

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 376



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

RECENT REPORTS SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER 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).

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

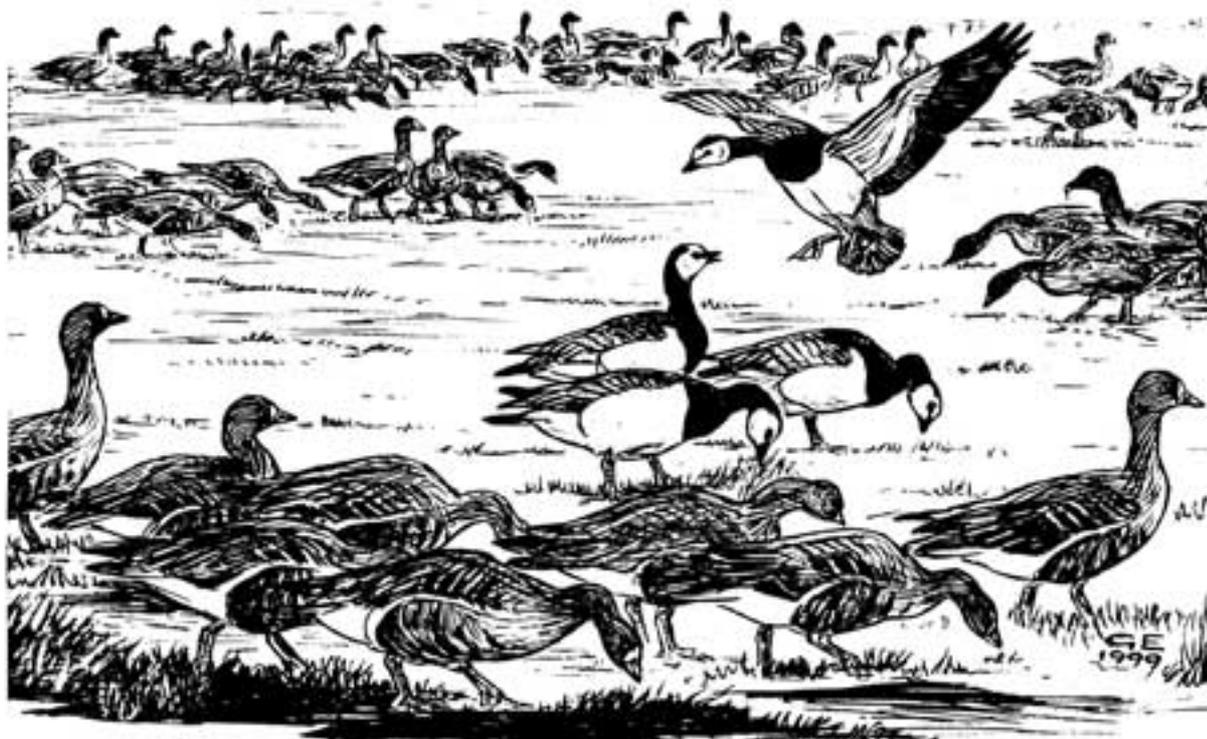
This bulletin reports the occurrence of 182 species (excluding hybrids and exotics). Unusual species recorded include Pacific Golden Plover and Horned Lark (see p8 for full accounts), Red-backed Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, Twite and Lapland Longspur. The Leach's Petrel seen in Cambridge may have caused the most surprise.

Please submit any further records of breeding species as soon as possible – this will help make the Club's database really comprehensive. Biodiversity Action Plan species are of particular interest (listed in the last Bulletin). Records of breeding owls are also needed for the Club's on-going survey

Season's Greetings

Happy Christmas and a good birding New Year to all Cambridge Bird Club members.

Wild geese by Graham Easy



Numbers in brackets indicate September and October maximums.

DIVERS TO HERONS

Little Grebe Recorded at 11 sites with double figures at Grafham Water (11), Kingfishers Bridge (19), Ouse Valley Fen (10) and Paxton Pits (43, second highest ever site count, 45 in Oct 95).

Great Crested Grebe At Fen Drayton GP (116, 91), Grafham Water (200, 238) and Paxton Pits (60, 43). Also reported from 8 other sites.

Slavonian Grebe Singles reported from Paxton Pits on Sept 4th and 15th and Grafham Water on Oct 28th.

Black-necked Grebe There were sightings of 4 different birds at Grafham Water in September, a juvenile on the 3rd, an adult on the 5th, a different juvenile on the 21st and a different adult on the 25th. At Kingfishers Bridge a bird was seen on Oct 4th.

Manx Shearwater There were 3 records from Grafham Water in September, the first on 3rd, the second on 12th and third on 19th. The latter bird was later found dead on the dam having probably been attacked by a large gull.

Leach's Storm-petrel A remarkable record of a bird seen by an observer at Castle Hill as he led a guided walk round Cambridge on Oct 16th. The bird flew low over his head being mobbed by Jackdaws.

Great Cormorant Recorded at 15 sites with the highest counts at Fen Drayton GP (60, 41), Godmanchester GP (55), Grafham Water (256, 83) and Kingfishers Bridge (41). The dusk roost counts at Paxton Pits produced a maximum of 225 in October.

European Shag Some interesting records of this species. As stated in the last bulletin a juvenile bird was at Grafham Water on Aug 30th until Sept 2nd. Then a bird was seen briefly at Cantelupe Reservoirs Haslingfield on Sept 12th followed by 4 birds at the same site on Oct 16th, which after feeding were seen to fly off south following the River Cam. And finally 4 birds (could they be the same or is there a regular migratory route through the county?) were seen at Kingfishers Bridge on Oct 24th.

Little Egret Up to 3 birds were noted at Fen Drayton GP, Godmanchester GP, Kingfishers Bridge and Paxton Pits during the period.

Grey Heron Single figure counts were reported from 12 sites and double figures at Fen Drayton GP (18, 15), Grafham Water (18, 5) and the Ouse Washes (46, 50).

WILDFOWL

Mute Swan Counts at Fen Drayton GP were (110, 110), the Ouse Washes (368, 478) and Paxton Pits (132, 138). Also reported from 7 other sites.

Tundra Swan The first of the winter were 4 at Paxton Pits on Oct 10th followed by 88 at the Ouse Washes on the 18th, 5 at Prior's Fen on the 28th and 2 at the Nene Washes on the 29th.

Whooper Swan The first was a single on the Ouse Washes on Sept 29th and by the end of October had increased to 500. Two were seen at Prior's Fen on Oct 8th and 1 at the Nene Washes on the 10th.

Pink-footed Goose A feral bird with Greylags was again seen at Whittlesford GP in September but a possible wild bird was at Kingfishers Bridge on Sept 27th. Forty-five certainly wild birds were at Prior's Fen on Oct 16th and wild birds flew over Wisbech town centre at 9 pm on Oct 29th.

Greater White-fronted Goose A probable feral bird with Greylags was seen at Ferry Meadows CP on Oct 26th.

