

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 409



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

RECENT REPORTS MARCH/APRIL 2010

These are unchecked reports rather than confirmed records sourced from sightings received by the county recorder or reported on the "What's About?" page on the CBC website.

Firecrest by Ben Green



Although the weather hardly felt like spring the wild swans had started to move back towards their breeding grounds with only 12 **Bewick's Swans** remaining at the Nene Washes by Apr 8th. **Whooper Swans** remained in strength with 767 at the Nene Washes and 446 at the Ouse Washes during the March WeBS count. Wild geese continued into March too, with 2 **Tundra Bean Geese** seen at Roswell Pits on the 27th and the 3 **Taiga Bean Geese** relocating from Manea to the Nene Washes on the 15th. Two **Pink-footed Geese** remained at the Ouse Washes where 2 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were also seen on the 15th. Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** were also noted at Kingfishers Bridge on the 3rd.

A **Ruddy Shelduck** was reported around the River Ouse / Berry Fen area on Apr 19th and a **Green-winged Teal** turned up at Maxey GP's on Apr 17th. An increase in the reports of **Garganey** indicated their spring arrival, the peak count being 6 drakes at the Ouse Washes on Apr 22nd. After record counts during the previous period's cold snap, **Red-crested Pochard** numbers were back to 5 at Paxton Pit's on Mar 14th. **Scaup** were still at Grafham Water during March with 2 females noted on the 2nd and also at the same site 8 **Common Scoter** were reported on Apr 11th. 50+ **Smew** lingered into March when displaying birds could be seen at Barleycroft GP. Other reports came from Paxton Pits, Needingworth GP's and Ely BF. **Goosander** also remained into March with the peak count coming from Fen Drayton (4 birds on the 14th).

Grey Partridges began to disperse and pair up with reports received from 10 sites.

The **Great Northern Divers** could still be seen at Grafham Water during the period with 5 birds remaining until Apr 11th. Also at Grafham Water, a **Red-necked Grebe** made a brief appearance on Mar 1st, and a single **Black-necked Grebe** was present until the middle of March. A pair of **Black-necked Grebes** was found in suitable breeding habitat in April and, with hopes that they may breed, this site remains undisclosed.

An early 'grunting' **Bittern** was heard at Wicken Fen on Mar 2nd with proper 'booming' birds later in the month and throughout April. Two further sites also held 'booming' birds in April. **Little Egrets** remained widespread throughout the period with their strongholds of the Nene Washes and Ouse Washes holding 15 and 10 birds respectively. Paxton Pits also held at least

8 birds on Apr 28th. A **Great Egret** turned up at the Nene Washes being seen at March Farmers and at Eldernell at the beginning of April and a fly-over bird was noted at Witcham on Mar 13th.

Most of the reports of **Red Kites** involved single birds but 9 were recorded from the Wistox, Raveley and Upwood area on Mar 7th. A probable **White-tailed Eagle** that flew over St. Ives on Apr 20th was of particular note and must have truly surprised the lucky observer. The **Hen Harrier** roost at Wicken Fen held 5 birds on Mar 23rd and the **Rough-legged Buzzard** around Coveney showed itself on and off throughout the period. A probable immature **Goshawk** was seen at Woodwalton Fen on Apr 24th whilst a female bird seen first at Paxton Pits on Apr 17th appeared to linger with further reports received thereafter. Returning **Ospreys** were first noted at Castor Hanglands on Mar 26th with other reports coming from Fen Drayton Lakes and Prior's Fen GP's.

A dusting of **Merlins** remained throughout March whilst **Hobbies** started to reappear with 2 birds first seen at Wicken Fen on Apr 17th. **Peregrines** were reported from many sites but perhaps the most notable record was 3 birds over Coldham's Common, Cambridge on Mar 13th.

A singing **Spotted Crake** was heard from the Ouse Washes Welches Dam Hide on Apr 22nd and three days later another was reported further along the Ouse Washes at Sutton Gault. Squealing **Water Rails** were also noted from a further 11 locations. Three **Common Cranes** remained at the Nene Washes until Mar 15th and a further 2 birds were discovered briefly at Stretham on Apr 4th.

