

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 400



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

RECENT REPORTS SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2008

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), Vicki Harley (Gulls and Terns, Hybrids and Exotica), Jon Pavey (Pigeons to Woodpeckers), Colin Kirtland (Larks to Thrushes), Mike Foley (Warblers to Tits) and David Heath (Wood Nuthatch to Buntings). If you have valid reasons to dispute comments (e.g. further records) please forward these to the county recorder (contact details on back page).

FIELD MEETINGS

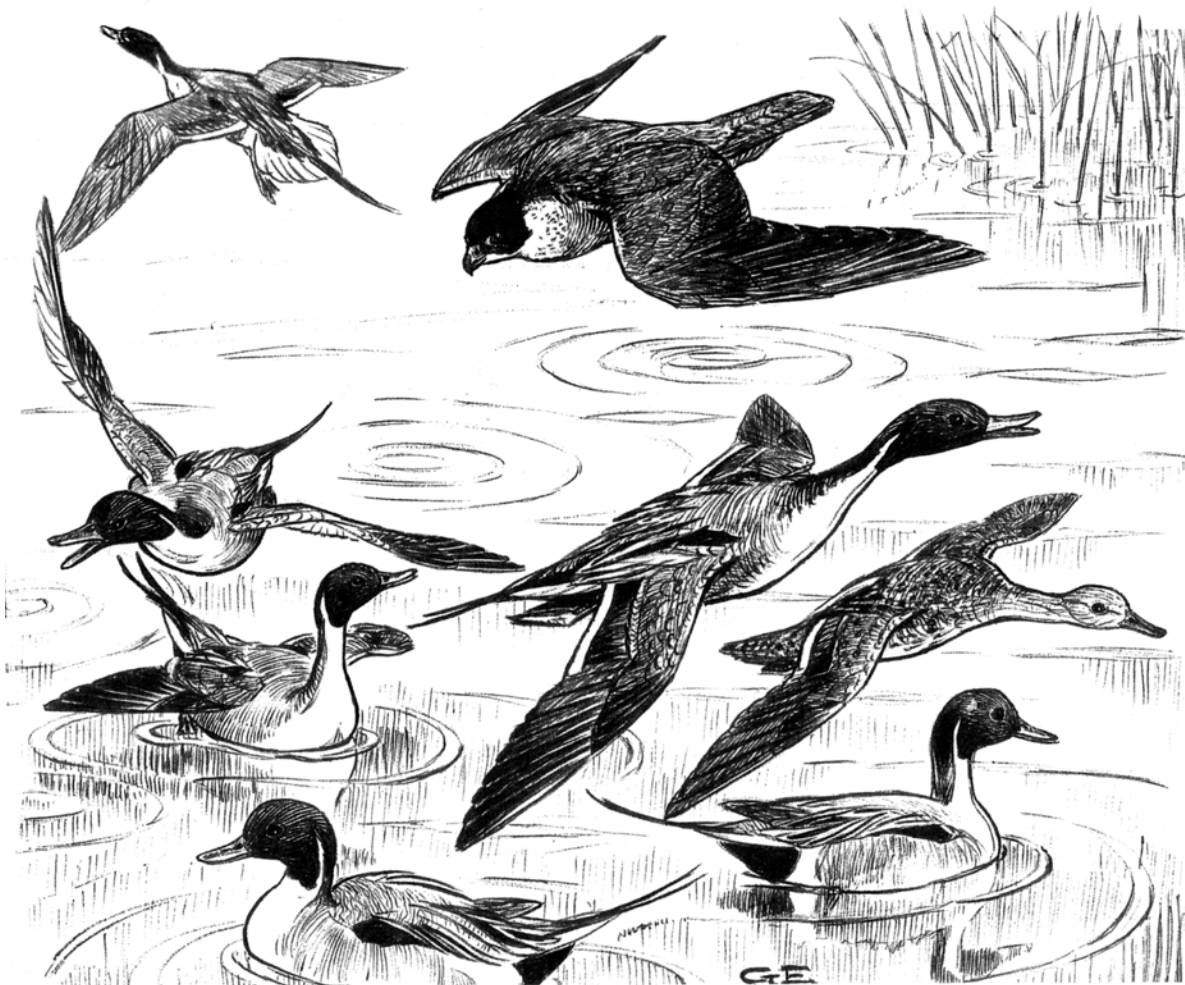
Ringling at Wicken Fen

CBC members are invited to attend a bird-ringing session at Wicken Fen on Saturday January 3rd 2009. Please see p13 for details. You must book to attend this event.

Cambridgeshire Bird Club Roving Atlas Day: 10 January 2009

Spend a day birding in the county and contribute to the BTO/CBC Atlas – see p12.

Peregrine and Pintails by Graham Easy



Numbers in brackets indicate November and December maximums.

WILDFOWL

Mute Swan At Fen Drayton Lakes (226; 236) and Grafham Water (194; 124). Now that the Ouse Washes are in flood again numbers, as would be expected, have shot up with 566 birds on the October count. Double-figure counts were made at 6 other sites.

Whooper Swan The first returning birds were seen on the Ouse Washes on Sep 29th and by the end of the period 136 was the maximum count in the Cambs section.

Pink-footed Goose Ten birds flew south over Wicken Fen on Oct 16th and singles were seen at Grafham Water on Oct 19th and Kingfishers Bridge on Oct 28th.

Greylag Goose Three-figure counts were at Grafham Water (446; 431), Kingfishers Bridge (173; 290), Needingworth GP (416), Ouse Fen (280), the Ouse Washes (205), Paxton Pits (577) and Wicken Fen (143; 190).

Canada Goose Three-figure counts were at Berry Fen RSPB (145), Grafham Water (100+), Kingfishers Bridge (291; 312), the Ouse Washes (299; 776) and Wicken Fen (174).

Barnacle Goose Up to 3 birds reported from 5 sites.

Brent Goose One bird was at Ouse Fen on Sep 7th.

Egyptian Goose Up to 2 birds were seen at Buckden GP, 2 on the Ouse Washes and 3 at Paxton Pits during the period.

Common Shelduck At the Ouse Washes 59 birds were still present in early October but had dropped to 4 by 20th and there were 3 at Ouse Fen on 19th.

Mandarin Singles were seen at Bolton's Pit on Sep 12th and a pair on Oct 7th.

Eurasian Wigeon Numbers increased during the period with 7067 on the Ouse Washes by Oct 20th. The next highest counts were 671 at Fen Drayton Lakes and 670 at Paxton Pits.

Gadwall Three-figure counts were 663 at the Ouse Washes, 241 at Fen Drayton Lakes and 187 at Buckden GP.

Eurasian Teal Three-figure counts were 784 at the Ouse Washes, 170 at Wicken Fen, 151 at the Cam Washes Upware and 137 at Needingworth GP.

Green-winged Teal A bird was at Woodwalton Fen on Oct 21st.

Mallard The highest count was 1631 at the Ouse Washes and 7 sites had a three-figure count.

Northern Pintail Apart from a count of 237 at the Ouse Washes birds at 7 other sites only reached single figures.

Garganey Ten birds were at the Ouse Washes on Sep 6th and 2 birds on Oct 13th.

