

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

*Bulletin* No. 391



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

## RECENT REPORTS MARCH AND APRIL 2007

These are unchecked reports rather than confirmed records; comments are made by Bruce Martin (Wildfowl, Divers to Herons), Vincent Lea (Gamebirds, Raptors, Rails), Jonathan Taylor (Waders), Colin Kirtland (Gulls and Terns), Jon Pavey (Pigeons to Woodpeckers), Jono Leadley (Larks to Thrushes), Mike Foley (Warblers to Tits), and David Heath (Wood Nuthatch to Buntings) and Vicki Harley (Hybrids and Exotica). If you have valid reasons to dispute comments (e.g. further records) please forward these to the county recorder (address on back page).

### Roger Clarke – Memorial Appeal

Please read about – and donate to – the Club's project to commemorate former Club Chairman Roger Clarke on p12.

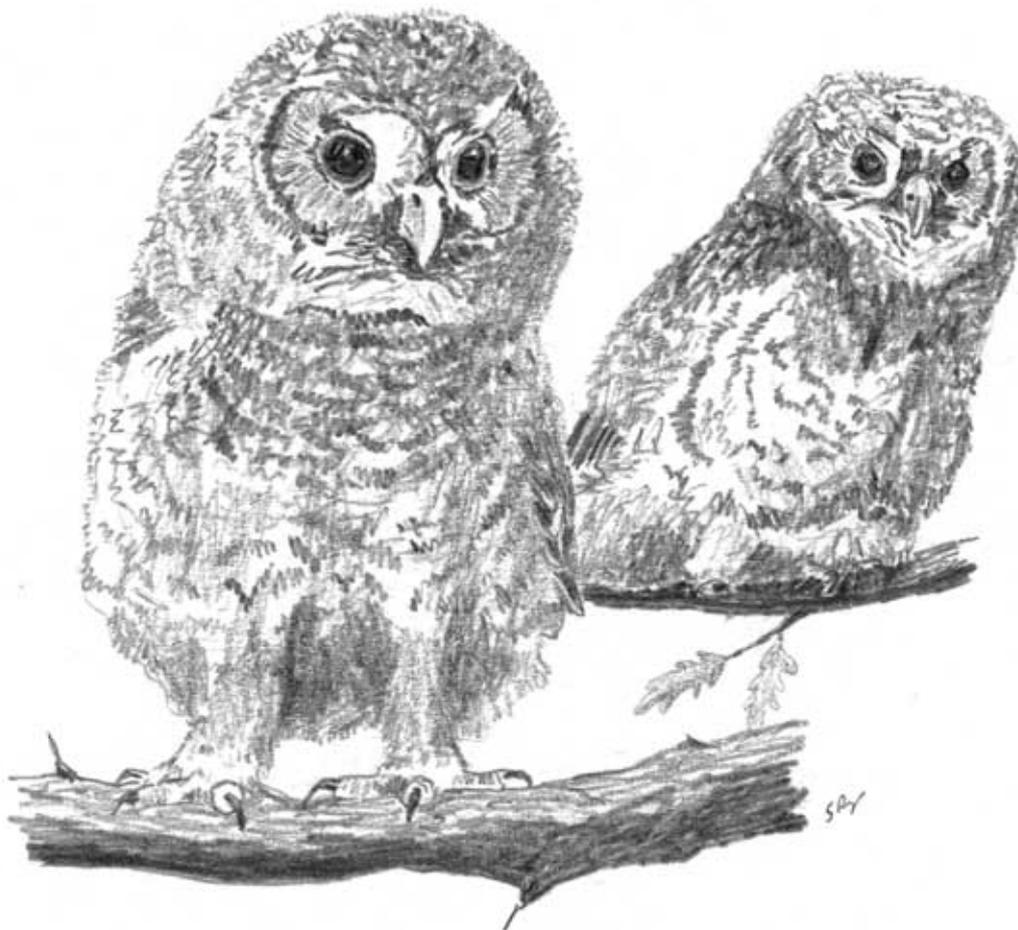
### Forthcoming Events

Details of future events are given on pp12–13. Please check the Club website for up-to-date information.

### Breeding Bird Atlas

For news of the Club's involvement in this major national project, see p11.

*Young Tawny Owls  
by Sue Rogers*



Numbers in brackets indicate January and February maximums.

## **WILDFOWL**

**Mute Swan** At Fen Drayton GP (33; 46), Needingworth GP (36; 96), the Nene Washes (228; 107), Ouse Fen (164; 33) and the Ouse Washes (177; 94). Also noted at other 16 other sites.

**Tundra Swan** At the Nene Washes 4 birds were present on Mar 16th and the Ouse Washes 46 on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>; 2 flew north over the Washes at Earith on Mar 10th.

**Whooper Swan** At the Nene Washes (208; 23) and the Ouse Washes (674; 50). Flocks numbering between 18 and 65 were seen heading north over Elm near Wisbech back to their breeding grounds on Mar 25th between 8am and 6pm. With another 14 at 7.30pm on Apr 7th. The few birds remaining on the washes at the end of the period were almost certainly sick or damaged birds.

**Greylag Goose** At Kingfishers Bridge (114; 124). Three-figure counts of 171 at the Nene Washes and 195 at Paxton Pits were noted in March. Broods were noted at a number of sites by the period end.

**Canada Goose** At Kingfishers Bridge (131; 127), also noted at other 15 other sites.

**Barnacle Goose** Five birds were recorded at Paxton Pits on Apr 5th and 7 over Little Paxton village on Apr 14th. One to two birds were also present at 4 other sites.

**Brent Goose** An impressive (for south Cambs anyway) flock of 14 were at Graham Water early on Mar 9th before they flew off east.

**Egyptian Goose** Up to 4 birds were on the Earith Washes during the period and 2 each at Ouse Fen, the Ouse Washes and Paxton Pits.

**Ruddy Shelduck** A male of unknown origin was at Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 10th and the Cam Washes on Mar 16th.

**Common Shelduck** At Grafham Water (27; 12), the Nene Washes (139; 35), the Ouse Washes (57; 42) and Paxton Pits (26; 30). Also noted at 6 other sites

**Mandarin** Three birds were at Grafham Water on Mar 6th and singles were noted over Barton and at Fowlmere RSPB and Farcet Fen near Peterborough.

**Eurasian Wigeon** At Fen Drayton GP (826; 2), Kingfishers Bridge (820; 26), Needingworth GP (705; 0), the Nene Washes (8180; 2000), Ouse Fen (215; 120), the Ouse Washes (11202; 1992) and Paxton Pits (331; 2). Also reported from 5 other sites.

**Gadwall** At Fen Drayton GP (58; 30), Kingfishers Bridge (72; 34), the Nene Washes (101; 0), the Ouse Washes (126; 89) and Paxton Pits (66; 0). Also reported from 12 other sites.

**Eurasian Teal** At the Cam Washes (89; 61), Fen Drayton GP (181; 16), Grafham Water (54; 0), Kingfishers Bridge (108; 40), the Nene Washes (1677; 300), the Ouse Washes (775; 273) and Paxton Pits (211; 60). Also reported from 7 other sites.

**Mallard** Three-figure counts were at Grafham Water (103), the Nene Washes (485) and the Ouse Washes (830). Also recorded at 25 other sites.

**Northern Pintail** At Fen Drayton GP (172; 0), the Nene Washes (1152; 150) and the Ouse Washes (91; 16). Single figures were noted at 3 other sites.

**Garganey** A maximum of 5 were seen at the Ouse Washes on Apr 16th, and 3 at the Nene Washes on Apr 17th. A pair were at Ouse Fen on Apr 27th and singles were at Kingfishers Bridge and Paxton Pits.