Passage wader numbers started slowly to build up but many areas reported lower than expected returns. **Oystercatcher** numbers peaked at Mepal Bridge with 20 being present on Mar 12th, while at the Cam Washes **Avocet** numbers reached a respectable 38 on Apr 14th (but still less than the previous year). **Little Ringed Plover** numbers reached just 6 at Maxey GP's on Apr 18th whilst **Ringed Plovers**, including some *tundrae* birds, peaked at 13 at Fen Drayton Lakes on Mar 4th. The only record of **Dotterel** came from Blackbush Drove on Apr 27th when 3 birds were present and a single Grey Plover was noted at 3 sites.

Two **Knots** were reported from Paxton Pits on Apr 21st, which were replaced by 2

Sanderlings the next day. **Dunlin** (50+), **Ruff** (70+) and **Snipe** (100+) were all present at the Nene Washes on Mar 7th, and singles of **Jack Snipe** were reported from 5 sites. Numbers of **Black-tailed Godwits** peaked at 3,500 birds from the Nene Washes during the middle of March and a single **Bar-tailed Godwit** was reported from here and at Paxton Pits.

A small passage of **Whimbrel** towards the end of April resulted in 3 birds being reported from Grafham Water and Waterbeach Fen and 3 **Curlew** were also recorded from the Nene Washes on Mar 15th. Five **Spotted Redshanks** settled briefly at Fen Drayton Lakes on Apr 28th, and reports of single birds came from a further 2 sites. **Greenshank** numbers peaked at 15 on the Ouse Washes by Apr 22nd, and a single **Turnstone** was also here and at Paxton Pits during the period. In a tight contest **Green Sandpipers** outscored **Common Sandpiper** 6 to 5, with peak reports from Paxton Pits and Grafham Water respectively.

Mediterranean Gulls were picked out from the **Black-headed Gull** colonies at Grafham Water and Paxton Pits and a movement of **Little Gulls** during April saw a peak of 9 adults at Grafham and from 3 further sites. A **Caspian Gull** was noted at Dogsthorpe Tip on Mar 29th, and the tip at Long Drove Cottenham held at least 20 **Great Black-backed Gulls** on Mar 27th. An **Iceland Gull** was found at Grafham Water on Apr 24th and a **Kittiwake** was also reported here on Apr 5th.

In the last week of April reports of **Sandwich Terns** came from 3 sites with 3 birds at Maxey GP's being the peak count. **Common Tern** numbers started building up with 70+ birds noted at Grafham Water and **Arctic Terns** started making their way through with 15+ birds at Grafham on Apr 25th. **Black Terns** were seen on passage at 3 sites with Paxton Pits hosting 3 birds on Apr 28th.

The first **Turtle Dove** of the year was seen at Paxton Pits on Apr 21st and the same site boasted the first **Cuckoo** on Apr 10th. Is it just me or are there more **Cuckoos** around this year? A bird certainly in short supply this year, the **Short-eared Owl**, was reported from just 4 sites. **Long-eared Owls** fared no better and single birds were recorded from only 3 locations. **Common Swifts** made a welcome if not later return than normal with the first report coming from Ouse Fen on Apr 18th, and just when it looked like we were going to miss out

on the unprecedented national influx of **Alpine Swifts** a probable turned up over the A14 at Bar Hill on Mar 26th. **Kingfishers** must have had a tough time during the extreme cold temperatures but reports of 4 birds at Paxton Pits and 3 at the Mill at Eaton Ford are encouraging. The scarce but regular exotic visitor, the **Hoopoe**, was photographed in a garden near Whittlesford on Apr 9th and possibly the same bird was seen near Duxford 12 days later.

Hirundines started arriving in March with **Sand Martins** being followed in by **Swallows** and **House Martins**, but due to the cold weather most remained over open water where feeding was easier. A trio of uncommon Pipits were reported from the Ouse Washes with a single **Tree Pipit** and **Rock Pipit** on Apr 22nd and Mar 15th respectively and 12 **Water Pipits** on Mar 15th. A peak count of 33 **Yellow Wagtails** at the Cam Washes headed the summer arrival and **Blue-headed Wagtails** and **White Wagtails** were also reported from further sites. The 4 **Waxwings** in Panton Street continued to enthral onlookers until Mar 15th with another bird being seen at Castor Mill on Mar 21st.