Northern Shoveler Three-figure counts were made at the Ouse Washes (372) and Wicken Fen 175. Double figures we seen at 8 other sites.

Red-crested Pochard Single birds were seen at Fen Drayton Lakes, Needingworth GP and Paxton Pits.

Common Pochard Double figures were present at 10 sites.

Tufted Duck At Buckden GP (217; 98), Fen Drayton Lakes (505; 363), Grafham Water (1145; 435), the Ouse Washes (354; 64) and Paxton Pits (217). Double figures were counted at 3 other sites.

Great Scaup Two birds were at Grafham Water on Sep 29th and single birds at Ouse Fen, the Ouse Washes and Wicken Fen mid October.

Common Scoter Three birds were at Grafham Water on Oct 24th and 2 on the 29th.

Goldeneye Single figures were seen at 4 sites.

Smew An early bird was at Grafham Water on Oct 24th.

Red-breasted Merganser A juv/female was at Grafham Water on Oct 9th.

Goosander The first of the winter was seen at Grafham Water on Oct 22nd and another at Milton CP on 27th.

Ruddy Duck Reported from 3 sites.

GAMEBIRDS

Red-legged Partridge Only reported from 5 sites with 13 at Long Drove Cottenham the maximum count.

Grey Partridge Noted from 11 sites including 12 at Ouse Fen, 10 near Milton Tip, 8 Lolworth and a road casualty at Comberton.

Common Pheasant Double-figure counts only from Elm and Comberton.

DIVERS TO HERONS

Red-throated Diver An adult in winter plumage was at Grafham Water on Oct 4th.

Great Northern Diver Two birds were seen at Grafham Water in October: a moulting adult on the 23rd and a juvenile on the 31st.

Little Grebe Double figures were noted at Grafham Water (19), Needingworth GP (29), Ouse Fen (17), the Ouse Washes (14) and Paxton Pits (37). Single figures were counted at 5 other sites.

Great Crested Grebe Three-figure counts were made at Fen Drayton Lakes (118) and Grafham Water (213). Also noted at 7 other sites.

Red-necked Grebe One was at Grafham Water on Sep 19th.

Black-necked Grebe One was at Woodwalton Fen on Oct 19th.

Manx Shearwater One was at Grafham Water on Sep 6th.

Northern Gannet A juvenile bird flew south over Paxton Pits on Sep 7th and another bird over Ouse Fen on Oct 12th.

Great Cormorant At Fen Drayton Lakes (137; 127) were the only three-figure counts. Double figures were noted at 9 other sites.

European Shag Just one bird remained from the late August influx, a juvenile at Ferry Meadows CP on Sep 1st.

Great Bittern One or two birds were seen at Fen Drayton Lakes from mid October.

Little Egret Double figures were seen at Fen Drayton Lakes (18), Ouse Fen (34) and Paxton Pits (17). Also noted at 11 other sites.

Great Egret A juvenile was at Kingfishers Bridge on Sep 27th.

Grey Heron Double figures were present at Fen Drayton Lakes (15), Grafham Water (14), Needingworth GP (18), Ouse Fen (10) and the Ouse Washes (35). Single figures were at 11 other sites.

Glossy Ibis An adult was first seen on the Ouse Washes on Sep 23rd where it favoured the area just south of Sutton Gault. Each night it flew south down the Washes to roost and after a concerted effort on Oct 1st by three observers spaced along the Ouse Valley it was traced to the Heron and Little Egret roost at Fen Drayton Lakes. It continued this pattern until Oct 12th when it was last seen at Chain Corner.

Eurasian Spoonbill A number of birds roamed the county during the period with 2 at Ouse Fen on Sep 7th, then 3 flew over Ouse Fen on Sep 13th. Two of those birds were at Grafham Water on Sep 14th until the 23rd when they moved on to Paxton Pits where they stayed until Sep 30th. Single birds were at Kingfishers Bridge on Oct 4th and at Wicken Fen on Oct 14th to 16th.

RAPTORS

A fantastic period for raptor passage with high pressure and easterly winds favouring soaring migrants. Sitting comfortably on a high point, preferably one on a ridge or near a watercourse, is a good strategy in such conditions, as birds drift by. Richard Hall seemed to have done particularly well with this strategy at Magog Down just south of Cambridge; between the 19th and 21st Sep logging 2 Honey Buzzards, Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Sparrowhawk, 15 Common Buzzards and Peregrine.

European Honey-buzzard An incredible autumn passage for this species in eastern Britain, and Cambridgeshire didn't miss out with 2 on 13th Sept at Morborne Hill the first of a great run. On the 14th there were individuals reported at Melbourn, Cambridge, Ouse Fen, St. Neots, Wicken Fen, Witcham and 3 or 4 at Paxton Pits! Eight further singles were reported up to 25th Sept, then 4 at Fowlmere on 28th, 2 at Marsh Lane on Oct 2nd and the last on Oct 9th at Caldecote. As this passage coincided with large scale Common Buzzard movements, it will be essential that observers give good descriptions of the birds seen; also, precise time of observation, direction of travel, colour phase, any distinctive features of birds may help analysis of the true number of individuals involved.

Red Kite Continuing to maintain a presence in the county, with birds seen at 9 sites, including 2s at Ferry Meadows and Paxton Pits, both on Sept 14th.

Eurasian Marsh Harrier Frequently seen throughout the period, with a high count of 16 at the Ouse Washes found during a specific count of Harriers on Oct 16th. Other wetlands had lower maxima, with 5 at Nene Washes, 3 each Wicken Fen and Kingfishers Bridge, 2 at Woodwalton Fen. Migrant birds were also noted, for example 4 at Grafham Water on Sept 7th and a first record for the well-watched Westfield Farm at Comberton on Oct 6th.

Hen Harrier Six records: Sept 7th a male at Ouse Fen, Sept 28th, female at Wicken Fen, Oct 2nd,

22nd and 23rd singles at Ouse Washes and Oct 27th a ringtail at Great Gidding.

Montagu's Harrier A ringtail seen at Magog Down on Sep 21st was also seen distantly by a second observer who reported it as 'Harrier sp.'. Any sightings of these difficult birds should be backed up with full written descriptions.

Northern Goshawk Two records received: Sept 8th at Wicken Fen and Oct 9th at Earith a bird was seen soaring high in the middle of the day. Written records are always required with this species as well.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk Records came from 23 sites, mostly of singles and a few pairs. Four+ in the Elm area was the highest count. Prey items seen included Woodpigeon, Greenfinch and Starling.

Common Buzzard One hundred and seven records! Passage and resident birds noted in good numbers throughout the period but on 13th–14th Sept (when peak Honey Buzzard passage also noted) there were 25+ at Grafham Water with 22 in view at once, 25 at Ouse Fen, c. 25 at Paxton Pits and 6 at Castor Hanglands. Heavy passage was again noted around 20th–21st Sept with 15 Fen Drayton, 12 Magog Down and c. 10 at Paxton Pits and on Oct 6th with 20 at Elton and 17 Fowlmere.

Osprey Singletons seen throughout the period from Sept 2nd at Cam Washes to Oct 30th at Paxton Pits. Most seen at larger wetland sites of course, with 8 dates at Grafham Water, 8 at Eldernell on the Nene Washes, and 5 dates at Kings Dyke NR probably representing long-staying individuals.