**Northern Shoveler** At Fen Drayton GP (106; 8), Grafham Water (170; 0), Kingfishers Bridge (149; 16), the Nene Washes (389; 2), Ouse Fen (41; 8), the Ouse Washes (202; 358) and Paxton Pits (230; 2).

**Red-crested Pochard** Only reported from Paxton Pits with 1 bird on Mar 8th and 2 on Mar 30th and Apr 2nd.

**Common Pochard** At the Ouse Washes (1571; 41). Double figures were noted at 8 sites.

**Ring-necked Duck** A fine male was at Fen Drayton GP from Apr 22nd to 27th.

**Tufted Duck** At Fen Drayton GP (253; 275), the Ouse Washes (1210; 574) and Paxton Pits (311; 200+). Double figures were seen at 15 other sites. A three-figure count was made at the Nene Washes (375) on Mar 16th and double figures at 11 other sites.

**Greater Scaup** A male was at Grafham Water on Apr 1st and that or another at Kingfishers Bridge on Apr 7th.

**Common Scoter** A pair was present at Grafham Water on Apr 19th.

**Goldeneye** At Fen Drayton GP (75; 110) and Paxton Pits (108; 92). Also noted at 6 other sites.

**Smew** Only reported from Paxton Pits during the period with a pair until the end of March and a redhead until Apr 5th.

**Goosander** Two birds were seen at Grafham Water on Mar 6th and 1 on Mar 12th. The last report of the winter was of two birds at Paxton Pits on Mar 25th.

**Ruddy Duck** Reported at 6 sites.

## **GAMEBIRDS**

**Red-legged Partridge** Widely reported in small numbers, 24 pairs at Blackbush being a notable record.

**Grey Partridge** Seen as pairs and a few singles, from 20+ locations with several sites holding multiple pairs, such as Lark Rise Farm, Barton, with 11 birds, and Farcet Fen with 9 pairs reported in the area.

**Common Quail** One reported from Kings Dyke on Apr 15th is a contender for the earliest Cambs record.

**Common Pheasant** Thirteen records received, mainly of large counts. Highest number was 92 at Fowlmere.

## DIVERS TO HERONS

**Red-throated Diver** An adult was seen briefly at Graham Water on Mar 29th before flying off.

**Little Grebe** Double figures noted at Block Fen (13), Kingfishers Bridge (15) and Paxton Pits (10). Single figures were noted at 14 sites.

**Great Crested Grebe** Counts at Block Fen GP (17; 16), Fen Drayton GP (17; 27), the Nene Washes (34; 17) and the Ouse Washes (60; 23). Also noted at 19 other sites. At a number of sites birds were nesting/ displaying and at Paxton Pits a leucistic bird was seen in late April.

**Black-necked Grebe** The bird present at Paxton Pits since Jan 23rd was last seen on Mar 13th. A pair in summer plumage was at the Ouse Washes on Apr 11th & 12th.

**Northern Fulmar** A bird was seen at Paxton Pits on Mar 19th and 1 at Graham Water on Mar 24th.

**Great Cormorant** A count of 418 on Mar 19th was unusually large for the Ouse Washes. Double figures were reported from 6 sites and single figures at 11 sites. At Paxton Pits 161 nests were occupied of which approx. 10% held mid sized juveniles.

**Great Bittern** Booming was noted at 4 sites.

**Little Egret** The majority records came from the Ouse Washes with a maximum count of 13 during the periods. Single figures were reported from 13 other sites.

**Grey Heron** The Ouse Washes (53; 32). Also noted at 26 other sites. Breeding was reported from 5 sites one of which this was the first time breeding had been recorded.

**Purple Heron** One at Friday Bridge on Apr 6th.

**White Stork** A bird previously seen in the Yorkshire area paid a visit to the Ouse Washes from Mar 22nd to 24th before returning to Yorkshire. Two birds flew over the A14/A10 junction at Milton on Apr 25th.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** A bird was present at Paxton Pits on Apr 26th and that or another at Wicken Fen on Apr 28th and 29th.

## RAPTORS

**Honey Buzzard** A single reported at the very end of the period, from Warboys High Fen.

**Black Kite** One seen over Wicken Fen on Apr 26th was a typical brief encounter with *Milvus migrans*, one of our rarest raptors.

**Red Kite** An excellent series of sightings throughout the county, including signs of display and nesting behaviour at one site. Five singles in March, followed by 20 in April, 40% in Cambs and 60% in Hunts.

**Eurasian Marsh Harrier** Widespread and well established at our larger wetland sites in the fens, with maxima seen at Ouse Washes (10 on Mar 29th) and Kingfishers Bridge (7 on Mar 29th, 6 on Apr 16th). A few migrant singles were seen late April, e.g. Fowlmere, Witcham and Grafham Water.

**Hen Harrier** A ringtail roosting at Kingfishers Bridge through March and early April and a male at Nene Washes were the only regularly seen birds, but

single males also noted from Wicken Fen, Elton and Upware, the latter on Apr 20th being the latest.

**Northern Goshawk** A well-seen individual, being mobbed by Carrion Crows, was reported from Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 20th.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** Widely reported throughout the period in ones and twos. Two pairs present at Paxton Pits.

**Common Buzzard** Widespread singles, 11 reports of twos plus larger numbers such as 3 at Hayley Wood, 2 pairs at Monks Wood, 4 migrating north of Cambridge, 5 at Fowlmere and 6 at Paxton Pits and Grafham Water, where a pair seen mating, Mar 14th.

**Osprey** Five singles: Mar 14th Farcet Fen, Apr 7th Paxton, 8th Ely BF, 9th Bourn Airfield and 19th at Rampton; none were reported to have lingered.

**Common Kestrel** Reported from 28 localities, with 7 pairs and a few larger counts, maximum of 5 at Ouse Washes.

**Merlin** Singles from 10 localities throughout the period, and a pair at Farcet Fen on Apr 12th.

**Eurasian Hobby** An early first report on Apr 6th Woodwalton Fen. A gradual trickle of singles followed, until Apr 25th when 3 at Nene Washes, then Fen Drayton had 5 on 27th and 6 on 30th, Wicken 6 on 28th and 10 on 29th, Paxton Pits peak of 9 on 29th, Woodwalton Fen had 5 on 29th.

**Peregrine Falcon** Mainly seen in March as singles from the larger wetland sites, with a few further sightings into April, last on the 18th. One seen hunting Pied Wagtails at Paxton Pits Apr 6th, and 2 there on Apr 15th was the highest count.

## RAILS

**Water Rail** Records from 6 wetland sites throughout the period, with 12 calling at Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 15th the highest count.

**Common Moorhen** Top WeBS counts from Ouse Washes (64), Fen Drayton (25; 22) and Ouse Fen (13). Other notable reports were of 22 at Kingfishers Bridge, and of 2 young at Four Gotes on Apr 21st.

**Common Coot** Interim count of 887 at Ouse Washes was highest, while WeBS counts of 562 at Nene Washes, 164 at Fen Drayton, 132 at Paxton Pits, 131 Grafham Water and 110 at Ouse Fen were also reported in March. Several incidences of nesting were reported in April, earliest being 7th at Milton CP.

**Common Crane** A single report of two birds from Fowlmere, on Apr 30th.

## WADERS

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** Highest counts from Nene Washes with 25 on Mar 16th, 17 at Ouse Washes on Mar 5th, 9 at Needingworth pits on Mar 20th, up to 8 at Kingfishers bridge and 1–6 from a further 7 sites. First hatching was noted on Apr 30th at Paxton Pits.

**Avocet** Regular sightings from no less than 8 wetland sites. Highest count from Ouse Washes with 28 on Apr 30th. A colour-ringed male at Paxton

Pits on Apr 6th was ringed as chick in France, department Loire-Atlantique in August 2005.