Nightingales returned to Paxton Pits on Apr 10th, where there were 13 singing by the 25th. Singles of both **Black Redstart** and **Common Redstart** were reported from 4 sites during April. Two **Whinchats** were seen at the Nene Washes and Maxey GP's on Apr 30th and 3 or more **Stonechats** remained at Wicken Fen on Apr 3rd. Passage **Wheatear** numbers, including many Greenland birds, peaked with 11+ birds at Trumpington on Apr 25th. A mini arrival of **Ring Ouzels** towards the end of April mostly involved single birds but Castor Hanglands hosted 2 on Apr 18th. **Redwings** and **Fieldfares** hung around into April but the majority had departed by the end of March.

Cetti's Warblers could be heard from 12 sites, the peak count was at least 15 males at Wicken Fen on Apr 19th and one was recorded at Fowlmere for the first time. Common warblers started returning in earnest during the period but a singing **Wood Warbler** at Brownhills Staunton on Apr 25th was notable. Twelve **Grasshopper Warblers** at Woodwalton Fen and 10+ at Wicken Fen could be heard 'reeling' in April and the rattling song of **Lesser Whitethroats** rang out from many sites.

Goldcrest reports remained ominously thin on the ground but encouragingly reports of single **Firecrests** were received from 8 sites.

A female **Pied Flycatcher** was discovered at Paxton Pits on Apr 25th frequenting the conservation area between Hayden & Kingfisher Hides. The sound of 'pinging' **Bearded Tits** was again heard at Wicken Fen and Ely BF after no reports were submitted during February. Thirty two **Marsh Tits** and 10 **Nuthatches** were recorded at Monks Wood on Mar 24th.

Reports of **Ravens** from 6 sites may have involved the same birds and a report of 2 birds displaying at a site in the west of the county on Mar 13th was interesting. **Tree Sparrows** were only reported from 2 sites with 16 birds at Woodhurst on Mar 28th being the peak count.

Bramblings were even thinner on the ground with just single birds reported from 4 sites and **Siskins** fared little better with 8 birds over Cambridge on Mar 11th being the maximum

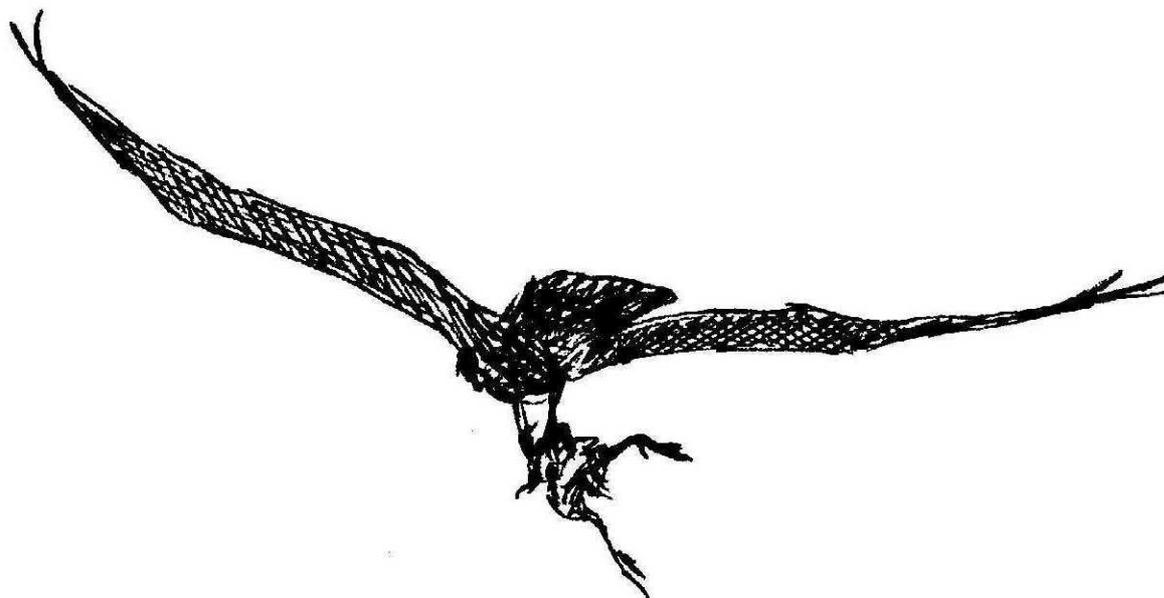
count. Spirits were raised however when 3 **Twite** turned up at Paxton Pits on Mar 14th and remained around long enough to offer some birders a county tick!