Greylag Goose At Grafham Water (164, 71), Kingfishers Bridge (130, 248), Ouse Washes (0, 447) and Paxton Pits (438, 390).

Canada Goose At Kingfishers Bridge (382, 55), the Ouse Washes (0, 308) and Paxton Pits (93, 171). Also reported from 6 other sites.

Barnacle Goose Up to 3 noted at 6 sites.

Egyptian Goose Three flew over Roswell Pits on Oct 9th.

Common Shelduck A maximum of 18 (all juveniles), were seen on the flooded fields at Fidwell Fen, with 2 birds still present on Oct 31st. Singles were also noted at Paxton Pits during September and a maximum of 9 were at Grafham Water on Oct 17th.

Mandarin Four birds were noted at Grafham Water on Sept 27th, 2 at Bolton's Pit and Paxton Pits during the period.

Eurasian Wigeon At Fen Drayton GP (307, 920), Kingfishers Bridge (56, 80), the Ouse Washes (257, 5634) and Paxton Pits (149, 605). Birds were also reported from 5 other sites.

Gadwall Counts at Fen Drayton GP were (96, 296), Grafham Water (64, 13), the Ouse Washes (122, 70), and Paxton Pits (94, 105). Also noted at 5 other sites.

Eurasian Teal Counts at Fen Drayton GP were (72, 80), Fidwell Fen (175, 365), Grafham Water (192, 414), Kingfishers Bridge (90, 125), the Ouse Washes (523, 524), Over Fen (48, 180) and Paxton Pits (24, 165). Also noted at 3 other sites.

Mallard At Fen Drayton GP (196, 177), Fidwell Fen (80, 67), Grafham Water (366, 267), Milton CP (63, 61), the Ouse Washes (407, 1772), Over Fen GP (80, 54) and Paxton Pits (72, 45). Also noted at 5 other sites.

Northern Pintail Single figures were noted from September at Fidwell Fen, Grafham Water, Kingfishers Bridge, the Nene Washes, the Ouse Washes and Paxton Pits. The highest count for the period was 22 at the Ouse Washes on Oct 18th.

Garganey Single birds were seen in early September at 4 sites and 1 at Godmanchester GP on Sept 27th. The latest seen was one at Buckden GP on Oct 17th.

Northern Shoveler Counts at Fen Drayton GP were (97, 135), Fidwell Fen (240, 142) and

Grafham Water (184, 136). Also noted at 5 other sites

Red-crested Pochard At Fen Drayton GP, 2 pairs were present on Sept 3rd to the 5th, then 2 birds on Oct 3rd. And at Paxton Pits, 3 female were seen on Sept 5th and 15th and 1 female on Sept 26th and 28th.

Common Pochard The only site with three-figures was Paxton Pits with 126 on Oct 17th. Birds were noted at 12 other sites, double figures at half of them.

Tufted Duck Counts at Fen Drayton GP were (223, 323), Grafham Water (461, 195) and Paxton Pits (416, 1137). Double figures were reported from 6 other sites and single figures at one.

Greater Scaup A first winter bird was at Prior's Fen GP on Oct 24th and 28th.

Black Scoter Three birds were present at Grafham Water on Oct 16th.

Goldeneye The single bird that was at Fen Drayton GP in August was joined by 4 more during October. First noted at Grafham Water on Oct 13th (4) with 24 by Oct 27th, and at Paxton Pits the 2 birds first seen on Sept 26th had increased to 20 by Oct 24th.

Ruddy Duck Single figure numbers were noted at 7 sites, with 6 at Grafham Water the highest count.

RAPTORS

Honey Buzzard Migrants were seen over Grafham Water on Sept 16th, Trumpington on Oct 13th and Anglesey Abbey on Oct 18th.

Black Kite One was seen on Sept 13th and 14th at Monks Wood – although it was very elusive, and only seen by two observers.

Red Kite Singles were seen at Grafham Water on Sept 1st and 15th, Paxton Pits on Sept 3rd, Wimpole Park on Sept 4th, Longstowe on Oct 2nd, Woodwalton Fen on Oct 10th and Sawtry on Oct 22nd.

Marsh Harrier The usual autumn build-up on Nene Washes peaked at 15 on Sept 8th, with up to 3 of these birds visiting near-by Priors Fen during September. The Ouse Washes and Wicken Fen also attracted 3 birds during September, with the latter birds being seen around Fidwell Fen and Swaffham Prior Fen during the period. At Monks Wood, 3 were also seen on Sept 14th, and migrants were seen at Paxton Pits on Sept 1st, Grafham Water on Sept 9th, Haddenham and Soham Mere on Sept 15th. In October singles were at Grafham Water on 7th and Lode on 18th.

Hen Harrier A 'ringtail' was present on Nene Washes from Oct 24th onwards, a male was at Ouse Washes on Oct 26th and another 'ringtail' was seen at Smithey Fen on Oct 28th.

Sparrowhawk Recorded at 31 sites, all involving 1–2 birds, apart from 4 at Paxton Pits on Sept 19th.

Buzzard Recorded from 20 sites (*cf.* 40 September–October 2003). Numbers ranged from 1–5, with groups of 6 being seen at 2 sites. Perhaps the lower numbers reported suggested

less of an influx from the continent this year, or maybe the novelty is wearing off?

Osprey Singles were seen at Kingfishers Bridge on Sept 2nd, Chesterton on Sept 14th and St. Ives on Oct 10th. An adult at Grafham Water lingered from Sept 9th to 20th – attracting a few admirers.

Kestrel Reported from 21 sites – numbers ranging from 1 to 4, except for Nene Washes (12, 15) – maybe suggesting an abundance of rodents.

Merlin Recorded in September at Grafham Water on 15th, RAF Alconbury on 17th and Elm on 25th. Recorded in October at Great Eversden on 2nd, Westfield Farm (Comberton) on 6th, Gorefield on 8th, Elm on 9th, Swaffham Prior Fen on 18th, Cambourne and Paxton Pits on 19th, Farcet Fen and Priors Fen on 24th, Ouse Washes 25th–26th, Knapwell on 29th and Nene Washes on 30th.

Hobby Recorded at 24 sites, with numbers ranging from 1–3 birds, apart from 4 at Priors Fen on Sept 4th. Latest at Fen Drayton on Oct 12th. At Roswell Pits a juvenile tried its luck chasing a Kingfisher, which dived in to the water to avoid the attack!

Peregrine In September, recorded at Toft on 1st, and on Nene Washes 1–2 from Sept 23rd throughout October. Also an immature male commuted between Paxton Pits and Grafham Water from Sept 19th to Oct 28th. Other October sightings included Chatteris on 1st, Papworth/Eltisley on 8th, Ouse Washes and Woodwalton on 16th, Wicken Fen on 18–19th, Godmanchester GP on 21st, Paxton Pits (female) on 24th and Ely on 27th

GAMEBIRDS TO COOT

Red-legged Partridge Recorded from 13 sites, numbers ranging from 3–30 birds.

Grey Partridge Recorded at 6 sites, numbers ranging from 1–7 birds.