**Little Plover** First date from Paxton Pits on Mar 16th. Highest counts from Maxey GP with 16 on Apr 18th and Paxton with 8 on Apr 9th; 1–4 recorded from a further 11 sites.

**Ringed Plover** Peak count from Paxton Pits of 19 both Mar 3rd and Apr 11th; 1–6 from a further 8 sites.

**Tundra Ringed Plover** Five were identified at Paxton Pits on Apr 19th.

**European Golden Plover** Highest count by far was from Trumpington with 1700 on Mar 30th, additionally 500 at Landbeach on Apr 9th, 350 at Paxton Pits on Mar 2nd, 310 at Ouse Washes on Mar 19th and 300 at Hardwick on Apr 7th, late groups as follows: 70 at Blackbush on Apr 19th, 60 at Hardwick and 40 at Landbeach on Apr 20th.

**Grey Plover** All records from April at Ouse Washes on 5th, 7th and 11th, Kingfishers Bridge 3 on 7th and singles on 27th and 28th and Nene Washes 1–2 from 27th to 30th.

**Northern Lapwing** Initial breeding figures from Nene Washes of 254 pairs (stable on 2006), and 10+ to south of Washes. Encouraging signs from arable areas, i.e one area of Farcet Fen held 13 pairs, also breeding to west of Woodwalton Fen. Elsewhere 11 pairs Kingfishers bridge.

**Red Knot** Single at Maxey GP on Apr 30th.

**Sanderling** In April at Paxton Pits on 23rd–24th and 3 on 27th, Nene Washes 3, Fen Drayton 2 and Wicken Fen 1 all on 29th.

**Little Stint** In April at Paxton Pits on 1st–11th and 18th–21st, Ouse Fen on 25th–29th and Ouse washes on 30th (seen to fly off south with 3 Dunlin). Perhaps all these sightings refer to the same individual?

**Dunlin** Highest counts from Ouse Washes (35; 42), Paxton Pits (29; 25), Fen Drayton GP 20 on Mar 16th, Nene Washes 1–15 in April and 1–5 from a further 4 sites.

**Ruff** Highest count from Ouse Washes with up to 65 in April (some seen lekking); elsewhere 12 at Fen Drayton on Mar 2nd and 33 on Mar 16th, 4 at Needingworth GP on Mar 20th, 11 at Berry Fen on Mar 24th, 4 at Nene Washes on Apr 6th and 1–2 from only a further 2 sites.

**Jack Snipe** Paxton Pits (3; 5), latest date on Apr 23rd, singles also from Farcet Fen, Fowlmere and Maxey Pits.

**Common Snipe** Highest counts at Grafham Water 53 on Mar 13th, Kingfishers Bridge (46; 24), Ouse Washes 40 and Nene Washes 33 on Mar 16th, Paxton Pits (17; 13). Breeding: drumming at Nene Washes (145), Kingfishers Bridge (3), Little Wilbraham Fen (4), Ely (2), Wicken Fen (1).

**Eurasian Woodcock** Only reported roding from Woodwalton Fen where an estimate of 2–8 birds.

**Black-tailed Godwit** Highest counts from Ouse Washes (2000+; 3085 on Apr 2nd), Nene Washes (1082; 1000+), Paxton Pits (2300 – way above previous site record; 2), Fen Drayton (1000; 2). 1200 remained at Ouse Washes to Apr 20th and 66 at Nene Washes to Apr 25th. The large numbers at Fen Drayton and Paxton Pits were displaced from

the Ouse Washes during deep floods in early March.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** An exceptional passage took place from Apr 28th to 30th involving over 500 birds, heading eastward, only a few stopped over to feed. Maximum counts as follows 28th; Paxton Pits 42, Fowlmere 20, Maxey Pits 22, 29th; Wicken Fen 194, Paxton Pits 110, Burghley Park 55, Nene Washes 30 and on 30th; Maxey GP 26, Nene Washes 21 and Paxton Pits 19.

**Whimbrel** First recorded over Farcet Fen on April 10th, multiple groups of 7 over Kingfishers Bridge on 18th and 7 Paxton Pits on 29th and singles over 8 sites.

**Eurasian Curlew** Five at Nene Washes on Mar 16th, 4 at Caldecote (Hunts) on Apr 6th, 2 at Paxton Pits on Apr 6th and singles from a further 4 sites.

**Spotted Redshank** Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 26th may have been the bird present in the area in February; in addition from Ouse Washes on Apr 16th and 30th.

**Common Redshank** Highest March WeBS counts Ouse Washes 283, Nene Washes 149 elsewhere Paxton Pits (26; 26), Kingfishers Bridge (18; 19), Grafham Water 13 on Mar 9th, Cam Washes (18; 8), Wicken Fen 12 on Mar 7th, Ouse fen (12; 12) and 1–4 from a further four sites.

**Common Greenshank** First recorded from Nene Washes and Wicken fen on Apr 22nd, Peak count from Nene Washes of 8 on 29th, 1–2 from a further 3 sites.

**Green Sandpiper** Peak counts from Maxey GP 5 in April, Needingworth GP 4 on Apr 15th, Paxton Pits (3; 3), Kingfishers Bridge 1–2 in April then 5 on 21st, and 1–2 from a further 6 sites. One was observed in song flight at Paxton Pits on Apr 25th.

**Wood Sandpiper** One at Roswell Pits on Apr 20th and 2 at Nene Washes on Apr 25th with one remaining to 26th.

**Common Sandpiper** Wintering birds remained at Grafham Water to Mar 27th. First spring migrants from Ferry Meadows on Apr 16th followed by 1–3 from a further 10 sites.

**Ruddy Turnstone** Singles at Nene Washes and Wicken Fen on Apr 29th.

## SKUAS TO TERNS

**Mediterranean Gull** The now usual spring influx was noted at several sites. At Farcet Fen there were 2 adults from March 22nd to 29th, then again on April 8th and 12th and 1 on 16th. There were single adults at Paxton on March 25th and April 8th and 23rd, Grafham on March 29th and 2 birds at Blackbush Drove on Apr 4th, Pondersbridge on 11th and Ouse Washes on 16th. The only immatures reported were at Ouse Washes and Kingfishers Bridge on 21st.

**Little Gull** An average spring passage with a scattering of records, mostly adults, but no notable flocks. The first was at Wicken on Apr 7th, followed by ones or twos at Fen Drayton, Paxton, Kingfishers Bridge, Fletton BP, Ouse Washes, Ferry Meadows and Grafham. The highest counts were of 4 at Kingfishers

Bridge on April 15th, Fen Drayton on 18th and Grafham on 22nd.

**Black-headed Gull** The highest counts were from Kingfishers Bridge with a pre-breeding flock of 800 on March 15th, 390 and 8 nests on April 14th and 375 with 82 nests by 28th. The only other sizeable flocks noted were 200 at the Ouse Washes on March 30th and 229 at Barleycroft on April 15th.

**Common Gull** Spring passage evidently finished early this year as the only count of note was of 82 at Fen Drayton on March 16th.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** The once marked northward spring movement of this species is now much less obvious as so many wintering birds linger into April, taking advantage of the food available on refuse tips. The largest flocks were of 400 still at Long Drove, Cottenham on Apr 26th, 295 at Kingfishers Bridge on 30th and 250 at Paxton on 10th. The only report of possible breeding activity was of a pair holding territory at Kingfishers Bridge in April.

**Herring Gull** With most birds back on their breeding grounds the only reports were of 20 at Paxton on Apr 11th, 10 at Long Drove, Cottenham, on 26th and 3 at Kingfishers Bridge on 18th.