A **Mealy Redpoll** remained amongst the **Lesser Redpolls** at Fowlmere and **Common Crossbills** were reported from 3 sites with Monks Wood and Grafham Water recording 3 birds during the period. **Corn Buntings** could still be found in flocks with 45 birds being reported from Ferry Meadows CP and Woodwalton Fen on Mar 8th.

The Recent Reports were compiled and written by David Heath.

Thanks to the contributors to the CBC database Mar/Apr 2010 :

Colin Addington, Louise Bacon, Richard Bayldon, Rowena Baxter, Richard Broughton, Elizabeth Charman, Steve Cooper, Alison Edwards, Ian Ellis, Mike Foley, Dean Harlow, Mark Hawkes, Gordon Harland, Stephen Hartley, Kevin Harris, Peter Herkenrath, Bob Humphrey, John Le Gassick, John Lindsell, Bruce & Gwen Martin, Tony Mallyon, Duncan McNiven, David Palmer, Doug Radford, Mike Redshaw, Gareth Rees, Tony Roberts, Ian Seamark, Bridget Smith, Nigel Spowell, Martin Sreeves, Chris Thome, John Walsh, Jamie Wells.



Extremadura or bust

Ben Green

In April the bulletin's artist in residence had an unexpected extension to his first visit to Spain due to the volcanic ash cloud from Iceland that drifted over the UK closing airports nationwide. Here, in the first of two parts, he describes his holiday before having to make his way home overland from Madrid to Ely as Europe descended into travel chaos.

The plaintive calls of Thekla and Crested Larks flicker in the pre-dawn. As the darkness evaporates, the plains bathe in the damp light. Blue-green rolling fields stretching out as far as the eye can see, swathes of yellow flowers hinting at the sun. Calandra Larks rise and chase in the clear sky while Corn Buntings begin the constant jangling that is to provide the underlying rhythm for the next few days. From the roadside we looked across the vista, hoping to find the bird we had come all this way for– the Great Bustard.

The previous day saw us driving west from Madrid into the heart of Extremadura. Like many a trip to foreign climes, our first experience of the local birdlife was glimpsed through the car windows. Spotless Starlings darted across the motorway and investigated the many derelict buildings, just like the Starlings at home. However, it soon became evident that the typical Kestrels, Pigeons and Magpies so familiar beside our English roads were, in Spain, replaced by Black Kites, White Storks and the hulking forms of Griffon Vultures.

Birds of prey of various species were more abundant than I had expected, but it was the gravity-defying Vultures that immediately made it clear that this was no drive through central England. We were on safari. The sheer immensity of the Griffons made their slow progress appear at odds with the laws of aerodynamics. How did they manage to remain airborne, just twenty or thirty metres off the ground at times? Once or twice we spotted Black Vultures among the Griffons, great slabs of dark wing circling above the earth like monoliths from an Arthur.C.Clark novel.



We stopped at the Embalse de Arrocampo for our first proper taste of the area. The road ran across a causeway at the eastern end of the reed fringed lake– and from here a rich array of calls and song rang out, indicating its wealth of birds. Two Savi's Warblers reeled on our right, perched prominently on last winter's reed mace stems, while beyond them, a Purple Heron sprang up and flew off, past Cattle Egrets on a nearby field and away. On our left, a Fan Tailed Warbler leapt into the air and floated above us, piercing the afternoon heat with its simple monotony of its song.