Pheasant Recorded at 6 sites, with a peak of 37 at Westfield Farm (Comberton).

Water Rail Recorded at 7 sites, with numbers ranging from 1–5 birds.

Moorhen Reported from 8 sites – peak counts from Grafham Water (33, 31) and Paxton Pits (39, 27).

Coot Reported from 8 sites – peak counts from Grafham Water (228, 317), Kingfishers Bridge (224, 178), Paxton Pits (824, 967). Also, a partial albino was at Paxton Pits on Oct 30th.

Common Crane One was reported in a field just north of Royston on Oct 29th.

WADERS

Eurasian Oystercatcher Singles at 3 sites, last at Friday Bridge on Oct 27th.

Pied Avocet Single at Fidwell Fen on Oct 4th.

Stone Curlew Single (heard only, at 23:20hrs) at Landbeach.

Little Plover Fidwell Fen, 1–3 from Sept 1st to 17th and Paxton Pits from Sept 1st to 5th.

Ringed Plover Highest counts from Grafham Water with peak of 12 in Sept and 5 on Oct 5th,

Fidwell Fen up to 11 in Sept and latest county bird on Oct 27th and Paxton Pits 7 on Sept 1st.

Pacific Golden Plover The second county record on Oct 30th to 31st at Fidwell Fen was a moulting adult.

American Golden Plover A superb adult retaining most of its summer dress was at Melbourn on Oct 22nd. Found by the same observer (SLC) as an adult close-by, one year earlier – no luck in that.

European Golden Plover Widely reported in small groups from early September, highest numbers from mid-October – Fidwell Fen 4000, Haddenham 2500, Ouse Washes 2053, Meldreth 2000, Over Fen 1500, Kingfishers Bridge 800, Swaffham Prior Fen 570, Fowlmere 550, Melbourn and Priors Fen GP 500.

Grey Plover Singles at Kingfishers Bridge Sept 27th to 29th and Oct 2nd to 10th, Grafham Water Oct 16th and Godmanchester Tip Oct 29th.

Northern Lapwing Largest concentration (by far) at Ouse Washes with 9252 on Oct 18th. 800 at Priors Fen GP and Haddenham and several sites holding under 500 birds.

Red Knot Singles at Grafham Water Sept 4th to 5th and Oct 9th.

Sanderling Singles at Grafham Water on Sept 1st and 17th.

Little Stint At Fidwell Fen, singles on several dates in Sept with 3 on 11th and 2 from Oct 1st to 7th and 2–4 from Oct 21st to 31st. At Grafham Water 1–2 Sept 4th to 19th and 2 from Oct 8th to 23rd and single Priors Fen GP on Sept 26th.

Temminck's Stint Two juveniles at Fidwell Fen on Sept 11th.

Curlew Sandpiper At Fidwell Fen, 1–3 from Sept 3rd to 21st, Grafham Water from Sept 17th to 28th, 2 from 29th to Oct 3rd and single to 22nd. Paxton Pits Oct 4th and Ouse Washes Oct 8th and 16th.

Dunlin Highest counts as follows Grafham Water (24, 31), Fidwell Fen (21, 24), Priors Fen GP (20, 7) and 1–7 at a further 5 sites.

Ruff Highest count from Fidwell Fen with 24 on Sept 1st, 1–8 here to end of October, and 1–8 at a further 5 sites.

Jack Snipe First at Kings Dyke NR with 2 on Oct 11th and 1 at Priors Fen GP on 16th.

Common Snipe Largest concentration at Over Fen GP with an estimated 150 on Sept 22nd, elsewhere Paxton Pits GP (13, 39), Priors Fen GP (13, 19) and 1–12 from a further 7 sites, including presumed migrants over Wisbech and Grafham Water in early September.

Eurasian Woodcock Singles in October at Hardwick Wood and Fowlmere

Black-tailed Godwit At Fidwell Fen up to 8 from Sept 2nd to 12th, 2 on Oct 8th and 1 on 31st. Four at Godmanchester GP on Sept 23rd.

Bar-tailed Godwit Single at Paxton Pits on Sept 2nd.

Eurasian Curlew Largest flock for some time were 7 at Fidwell Fen on Sept 29th. Singles from a further 6 sites.

Spotted Redshank Prior's Fen from Sept 4th to 7th and Fidwell Fen on Sept 5th were the only records.

Common Redshank Highest counts from Fidwell Fen (4, 15), Dogsthorpe Star Pit LNR (0, 11), Kingfishers Bridge (0, 9), Grafham Water (1, 7).

Common Greenshank Low numbers recorded – peak numbers Sept 1st to 13th: Fidwell Fen 6, Kingfishers Bridge 3, Grafham Water 3, Priors Fen and Paxton Pits 2. Last recorded at Fen Drayton GP with 2 on Oct 28th.

Green Sandpiper Highest counts – Cam Washes 10 on Sept 4th, Fidwell Fen (8, 3), Paxton Pits (5, 2), Dogsthorpe Star Pit (0, 4), Godmanchester GP (1, 4), Carr Dyke (0, 3).

Wood Sandpiper Only recorded at Fidwell Fen on Sept 4th and 11th to 14th.

Common Sandpiper Main locality Grafham Water with peak of 8 on Sept 3rd, 1–2 from a further 3 sites, latest at Paxton Pits GP on Oct 24th.

Ruddy Turnstone Fidwell Fen on Sept 4th and Grafham Water from 7th to 10th, 1 on Oct 7th and 4 on 8th.

Red-necked Phalarope A juvenile at Grafham Water, Sept 1st to 2nd, was a rare yet typical autumn occurrence.

SKUAS TO TERNS

Arctic Skua A dark phase adult was at Grafham Water on Sept 22nd.

Mediterranean Gull Only reports were of single adult birds at Long Drove Cottenham on Oct 19th and at Paxton Pits on Oct 24th.

Little Gull In September reported exclusively from Grafham Water where 1–3 on many dates. In October an adult and a juvenile at Grafham Water on the 11th, the adult staying to 16th with another adult there on 28th. 2 were also noted on the Ouse Washes on the 25th.

Sabine's Gull On Sept 12th, a juvenile first noted at Priors Fen in the morning was relocated on Dogsthorpe Star Pit later in the day.

Black-headed Gull Up to 400 regularly frequented the arable in the Melbourn area during late October, under-recorded.

Common Gull Only single figures reported, under-recorded.

Lesser Black backed Gull A roost of 1400 noted at Barleycraft GP on Oct 28th.

Herring Gull The only record received was of 60 roosting at Barleycraft GP!

Western Yellow-legged Gull In September regular reports of up to 5 birds from Dogsthorpe Star Pit. In October, 3 roosting at Barleycraft GP on the 28th elsewhere singles reported from 6 sites.

Caspian Gull All records received were of adult birds. At Dogsthorpe Star Pit noted on Sept 6th with 2 on Sept 23rd another single on Oct 24th. Also noted at Grafham Water on Sept 29th, Landbeach Tip on Oct 7th, Long Drove Cottenham on Oct 10th and Barleycraft GP on Oct 28th.