Common Kestrel Only noted at 17 sites with high counts of 6 at Ouse Washes, 5+ Wicken fen and 3 at Hinchingsbrooke and Elm, the latter site having one male road casualty.

Red-footed Falcon Two records, both on Sept 20th – a probable immature over Cambridge and a male at Wimpole Hill / Eversden.

Merlin An interesting observation of 2 hunting in tandem at Paxton Pits on Sept 2nd was also the high count of the period, with further singles seen at Fordham, Castor Hanglands, Ouse Washes (4 dates), Nene Washes (twice), Ouse Fen, Wicken Fen, Fen Drayton, Isleham and Waterbeach.

Eurasian Hobby Abundant sightings in September fizzling out in October with one late bird on Oct 27th at Grunty Fen. Peak counts came between 7th and 20th Sept, with 7 at Grafham Water, 6 at Paxton Pits, 5 at Cam Washes, 10 at Ouse Fen and 9 at Hemingford Grey.

Peregrine Falcon Seen at 12 sites, with 2 on the Ouse Washes on Oct 3rd and separate sightings of ad male and juv female at Paxton Pits the only multiples.

RAILS

Rail Recorded at 11 locations, with 7 at Kingfishers Bridge on Sept 18th the highest count.

Common Moorhen Main reports came via the WeBS counts: Berry Fen (1; 6), Fen Drayton (28; 31), Grafham Water (23; 18), Landbeach (10;11), Needingworth (11; 5), Ouse Fen (6; 7) Ouse Washes (Oct – 40) and Paxton Pits (Oct – 22).

Other high counts came from Buckden and Stirtloe Pits, 32 and Four Gotes, 22.

Common Coot WeBS counts: Barleycroft (19; 16), Fen Drayton (1324; 1772), Grafham Water (1500;1288), Landbeach (93; 89), Needingworth (354; 202), Ouse Fen (136; 99), Ouse Washes (Oct – 892) and Paxton Pits (Oct – 499).

Common Crane Singles seen on Sept 6th (Witchford) and 8th (Ouse Washes) is a rather disappointing tally for this species in recent times.

WADERS

Eurasian Oystercatcher Two at Ouse Fen on Oct 8th and single on 13th.

Little Plover Singles at Paxton Pits on Sept 2nd–6th, Ouse Washes on 4th and Ouse Fen on 6th.

Ringed Plover Majority of records from first half of September with highest counts Maxey GP 11, Ouse Fen 7, Paxton Pits 5 and Grafham Water 4.

Tundra Ringed Plover One at Paxton Pits on Sept 2nd, 8 on 5th and 3 on 6th.

Eurasian Dotterel One at Ouse Washes (near Welches Dam visitor centre) on Sept 7th.

American Golden Plover Adult near Brownhill Staunch Oct 29–30th.

European Golden Plover Highest September counts from Ouse Washes with 470 on 10th and 250 at Kingfishers Bridge on 18th. In October up 1440 in Needingworth/Over area, 1000 at Brownhill Staunch and Stretham/Lt Thetford, 700 at Paxton Pits and 400 at Ouse Washes.

Grey Plover Singles in September at Paxton Pits on 16th, Ouse Fen on 25th and Grafham Water on 27th. In October at Ouse Fen on 19th and 2 at Ouse Washes on 20th.

Northern Lapwing Highest counts as follows: Ouse Fen (400; 500), Paxton Pits (2500; 3000) with 100–800 from a further 7 sites.

Red Knot Singles at Grafham Water on Sept 4th, Paxton Pits on 26th and Ouse Washes on Oct 20th.

Sanderling Six at Grafham Water on Sept 2nd.

Little Stint All juveniles as follows: from Needingworth GP on Sept 4th, Paxton Pits from 21st to 29th and on Oct 6th and 2 at Maxey GP on Oct 9th.

Baird's Sandpiper The juvenile at Paxton Pits present from Aug 27th was present to Sept 1st, was not seen from 2nd to 4th, but returned between 5th and 7th.

Curlew Sandpiper In September at Paxton Pits on 1st, 2 at Ouse Fen on 7th, 2 Ouse Washes on 10th, one at Maxey GP on 13th, 3 at Needingworth GP on 14th with 6 on 15th and 1 on Oct 11th at Ouse Fen.

Dunlin Highest counts from Paxton Pits with 11 on Sept 8th (present more or less daily throughout period), Ouse Washes 12 on Oct 28th and 1–5 from Needingworth GP, Grafham Water and Maxey GP.

Ruff Highest count by far from Ouse Washes with 79 on Sept 6th, 13 at Ouse Fen on Sept 10th and up to 8 from Sept 29th to end of October and 1–4 from a further 5 sites on 1–2 dates.

Common Snipe Reported from 12 sites with highest counts from Ouse Fen (134; 169), Ouse Washes 101 on Oct 6th, Isleham Water Meadows 60 on Sept

19th, Kingfishers Bridge (32; 7) Paxton Pits (11; 8) Cam Washes (9; 6), Witcham 12 on Oct 24th and 1–7 at the remaining sites.

Eurasian Woodcock One trapped and ringed at Wicken Fen on Sept 23rd and 1 seen on Oct 26th.

Bar-tailed Godwit One at Paxton Pits on Sept 24th.

Black-tailed Godwit Singles at Ferry Meadows on Sept 1st, Paxton Pits on Sept 7th, 2 at Grafham Water on Sept 18th and up to 6 at Ouse Washes in October.

Eurasian Curlew The only multiple record was of 3 over Grafham Water on Sept 19th. Singles from a further 4 sites though a bird in the Ouse Valley bird may have been responsible for all site records except for 1 at Foul Anchor on Oct 5th.

Spotted Redshank Kings Dyke NR on Sept 17th (a reserve first), 2 at Grafham Water on Sept 17th and one at Ouse Washes on Oct 11–12th.

Common Redshank Eighteen on the tidal Nene near at Four Gotes was the largest flock. Elsewhere usually scarce in this period: Maxey GP 11 on Oct 7th, Paxton Pits (7; 5), Grafham Water 1–6, Ouse Washes up to 6 in October and Cam Washes 3 on Oct 25th.

Common Greenshank Highest counts in September from Ouse Washes 5, Ouse Fen 6, Paxton Pits 5 and 1–2 from a further 5 sites, only 1 October record at Ouse Washes on 6th.

Green Sandpiper Highest counts from Maxey GP (12; 6), Fen Drayton Lakes (11; ?), Ouse Fen (10; 1), Paxton Pits (7; 2), Ouse Washes (7; 1), Wicken Fen (7; 1), Kingfishers Bridge (4; 2) and 1–3 from a further 5 sites.

Wood Sandpiper An exceptional 12 at Ouse Fen on Sept 7th followed by 2 on 14th and 1 on 18th and 1 at Maxey GP on Sept 3rd.

Common Sandpiper Much reduced from August with up to 3 at Grafham Water, 1–2 from a further 6 sites mainly from the Ouse Valley Pits. One probable at Four Gotes would be returning for its 4th winter (if it's the same bird!).

Ruddy Turnstone One at Grafham Water from Sept 3rd to 4th and 2 at Ouse Fen on Sept 7th.