Woodchat Shrike and Serin perched atop the low bushes, and further off, the erratic song of Cetti's Warbler drew us towards the edge of the main reed bed. The Cetti's Warbler proved very obliging, appearing from time to time on exposed bramble sprays. Overhead a male Marsh Harrier and a lone Gull-Billed Tern flew past, but our attention was centred on a clump of bushes that seemed to be alive with passerines.

At first we noticed only House Sparrows, but we heard an intriguing call from within the foliage. Before long Blackcap, Melodious Warbler and Willow Warbler all flitted briefly in front of us. Then a real surprise, as a beautiful male Penduline Tit darted out of one bush and clung briefly to a vertical twig at the top of another– buffeted in the warm but strong breeze. This was the little bandit whose subtle but

distinctive call had alerted us to its presence, and within seconds he was gone. A Reed Warbler chuckled in the distance as we made our way back to the car, past two familiar sights in the form of a Common Whitethroat, and a pair of Stonechats.

The Stonechats were feeding a fully fledged youngster, a reminder that spring in Spain was already old. The male was a striking individual with large white neck patches and orange red chest that did not extend onto the flanks like our own birds, and his worn upperparts were very black. Arriving back at the car we were treated to the sight of Bee-eaters and Lesser Kestrels hawking for insects along with Swallows and Sand Martins.

A short drive further south took us to the plains around the small town of Trujillo where we relaxed in the haze of the evening. Larks pattered around, almost at our feet, and while a common Cuckoo called its familiar cry, across the fields a Great Spotted Cuckoo sat in one of the tamarisk bushes that dotted the landscape. A bizarre rasping note seemed to come from just beyond the fence. Our attention focused on the lush vegetation—vetches and cruciforms in full bloom after recent rains, but there was no sign of the bird. Then, a brief flash of white, and a Little Bustard took flight, fifty yards further off than it should have been. The still air had made it seem so close as to be almost touchable. It was a tantalising first contact with one of the birds that make this area so special, but I already feared that getting good views would be difficult.

We drove further down a dirt track, into landscape that could have been painted by Andrew Wyath, with rolling fields of pale green peppered by blue, white and yellow. A Short-toed Lark stood out surprisingly well against the damp red earth. If we had been on the fen in November, the next noise we heard would surely have been a pair of Shelduck, wings whistling as they beat overhead. But these black and white wings belonged to two stunning Little Bustards, both males. Their arcing flight echoed the curve of the horizon, and as they flew around us every detail shone in the last light of our first day. As they finally disappeared, three large birds loomed along the low ridge, silhouetted against the golden sky.

The next morning, to the east of Trujillo, the fields were dotted with white. At first I thought these blobs must be rocks, but upon closer inspection, pearl grey heads atop ginger necks resolved themselves. Through telescopes, the vermiculated upperparts gave structure to the white cotton wool-like underparts, and the silhouettes of the previous evening were seen in their pomp. Billowing in the morning breeze like giant dandelion seed heads, the Great Bustards began to lek. Small groups of females strolled about, inspecting each male's preposterous display. Shaking their feathers loose and inflating their throats, heads sunk into whiskery chins, whirling and flapping as if dancing to the lark song. There can be few stranger and beguiling sights in nature, but it was cold and raining, and after an hour or so we retreated reluctantly to the car and set off for Monfrague.