**Yellow-legged Gull** Small numbers at Grafham, Paxton, Kingfishers Bridge, Ouse Washes and Stretham. Largest counts were 7 at Paxton on April 10th and 5 at Kingfishers Bridge on 30th.

**Caspian Gull** Singles only at Grafham on Apr 7th, Ouse Washes on 8th and Paxton on 28th and 29th.

**Iceland Gull** One record only of a 2nd winter bird at Grafham on Mar 17th.

**Glaucous Gull** A late bird at Grafham on Apr 9th.

**Great Black-backed Gull** The only significant counts were from Kingfishers Bridge with 22 on March 7th, 50 on 9th and 19 on 15th and Paxton with 14 on Apr 10th.

**Kittiwake** An adult at the Ouse Washes on March 27th.

**Sandwich Tern** Two at Paxton on April 30th were seen to fly off to the east.

**Common Tern** The first to arrive were 3 at Paxton on April 11th, followed by singles at Fen Drayton on 12th and Kingfishers Bridge on 16th. Numbers increased steadily to a peak in the last week of the month when there were 70 at Paxton on 25th, 30 at Kingfishers Bridge on 27th, 16 at Roswell Pits on 28th, 30 at Grafham on 29th and 60 at Fen Drayton on 30th.

**Arctic Tern** In contrast to 2006 when northerly winds and overcast conditions saw large flocks passing through the county, the clear blue skies of April produced only small numbers. The first was at Paxton on 15th followed by others from 21st at Grafham, Fen Drayton and Ely. All records were of 1–3 apart from 5 at Grafham on 29th and 7 at Fen Drayton on 27th.

**Little Tern** Four at Fen Drayton on April 16th was a good record. Most occurrences in the county are of single birds.

**Black Tern** Recorded at only 4 sites: 1 at Kingfishers Bridge on April 20th and 21st, 4 at Fen Drayton on 27th, 2 on 28th and 1 on 30th, 2 at Fletton BP and 9 at Orton BP on 30th.

## NEAR PASSERINES

**Feral Pigeon** Wisbech town centre had over 150 birds in March and 130 in April. Records also from Farcet Fen and Over.

**Stock Pigeon** About half of the 24 records were of less than 10 birds. Highest count of 58 birds at Cambridge Research Park on Mar 26th.

**Common Wood Pigeon** Nine hundred birds at Girton, Cambridge on Mar 15th. Six other records of 200–321 birds, mainly near Comberton.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** A fully grown juvenile being fed on Apr 4th in St Neots. Between 2 and 11 birds recorded from 11 sites; 19 birds at Mere Mouth Farm on Apr 4th. Over 20 birds at Elm in both months.

**European Turtle Dove** Singles from 5 sites, all in the west of the county, between Apr 17th and 24th.

**Common Cuckoo** Predominantly singles, from 16 sites; maximum of 5 calling birds at Paxton Pits.

**Barn Owl** Recorded from 21 sites; 18 of the 28 records were in March. All singles, except 7 records of 2 birds.

**Little Owl** Twenty-six records (usually 1 or 2 birds). Two records suggest new breeding sites.

**Tawny Owl** Eighteen records from 10 sites, three records of birds calling during the day. Young chick recorded on Apr 17th.

**Long-eared Owl** Two records of calling birds from locations in the west of the county.

**Short-eared Owl** Recorded at 6 sites sporadically up to Apr 17th. Two birds on Mar 31st, otherwise singles.

**Common Swift** First record on Apr 18th at Ferry Meadows CP. Twenty arrived at Milton CP on Apr 21st; peak count of 30+ at Fen Drayton on Apr 24th.

**Common Kingfisher** Recorded widely across the county (33 records), including several records of pairs or nesting. Five birds recorded on the Ouse Washes at the end of March.

**Hoopoe** One at Caldecote on Apr 15th.

**Green Woodpecker** Recorded at 28 sites with maximum of 7 birds at Paxton Pits on Apr 4th.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** Generally 1–3 birds recorded at 19 sites; 1 record of 3 pairs.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** Seven records (seven sites) of singles. Two birds were drumming in mid-April.

## PASSERINES

**Skylark** Reported from 11 sites in March and 14 sites in April. In March, the largest counts reported were 24 at Monks Hardwick, St Neots, on 11th, with the same number at Lark Rise Farm, Barton, on the 27th. In April, the largest counts were 39 at Lark Rise Farm, Barton, on 20th.

**Sand Martin** Reported from 4 sites in March, with the largest count being 22 at Paxton Pits on 25th. In April, reported from 16 sites, with notable counts being 103 at Kingfishers Bridge on 28th, and 73 at Block Fen and 50 at Maxey GP on 16th.

**Barn Swallow** One at Manor Farm, West Perry on 13th March was the first of the year. Two were seen at the Ouse Washes on 16th, with one at Paxton

Pits on 18th. Singles appeared at a handful of sites at the end of the month and in the first week of April, with the main arrivals occurring in the second. The largest April count came from Ouse Fen, with 40 on 22nd.

**House Martin** Ten at Paxton Pits on Apr 9th were the first of the year. Hereafter reported from across the county with the largest count being 24 at Fowlmere on 30th.

**Tree Pipit** Two records: 1 flew over the Ouse Washes on Mar 28th and at Grafham Water, one flew over Mander Car Park early on Apr 9th.

**Meadow Pipit** Reported from 9 sites in March and 13 sites in April. Notable counts in March include 45 at Paxton Pits on 2nd, 25 at the Ouse Washes on 5th and 22 at Lark Rise Farm, Barton on 27th. In April, counts included 41 at Lark Rise Farm, Barton, on 7th and 40 at Paxton Pits on 9th.

**Rock Pipit** A bird identified as the migratory Scandinavian *littoralis* subspecies, was recorded from Paxton Pits between Mar 25th and Apr 6th.

**Water Pipit** Reported from 5 sites during the period, as follows: 2 on the Ouse Washes on Mar 5th, with 1 on 19th and a great count of 11 on 25th. A single was seen on the Nene Washes on Mar 16th and Apr 6th, with other singles at Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 30th and nearby at Wicken Fen on Apr 29th.

**Yellow Wagtail** The first record was of 2 at Paxton Pits on Apr 5th. Hereafter recorded from many sites. The largest counts were over 60 at March Farmers, Nene Washes, on 15th, 22 at Maxey GP the next day, and the same number at Kingfishers Bridge on 21st. Individuals considered to be of the subspecies *flava*, known as Blue-headed Wagtail, were recorded as follows: Fordham, 1 male from 21st to 23rd, a female at Grafham Water on 29th, which was joined by a male the next day.

**Grey Wagtail** Reported from 3 sites in March and 4 in April. All reports concerned individuals, except for 2 at the Ouse Washes on Mar 12th and 2 at Mill Bridge, Little Paxton on Apr 8th.

**Pied Wagtail** Reported from many sites during the period. Notable counts in March were over 100 at Kingfishers Bridge on 9th, with 71 at Paxton Pits on 16th and 70 roosting in the reedbed at Ely BF on 15th. In April no large counts reported as birds dispersed to breed, though a handful of counts of c10 birds noted, some of which were presumed to be migrants.

**White Wagtail** Reported from 8 sites during the period. In March, 1 was at Kingfishers Bridge on 6th, 1 at Chatteris on 22nd and 1 at the Ouse Washes on 30th. In April, 1 at Maxey GP on 1st, 2 at Paxton Pits on 9th, with 1 there the next day. One was at Grafham Water on 12th, with a good count of 21 at Maxey GP on 17th and 1 at Newborough on 19th.