SKUAS TO TERNS

Pomarine Skua Five reported from Foul Anchor on Oct 3rd.

Arctic Skua About 30 at Foul Anchor on the same day, when 6 were also reported from Grafham Water, where there had also been 2 on 2nd. Also 1 at Ring's End on 3rd. Then 1 reported from Ouse Fen on Oct 19th.

Long-tailed Skua Two at Foul Anchor on Oct 3rd, both juveniles.

Great Skua To complete the set, Foul Anchor produced 19 on 3rd; also 3 at Ring's End on that day and, 2 days later, Foul Anchor produced 3 more.

Mediterranean Gull Single birds on four occasions at Grafham Water.

Little Gull Three birds at Grafham Water on Sept 14th; otherwise the odd single in September only.

Black-headed Gull Largest counts were 852 at Buckden and Stirtloe Pits on Oct 28th and 273 there on Sept 13th.

Common Gull There were at least 15 at Elm on Sept 30th and 13 at Buckden and Stirtloe on Oct 28th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Large numbers reported around the county, with highs of 340 at Long Drove, Cottenham, on Sept 6th, 148 at Priory Park, St. Neot's, on Sept 21st, 96 at Buckden and Stirtloe on Oct 28th, and 83 at Westfield Farm, Comberton on Oct 9th.

Herring Gull Forty were reported from Buckden and Stirtloe on Oct 28th.

Yellow-legged Gull As last time, the large majority of reports were from Paxton, where numbers peaked at 23 on Sept 14th; 10 were there on Oct 3rd, but thereafter numbers dwindled through the month to single birds. Other reports of 1s and 2s from Grafham and Long Drove.

Caspian Gull One at Paxton on Oct 24th was the only record.

Great Black-backed Gull There were 54 birds at Buckden and Stirtloe on Oct 28th.

Common Tern The odd bird seen passing through in September, but there were 7 at Maxey GP on Sept 3rd, and 18 at Ferry Meadows on 4th.

Arctic Tern Single birds were seen at Grafham Water on Sept 7th and Oct 3rd.

Black Tern The first half of September saw a strong passage, with reports from Ferry Meadows, Grafham, the Ouse Washes and Paxton. On Sept 2nd and 11th, at least 10 birds were at Grafham. After Sept 13th there were no further sightings.

NEAR PASSERINES

Rock Pigeon About 50 birds at Cambridge University Farm, Cambridge, but Wisbech town centre held more at 65+.

Stock Pigeon Sixteen at Comberton on Oct 27th; otherwise 1–6 birds recorded from 5 other sites.

Wood Pigeon Three records of over 2000 birds at Croydon / Croydon Hill and Wicken Fen, all in the 3rd week of October.

Eurasian Collared Dove Forty-five+ birds at Elm in September, dropping to 24+ in October.

European Turtle Dove Singles at Ouse Fen and Gorefield, on Sept 10th and 11th respectively.

Rose-ringed Parakeet Singles recorded in Cambridge on Oct 13th and 14th.

Barn Owl 1–2 birds seen at 10 sites.

Little Owl Aside from 3+ calling birds at Elm, at end September, 1–2 birds at 9 other sites.

Tawny Owl Calling birds recorded throughout period with possibly 8 birds involved at Gransden and Waresley Woods.

Short-eared Owl Singles recorded widely; most (5 records) in mid-September.

European Nightjar A single recorded at Hauxton, early morning of Sept 8th.

Common Swift 1–2 birds recorded on several occasions in first 10 days of September; one other record – a single on Sept 25th.

Common Kingfisher Recorded at 18 sites, predominantly single birds; 4 recorded at Ouse Fen on Sept 14th and Paxton Pits on Oct 19th.

Eurasian Wyrneck A possible was reported on Sept 22nd.

Green Woodpecker 1–6 birds recorded from nearly 19 sites.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 1–3+ birds recorded from 18 sites.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker One in Waterbeach on Oct 11th.

PASSERINES

Skylark A small south-southwest movement was noted in the 1st week of October. Only 2 flocks

over 20: 27 at Comberton on Oct 6th and 30 at Toft on Oct 27th.

Sand Martin At Fen Drayton Lakes 150 were still present on Sept 10th but surprisingly only 1 October record of a single at Grafham on 5th.

Barn Swallow Post-breeding gatherings of 500 at the Ouse Washes on Sept 8th and 100 at Fen Drayton Lakes 10th. An apparently early exodus with only 5 October records, the latest a single at Ouse Fen on 19th.

November records used to be fairly regular; with generally earlier arrivals in recent years, are birds also departing earlier?

House Martin Three hundred at Paxton Pits on Sept 5th and 150 at Fen Drayton on 10th were by far the largest counts. Only 8 October records, the last were 2 at Toft on 27th.

Meadow Pipit The usual autumn influx was evident with 10–30 birds seen migrating at Grafham, Paxton Pits, Eynesbury and Comberton from Sept 8th to 20th. Other September flocks noted were 30 at Grafham on 13th and 32 at Foul Anchor, 33 at Waresley and 50 at Wicken on 21st. October records of note were 60 at Grafham on 4th and 91 at the Ouse Washes on 6th. A flock of 20 was seen roosting at Barton on Oct 21st.

Rock Pipit The following were all identified as belonging to the Scandinavian race *littoralis*: single birds at Grafham on 7 dates from Sept 16th to Oct 28th with 2 on Sept 30th and Paxton Pits records of one on Sept 26th, 2 on 28th and another on Oct 20th. A Rock/Water Pipit was reported from Kingfisher's Bridge on Oct 21st.

Water Pipit One at Wicken Fen on Oct 13th.

Yellow Wagtail Many September reports up to 24th of birds flocking prior to migration. Largest counts were 12 at Paxton Pits on 7th, 20 at Maxey GP on 9th, 10 at Grafham and 50 at Ouse Fen on 10th and 30 at Fen Drayton on 17th. Only 2 October records of singles at the Ouse Washes on 6th and Milton CP on 11th.

Grey Wagtail A veritable torrent of autumn migrants. Many were reported flying over,

with multiple records of 4 at Paxton Pits on Sept 12th and 6 at Grafham on 15th. Noted in central Cambridge at Peterhouse on Oct 19th and St. Catherine's College on 27th.

Pied Wagtail Largest numbers reported were 41 over Priory Park, St Neots on Oct 6th, 20 at Manea on Oct 27th and 12 at Elm on Oct 31st.

Waxwing One at Fenstanton on Oct 30th, hopefully a fore-runner of an impending invasion!

Winter Wren No notable records received.

Dunnock No notable records received.

Robin At Monks Hardwick, St Neots 16 were counted on Sept 21st and at Barton there were 12 on Oct 8th, possibly signs of an autumn influx.

Black Redstart One was seen in Cambridge on Oct 18th.

Redstart An extremely good autumn passage, reflecting the numbers seen on the east coast at the time. There were 23 reports from 8 different sites during the period Sept 5--24th. Mostly 1s and 2s, but 3 at Witcham on 5th and 4 on 7th, 3 at Ferry Meadows CP on 11th, 3 at Castor Hanglands on 13th and 4 at Croydon on 19th.