Greater Black-backed Gull Up to 25 roosted at Barleycraft GP during October.

Common Tern At Grafham Water 23 on Sept 22nd with the last bird of the year at Paxton pits on Oct 24th.

Arctic Tern Juvenile birds noted at Grafham Water on Sept 13th and 25th with a very late bird on Oct 28th one day short of the latest county record.

Black Tern A movement through the county on Sept 2nd saw birds recorded at Fen Drayton GP (4), Fidwell Fen (2) and Grafham water (34 with 6 present the next day). At Godmanchester GP, 6 birds were noted on Sept 30th. A juvenile frequented Barleycraft GP on Oct 28th.

NEAR PASSERINES

Feral Pigeon Numbers increased to 180 birds at Wisbech, 60 noted at Elizabeth Bridge Cambridge.

Stock Pigeon At Paxton Pits, 100 birds left the roost at dawn on Oct 22nd and 65 noted at Comberton on Oct 26th.

Wood Pigeon Three hundred noted at Comberton and Paxton Pits in October.

Collared Dove The largest flock reported this year was 140 at Over Fen on Oct 12th; elsewhere 90 at Trumpington on Oct 31st, 55 at Paxton Pits on Oct 20th and 54 at Waterbeach on Sept 5th.

Turtle Dove Reported from 12 sites during September with the latest bird at Over Fen on Oct 24th.

Common Cuckoo The only report received was a juvenile at Grafham Water on Sept 3rd-4th.

Barn Owl Five more reports confirming second broods either indicating a good breeding season or perhaps this is a more common occurrence in this species than is generally recognised. So far the Owl breeding survey has recorded 47 probable breeding pairs.

Little Owl The owl survey has recorded 41 probable breeding pairs indicating that this species is somewhat under recorded so please send in all your sightings (and of the following species).

Tawny Owl Calling birds noted from 12 sites – keep sending in all records.

Short-eared Owl. A single bird back at the Nene Washes on Sept 1st where numbers increased to 7 by the end of October. Most sightings came from the Eldernell area. A single was at Eltisley on Sept 1st.

Common Swift Recorded regularly through September as can be expected but birds seen during October at Farcet Fen 2 on 6th, Foxton on Oct 14th and Fidwell Fen on 15th must have made the observers hearts miss a beat, as they coincided with an unprecedented influx of Pallid Swifts into Britain!

Kingfisher Reported from 20 widespread sites with up to 5 at Paxton pits. In the Cambridge Botanical Gardens, 2 birds noisily flew around oblivious to the Apple day crowds!

Wryneck A single at Eaton Ford on Oct 5th again a garden bird!

Green Woodpecker Twenty-six records received from 21 sites including up to 5 at Elm.

Greater Spotted Woodpecker 19 records from 13 sites, including 3+ at the woodpecker hot spot of Elm.

Lesser-Spotted Woodpecker Seemingly as elusive as ever with records on Sept 8th from Fen Drayton GP and Monk's Wood again at the latter on Sept 22nd and Paxton Pits on Oct 25th.

PASSERINES

Skylark Reported from 7 sites with a maximum of 40 at Westfield Farm, Comberton on Oct 26th.

Horned Lark A very confiding bird was present at Aldreth on Oct 24–25th. This very welcome individual was the first to be twitchable since the long-stayer at Barnack in 1989.

Sand Martin Reported from 7 sites with numbers dropping towards the end of September. The maximum count was 45 at Fidwell Fen on Sept 13th.

Barn Swallow Noted from at least 16 sites with many reports of large migrant flocks. Several flocks of 100–200 were noted but the maximum count was 400 at Nene Washes on Sept 2nd. The last straggler was noted at Farcet Fen on Oct 24th.

House Martin Recorded from at least 13 sites with some large flocks heading south in late September. Maximum counts received were from Grafham Water with 600 on Sept 12th and from Paxton Pits with 500 on Sept 26th. The latest was noted at St. Neots on Oct 21st.

Tree Pipit The only record in the period concerned a single at Ferry Meadows on Sept 19th.

Meadow Pipit Records were received from 7 sites with the highest count coming from Farcet Fen with 240 present on Oct 20th.

Rock Pipit As many as 6 noted; 1–2 were seen at Grafham Water between Sept 29th and Oct 30th. 1–2 were also seen at Fidwell Fen between 11 and 14th Oct and 2 were at Priors Fen on Oct 16th

Water Pipit Two were recorded at Ouse Washes on Oct 26th

Yellow Wagtail Noted from at least 10 sites. The maximum recorded was 40 at Grafham Water on Sept 1st with the latest at Wisbech on Oct 31st.

Grey Wagtail Reports were received from 11 sites with the majority of records concerning 1–2 birds. The maximum was 4 at Godmanchester GP on Oct 29th.

Pied Wagtail The only records of note received were 100 at Grafham Water on Oct 16th.

Bohemian Waxwing With one of the largest invasions ever in the UK, it was inevitable that the county would get some early records. The first record concerned a single on Oct 27th near Paxton Pits with 30 recorded at Long Drove Cottenham next day. Of interest some of the flocks in northeast Scotland contained over 1800 birds – they must have been a fantastic sight. There's surely more to come our way yet!

Common Redstart In a fairly typical autumn showing 3 were seen. An adult was at Ferry Meadows on Sept 1st with another individual at Graham Water the same day. A female/immature was seen on Sept 15th at Monks Wood.

Whinchat Singles noted at 7 sites between 1st and 15th September. Records came from Ferry Meadows, Haddenham, Priors Fen, Paxton Pits, Grafham Water, Grange Farm, Toft and Farcet.

Stonechat 1–2 birds were noted from at least 10 sites with records from Grafham Water, Paxton Pits, Nene Washes, Over Fen, Elm, Toft, Woodwalton Fen, Cam Washes Upware, Fidwell Fen and Grange Farm Knapwell

Northern Wheatear Recorded at 14+ sites in September with the last noted on Oct 16th at Grafham Water. Records were received as follows: Toft, Fidwell Fen, Flag Fen, Grafham Water, Grange Farm Knapwell, Priors Fen, Nene Washes, Paxton Pits, Cottenham (2), Grantchester (2), Haddenham (3), Over Fen (3) and Soham Mere (8)

Blackbird Records were received from 7 sites with maximum of 120 at Elm on Oct 31st.

Fieldfare First noted on Oct 6th at Barton with records from 15 sites across the county. The maximum count was from Long Drove Cottenham with 700 on Oct 28th.

Song Thrush Records were received from 5 sites with 1–3 individuals being the norm at most sites. The maximum was 15 at Elm on Oct 31st.

Redwing First returning birds noted on Sept 28th with 3 at Comberton. The maximum noted during the period was from Ferry Meadows with 3650 over between 7 and 8am on Oct 9th

Mistle Thrush Reports were received from 10 sites with 1–2 being the norm. Several large groups were noted including 35 at Elm on Sept 11th

Cetti's Warbler A single observation at Grafham Water at the Lagoons on Oct 17th was the first for this site.