To be continued in the next bulletin



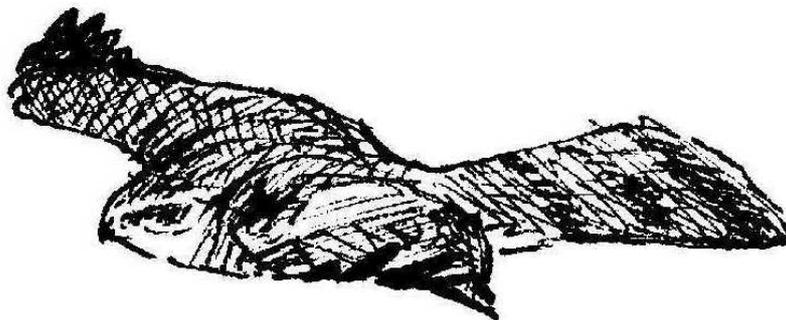
From the Chairman

Peter Herkenrath

I recently checked out the natural history section of a Cambridge bookshop and to my surprise came across a 2009 paperback edition of Peter Bircham's *The Birds of Cambridgeshire*, a reprint of the original hardback edition from 1989. I love browsing old avifaunas and compare what they tell us with today's situation. Peter Bircham's book, covering the old county of Cambridgeshire (John Clark's 1996 *The Birds of Huntingdon and Peterborough* covering the 'rest' of modern Cambs) is only 21 years old but in this short timespan so much has changed. On the day of writing this piece, I heard a Cetti's Warbler singing. Bircham called it 'a most uncommon resident, found only at a handful of sites'. For Little Egret, he could list just two records, from 1850 and 1976, for Great White Egret only one record from 1849. Our avifauna is changing rapidly.

The Club is currently involved with mapping the distribution of wintering and breeding birds, as part of the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) efforts for a new nationwide wintering and breeding atlas. We aim for a Cambridgeshire edition of the atlas and are more than halfway through the five year period of 'atlassing'. I would invite every member of the Club to contribute by taking on timed tetrad visits to areas yet uncovered or sending in roving records. Council is currently working on making data from our own records database available for the atlas. This year, I have chosen to undertake timed tetrad visits to four tetrads near March. The area looks very boring and I have felt happy about finding any Skylark, Goldfinch or House Sparrow. But I was rewarded in April by a fine Firecrest singing in a rural garden which to me looked anything but attractive to birds. A moment like this makes our bird surveys so exciting to me. But it's not only the scarce and rare birds that make me enjoy surveys. The BTO asks not only for a count of the birds in each tetrad but also invites estimates of the real number per species. This is something I feel great pleasure in doing – how many Blackbirds or Blue Tits occur in a tetrad. Is the real number so much higher than my count of perhaps 10 or 15 birds?

I hope that when you are reading this column you have had your own exciting moments when atlassing this year, doing your Breeding Bird Survey, or simply enjoying birdwatching. Don't forget to send in your records for the Club's database. And you may also want to get your copy of Peter Bircham's 1989 Cambridgeshire avifauna in case it has not been sitting on your shelves since it came out 21 years ago.



ATLAS UPDATE

Louise Bacon for the Research Committee

Although we are already in the third breeding season for the national and local atlas projects, it is never too late to get involved.

Our main goals for the summer are filling in species gaps and breeding code gaps across the county, and recruiting people to cover the poorly covered parts of the county.

To help us achieve our first goal, it would be great if you could research an area which you know you are going to visit. This involves looking up which species have been recorded in your target tetrad and finding out how many have been seen exhibiting breeding behaviour (lots of tetrads still do not have confirmed breeding of Starling or Blackbird, for instance). You can do this via the BTO website and we have links from our club website to help with this; alternatively you can ask Louise Bacon (details in contacts) to provide a species list for a tetrad or more than one tetrad.

To help us achieve our second goal, to complete our minimum coverage on time, we are holding a fieldwork morning. On Saturday 26th June, you can attend a workshop at a location near Cambridge, which will focus on bird calls and looking for those field signs which constitute breeding evidence. We want to show you how easy it can be, if you feel that you would like to get involved but don't have enough expertise then this may be the morning for you. It will run from 6am until around 9am, and it would help if you could book in advance by contacting Louise Bacon. We will probably be covering a new tetrad and carrying out a set of counts as per the standard fieldwork.

Cambridge nesters: update on breeding birds

Vince Lea

March and April are when most of our resident birds really get underway with breeding, but 2010 has been slow starting. Very cold weather interspersed with dry sunny spells, has led to reduced spring growth of important nesting vegetation especially bramble and thorn bushes. Birds such as Robins, Song Thrushes and Wrens with access to ivy or other evergreen cover went ahead as usual. Others have been seen to build nests that have then been left unused, or have delayed their start to the season. Those that have started on cue are believed to have suffered high levels of predation due to the lack of cover.