Whinchat Another migrant with higher than average numbers. Reported from 10 localities Sept 1st--Oct 14th, with a peak from Sept 4th to 11th. Highest numbers were 6 at Maxey GP and Ouse Fen on Sept 7th, 5 at Wardy Hill on 6th and 3 at Croydon on 7th.

Stonechat Many widespread reports from Sept 17th onward, mostly of passage birds but doubtless some will remain for the winter in favoured localities. A good count of 9 at Ouse Fen on Oct 9th and 13th, elsewhere 5 at Fen Drayton on Oct 17th and Little Wilbraham Fen on 27th, 4 at Wicken on Oct 14th and at Ouse Washes on 20th were highest counts. Nearly all the records were from fenland and wetland areas.

Wheatear Reported from Sept 2nd to Oct 17th: as with Whinchat there was a peak in early September when 8 at Wardy Hill, 6 at Waterbeach and 5 at Paxton Pits on 6th and 6 at Maxey GP and 5 at Ouse Fen on 7th. Otherwise 1--3 from various sites, all from north of Cambridge apart from 2 reports from Croydon.

Blackbird Some evidence of an autumn arrival with 50 at Buckden/Stirtloe on Oct 28th and at least 150 feeding in overgrown orchards at Elm on 31st. A partial albino at Toft has been present for over a year.

Fieldfare Only 1 September record of 5 at Bourn on 26th, then 4 at Milton CP on Oct 4th and 30 at Wicken on 7th. The main arrival occurred from 17th onward when 40 at the Nene Washes, followed the next day by 623 over Croydon Hill, 260 at Ferry Meadows CP, 152 at Comberton and 150 at Wicken. The movement continued on 19th with 140 at Fen Drayton, 80 at Long Drove, Cottenham and 60 flying west at Ouse Fen. Elsewhere 142 at the

Ouse Washes on 20th, 120 at Caldecote on 29th and 150 in orchards at Elm were the highest counts.

Song Thrush Several observers noted an influx concurrent with the arrival of Fieldfares and Redwings. 30 at Elm on Sept 25th and 25 at Buckden and Stirtloe were the largest numbers. Obvious passage was recorded at Wicken, at St Neots where two 'dropped from the sky at 09:00' and at Over where 8 in a garden in the morning had departed by noon.

Redwing First of the autumn was one at Kingfishers Bridge on Sept 23rd, followed by 20 at Elm and smaller numbers elsewhere on 25th. Most arrived from early October onward with 61 at Milton CP on 4th and 150 at Kingfishers Bridge on 7th, followed by 777 over Croydon Hill, 280 at Elton and 100s at Swaffham Prior on 18th. Other concentrations were 100 at Little Wilbraham Fen on Oct 24th and 200 at Elm on 31st.

Mistle Thrush A remarkable count of 200 plus on a large harrowed field at Wisbech on Sept 5th is possibly the largest flock ever recorded in the county. A few reports from other sites but none of flocks greater than 6!

Cetti's Warbler With an increase in locations over the same period last year -- being reported from 8 sites -- birds were noted in both months at Fen Drayton Lakes, Ouse Washes and Wicken Fen (maximum of 7 on Sept 15th).

Sedge Warbler Reported from Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen, the latest sightings being on Sept 20th--21st.

Eurasian Reed Warbler From 7 sites, with most reports from Paxton Pits. The latest was on Oct 7th at Wicken Fen.

Lesser Whitethroat From 6 sites, but with no October sightings this season (latest: Sept 21st, Paxton Pits).

Common Whitethroat The last sightings from a range of sites were around a fortnight earlier than in some recent years.

Garden Warbler Noted in small numbers at Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water, Orton GP, Paxton Pits and Tanholt GP, between Sept 2nd and 10th.

Blackcap Reports from 10 sites in September, and from an additional 2 sites in October, the latest being Oct 13th.

Common Chiffchaff From 13 sites, but by far the largest number reported on one day was 25+, at Buckden and Stirtloe GPs, on Sept 13th.

Willow Warbler From 6 sites, with up to 2 individuals, the latest seen was on Sept 20th at Westfield Farm (Comberton).

Goldcrest At Wicken Fen, numerous arrivals to the site were noted on Sept 26th and by the end of the month 31 different birds had been ringed. Elsewhere, at 8 sites, numbers ranged from 1 to 12.

Spotted Flycatcher Seen at Cambridge, Ferry Meadows CP, Grafham Water, Hardwick Wood, Milton CP (Cambridge), Orton BP, Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen, with up to 12 noted at Ferry Meadows CP on Sept 6th. The latest was on Sept 25th.

Pied Flycatcher Singles were noted at King's Dyke

NR on Sept 7th and at Chrishall Grange Plantation on Sept 13th.

Bearded Tit At 3 sites, all were October records, but at Kingfishers Bridge it is probable that several were also present during September.

Long-tailed Tit From 7 sites, flocks ranged from 6 to 30.

Marsh Tit At Gamlingay Wood 4+ were present in October, and 2+ were noted at Paxton Pits.

Coal Tit Noted at 3, mainly garden, sites with 1–2 birds.

Blue Tit From widespread locations, but no large flocks noted.

Great Tit At 3 locations, up to 3 birds.

Wood Nuthatch Records were received from 2 sites, with a report of 2 birds at Gamlingay Wood on Oct 17th being the peak count.

Eurasian Treecreeper Records were received from 5 sites with the peak count being 3 birds at Paxton Pits with a further 3 being ringed at Wicken Fen.

Great Grey Shrike A single bird was recorded at Wicken Fen on Sep 28th.

Eurasian Jay As would be expected, during September and October reports have increased significantly with records from 20 sites mostly involving 1–2 birds, but 7+ were noted at Elm on Sep 30th.

Black-billed Magpie Recorded from 3 sites during the period with a maximum count being 15+ at Elm.

Eurasian Jackdaw A report of 45 birds flying to roost at Priory Park St. Neots on October 6th was the peak count.

Rook Recorded from 4 sites during the period with the peak count being 200+ birds feeding on arable land at Elm.

Carrion Crow Reported from 6 sites with 300 birds at Westfield Farm, Comberton being the peak count.

Common Raven A rare bird in the county, but this is the third year running birds have been recorded during this period, with a single bird being noted at Grafham Water on Sept 13th and again at Landbeach on Oct 18th.

Common Starling Numbers of birds gathering at roosts during the period was beginning to build with a maximum record of 1000+ birds at Buckden & Stirtloe Pits on Sept 13th.

House Sparrow A report of 125+ birds at Elm on Sept 30th was easily the peak count.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow Reported from 7 sites with at least 10 birds at Orton Brick Pits on Oct 24th being the maximum count.

Chaffinch Recorded from 8 sites with a maximum of 283 birds over Croydon Hill on Oct 18th.

Brambling Another expected seasonal increase in reports with records received from 7 sites including a peak count of 7 at Croydon Hill on Sept 29th.

European Greenfinch Recorded from 5 sites with 30 birds at Toft being the peak count.

European Goldfinch Recorded from 11 sites during

the period with the maximum count being 133 birds at the Ouse Washes on Oct 6th.

Eurasian Siskin The first winter reports indicate that it will be another good year for this bird.

Recorded from 21 sites including a report of 79 birds at Grafham Water on Sept 20th.

Common Linnet Reported from 9 sites with 90+ birds at Elm on Sept 11th being the peak count.