Common Grasshopper Warbler One was noted at Serpentine BP (Orton BP) on Sept 15th.

Sedge Warbler One individual at Paxton Pits on Sept 14th was reported to be the last record of the year there. A later bird was found at Godmanchester GP on Oct 1st.

Eurasian Reed Warbler Records of 14 birds at Prior's Fen on Sept 6th and 1 at Grafham Water on Sept 18th were several weeks earlier than the latest ever record (which was Nov 8th at Woodwalton Fen).

Lesser Whitethroat The last of year record at noted.

Common Whitethroat Reported from Ely Water Meadow, Haddenham, Paxton Pits, Roswell Pits and Toft, the latest record was at Paxton Pits on Oct 30th (the latest Paxton Pits was on Sept 4th, a single bird being ever sighting for the Pits).

Garden Warbler A Whittlesey bird found on Sept 3rd was the only record for the period.

Blackcap Located at Elm, Granta Park Abington, Paxton Pits and Woodwalton Fen, dates of the records were variously between Sept 23rd and Oct 16th, the latest date referring the Woodwalton Fen record.

Common Chiffchaff Reported from 14 sites, October records consisted of 8 at Godmanchester GP on the 1st, 1 at Coton and also 1 at Elm on the 2nd, 2 at Ferry Meadows CP on the 24th, 1 at Paxton Pits on 22nd and 24th (the latest), 1 at Grafham Water on the 25th, 1 at Roswell Pits on

the 14th and 1 at Toft on the 2nd. The observers of the Paxton Pit bird did not rule out that it might be ssp. *abietinus* (from N Fenno-Scandia).

Willow Warbler A single record from Coton, Oct 2nd.

Goldcrest From 15 sites, some higher counts were reported from Paxton Pits (30+, Oct 19th), Godmanchester GP (20, Oct 1st), Woodwalton (10+, Oct 9th), and Grafham Water (10, Oct 9th).

Firecrest One was noted at Godmanchester GP on Oct 15th, and 1 was seen and trapped at Wicken Fen on Oct 17th.

Spotted Flycatcher From 9 sites, all the observations were made in September, thus eluding the latest ever record of Oct 23rd (1989) by a considerable margin. Feeding of newly fledged young of a second brood was noted at Over on Sept 4th. The latest record was at Paxton Pits on Sept 26th.

Pied Flycatcher An individual was noted at Grange Farm (Knapwell) on Sept 13th. This was the first record for the site since the presence of a pair in 2000.

Bearded Tit Two were recorded at Kingfishers Bridge on Oct 10th, 1 at Nene Washes, Eldernell on Oct 10th, and a pair at Woodwalton Fen on Oct 16th.

Long-tailed Tit Reported from 10 sites, the highest count was at Over Fen GP on Sept 12th.

Marsh Tit Birds were seen at Hardwick Wood, Paxton Pits (3 seen regularly throughout September at feeders), The Gloucesters (Wimpole) and Woodwalton Fen. The highest count was 10 at Woodwalton Fen on Oct 9th, followed closely by The Gloucesters with 9 on Oct 29th.

Coal Tit Reported from 9 sites, counts ranged from 1 to 2, mostly recorded in gardens or visitor centres.

Blue Tit Of the few reports, 25 were noted at The Gloucesters (Wimpole) on Oct 29th.

Great Tit The biggest group reported consisted of 8 at The Gloucesters (Wimpole) on Oct 29th.

Wood Nuthatch Reported from Monks Wood (2) on Sept 8th, The Gloucesters (Wimpole) (2) on Oct 29th and Linton, where a bird made a brief visit to garden feeder on Sept 15th.

Eurasian Treecreeper Records were received from 8 sites, with 3 at Godmanchester GP on Sept 22nd, and 3 at Fowlmere NR on Oct 9th.

Red-backed Shrike A juvenile bird at Prior's Fen GP between Sept 3rd and 12th was a welcome autumn record.

Eurasian Jay Reported from 15 sites, with up to 7 at Godmanchester GP/Tip during October, and 4–6+ at Elm throughout. A far cry from the numbers recorded during mid October last year.

Black-billed Magpie Reported from 7 sites. Between 15 and 25+ birds at Elm throughout and 13 at Grafham Water on Sept 16th were the highest counts

Eurasian Jackdaw Records received from just four sites, none of which involved significant numbers.

Rook Recorded from an astonishing 2 sites, with 300 going to roost at Stapleford on Oct 7th, and 200+ at Elm throughout the period

Carrion Crow Recorded from 6 sites, with 85 at Fidwell Fen on Oct 30th being the highest count.

Starling Highest counts received were of up to 5,000 at a Paxton Pit dusk roost in late October; 2,500 at Carr Dyke on Oct 22nd, and a roost of 1,000 at Fowlmere NR in mid-late Oct.

House Sparrow Records received from only 6 sites, with 140–180 throughout the period at Elm being by far the highest count.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow Recorded from 7 sites. 26 in late October at Paxton Pits was the highest Paxton count since March 1987, and 13 at Farcet Fen on Oct 24th was also significant.

Chaffinch Reported from 12 sites, with 200+ at Grafham Water on Oct 16th by far the highest count.

Brambling Records of this returning winter migrant started with 3 at Ouse Washes on Oct 8th (5 days later than 2003). Other significant records were of 10 at Nene Washes (Eldernell) on Oct 10th, and 10 at Stonebridge Corner on Oct 13th. Other records involved 1–2 birds at 6 additional sites.

European Greenfinch Noted from 7 sites. Highest counts came from Cambourne, with 50 during September, and Lode with 30 throughout October.

Goldfinch Noted from 15 sites. Highest counts came from Swaffham Prior Fen (100–150+ during mid-Oct), River Cam (Upware-Dimmock's Cote) (70 on Sept 5th), Comberton (60 on Oct 27th), and Granta Park (Abington) (50 on Sept 13th).

Eurasian Siskin The first Siskins of the season were at Woodwalton Fen (1 on Oct 16th), Ferry Meadows CP (2 on Oct 24th), and Fen Drayton GP (1 on Oct 27th)

Linnet Reported from 15+ sites. Peak counts of 300 at Cambourne during September, 150 at Toft on Sept 19th, up to 100 at Over Fen GP throughout, and 120 at Westfield Farm (Comberton) on Oct 6th.

Twite Two birds beside the road at Swaffham Prior Fen on Oct 17th were an excellent find. At least one bird was still present there on Oct 22nd.

Lesser Redpoll Mostly singles and twos were recorded from 7 sites, although 6 at Paxton Pits on Oct 17th, 4 at Godmanchester GP/Tip on Oct 29th, and 3 over Grafham Water on Oct 18th are noteworthy.

Bullfinch Reported from 8 sites, with 4–6 birds recorded at Elm, Godmanchester GP/Tip, and Fowlmere NR.

Lapland Longspur A bird heard flying south over Grafham Water on Oct 30th, was an excellent record for two fortunate birders.