**Wren** Reported from many sites across the region. Notable counts included 32 at East Fen, Isleham on 22nd April, 19 at Mere Farm, Ramsey Mere on 17th and 18 at Kingfishers Bridge on Apr 7th.

**Duncock** Reported from many sites. A notable count was of 10 at Fox's Bridge Farm, Toft, on Mar 10th.

**Robin** Reported from many sites. Twelve at Lark Rise Farm, Barton, on Apr 7th was a good count.

**Common Nightingale** Reported from 10 sites. The first record of the year came from Orton Brick Pit, Peterborough, where one was singing on Apr 8th. The next day, one was at Paxton Pits. Singles arrived at Fen Drayton GP, Ferry Meadows and Marsh Lane GP on 16th. The highest counts came from Paxton Pits, which peaked at 21 on 26th.

**Black Redstart** Reported from 3 sites. A female was reported from Paxton Pits on Mar 11th and 2 singing males were reported in the county.

**Common Redstart** Reported from 2 sites. One was at Ferry Meadows on Apr 19th, followed by a first summer male at Fowlmere on Apr 21st and 22nd.

**Whinchat** Reported from 5 sites. A male at Paxton Pits on Apr 22nd was the first of the year. On the 23rd, a female was on Eight Roods Land, Farcet, with 3 nearby at Blackbush and 1 at Tebbit's Bridge. Three were also present at Paxton Pits on 23rd, with a single male there the next day and 1 at Fen Drayton GP on 27th.

**Stonechat** Reported from 6 sites. A single was seen at the Ouse Washes in the first half of the month, with a single at Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 6th, 4 at Dimmock's Cote on Mar 16th, one at Wicken Fen on Mar 28th and one at Farcet Fen on 29th. An unusually late record came from Cambourne where one was reported on Apr 20th.

**Northern Wheatear** A late arrival this year, presumably due to northerly winds during March. A male at Farcet Fen on Mar 28th was the first record of the year, followed the next day by a female at Serpentine BP, Peterborough. During April, reported from 17 sites, with notable counts being 11 at Blackbush, near Whittlesey, on 24th and 7 at Stilton Fen on 29th. Birds considered to be of the Greenland form were recorded from King's Delph on 18th (1) and 19th (2) and Redmere, near Shippea Hill on 24th (4).

**Ring Ouzel** An excellent spring passage with at least 49 individuals recorded. The first records were of singles at Ickleton and Little Wilbraham on 11th April. The next day, singles were reported from Fowlmere and Melbourn, with a single male at Farcet Fen on 13th, along with another single at Witcham. On 14th, 3 were at Fen Drayton GP, and a female was at Fowlmere. A male was at Eldernell on 16th with 3 at Kings Dyke NR the next day. On 18th, 2 males were on Eight Roods Land, Farcet, with 1 at Swaddywell and the male still at Eldernell. The next day, 2 males were at Stretham. On the 20th, a female was found at Coton, and a male was located at Paxton Pits. On the 21st, 3 were on the Devils Dyke between Swaffham Prior and Burwell, 2 were at Ely, a pair was at Grafham Water, 2 at Granta Science Park, Cambridge and a female at Wicken Fen. On the 22nd, a male was still at Fen Drayton GP, with a female at Ferry Meadows and another female at Fowlmere. On the same day, 4 were present at Eldernell, 2 at High Hadden, Glatton, and a single at Trumpington. On 23rd, there was a pair at Fordham, a female at Caldecote, a male at Fleam Dyke, and other singles

at Fowlmere (remaining until the 29th) and Newborough Fen. On 25th, a female was at Melbourn and another single was on the Ouse Washes. The male remained at Fen Drayton GP until at least 29th. A single was reported from Moonshine Gap on 29th and a male rounded off the month at Shepreth L-Moor Wildlife Trust reserve on 30th.

**Blackbird** Reported commonly across the county, with fledged juveniles recorded from mid-April.

**Fieldfare** In March, notable counts included 312 at Fox's Bridge Farm, Toft on 10th, 260 at the Nene Washes on 16th, 224 at Fox's Bridge Farm, Toft on 30th, 159 at Paxton Pits on 16th and 152 heading east at Kingfishers Bridge on 21st. In April, notable counts included 100 at Paxton Pits on the 2nd, 61 at Toft on 6th and 48 at Kingfishers Bridge on 10th. The last record was of a single at Melbourn on 22nd.

**Song Thrush** Reported from many sites during the period. The only notable count was of 11 at Lark's Rise Farm, Barton on Apr 7th.

**Redwing** In March, notable counts were of 63 at Westfield Farm, Comberton on 6th, 56 at Kingfishers Bridge on 7th, over 50 at Fowlmere on 5th and 40 at Hardwick Wood on 6th. In April, 4 records received; 9 at Westfield Farm, Comberton on 5th, one singing at Paxton Pits on 15th, with another nearby at Grafham Water the same day and one at Coton on 20th.

**Mistle Thrush** Reported from many sites throughout the period. No large counts noted.

**Cetti's Warbler** Records were mainly from April, with reported from 5 sites, including Wicken Fen (maximum of 6 birds) and Woodwalton Fen NR. Singing birds or territorial activities were noted at all sites.

**Common Grasshopper Warbler** Noted at 10 sites, the earliest record was on Apr 12th at Wicken Fen (this being the same as the long term average). Wicken Fen held 2 singing males up to the end of the month; elsewhere single birds were found.

**Sedge Warbler** No records beat the average earliest date of arrival of Apr 6th, the first being on Apr 9th (Orton BP) – around 6 days later than the earliest of last year. Influxes into many sites occurred in the following days with 30 singing birds at Kingfishers Bridge by the end of the month.

**Eurasian Reed Warbler** The first record was spot-on the average date (Apr 19th, Paxton Pits); with further reports from 7 other sites, Woodwalton Fen holding 3 singing males.

**Lesser Whitethroat** Reports of sightings or singing birds started on Apr 13th (Huntingdon) and it was present at 14 sites before the mean date of earliest arrival (Apr 18th). It was commented that for a while, this species seemed more often found than Common Whitethroat. The maximum was 6 singing males at Orton BP.

**Common Whitethroat** This species was a week or so later in arriving than was usual, the earliest records being one on Apr 17th at Farcet Fen (Crowtree) and one at King's Dyke NR.

**Garden Warbler** A report from Fen Drayton GP on Apr 15th was the earliest (the long term average

being this date). By month's end, it was noted at 11 other sites.

**Blackcap** The first record for March was 10th, with reports from 6 more sites until month's end.

Reports became more numerous from around Apr 9th.

**Wood Warbler** A single record of 1 at Brampton Wood on Apr 23rd.

**Common Chiffchaff** At numerous sites in both months, singing birds were noted from the start. The first sighting at Wicken Fen was Mar 16th, with a peak count at Paxton Pits of 23 on Mar 25th. Milton CP (Cambridge) held 16 on Mar 31st.

**Willow Warbler** The earliest reports were 3 or 4 days later than the long term average, for instance the earliest at Fen Drayton GP and Paxton Pits were on Apr 1st and 2nd resp. Nine were present at Orton BP on Apr 9th, and 11 singing males were at Fen Drayton GP on Apr 11th.

**Goldcrest** Reporting was limited to 9 sites, with up to 3 at Kingfishers Bridge.

**Firecrest** A male was seen briefly on Apr 12th at Fowlmere RSPB.

**Pied Flycatcher** A male was at Fowlmere on Apr 28th.

**Bearded Tit** Noted at only 2 sites – with 2 pairs and confirmation of breeding at one of these.

**Long-tailed Tit** Reported widely but only from 14 sites with 1–7 birds noted.

**Marsh Tit** Present in March at Ditton Park Wood, Eversden Wood, Paxton Pits, Upton Wood and The Gloucesters (Wimpole); and in April at Fowlmere RSPB, Hardwick Wood, Woodwalton Fen and again at Paxton Pits. Upton Wood held 6–7 pairs.