Another feature is that brood sizes seem to be smaller than usual in many cases, particularly the tits which have no problems finding nest sites, but presumably the cold weather and poor vegetation growth have combined to reduce their caterpillar food. Long-tailed tits are normally very early breeders; many were seen building nests in early March. Failed first attempts and perhaps delayed starts by other pairs have seen nest building activities continuing into May, at the same time as successful early pairs had fledglings on the wing.

As a group we have made half a dozen visits to our Cambourne site, but very little has resulted so far, with one successful Skylark nest being the highlight; this pair reared just 2 chicks and they have subsequently been seen as fledglings close to the nest. At Wicken Fen, where a wider variety of species are present, many more nests have been found – in the region of 50 nests at the time of writing. There have been many nests which appear to have been built and then not used, and a very high rate of predation. Nonetheless there have been successes where young have been ringed prior to leaving the nest, providing the best possible provenance for any recovered birds that may be found in the future. A couple of highlights, in nest-finding terms, have been under recorded species such as Bullfinch, Blackcap and Chiffchaff. At our fenland Tree Sparrow colony, located in an old orchard with lots of hollow trees, we have found a good number of nests underway. The larger trees at the site are host to several pairs of Starlings as well.

We shall be exhibiting at Cambridge's annual wildlife get-together, *Conversazione*, held at the Zoology Dept, Downing Street, Cambridge on the weekend 12-13th June. If anyone is interested in finding out more about our work, seeing some used nests or if you wish to join us then please contact Carl Barimore carl.barimore@bto.org (tel: 07879 052 337).

Waterbird counts at Oursi, Burkina Faso, November 2009-March 2010

With support from the Cambridgeshire Bird Club, the local bird club at Oursi and Naturama (the BirdLife partner organisation in Burkina Faso) have undertaken monthly waterbird counts at Oursi from November 2009 to March 2010.

The most numerous birds were White-faced Whistling Duck (58,000 birds, with a maximum of 16,000 in February), Ruff (36,700 individuals, with peaks of 12,000 in January and 10,000 in February), Garganey (35,400, peaking at 12,600 in January), Black-tailed Godwit (33,500, with 11,700 in January), Spur-winged Goose (a total of 23,400), Fulvous Whistling Duck (18,700), Knob-billed Duck (14,100), Purple Swamp-hen (12,100), Cattle Egret (9,900), Spotted Redshank (3,800), Black-winged Stilt (2,400) and Glossy Ibis (1,650). Other species recorded in smaller numbers included 846 Grey Herons, 21 Purple Herons, 71 Squacco Herons, 62 Great and 113 Little Egrets, 101 Greenshank, 615 Wood Sandpiper, 185 Marsh Sandpiper, 107 Common Sandpiper, 43 Green Sandpiper, 12 Eurasian and 7 African Spoonbills, 107 Ringed and 89 Little Ringed Plover, 32 Common and 19 Jack Snipe, 253 Little Stint, 43 Moorhens, 9 White Storks, 111 Marsh and 6 Montagu's Harriers. Please visit the Oursi blog on the Club's website for further information.

Rookeries Survey 2010 – data request

The leaves are on the trees and the window for counting Rook nests for the 2010 Rookeries survey is at an end. Your counts are now needed so that data can be compiled and analysed. Ideally we would like all data to be submitted on an Excel sheet and the format is used in the example below.

| Site | Grid reference for 100m ² | Active nests | Tree species |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Soham Village College | TL 594 727 | 39 | 2 Oak, 1 Scots Pine |

To make data analysis and map generation as unambiguous as possible we would ask that all grid references are generated using the Grab a Grid website, using the 100m square function, which can be accessed through the club website. The data gathered will be used for the BTO Atlas, the planned Cambridgeshire Atlas and for a Research Committee paper comparing the 2010 data with the historic database of previous surveys co-ordinated by Graham Easy. Completed Rookeries Excel sheets should be sent via e-mail to cambsrookeries@gmail.com. If you do not have access to the internet then paper records in the same format can be sent to Louise Bacon (see the last page for contact details).