Snow Bunting An unconfirmed report of a bird at the Ouse Washes on Oct 23rd is awaiting further details.

Yellowhammer Recorded at 11 sites, with 45 at Farcet Fen on Oct 20th by far the highest count.

Reed Bunting Recorded at 9 sites, although 10 at Over Fen GP on Oct 12th was the only count in double figures.

Corn Bunting Records were received from 5 sites. A count of 40 at Cambourne during September, and 30 at Ouse Washes (Sutton Gault) on Oct 26th were by far the highest.

HYBRIDS

Greylag x Canada Goose At Kingfishers Bridge, 4 present on Sept 2nd and 3 at Paxton Pits on Oct 17th.

EXOTICA

Black Swan A single still on the R. Cam in Cambridge and another noted at Fen Drayton GP on Sept 13th.

Wood Duck The male bird remained at Paxton Pits to Oct 17th at least; another male was reported from Bar Hill GC on Oct 5th.

Saker Noted hunting wildfowl at Prior's Fen GP on Oct 16th.

Ring-necked Parakeet A single at Ferry Meadows on Sept 9th.

Sudan Golden Sparrow Again noted in a Farcet Fen garden on Sept 29th

Contributors: Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Jake Allsop, Paul Atkinson, Louise Bacon, Ian Barton, Peter Bircham, James Cadbury, John Clark, Robert Coleman, Steve Cooper, Robin Cox, Ian Delgado, Steve Dudley, Jill & Stuart Elsom, Dr Mike Foley, Richard Fowling, Don Gardener, Vicki Harley, Kevin Harris, Jack Harrison, Brian & Sheila Harrup, Mark Hawkes, Colin Head, Peter Herkenrath, Julian Hughes, Will Kirby, Charlie Kitchin, Marcus Kohler, Jim Lawrence, John Le Gassick, Vince Lea, Jono Leadley, Stuart & Rita Lingard, Tony Mallyon, Owen & Monica Marks, Paul Mason, Duncan McNiven, Mark Missin, Clare Neville, Dick Newell, John Oates, Rob Palmer, Doug Radford, Dr Gareth Rees, Tony Roberts, Kathleen Rosewarne, Clive Sinclair, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, Richard Thomas, Alan & Brenda Wadsworth, Mark Ward, P. M. Warrington, Michael Wood.

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.

Bulletin bird 1: Pacific Golden Plover at Fidwell Fen – the second for Cambridgeshire

John Oates

The flooded fields at Fidwell Fen, near Stretham had attracted a variety of waders during the autumn of 2004 and numbers of Golden Plovers had begun to build up during October. On 30th October a flock of at least 2500 had gathered and James Hanlon and I spent the afternoon looking through them for something unusual. Many were close and after seeing a fantastic near full summer plumaged American Golden Plover found by Steve Cooper recently at Melbourn, we were feeling optimistic. Optimism is rarely rewarded though! However, at about 3.15pm James found a probable American Golden Plover among the closest birds. After some very calm directions, I was soon on to it. A couple of things struck me immediately – the most important was the rear end. The whole area looked rather compact, and completely lacked the attenuated look associated with American. The tertials were long, almost reaching the tail while the primaries extended only a short way past the tail. It also lacked the striking white supercilium of American Golden Plover and had a yellow toned face, which I thought was more typical of an autumn Pacific. This was very surprising and I told James I thought it was a Pacific. After a brief discussion while looking at the bird, James agreed. Unfortunately the bird was not showing particularly well all the time, as it was often hidden within the flock, so it took a while before we could confirm all the features, including the long bill and legs, small size and dusky underwing.

We watched the bird for c30 minutes until the flock took flight. We relocated it at c4.10pm, by which time Owen Marks and Rob Palmer had arrived. They had some close views before it once again flew off. It wasn't seen again that day, but over the next couple of days some other observers saw it. It was always rather difficult to catch up with, not least because of mobile nature of the flock combined with increasing numbers of birds at the site. Even when observers did see it, the bird could be rather distant, partly obscured and badly lit. Inevitably some didn't see it particularly well and left the site not sure what they had seen! It was last seen on November 1st.

The identification of the bird as a Pacific Golden Plover was relatively straightforward given good views. It could be aged reliably as an adult by some traces of summer plumage on the underparts. Some rather good photos of the bird taken by Richard Patient can be viewed on the photos page of the CBC website.

If accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee this will be the second record for Cambridgeshire, following one at Swaffham Prior Fen in April 1996.

Bulletin bird 2: Shore Lark, Aldreth

Richard Thomas

Sunday 24th October was a bright breezy day. I set out later than usual to check Smithey Fen for Golden Plover flocks. As seems to be the norm this autumn, none were present so I decided to drive around to Aldreth, where the previous day I had spent time scrutinising a flock of around 1,000 Golden Plovers in a small ploughed field just west of the end of the village, 200 yards along a concrete farm track. When I arrived, just before midday, there were no plovers. However, I decided to walk over to the field anyway as the previous day there had been good numbers of small passerines, mainly Linnets and Skylarks, present. As I approached a tin hut in the corner of one field, a group of larks flushed. In amongst the normal Skylark chirrups, I heard an unfamiliar call. Fortunately the larks soon landed in the adjacent ploughed field, and through binoculars I saw that one appeared greyer than the others. I quickly found it in my scope, and to my utter delight and amazement, found I was looking at the unmistakable black-and-yellow face patterning of a Shore Lark! I hurriedly put my tripod up to full height, and keeping one eye on the bird, flicked through my mobile's address book, calling any Cambs birder whose number appeared. I kept on watching the bird – which didn't take off once over the next 40 minutes or so before the first birder (John Oates) arrived, although did disappear for

periods into furrows in the field. It appeared slightly smaller than the Skylarks with which it loosely associated, and more crouched when feeding, although for periods it was upright and alert. Gradually more people arrived, and despite the strong breeze and usually rather distant views, the Shore Lark remained mostly on view until I left about 15.15. At one point it flew off with Skylarks over a raised bank, but fortunately soon returned to the ploughed field, where it spent the majority of its time. It also fed for a short time on the rough grass of an adjacent unploughed field. During Sunday afternoon, Richard Patient managed to obtain some digiscoped images of the bird, which are now on the Cambs birds website. On Monday, despite even stronger winds and the bird being more elusive, Jim Lawrence managed to obtain some video footage and a video grab is now posted on the Surfbirds website. Shore Lark is a very rare migrant in Cambridgeshire, with six records totalling 10 individuals prior to this latest individual. Only the two most recent of these – in 1997 and 1998, both, remarkably, on the same date, 9th November - have previously been seen in old Cambridgeshire rather than the former Huntingdonshire. Neither was seen by more than the finders, making the Aldreth bird a welcome 'first twitchable' Shore Lark for the majority of Cambs birders. All the previous Cambs Shore Lark records have been in the November to February period, making this the earliest date ever. Indeed, it is quite an early date for this species in the UK as it is generally a late autumn migrant and winter visitors to our shores. Very few are found inland each year in the UK, making this record all the more remarkable.