**Coal Tit** A maximum of 2 birds at any site, more often found in private gardens especially those with feeders.

**Blue Tit** Reported from 15 locations, with a Melbourn pair investigating a garden nest box as early as Mar 6th.

**Great Tit** Sixteen birds were present on East Fen, Isleham in April, elsewhere at 15 sites, 1–8 birds were reported.

**Wood Nuthatch** Reported from 3 sites with counts of 2 birds at Hayley Wood supported by just singles at Ditton Park Wood and Priory Park, St. Neots.

**Eurasian Treecreeper** Recorded from 9 sites mostly involved 1–2 birds, but 4 singing males were reported at Paxton Pits with a further 4 reported at Milton CP and 3 at Wimpole NT.

**Eurasian Jay** Reported from 18 sites during the period with a maximum count of 5+ at Elm on Mar 31st and 5 at Dry Drayton on Mar 24th.

**Black-billed Magpie** Recorded from 8 sites during the period with the peak count being 16+ at Elm on Mar 31st.

**Eurasian Jackdaw** Records were received from 10 sites with 35+ at Elm on Mar 31st being the maximum count.

**Rook** Good numbers of nesting birds were recorded during the period but the peak count was again from Elm with 110+ feeding on arable land on Mar 31st.

**Carion Crow** Reported from 16 sites including a flock of 54 birds at Westfield Farm, Comberton on Mar 24th.

**Common Starling** Records were received from 17 sites with 1000 birds coming to roost at Paxton Pits on Mar 2nd being the peak count.

**House Sparrow** Reported from 12 sites during the period including many breeding birds. Elm hosted the peak count of 45+ birds in both March and April but 40+ birds were also recorded at Denton, near Stilton on Apr 16th.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** Records were received from just 4 sites including a single bird at Wisbech on Apr 12th. However, as can be expected, Farcet Fen, Block Fen and The Ouse Washes remain the strongholds of this species and still account for the bulk of the records.

**Chaffinch** Reported from 16 sites including a flock of 28 birds at Fox's Bridge Farm, Toft on Mar 10th.

**Brambling** Only a handful of birds remained during the period where reports were received from just 3 sites with the Ouse Washes having the peak count of 6 birds on Mar 10th.

**European Greenfinch** Recorded at 15 sites including 25+ at Elm on Mar 31st and 24 in a Stretham garden on Mar 22nd.

**European Goldfinch** Reported from 12 sites with the peak count being 24 birds in presumably the same Stretham garden on Mar 22nd.

**Eurasian Siskin** A hard bird to find this year with again only 4 records throughout the period. Three birds were observed flying north in Stretham on Mar 31st and unusually, a bird was seen gathering nesting material in Cambridge on Apr 4th.

**Common Linnet** Reported from 22 sites with 145 birds at Waterbeach Fen on Mar 16th being the peak count. A further 80 birds were recorded as being the monthly maximum at Ouse Fen.

**Lesser Redpoll** Reported from 3 sites with just 2 birds at Woodwalton Fen on Apr 6th being the peak count.

**Common Bullfinch** Records were received from 16 sites including a single flock of 20 birds at Grafham Water on Mar 17th.

**Hawfinch** An unconfirmed report of a single bird was received from Paxton Pits on Apr 6th.

**Yellowhammer** Reported from 21 sites with the

maximum being 30 on rough ground at Cambourne.

**Reed Bunting** Records were received from 24 sites with the peak being the WEBS count at the Ouse Washes on Mar 19th. A further 25 birds were reported from Block Fen on Mar 19th.

**Corn Bunting** A large increase in reports during the period with records from 16 sites. The peak count was 34 birds sitting on a telephone wire at Sutton Gault on Apr 24th.

#### HYBRIDS

**Canada x Barnacle** One or two birds of this combination were noted at Bury Fen and Cambourne.

**Canada x Greylag** One at Kingfishers Bridge throughout the period. Also at Cam Washes (Waterbeach) on Mar 25.

**Common Pochard x Tufted Duck** A drake of this combination at Ouse Washes (Oxlode) at the end of March.

**Scaup or Scaup x Tufted Duck** A female at Marsh Lane GP on Apr 21 was a difficult bird to identify for certain.

#### EXOTICA

**Black Swan** One was apparently sitting on nest at river Cam near Mill Pond, Cambridge, on Mar 12th. Also one at Ely Riverside on Mar 18th, and one at Kingfishers Bridge on Mar 20th was the first record for the site. Also a pair were recorded breeding on Coe Fen, by river Cam (4 eggs seen). Individuals at Brownhill Stauch and Little Shelford.

**Bar-headed Goose** At Paxton Pits for most of April.

**Argentine Bluebill** A drake at Paxton Pits from Mar 2nd to 16th.

**Rosy-billed Pochard** Recorded at St Neots (Eynesbury – Pocket Park) on Mar 10th and Paxton Pits on Mar 31st.

**Wood Duck** A drake on the Cam, near Elizabeth Bridge, Cambridge, on Mar 12th.

**Indian Peafowl** Two at Monks Wood on Mar 27th.

**Lanner Falcon** One at Paxton Pits on Mar 30th.

**Grey Cocketiel** One at Gamlingay on Apr 10th.

Contributors: Colin Addington, Ian Barton, Rowena Baxter, Carlos Davies, Steve Dudley, Evans PJ & AJ, Dr Mike Foley, David Griffiths, Kevin Harris, Mark Hawkes, Fred Heath, Peter Herkenrath, Julian Hughes, Bob Humphrey, Andrew Knights, John Le Gassick, Jono Leadley, Tony Mallyon, Owen & Monica Marks, Bruce & Gwen Martin, Mark Missin, Robert Pople, Duncan Poyser, Michael Price, Tony Roberts, Kathleen Rosewarne, Bob & Ann Scott, Clive Sinclair, Alan & Brenda Wadsworth, P. M. Warrington, Birdline East Anglia, Cambridgeshire Bird Club website.

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.



## News from the Ouse Washes

*Alex Thomas*

I am sure that many people reading this article have visited the RSPB Ouse Washes on a number of occasions and know how quickly the bird spectacle can change. There are those great days when meandering down to the hides there is a memorable sight out of every window. Conversely, there are those days when the long straight trudge results in views that are bereft of birds. How many times have you been told by one of the wardens that it was great for wild swans last week or that the Ruff were in front of Stockdales hide, but they have now gone! In fact there can be nothing more frustrating than turning up and finding out that it was fantastic all last month but now unfortunately the water levels have risen and the birds are on the far side. To try to rectify this problem, so that people know when it is best to visit, we have started a little informal e-mail that is sent out on an ad-hoc basis. This is kindly forwarded by Bruce Martin to Cambirds. This e-mail is often brief but tries to encapsulate the current view/feel of the reserve. It is proving to be popular – so much so that I am now writing this article to give a greater background to some of the points mentioned in the e-mails, and to inform readers who do not subscribe to Cambirds.

Firstly, a quick review of last winter, the washes first began to flood at the end of October due to high tides combining with rainfall in the Great Ouse catchment area. This resulted in ideal winter flood conditions, which lasted for just under a month. Ideal winter flood conditions are when the flood level is between 1.3 metres and 1.5 metres. This means the washes are covered by shallow water and the reserve wardens have big smiles and wax lyrical about the winter bird assemblages. Unfortunately, last winter the levels rose above the ideal level and by late November the bird spectacle had been replaced by a large expanse of deep water. It pretty much stayed that way until late April. This is caused by the inability of the water to be evacuated from the washes, due to the siltation issue down stream at the Tidal River. Nevertheless, there were some winter highlights that included Grey Phalarope, Red and Black-necked Grebe and the late swan roosts within walking distance of the visitor centre.