Birdsong workshop at Fowlmere

On the 1st May, some 20 people gathered at Fowlmere RSPB for a birdsong workshop, jointly organised by the Club and the RSPB. The aim was to continue the tradition of springtime warbler workshops held at Fowlmere to learn the songs and calls of birds, in particular passerines. Doug Radford, warden at Fowlmere, welcomed the participants, before Tony Fulford and Peter Herkenrath each led a group around the reserve. In three hours, just short of 50 species were recorded. Highlights included an obliging Cuckoo, several Sedge and Reed Warblers, Bullfinches, Corn Buntings, Linnets, Lesser Whitethroats, and a singing Water Rail. The many Blackcaps, Wrens and Robins were also appreciated and their songs and calls studied. Two Common Buzzards circling overhead rounded off a successful and enjoyable morning.

Website editor wanted

The Club is looking for someone to manage our website. With several blogs now up and running and maintained by Club members, the job is not very onerous. If you have web editing skills and a few hours per month to spare, please contact Peter Herkenrath (see contact details at the last page).

Notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting

There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Cambridgeshire Bird Club to take place before the Indoor Meeting on Friday September 10th (usual start time of 8pm). Council proposes an Amendment to the Constitution.

'A.4 of the Constitution to read: 'the education of the public in the study and conservation of the avifauna in particular in the county of Cambridgeshire but not exclusively.' (Currently A4 is worded: 'the promotion of the conservation of birds within the County.')

Rationale

At the 2010 AGM it was pointed out that the Council's decision to use some of its funds to support the Oursi Bird Club in Burkina Faso might breach the aims of the Club as defined in the Constitution. The Charity Commission was approached and came up with the wording of the Amendment that Council is putting before members. At the same time, at the AGM, the use of Club funds for purposes outside the county was challenged by some members and Council agreed to discuss the matter. At a recent Council meeting it was resolved that Council supported the use of the majority of the Club's special Fund to help finance the County Bird Atlas, and that no further payments to the Oursi Bird Club were envisaged. The change to the wording of the Constitution should therefore not be seen as opening the door to similar payments to causes beyond the County, although it may be that Council will wish to support the Bob Scott Appeal, which also has an African focus. The EGM will give the opportunity for members to discuss these matters further.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2010

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Friday 11th June Nene Washes RSPB

Meet at 7 pm for a guided walk with the warden to see the reserve and its breeding birds. There will be an opportunity to stay late to listen for Corncrakes. Booking is essential. To book and/or for further details contact Vicki Harley (contact details on back page).

Friday 9th July Brampton Wood

An evening walk looking at general natural history, 7pm to approx 9 pm. Booking is essential. For further information and to book contact Vicki Harley (contact details on back page).

Friday 13th August CBC Barbecue at Fowlmere RSPB Reserve

A Barbecue in the picnic area from 7.30pm. Bring your own food to cook. Salad, baps, sauces, soft drinks available – donation towards costs welcome. Please book by contacting Vicki Harley (contact details on back page). If anyone is interested in a guided walk at 6.30pm, please contact doug.radford@rspb.org.uk.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

We welcome the following new members – Jeffrey Brett of Prickwillow, Malcolm Busby of Histon, Keith Gypps of Fowlmere, Phillip Mosely of Duxford, Christoph Teufel of Cambridge & Nigel Westwood of St Ives.

Bruce Martin

CLUB CONTACTS

Chairman

Peter Herkenrath

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

Secretary

John Harding

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

Treasurer

Kevin Harris

37 Vicarage Meadow, Stow-cum-Quy,
Cambridge, CB25 9AL
Tel: 01223 813085
Email: kevin.harris1@mypostoffice.co.uk

County Recorder (Old Cambs)

Mark Hawkes

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

County Recorder (Hunts)

John Clark

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

Indoor Meetings Secretary

Vicki Harley

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

Bulletin Editor

Duncan Poyser

1 Hallfield Terrace, Stuntney, Ely
01353 662157
Email: cbcbulletin@googlemail.com

Other Council Members

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.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

Birdline number

Remember that your Cambridgeshire 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 July 2010, covering May/June 2010

GOOD BIRDING!