Wild goose watching in Cambridgeshire: some thoughts from an enthusiast

Mark Ward

Those that know my birdwatching habits well will no doubt be aware of my passion for wild geese. My interest in these evocative birds was actually spawned from experiences in Cambridgeshire, which may seem quite surprising, considering how impoverished the county is when it comes to wild geese. Not for me, the luxury of growing up on the Solway Firth, Islay, the Severn Estuary or North Norfolk. Visits to such locations were mere dreams back in my schooldays – the Cambridgeshire Fens were my wild goose teething grounds.

It is true that the county is not blessed with vast wintering flocks of wild geese, but in many ways, this added to the excitement of goose watching here for me, as finding wild geese of any form is always a challenge – and certainly a notable event!

One of the greatest appeals of geese for me is the challenge of picking out 'stragglers' of rarer species from the large flocks that assemble on the wintering grounds. We don't have the flocks of geese, but we do have flocks of up to 8,000 wintering Whooper and Bewick's Swans, which act as perfect 'hosts' for visiting wild geese and also 'carriers' for bringing them into the county from elsewhere. The thrilling moment of discovering 'stragglers' in Cambridgeshire comes in finding the tell tale, small, dark forms of wild geese of any form among the mass of white and grey bodies.

The truly wild geese that visit the county frequently seek out the companionship of wild swans on both their daytime feeding grounds (the Fen fields) or roosting sites (the flooded washlands). The washlands and surrounding arable 'swan feeding catchment area' (which can extend as far as 20–30 miles outside the boundaries in the case of the Ouse Washes, in particular) are by far the best places to seek them, but the numerous other wetlands in the county do attract them infrequently.

'Wild' geese in Cambridgeshire come in nine forms: Pink-footed Goose, European and Greenland White-fronted Geese, Greylag Goose, Tundra and Taiga Bean Geese, Barnacle Goose and Dark-bellied and Pale-bellied Brent Geese.

The most regular visitor is the Pink-footed Goose. This is no surprise with a population in excess of 100,000 birds spending winter in North Norfolk. Regular, large wintering flocks are sadly no more in Cambridgeshire, but a small number can generally be found most winters. Some remain for much of the winter; the majority make only brief visits. Regular appearances are also made by those 'overshooting' their Norfolk wintering grounds in late autumn and during periods of poor visibility at the coast – particularly during fog. The distinctive double note of 'pinks' have emanated from the night sky above my garden on such occasions.

The Whooper Swan sometimes acts as an unlikely, but effective 'carrier' species for these attractive little geese. The two species nest side by side in Iceland and single birds and small numbers are regularly 'carried' to the Fens with the swans. It is quite amusing to watch the much smaller birds follow the every move of their vociferous, oh so different cousins, as they temporarily takes on the guise of Whooper Swans for winter. I have seen a few large flocks of 'pinks' in the county (the largest of which was 120 birds), but wild goose watching in Cambs is not about numbers.

It is not always easy to tell which geese are truly wild. Wild geese could conceivably join up with our hoards of Greylags and Canadas, but any geese seen with these feral birds invariably have a doubtful origin. The origin of the ones and twos of European White-front, Pink-foot and Barnacle Goose that are inevitably encountered in the county without fail each year can, at best, only be viewed as 'suspect' and do little to stir the interest or enthusiasm the goose connoisseur. I certainly prefer to see my geese well away from the feral hordes!

Behaviour can be a useful pointer as to the origins of truly wild geese. My most recent encounter with a wild Pink-footed Goose reinforced several of the key 'unwritten rules' when it comes to ascertaining the likely origins of geese. A clearly newly-arrived, wary 1st winter bird I observed on the Ouse Washes at the start of November this year shunned the flock of Greylags that were just a hundred yards or so away to adopt a completely solitary existence, bathing and preening vigorously throughout my time of observation. It was gone by the next day.

For me, the greatest prize is the Tundra Bean Goose. I have been lucky enough to discover several flocks, small parties and individuals of this scarcity during 10 years of regular coverage on and around the Ouse and Nene Washes. Indeed, it was the thrill of finding these birds among wintering swans for the first time that fuelled my passion for wild geese. Pink-feet are always nice to find in Cambs, but it is an exciting moment, when confronted with a party of small, dark 'grey' geese, to note the orange bare parts and smoother, darker plumage tones of this subtle form and realise that you have found something much rarer.

Cambridgeshire has an excellent record for attracting these geese, which are rare and infrequent visitors to Britain. 'Our' birds frequently commute between the Nene Washes and the Norfolk and Cambridgeshire sections of the Ouse Washes (possibly following the regular local movements of wintering swans). The presence of an easily-recognisable orange-billed bird, most regularly seen at Welney WWT Reserve in Norfolk has proven that the same pair of birds has returned to the Ouse Washes with young each winter for at least eight years now, so it is likely that we attract the same core of birds each winter.

I have enjoyed many happy hours with wild geese in the county, but the moment when I was confronted with a flock of half a dozen Tundra Bean Geese, a same-sized flock of Pink-footed Geese and a Taiga Bean Goose (the first and only accepted record of a wild bird in Cambs) accompanying European White-fronted Geese in the space of three fields adjacent to the Ouse Washes is hard to beat.

European White-fronted Geese are also a regular winter fixture in small numbers and in cold winters we may receive a good-sized flock or two. These are classic cold-weather birds and the birds we get are most likely from the large population that winters in the Low Countries, pushed across the North Sea by hard weather. Another good time to find them is in March when 'returning' birds (some

quite possibly from Slimbridge, Gloucestershire) may cross the county as they head back to Russia. At this time, the largest ever Cambridgeshire flock occurred: 220 on the Nene Washes in March 1986.

In recent winters, the much rarer Greenland White-fronted Goose has made its first appearances in the county. Its increased occurrence in neighbouring Norfolk is probably a direct result of the booming Pink-foot population, but it could well be the increasing Whooper Swan population and their role as 'carriers' that led to the records of two relatively long-staying flocks of this statuesque and globally scarce goose in Cambridgeshire.

Wild Greylag Geese were regular winter visitors until the late eighteenth century (and indeed the species bred in the ancient Fens until then). Nowadays, proving the occurrence of truly wild birds would be very difficult among the huge numbers of birds of feral stock, but any showing a strong attachment to Whooper Swans may well be the best bet (aside from observing wild-ringed birds).

The Barnacle Goose is now a year-round sight in the county, but there is one record of these attractive little geese that stands head and shoulders above the rest. A group of 42 birds spent from January 4th–14th 1996 on the Nene Washes, feeding on adjacent farmland at Thorney Toll and Bassenhally Moor. The flock arrived during a notable influx of wild birds into neighbouring Norfolk and one of the birds was ringed and traced to a Russian origin – allowing this enthusiast to add this species to his Cambridgeshire wild goose list with no qualms about the birds' origin.