Currently unbeknown to many visitors there is an extension to the reserve, which is best viewed from the back of Cottier and Stevens hide. It consists of six fields that were arable and have now been converted to wet grassland, which run parallel to the washes. This area, known as the Pilot Project consists of 45 hectares and was created in 2001. Its objective is to provide alternative habitat for breeding waders, when the Ouse Washes is in unsuitable condition due to prolonged winter and spring flooding. The six arable fields were sown with a grass mix and furrows (narrow, shallow foot drains) were created by a machine called the Rotary Ditcher. These surface furrows, in conjunction with dams and pipes allow the water table to be raised and the fields are kept wet from January to June. As well as making the ground soft and probe-able for feeding Snipe and Redshank, it also provides suitable foraging areas for wader chicks. The final component of the Pilot Project is a nine-strand electric fence, which serves to keep foxes out. Once the waders have finished rearing young, the water table is dropped and the management for the following year begins. This is achieved by grazing cattle and sheep over the summer and autumn, thereby producing a mosaic of swards for nesting waders for the following spring.

In spring 2006, the Pilot Project supported 8 pairs of Lapwing, 7 pairs of Redshank and 5 pairs of Snipe. It was also the first year that fledged birds were recorded. This spring, numbers have increased and currently stand at 9 pairs of Lapwing, 7 pairs of Redshank and 7 pairs of Snipe. Previously many of the breeding waders would have left the Pilot Project as soon as the washes became available, but now they are choosing to use the site and suggesting the fields are becoming suitable wader habitat.

However, this is not the end of the Pilot Project as we have recently taken on the tenancy of another four arable fields, making a total area of 76 hectares. This means the area will extend past Stevens hide and all the way to the railway. These four fields were sown with a grass mix in the autumn of 2006 and the electric fence will be installed this winter along with new furrows and pools. From spring 2008, it is hoped that waders will start to use this area.

If anyone would like to receive the Ouse Washes e-mail up-dates directly, please contact [alex.thomas@rspb.org.uk](mailto:alex.thomas@rspb.org.uk)

## First Fen Impressions

*Sandi and Robin Irvine*

If you wake early on a sunny morning, don't go back to sleep. Go and visit the RSPB's 'new' Lakenheath reserve. This is what we did in mid May, lured by the possibility of hearing Golden Orioles again. Despite the opening of the new visitor centre there was plenty of parking (as yet still free) and enough distance in the paths to find space and quiet on one's own, even with a large number of birdwatchers. The shiny new centre has little more than toilets, display boards and a 'What's About' list at present but picnic tables promise more to come.

The RSPB are to be congratulated on consolidating a wide range of pleasant vistas and active habitat into a very easily accessed area, the whole forming a huge kinetic artwork of sound and colour. Immediately through the visitor centre there are views over an open pond; dragonflies and damsel flies are clearly evident. Peacock, Red Admiral and Orange-tip butterflies dance across gravel tracks. Pale brown reedbeds contrast with tall green poplars and clumps of flowering elder. The first sounds to hit us were those of the Reed Warblers, followed swiftly by the Sedge Warblers, both easily seen at the moment and, with a persistent Cuckoo, they provided a background to the whole walk. The track took us near the railway – full of Whitethroats singing and displaying – and a first chance to hear the carolling of the Orioles amidst the harsh notes of the corvid roost in one of the several poplar stands. A Hobby swooped through the topmost branches. Beyond there are open fields where Marsh Harriers glided and, closer, a mixture of reedbeds and mysterious pools. There were more Orioles in the following stands of poplars on the right and Great Spotted Woodpeckers drumming.

Then we came upon a raised bank looking out over one of the larger reedbeds and there were plenty of telescopes on the look out for the elusive Cranes, Bitterns (not seen or heard yet) and Bearded Tits (also eluded us); huge fish raised their dorsal fins out of the water and glooped in the shallows for insects and we did have a fly past by the Orioles!

The reserve path continues to a junction with the public footpath. Word has it (confirmed more recently) that the Cranes can be seen if one continues up this path. Turning back into the reserve and continuing with poplars on the right and the river and fields on the left, we saw Great Crested Grebes and many swans, Shoveler and Mallard in the water meadows. The more common song birds started up in poplars – Blackbird, Wren, Thrush and Robin. Oystercatchers piped along the river, even the Mute Swans weren't so mute. The return track could be muddy but for us was hard, grey and cracked. Passing scopes pointing in both directions was a bit tricky but most people were very accommodating. The final views over large pools and more river brought Common Terns, gulls, Shelduck and Gadwall (and finally a close view of the Cuckoo). The path divides and one can take a short cut back to the carpark. Thus the whole walk is also easily traversed in reverse, taking 2–3 hours depending on your dawdling time. Lots more Hobbies hawked over the carpark and everything called us back for another visit.

*Further information:* Lakenheath Fen nature reserve in Suffolk – a site that was a carrot field until the Society bought it 11 years ago and began its transformation into a square mile of marsh and fen. Club members were among the volunteers who worked on this project. The reserve is open daily from dawn to dusk; the visitors' centre is open 10:00 to 16:00. The entrance is close to Lakenheath railway station on the Cambridge–Norwich line, where trains stop on Saturday and Sunday.

Ellie Fretwell, RSPB Public Affairs Officer, at Lakenheath reports (18 June) that there is a second pair of Cranes that you can see flying in and around the site, if you have lots of time and patience. There are now 2 nests with breeding Orioles within the Poplar plantation, along with 6 breeding pairs of Marsh Harriers, and an abundance of Bearded Tits, Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers.

Also see [www.rspb.org.uk/fens](http://www.rspb.org.uk/fens)



## Warbler Workshop at Fowlmere NR on 5 May 2007

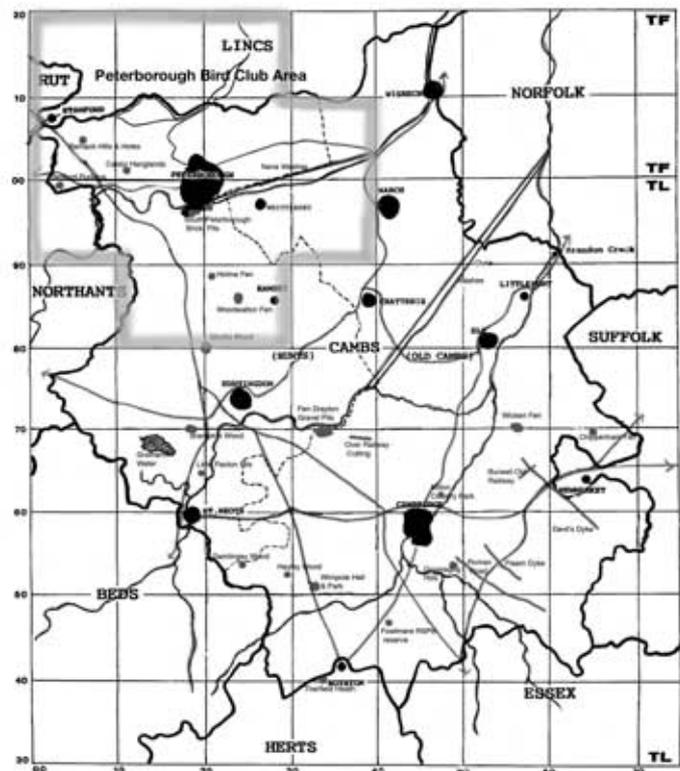
The Club, in collaboration with the RSPB Fowlmere reserve, organised a warbler workshop on 5 May. At 6am, 26 participants gathered despite the cold and overcast weather, and, led by Peter Herkenrath and the reserve warden Doug Radford, learned about the warblers at Fowlmere and how to identify them. The following warbler species were seen or heard: Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Goldcrest. Of the regular species at Fowlmere, only Grasshopper Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat were not found, probably due to the unfavourable weather. In addition, Doug provided an insight into the management of the reserve. The workshop, which finished at 10am, hopefully helped to increase observers' skills. The Club had not anticipated such a strong interest; several people, registering late, had unfortunately to be refused to keep the group at a manageable size. Plans are to repeat the workshop next year.