Lesser Redpoll Recorded from 13 sites mostly involving 1–2 birds but 73+ were reported moving over Grafham Water on Oct 2nd.

Mealy Redpoll A single bird was reported from Fen Drayton Lakes on Oct 19th.

Common Crossbill Reported from 4 sites with 6 birds at Mill Road, Over being the peak count.

Common Bullfinch Records came from 9 sites with a peak count of 12+ at Buckden & Stirtloe Pits on Sept 13th.

Yellowhammer Reported from 5 sites with the maximum being 20 at Burwash Manor Farm, Barton on Oct 29th.

Reed Bunting Records included 11 birds at the Ouse Washes on Oct 6th and 10 birds from Ouse Fen on Oct 13th.

Corn Bunting Reported from just 3 sites with the maximum being 10 at Burwash Manor Farm, Barton on Oct 29th.

HYBRIDS

Greylag x Canada Goose Individuals were observed at Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits and Toft.

Tufted x Pochard Two at Grafham Water on Sept 29th.

EXOTICA

Black Swan Individual birds on several dates at Buckden and Stirtloe Pit and Fen Drayton Lakes.

Bar-headed Goose Singles on several dates at Grafham Water, Ouse Washes (Sutton Gault) and Paxton Pits.

Lesser Canada Goose Individual birds at Ouse Fen on Sept 10th and Ely on Oct 3rd

Lesser Snow Goose One at Kingfishers Bridge with greylags on many dates from Sept 23rd to at least Oct 21st/

Muscovy Duck Forty at Ely on Oct 3rd.

White-cheeked Pintail One recorded on two dates at Grafham Water.

Contributors: Colin Addington, Louise Bacon, Rowena Baxter, James Cadbury, Martin Davis, Mike Foley, David Green, Richard Hall, Stephen Hartley, Kevin Harris, Mark Hawkes, Peter Herkenrath, Andrew Knights, Vince Lea, Tony Mallyon, Owen & Monica Marks, Bruce & Gwen Martin, Mark Missin, Peter Moule, Robert Pople, Tony Roberts, Bob Scott, Clive Sinclair, Chris Thorne, Alan & Brenda Wadsworth, P. M. Warrington, Jamie Wells



BTO atlas update

WELL DONE – the Club’s Research Committee would like to say a big thank you to all those who put such hard work into their survey work this year. The first of four BTO Atlas cycles is now complete and Cambridgeshire surveyors have put in a tremendous effort to make the first year a real success. The table below summarises the coverage within our region. The figure in brackets represents the percentage of the minimum coverage completed.

Completed tetrads (2 visits)	Cambridgeshire	Huntingdon & Peterborough
Winter	133 (61%)	66 (61%)
Breeding	112 (57%)	34 (44%)

Two key points are worth highlighting. Firstly we are well on the way, across the region, to reaching the minimum coverage of 8 tetrads per 10km square. Secondly there was significant drop off in coverage between the winter and breeding surveys which we hope is a blip rather than the start of a trend.

It is now time to sign up for new tetrads for the next winter/breeding Atlas cycle and hopefully everyone who completed surveys this year will be able to survey again and push us towards the county minimum coverage. We are also keen to recruit as many new surveyors as possible. All information about surveys, allocation of tetrads, recording sheets and survey methods can be found online at www.bto.org.uk for those wishing to administrate their surveys with old fashion pen and paper please contact Louise Bacon – see back page for phone and email.

Roving records are also an integral part of the data-gathering process for the BTO Atlas. Individual records of birds outside of the tetrad visits can be entered on the BTO site. On Saturday 14th June three teams of enthusiastic surveyors undertook an ‘birdrace’ around four 10km squares in the under recorded central and eastern Fens. Over 1000 roving records were generated and the BTO applauded the Club’s initiative in producing such a large amount of records and breeding status data. The racers enjoyed some great, if at times hectic, birding and highlights included sightings of Quail and Bittern. Other Fenland specialities recorded included Corncrake, Black-tailed Godwit, Marsh Harriers and farmland species of conservation interest such as Turtle Dove, Corn Bunting, Linnet, Tree Sparrow, Skylark and Yellowhammer.

A similar Atlas event to generate roving records in under watched squares during the winter period will take place on January 10th 2009, see p13.

Wicken Fen (Bird Ringing) Group: 40th anniversary

C.J.R. Thorne

The Wicken Fen Ringing Group (WFG) was established in 1968 by a group from Cambridge University, comprising both undergraduate and senior members. Some bird ringing had occurred earlier at the Fen, mostly in winter, but the 1968 founders were planning to catch and ring birds predominantly in the summer. This was partly stimulated by a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) nationwide survey that was just beginning, looking at the status and migration of *Acrocephalus* (Reed and Sedge) Warblers, both of which are abundant summer visitors and breeders at Wicken Fen. The WFG also hoped to utilise ringing, carried out in a systematic fashion, to produce some estimates of the numbers of birds, of many species, at Wicken Fen.

Many of the Group’s early aims have succeeded, and the systematic monitoring (our ‘Standards Sites Sessions’) as well as the more ‘random’ ringing, has continued to the present day. Group members mainly catch and ring birds using fine-mesh nets which are designed to ‘pocket’ birds gently without injury. More recently several members have become skilled at finding nests, so that the flightless young can also be ringed. The Group also has over 60 nestboxes, and in these up to 200 young tits are ringed each year. As well as studies made possible by bird-ringing, from which many scientific

papers have been published, the Group is also heavily involved in the straightforward bird recording, and we have published a number of annotated lists of the birds of Wicken Fen.

The National Trust has kindly allowed the Group to erect three ringing bases, in the form of small but comfortable huts, at three widely separated sites on the Fen. From these bases the Group, now comprising about 60 members, 30 of whom are actively engaged in the ringing programme, rings up to 4500 birds each year. In the 40 years of the Group's existence, over 82,000 birds have been ringed. Of this number 429 have been reported away from the Fen, 64 from abroad, with the furthest being a Swallow from South Africa (9664 km). Other distant recoveries have been a Starling in Russia, a Marsh Harrier in Mauretania and a Turtle Dove in Mali. The regularity of the ringing also means that we retrap many of the birds we originally ringed, as they often stay at, or return to, the Fen, for breeding. The oldest birds we have handled have been a Reed Bunting, a Reed Warbler and a Blackbird, all over 9 years after they had been first ringed. The 'rarest' birds ringed have been the Great Reed Warbler in May 1971 and the Barred Warbler in September 1979 – these are the only occasions that those species have ever been recorded at the Fen.

Over 40 years the ringing totals for the different bird species have reflected accurately the fortunes of birds at Wicken Fen. Analysis of the Group's 'Standard Sites Sessions' gives the precise trends, but a more simple comparison of the ringing totals for the two years 1973 and 2007 is instructive in this regard. The Group's 'effort' in the two years was similar, as reflected in the overall total of birds ringed (4868 in 1973, 4701 in 2007), allowing the comparison to be valid. A table is appended to this report, and it shows some changes very clearly (although the increase in the number of Greenfinches and Great Tits is mainly attributable to the use, in recent years, of seed and nut feeders in the winter to attract these species). But real decreases are seen in the numbers of Dunnock, Song Thrush, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Tit, Tree Sparrow, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll and Bullfinch. Conversely a real increase in numbers has occurred for Sparrowhawk, Collared Dove, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Chaffinch and Goldfinch. The exact reasons for these significant changes in numbers are unclear, but reflect the situation in the country in general, and Cambridgeshire in particular.



