makes them suitable for monitoring geographical and temporal trends in pesticide and other chemical use. However, ALL predatory birds received are given a post-mortem examination and tissues (liver, brain, muscle, kidney and fat) are archived. This archive gives us a unique capacity to determine long-term trends in other chemicals that may be recognised in the future as posing a significant risk to wildlife.

If you find a dead bird that you think we may be interested in, please send it in. We are primarily interested in the species listed below, although we would also like to receive any other large birds of prey as available.

Birds that we are primarily interested in: Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine, Red Kite, Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Long-eared Owl, Kingfisher and Great-crested Grebe.

Carcases should be sealed in a polythene bag inside a padded envelope or suitable box with packing (e.g. crumpled newspaper, bubble-wrap etc.). If there is any delay in posting, please place the dead bird in a plastic bag in the freezer or somewhere cool to delay decomposition. Please do not send very decomposed, maggot-ridden or desiccated birds, but smell alone will not deter us! When picking up a carcass ensure that it is safe for you to do so – especially if it is beside a road. It is a good idea to minimise skin contact with the carcass, for example, use an inverted plastic bag to pick up the bird. ALWAYS wash your hands thoroughly after handling the carcass. Mark the outside of the package 'PERISHABLE GOODS' and post first class to:

Heath Malcolm (PBMS), CEH Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, HUNTINGDON, PE28 2LS

The following information should also be included with the carcass:

1. Name and address of finder
2. Locality, date and circumstances in which the carcass was found
- 3.

Postage will be refunded in stamps, and a report of any toxicological findings will be sent to the finder.

If you have any queries, please telephone Heath Malcolm on 01487 772498 (direct line) or 01487 772400 (switchboard), or e-mail hmm@ceh.ac.uk

HOT NEWS

Please note this date in your diary:-

Thursday 18th November 2004

7.30 pm Wood Green Animal Shelter, Godmanchester
THE FUTURE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & PEOPLE

Your club has been instrumental in bringing together all the bird and wildlife groups in the county for a special environmental lecture and forum, we need you there.

Full details later.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2004

May 14th – Milton Country Park Visitor's Centre

Wildlife of Myanmar by Paul Bates

The talk will include a general introduction to the wildlife of Myanmar, reviewing not only the birds, but also other elements of the fauna and flora. In addition, there will be information on the Harrison Institute's extensive travels within the country and a short explanation of the aims of its joint conservation projects with Yangon (Rangoon) University. Finally, there will be a brief insight into Myanmar's rich history and culture. Opportunities exist for members of the audience to join the Institute in some of its future expeditions as paying volunteers. Dr Paul Bates, Director of the Harrison Institute, has researched mammals and other wildlife in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, India, Vietnam, Cambodia and, of course, Burma. The Harrison Institute, based in Sevenoaks, Kent, specialises in the study of birds and mammals and works alongside in-country scientists. It is currently running a series of research and conservation projects in the Old World tropics, particularly in Southeast Asia.

SUMMER OUTDOOR MEETINGS

June 12th – Wicken Fen

Meet at reserve car park, Lode Lane, at 7 p.m.
Further details from Bruce Martin (01223 700656)

July 9th – Woodwalton Fen – To be confirmed.

August 13th – Barbecue – Full details in the next bulletin.

FROM THE SECRETARY

New Members

We welcome the following new members, Chris Townend from Cambridge, Owen Barber of Ely and Joy Saunders from Fenstanton.

And the resignation of an old member

One of our oldest members Mr K M Mayall wrote to me saying the time has come for him to resign. Now in his 90s, he has been a member since 1951. Although he lives in Yorkshire he has kept in touch with the Club. He mentioned he first visited the Cambridge Sewage Farm in its heyday in 1945, with his brother who reported the Black-winged Stilts in 1945 and saw the Moustached Warblers, which bred on the site in 1947 and remain the only record of this species in Britain.

He also mentioned how much he enjoyed the reminiscences of Colin Kirtland in recent bulletins.

Shropshire's Farms

In a recent bulletin I mentioned that Shropshire's had given a donation to the workings of the Club. This was as a direct result of passing on the record of birds seen on the flooded field at Holt Fen. It seems that the flooding was successful in controlling eelworms and it is hoped that another field will have the same treatment later this year. If so it may be one of those along side the Wicken Road. Apart from the Holt Fen records, Ian Barton and Kathleen Rosewarne are doing WeBS Surveys on the Reservoir and Owen Marks and myself carried out a Grey Plover survey on the farms in the winter. We will also be looking at the birds on other Shropshire Farms nearer the Norfolk border this year.

Cambridgeshire Bird Records by computer.

Members willing to send in their records by e-mail, please contact John Oates. He will send you a copy of the spreadsheet. Please let him know if you have Excel, Works 2000 or whatever system you are using.

Cambirds email group.

Don't forget you can now use this news group for any information relating to the Bird Club or to let others know of recent sightings. Please contact me for details.

Bruce Martin

CLUB CONTACTS

Chairman :	Bob SCOTT, 8 Woodlands, St Neots, Cambs PE19 1UE	01480 214904
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	Peter HERKENRATH 50 Sherbourne Close, Cambridge, CB4 1RT	01223 420736

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.cambridgeshirebirdclub.org.uk

Birdline number

Remember that your Cambs bird sightings can be phoned in free of charge to Birdline East Anglia on 0800 083 0803.
page.

Contributors: Richard Allison, Jake Allsop, Dave Anderson, Catherine Andrews, Paul Atkinson, Louise Bacon, Ian Barton, Paul Bentinck, Dorothy Best, Peter Bircham, James Cadbury, Robert Coleman, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Ian Delgado, Pat Doody, Steve Dudley, Ian Ellis, Stuart Elsom, Dr Mike Foley, Richard Fowling, Bob Frost, Don Gardener, Rick Goater, Will George, David Green, Kevin Harris, Jack Harrison, Mark Hawkes, Colin Head, Fred Heath, Peter Herkenrath, Jem Holding, Pete Holt, Ken Hook, David Hopkins, Julian Hughes, Roger Hughes, Colin Kirtland, Marcus Kohler, Jim Lawrence, John Le Gassick, Vincent Lea, Christina Leadlay, Jono Leadley, Stuart & Rita Lingard, Tony Mallyon, Bruce & Gwen Martin, David McKee, Duncan McNiven, Will Miles, Mark Missin, Terry Murfitt, Dick Newell, John Oates, Dave Palmer, Rob Palmer, Richard Patient, Mark Peck, Mark Pettit, Michael Price, Mike Redshaw, Tony Roberts, Kathleen Rosewarne, Paul Rule, Ellis Selway, Clive Sinclair, Howard Slatter, Brian Stone, Richard Thomas, Alan & Brenda Wadsworth, George Walthew, Mark Ward, P. M. Warrington.

Apologies to anyone whose name has been omitted. Any records received after the deadline date may not appear in the Bulletin though the observers may be acknowledged. They will be entered on the Clubs database for the Annual Report.

Please send records to: John Oates by May 7th

Next Bulletin due out June 2004, covering March and April

GOOD BIRDING!