## The BTO/Cambridgeshire Bird Club /Peterborough Bird Club Atlas Project 2007–2001

The next five years will be 20 years since the last national breeding atlas of birds survey period. At that time, we also carried out a full breeding survey in 'Old Cambs' – the parts not in Huntingdonshire or the Soke of Peterborough (the Huntingdonshire section was covered two years later). The BTO is repeating its atlas project, and as a club we have decided to repeat a new survey, now covering the whole of the modern county, with the co-operation of the Peterborough Bird Club in their area. The BTO is combining breeding survey work with winter survey work in the same period, starting this coming Winter, and they aim to cover eight tetrads (2 × 2 km squares) in each 10 km square in the British Isles in both in winter and summer. As a club, we are aiming to get more comprehensive coverage than this, leading to a publication at the end of the survey period showing breeding and winter distributions across the county.

So, what will you need to do? Each tetrad has to be visited twice in summer and twice in winter, once during the survey period. Each visit should be 1–2 hours, so that's actually only 4–8 hours in the field, probably a lot less than many of you spend on your local patch or visiting other sites in the county. We also need several volunteers to take on the role of co-ordinating a group of volunteers in a 10 km square (or more than one), to ensure sensible coverage.

As part of this, we will be having an indoor meeting in early autumn (probably September) to go through methods and hints and tips on how to progress, and also to put volunteers for the same square in touch with each other. We also hope to have a field session in the Spring for those who feel they need a bit of training, although it really is as simple as going out birding for the morning!



If you would like to volunteer, look at the map, and let me know which area you are interested. The area in the northwest, outlined in grey, is the Peterborough Bird Club area and they will be

responsible for co-ordinating the coverage in these 10km squares; so if you volunteer for one of those, I will be putting you in the capable hands of our colleagues in Peterborough.

Email or write to Louise Bacon, email via [cambsbirdatlas@btinternet.com](mailto:cambsbirdatlas@btinternet.com) or by post to 236 Wimpole Road Barton, Cambridge.

### **CBC research committee members required**

The Club's research committee is looking for new members. The committee is responsible for the Club's research activities such as the recent breeding owl survey. By joining you will have the chance to help organise the Atlas work, as outlined above, or other projects. If you are interested and would like to volunteer or discuss this, please contact Louise Bacon (details on back page).

### **Roger Clarke – Memorial Appeal**

The Club was privileged to have Roger Clarke as one of its members and especially as Chairman. He was one of the country's most distinguished ornithologists as has been reflected in the many tributes and obituaries which have been published since his death. It is felt that his memory and his association with the Club should be commemorated in some permanent way and, since Wicken Fen was one of his favourite places where much of his work on Hen Harriers was done, it is proposed that an inscribed seat there would be an appropriate memorial. If the members were really generous in their subscriptions to this project it is possible that we could contribute to the cost of a hide which is to be built on Baker's Fen. This could be dedicated to Roger, but it would, of course, be much more expensive than a seat.

I hope all our members will subscribe generously to this project in memory of Roger, which will also have tangible benefit to those who visit Wicken. Donations should be made to Kevin Harris and addressed to: The Treasurer, CBC, 2 Millers Lane, Toft, Cambridge CB23 2RX

Cheques should be made payable to Cambridgeshire Bird Club. They can also be given to a Council member at a Club meeting.

*Robin Cox*

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **INDOOR MEETING**

**Friday September 11th Milton Country Park Visitor's Centre**

**Peregrines, Parrots and Poisons: the work of the RSPB's Investigations by Duncan McNiven**

Wild birds face all kinds of problems in the environment – habitat destruction, migration hazards, climate change and agricultural intensification to name just a few. But they also suffer from the criminal activities of people who want to destroy them or use them illegally for commercial gain. This talk will illustrate the lengths that a small team of RSPB investigators go to in order foil these activities and bring the perpetrators to justice. The talk will focus on some of the issues of high conservation concern such as raptor persecution, threats to rare breeding birds in the UK, and the international trade in endangered species. Duncan is a Senior Investigations Officer with the RSPB but is also a life-long birder and member of the Cambridgeshire Bird Club. Before joining the RSPB he worked on ornithological projects in Cameroon, Suriname, New Guinea and California.

### **OUTDOOR MEETINGS**

**Friday 13th July Visit to Chippenham Fen National Nature Reserve**

Kevin Warrington, Chippenham Fen Site manager for Natural England, will be leading a guided walk for the Bird Club. We hope to end the evening with moth trapping.

Meet at 6.30pm at the reserve entrance (TL651692).

**Booking is essential** – please contact Louise Bacon (details on back page).

Chippenham Fen is not open to the public away from the single public footpath through the site, so we will have a chance to walk around this wonderful wetland site and see their management practises including the Water Buffalo which are used as part of the grazing regime to keep this flower and invertebrate rich site in good condition.

**Friday 10th August Barbecue at Fowlmere RSPB Reserve**

Guided walk led by the Warden or a volunteer warden at 6.30 pm. Barbecue cooking in the picnic area from 7.30pm. Bring your own food to cook. Salad, baps, sauces, soft drinks available – donation towards costs welcome.

We hope to arrange a moth trapping session later in the evening.

Toilets are available.

**Contact Dick Newell** by 6th August if you intend to come – this will help us with the catering.

**FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

We welcome the following new members – Richard Howlett Jones of Cambridge, Gavin Paterson of Cambridge, Lesley Pulvertaft of Lode, Jeff Stenning of Cambridge and Nigel Sprowell of St Ives.

*Bruce Martin*

**EXCHANGE BIRD REPORTS**

The Bird Club exchanges Annual Reports with the following Counties/societies: - Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire & Rutland, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Suffolk.

If any one is interested in borrowing any of these Reports please contact me to arrange collection or I can take them to Bird club meetings.

*Bruce Martin* (see back page for phone and email).

**FROM THE BULLETIN EDITOR**

If you would like to contribute to the bulletin with an article, short note, request for help or information, or drawing, please contact me. You can send me a complete item or contact me with an initial idea. If you would like to receive your bulletin by email or be subscribed to CBC-ANNOUNCE, just send me an email.

If you have already made such a request but are still receiving your bulletin in hard copy, please let me know and I will check the e-subscribers list.

*Vicki Harley* (see back page for phone and email).

**\*\*\***

**RSPB Guided Walks at Ely**

**Sunday 24 June and Tuesday 26 June, 2–4 p.m.**

Meet RSPB staff at Oliver Cromwell's House, Ely, for a circular walk through the city, around the Pocket Park, Roswell Pits and along the river. Highlights of previous walks have included fantastic sightings of Kingfishers, Herons, Great Crested Grebes, Common Terns and more. Cost: Adults £3; Children £1; RSPB members: half-price.

For further details contact Eleanor Fretwell on 01842 863403.

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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](http://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 email records to: Mark Hawkes by July 7th**

**Please send records by post to: Louise Bacon by July 7th**

**Next Bulletin due out August 2007, covering May–June 2007**

# GOOD BIRDING!