A rather unpredictable visitor is the Dark-bellied Brent Goose. Thousands winter in adjacent coastal counties, but its appearance here generally comes in the form of disorientated singletons. They too join wild swans, but are just as likely to seek out the company of Wigeon. Larger flocks do occur (the largest on record is 200 at the Nene Washes in January 1987) and spring records of tardy individuals are regular too. There have also been three records of the pale-bellied Brent – all on or near the Ouse Washes.

So, do these nine forms represent the limit for the wild geese we can expect to occur in Cambs? I am ever the optimist, but there really are still possibilities. A white phase Lesser Snow Goose spent the winter of 1996-97 in the Norfolk section of the Ouse Washes and had an unbreakable bond to Icelandic Whooper Swans. They had almost certainly carried this Nearctic vagrant to their wintering grounds after it made landfall in Iceland the previous autumn. It was seen arriving and departing with them and there is no reason to doubt its wild origin. We could easily get a repeat performance and maybe the bird will favour Cambs next time! A genuine vagrant Canada Goose may also occur via the same mechanism.

Black Brants are on the increase as a British bird. Their status here changed forever when I discovered Britain's first and Europe's second family party of this striking form on The Wash in February 2002. There remains a very slim possibility that a sizeable flock of Dark-bellied Brents could contain one of these rarities or that a lost singleton may occur. Clearly, it would be wise to look very carefully at every Brent you see.

A genuinely wild Lesser White-front looks a very slim possibility now with the demise of the wild population. A Finnish-based reintroduction programme is going well though. Good numbers of birds from this scheme winter in Holland and that could be our best bet for receiving one of these dainty little geese. Check those hard-weather flocks of European White-fronts carefully!

Personally, I am dreaming of the day that first-winter Red-breasted Goose comes coasting down the Ouse Washes with a flock of Dark-bellied Brents. Here's hoping for a cold winter and plenty of wild geese. Happy hunting!

Unusual behaviour – diving Moorhen

I observed behaviour of an adult Moorhen at Fowlmere Fen this evening, which BWP describes as rare. The bird was repeatedly diving like a Coot but staying submerged for much shorter times than a Coot. It was fully submerging for two or three seconds after clearly searching for some sort of prey. I was unable to determine the prey items but suspect they were animals such as nymphs or small fish (possibly sticklebacks) as the bird never rose with vegetable material in its beak and it often appeared to have been unsuccessful in catching anything. On other occasions, however, it was clearly swallowing some sizeable but unidentifiable items. I have frequently seen Moorhens upending and occasionally 'half-diving' but I have never before seen a bird diving properly and persistently to feed. I watched it for about fifteen minutes.

Robin Cox

OWL SURVEYS: 2005, 2006

Good first year coverage of the county was achieved in 2004, so far, this reveals particularly an expanding range for Barn Owl, a few more recorders are needed to help fill in gaps for 2005 and 2006. The second half of the winter is the best time to start assessing potential territories – some owls are on territory quite early in the year. Full details in the next bulletin or contact- Please contact Louise Bacon Tel 01223 263962, email louise.bacon2@btinternet.com or Bill Jordan Tel 01767 651737 email bill@31hatley.fsnet.co.uk

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2005

January 14th – St John's Church Hall, Cambridge

Islands in the Sun – Birder's Paradise by Stuart Elsom

Stuart Elsom is a Bird Club Council Member, well known local birder and tour leader for the British Tour Operator, Sunbird. Stuart's travels take him far and wide and tonight he takes us on a journey to the South American islands of Trinidad & Tobago. In this travelogue Stuart will show us some of the bizarre and colourful birds and wildlife that the tropics has to offer. A perfect talk for a cold dark January evening with some evocative sounds too!

February 11th St John's Church Hall, Cambridge

The Hastings Rarities by Martin Collinson

Martin is a member of the British Birds Editorial board and of the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee, with special interests in taxonomy and the British List. He is 35 years old, and lives on the Aberdeenshire coast with 1 wife and 2 kids(!). 'The exposure of the 'Hastings Rarities' as frauds and their deletion from the British List sent shockwaves through the ornithological world. Blame was heaped on the taxidermist George Bristow, but was he just a dupe, or a scapegoat? Did fraud happen at all, and if it did, who was the Mr Big in charge of the operation? Why did the culprit(s) do it, and why did the British Ornithological establishment tiptoe round the problem for 40 years? How many other frauds have their been?

CORRECTIONS TO PROGRAMME CARD 2005

Please note the following corrections to the details given in the programme card for 2005.

At Milton Country Park

FRIDAY MAY 13th Jeff Baker [not Barker] Little Brown Jobs – Warbler Identification

At St John's Church Hall

FRIDAY SEPT 9th [not 8th] Debbie Pain The Indian Vulture Crisis

FRIDAY DEC 9th [not 19th] Christmas Social

Extra meeting at Masonic Hall Ely

THURSDAY [not Monday] APR 28th at Masonic Hall, Ely. Keith Offord Raptorphilia

CBC-ANNOUNCE

CBC-ANNOUNCE is an emailing list being set-up to send announcements and important notices about Club matters to any member who asks to go on the list. Most notices will be reminders of meetings and announcements of any changes in arrangements so you will only receive one or two messages a month. If you would like to be on this emailing list or ask for more information, please contact Vicki Harley, Tel: 01954 250340, email vicki.harley@care4free.net.

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).

FROM THE SECRETARY

New Members.

We welcome the following new members, Philip Bubb from St Ives, Philip Clark from St Ives, Andrew Green from Kingfishers Bridge, Michael MacDonald from Cambridge (home address Tasmania), Cathy Parker from Cambridge and Yvonne Samuels from Royston.

Bruce Martin

A MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS FROM THE TREASURER

Subscriptions are due on 1st January 2005, **please pay promptly – it saves the club the cost of sending reminders.**

Many of you pay by Bankers Standing Order and your bank should pay your subscription on the first working day in January 2005. If you pay by cash or cheque, please see me at an indoor meeting or post your subscription to me at 14 Spens Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9LS.

Subscriptions :- Full membership	£14.00
Senior/concessionary	£10.00
Student	£ 6.00

If you are a tax payer and have not yet completed a 'Gift Aid Form' to enable the club to reclaim 28p in the £ from the Inland Revenue on your subscription, please contact me either on 01223 356476 or email rita.lingard@ntlworld.com

If you no longer pay tax and have signed either on old covenant or a more recent gift aid form please let me know as the Club will no longer be entitled to reclaim tax on your subscription.

The tax we reclaim from the Inland Revenue is very important to the finances of the Club, **last year we were able to reclaim over £850** but there are still some of you who pay tax that have 'just not yet got round to completing the form'. Please contact me to check and if I do not hold a 'Gift Aid Form' for you I will be very pleased to send one to you by post or email.

Remember it does not cost you anything – all the money the Club gains comes from the Inland Revenue.

Rita Lingard (Hon. Treasurer)

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

www.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.

**Please send records to: John Oates by January 7th
Next Bulletin due out March 2005, covering November and
December 2004**

GOOD BIRDING!