Over its 40 years of existence, and despite some fluctuations in membership numbers, the WFG can be judged to have been very successful. Many young (and some not-so-young) ornithologists have been trained in the techniques of bird catching and ringing (at least 2 years of training is usually required before a Government-approved BTO permit can be obtained), and a significant number of members and former members are now distinguished and influential in high scientific and conservation circles (but to name any would be invidious!).

In particular, this year of 2008 has proved to be a memorable one for the WFG. As well as celebrating our 40th (ruby) anniversary (with a cake iced by one of our members to show suitable bird-ringing scenes), a milestone this year has seen the ringing of our 100th bird species (young Herons in nests on the Mere). The total number of different species of birds ever recorded at Wicken Fen is currently 235 (with, on average, two or three new ones being added each year), of which 99 have nested at one time or another. Perhaps 2008 will see this number also reach a milestone 100 – Shelduck or Cormorant are our predictions.

Wicken Fen Group: comparison of ringing totals 1973 and 2007

Species	1973	2007	Species	1973	2007
Mallard	0	1	Cetti's Warbler	0	25
Red-legged Partridge	1	0	Grasshopper Warbler	22	12
Sparrowhawk	0	10	Sedge Warbler	295	68
Kestrel	1	1	Reed Warbler	774	320
Water Rail	0	3	Lesser Whitethroat	35	25
Moorhen	0	4	Whitethroat	16	58
Ringed Plover	0	3	Garden Warbler	28	39
Lapwing	1	10	Blackcap	157	322
Snipe	17	9	Chiffchaff	28	154
Woodcock	0	3	Willow Warbler	111	66
Redshank	3	5	Goldcrest	7	29
Woodpigeon	1	1	Spotted Flycatcher	23	3
Collared Dove	0	6	Bearded Tit	10	6
Turtle Dove	4	2	Long-tailed Tit	48	171
Cuckoo	0	3	Blue Tit	188	376
Barn Owl	0	8	Great Tit	31	288
Little Owl	1	0	Coal Tit	0	3
Tawny Owl	2	3	Willow Tit	25	0
Swift	2	0	Tree Creeper	10	18
Kingfisher	22	16	Jay	1	5
Green Woodpecker	0	6	Magpie	0	1
Great Spotted Woodpeck	1	13	Jackdaw	0	3
Lesser Spotted Woodpec	1	0	Starling	0	4
Skylark	1	0	House Sparrow	0	15
Sand Martin	0	26	Tree Sparrow	170	1
Swallow (inc. hybrid)	687	262	Chaffinch	48	167
House Martin	7	0	Brambling	1	0
Meadow Pipit	1	42	Greenfinch	75	388
Pied/White Wagtail	0	85	Goldfinch	70	123
Wren	203	227	Siskin	0	1
Dunnock	291	86	Linnet	39	1
Robin	158	181	Lesser Redpoll	188	59
Nightingale	1	0	Mealy Redpoll	0	2
Redstart	0	1	Bullfinch	236	95
Whinchat	3	0	Yellowhammer	11	5
Stonechat	0	5	Reed Bunting	359	231
Blackbird	172	284			
Fieldfare	10	14			
Song Thrush	258	90			
Redwing	12	206			
Mistle Thrush	1	1			

In total 4868 birds of 55 species were ringed in 1973, and 4701 birds were of 67 species were ringed in 2007.

The Wicken Fen Ringing Group have kindly invited CBC members to a ringing session on Saturday January 3rd 2009. Please see p13 for details.

A Christmas quiz

One of our older members, the Venerable P. Witt, has submitted the following:

Betimes I lingered in my study, a-dusting of my books and fell to browsing. Methought I would perchance intrigue my companions by taxing their aged brains and this I did, having just completed my labours when I was haply interrupted by my young serving wench offering me a taste of her sweet posset. And so to bed!

For those who after Yuletide fare are settled snug in warm armchair,
These puzzling questions I have set, you'll never know them all, I bet!
He hunts in vain where'er he look if he do lack a certain book.
Yet seek in ancient tomes and there the answer may be shining clare.

(There be three clues hidden within this verse.)

1. Which ornithologist was once vicar of St Mark's, Newnham?
2. Who wrote a monograph on the Robin?
3. Who was the first RSPB warden on the Ouse Washes?
4. Can you put names to these initials once prominent in club reports? EARE, JAWM, ICTN, DIMW.
5. Where was Pout Hall?
6. What links Soham, Whittlesey and Ramsey?
7. Who lived at Bottisham Hall in the 19th century and recorded the birds of the area?
8. Who drew the first emblem of the club?
9. Which species was the first for Britain when found in the county in 1897?
10. Which species bred in the county for the first time in Britain in 1975?
11. Which species first bred in the county in 1961?
12. Which species was first recorded in the county on 7th January 1968?
13. Which species was last seen in the county in 1856?
14. Which species was the first for Britain when recorded in 1823 and has since bred only twice in the county and possibly once or twice in Norfolk?
15. Which species was recorded in the county in 1863 and 1888 but not since?
16. Which now common species, once reported on Ely Cathedral and also on King's College, Cambridge (both possibly misidentified), had been recorded in the county only seven times by 1934?
17. Which species found at Chesterton Fen in 1954 was only the second county record and the first since the 1820s?
18. Which species, the first for Britain, was shot at King's College?
19. Which species last bred in the county in 1923, when a nest was found in Cambridge?
20. Which species did H.G.Alexander find breeding on the Backs in 1909 and 1910?
21. 'An irregular visitor which has occurred four times in the last seven years.' Which species was thus described in 1934?
22. 490 pairs of which species bred in Cambridge in 1934?
23. In the 1930s: 'A fairly regular winter visitor on the Washes.....does not appear to be regular anywhere else inland in England.' Which species?
24. Of which species was it written in 1934: 'Few observers are competent to distinguish this species from the last.'?
25. 'In the Ely country.....thundering forth a voice so horrible that those unused to the thing say it is that of an evil spirit.' Which species?
26. '...a mimic, wont to be beguiled and caught by silly imitation. Great men and kings are keen in the chase of this bird. It furnishes very delicate meat.' Which species?
27. Of which species was it written in the 1930s: 'There are no definite records in the county since 1800.'?
28. 'Under the twigs the blackcap hangs in vain
With snow white patch streaked over either eye
This way or that he turns and peeps again
As wont where silk-cased insects used to lie.' – Name the species.

29. Who wrote of bumarrels, bluecaps, firetails, pettichaps and redcaps?
30. What links a Sandpiper, an Oriole, a Shearwater and a Warbler?

If you are over 60 you probably know a few of the answers. If over 70 you probably know several but can't find your glasses to read the clues. If over 80 you probably once knew most of them but have now forgotten and if you're over 100 you probably fell asleep after question 1 !!
The answers will be given in the next bulletin (if I can remember them!)



Cambridge Conservation Forum (CCF) Symposium 2009

The next CCF one-day symposium will be held at Murray Edwards College (formerly New Hall) on Friday 9 January 2009. The day will be opened by a talk from Bob Watson (Defra), and there will be talks on subjects as varied as the current Horizon Scanning initiative, the development of marine protected areas in Antarctica, the latest Countryside Survey, the conservation implications of sex ratios in birds, valuing ecosystem services in Tanzania and conservation work in Madagascar, Venezuela and Peru. It promises to be an excellent day for hearing what happens in practical conservation or conservation science both locally and abroad, and for meeting over coffee or lunch. The Cambridgeshire Bird Club is a member of the CCF and individual members of the Club are welcome to attend the symposium.

Registration

Registration will be £35. To register please send an email to Mrs Julie Leland at the British Antarctic Survey (jale@bas.ac.uk). Payment should be by cheque made out to Cambridge Conservation Forum, and sent to Julie at: Mrs Julie Leland (CCF), Directorate, British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET.

The Cambridgeshire Bird Club Roving Atlas Day: 10 January 2009

The Cambridgeshire Bird Club is organising the *Cambridgeshire Bird Club Roving Atlas Day* on Saturday 10th January 2009 to generate large numbers of roving records for the BTO/Cambridgeshire Bird Atlas in areas where coverage is poor or lacking. This follows from a successful similar event in June this year. Participants can choose to either work within the three 10-km squares TL58, TL67 and TL68 in the northeast of old Cambs or the following three squares: TL17, TL18 and TL28 in Hunts. From 4.30pm there will be a gathering and socialising at Old Beach Farm, 91 Green End, Landbeach, CB25 9FD, with soup and drinks to warm up after a cold day of birding.

Teams of two or three are required to record as many species as possible during the eight hour period from 8am to 4pm within one of the two areas, each consisting of the three 10-km squares indicated above. Species can be recorded in as many tetrads as the team chooses to visit; these tetrads can be located in one, two or all three of the 10km squares as above. Teams can use a species recording sheet produced for this day and are asked to load their data onto the BTO Atlas webpages for roving records (<http://www.bto.org/birdatlas/index.htm>) – the Club offers help in cases where this proves to be difficult.

Tetrad maps of each of the 10km squares and species recording sheets will be available to be used on the day. Teams are invited to register by e-mail with Duncan Poyser (see backpage for contact details). They will then be provided with further information.

FORTHCOMING CBC EVENTS 2009

INDOOR MEETINGS

For all indoor meetings, doors open at 7.30 pm for an 8 pm start.

Friday January 9th, St Johns Church Hall

The Wisdom of Birds by Tim Birkhead

Professor Tim Birkhead he researches and teaches animal behaviour and the history of science at the University of Sheffield. He has studied birds in Africa, Australia and the Canadian Arctic. He is also known for his research on Magpies.

We know more about birds than any other group of animals, but where does our knowledge of birds come from? Who first realised that most birds defend a breeding territory? Who first realised that most birds, like humans, usually breed as pairs? Tim Birkhead's investigations led him to the 17th century naturalist extraordinaire, John Ray and the beginning of true knowledge – sweeping away folklore and trying to establish the truth about birds. Ray's book *The Wisdom of God* was the inspiration for his *The Wisdom of Birds* and in this talk, he will describe how we know what we know about birds. For information about Tim's new book *The Wisdom of Birds* see <http://wisdomofbirds.co.uk>

Friday February 13th, St Johns Church Hall

Island Birds: Extinctions and Recoveries by Jim Groombridge

Jim Groombridge is a Senior Lecturer in Biodiversity Conservation at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent.

Islands have always been popular destinations, both for explorers and naturalists. Early visitors to Hawaii and the islands of the Indian Ocean described a rich avifauna. Many bird species found on these islands have become extinct and only museum specimens remain, whilst other species exist today as tiny populations close to the brink of extinction. DNA from museum specimens has shed new light on many of these species, enabling us to identify not only the impacts of historically declining population size on genetic diversity, but also to show instances where relatively common species today have survived severe population crashes in the past. In this talk, Jim will describe studies of endemic birds from Hawaii, Mauritius and Seychelles, and will conclude by presenting examples of the work restoring some critically endangered, endemic birds on these islands.

OUTDOOR MEETING

Bird Ringing at Wicken Fen – Saturday January 3rd

Members of the Cambridge Bird Club are invited to watch bird-ringing at Wicken Fen, by the Wicken Fen Group, on Saturday January 3 2009, 8.00am–12 noon. Nets will be set in the 'Education Area' which is quite near the Visitor Centre (approach from the National Trust Car Park down Lode Lane, pass the Visitor Centre on the right, and turn left after the final building on the left). The Group may also have nets set in one or other areas of the Fen, up to a mile away. Wellington boots (or very stout walking boots) are recommended.

If you are interested please contact Vicki Harley to book a place – see back page for phone and email.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

We welcome the following new members – Rod Bee of Eaton Ford, Tony Dellar of Sawston, Jeffrey Harrison of Longstanton and Paul Hinds of Girton .

Bruce Martin

CLUB CONTACTS

Chairman

Dick Newell

Old Beach Farm
Landbeach, Cambridge, CB25 9FD
Tel: 01223 860400
Email: dick.newell@googlemail.com

Secretary

John Harding

3 Cotton's Field, Dry Drayton, CB23 8DG
Tel: 01954 780777
Email: johnharding44@googlemail.com

Treasurer

Kevin Harris

2 Millers Road,
Toft, Cambridge, CB23 2RX
Tel: 01223 262659
Email: ksharris2@aol.com

County Recorder (Old Cambs)

Mark Hawkes

7 Cook Drive, Eynesbury, St. Neots, PE19 2JT
Tel: 01480 215305
Email: marklhawkes@yahoo.co.uk

County Recorder (Hunts)

John Clark

7 Westbrook, Hilton, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE18 9NW
Tel: 01480 830472
(No email)

Indoor Meetings Secretary & Bulletin Editor

Vicki Harley

30 Margett Street, Cottenham, Cambs, CB24 8QY
Tel: 01954 250340
Email: vicki.harley@care4free.net

Other Council Members

Duncan Poyser

14 Bohemond Street, Ely, CB7 4PP
01353 645908
hairfolkster@googlemail.com

Peter Herkenrath

19b Pepys Way, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0PA
Tel: 01223 276553
Email: peterherkenrath@yahoo.co.uk

Ken Hook

The Coach House, Scotland Road, Dry Drayton,
Cambs, CB3 8BX
Tel: 01954 782407
Email: kahook@aol.com

Research Officer

Louise Bacon

236 Wimpole Road, Barton, Cambs, CB3 7AE
Tel: 01223 263962
E-mail: louise.bacon2@btinternet.com

Membership Secretary

Bruce Martin

178 Nuns Way, Cambridge, CB4 2NS
Tel: 01223 700656
Email: bruce.s.martin@ntlworld.com

Website

Dick Newell

Old Beach Farm
Landbeach, Cambridge, CB25 9FD
Tel: 01223 860400
Email: dick.newell@googlemail.com

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 email records to: Mark Hawkes by January 7th

Please send records by post to: Louise Bacon by January 7th

Next Bulletin due out January 2009, covering November–December 2008

GOOD BIRDING!