

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 421



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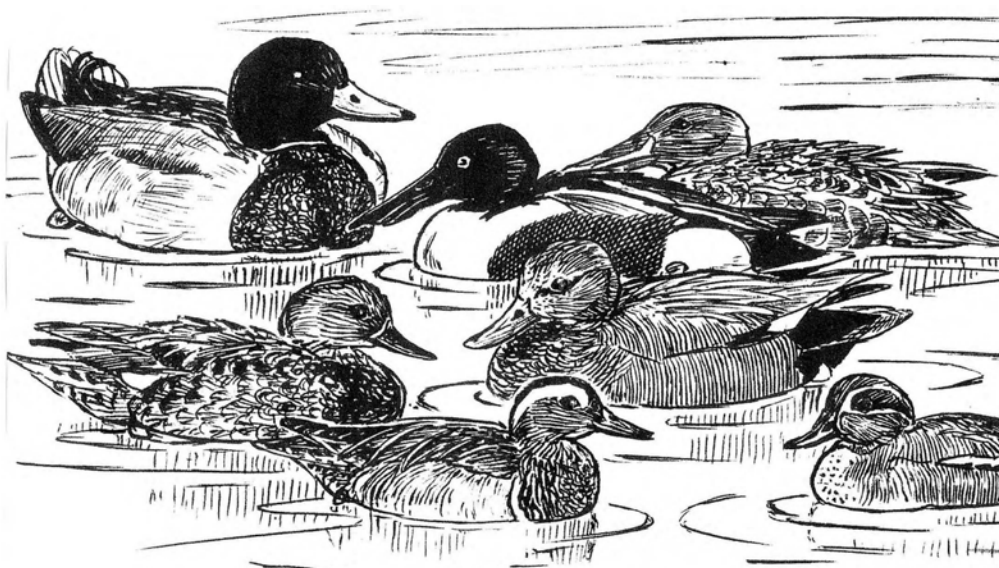
*Opinions expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of the Club.*

## Welcome to the March / April 2012 Edition

Apologies for the late arrival of my second bulletin for the club, held up by a combination of different key contributors' other commitments. It is also a slimmed down issue this time, to make room in the envelope for the flyer for our exciting autumn conference on raptors. This is remarkably topical with the recent announcement and almost immediate U-turn on the plan to control Buzzard numbers to protect Pheasant shooting interests. We rarely receive counts for Pheasants, and a search through the club's database might well suggest that the Buzzard is somewhat more abundant in our county than the Pheasant. Most of us would doubt that of course, but I think it shows that having figures on everything can, potentially, be useful. I'm sure that a gamebird count along the lines of the raptor watches described in this issue would reveal significantly higher numbers and might raise the question of just how many Pheasants do these gamekeepers need in the countryside, in order that their paying clients have a chance of shooting a few? The ecological impact of the release of millions of non-native Pheasant and Red-legged Partridges each year seems to go unquestioned. Personally, I celebrate the return of the Buzzard and can remember when I first found a pair breeding just a few miles south of home – it was only nine years ago. As with all change, there is inevitably a period of adjustment, but hopefully we can all learn to live with this one.

*From the Bulletin Editor*

*Dabbling Ducks, by Graham Easy*



## RECENT BIRD REPORTS March / April 2012

These are unchecked reports rather than confirmed records, sourced from sightings received by our County Recorder or reported on the 'What's About?' page on the CBC website.

The period March to April is all about change. Early summer visitors start to filter through, late winter visitors are leaving, whilst other birds are dropping off on the way to their breeding grounds. The weather during the two months was certainly changeable. March was dry, warm and sunny (the sunniest since 1929) but April, conversely, proved to be cold and wet.

The numbers of wild swans started to diminish with no reports of **Bewick's Swans** at all but there were approximately 700 **Whooper Swans** remaining at the Ouse Washes on Mar 16<sup>th</sup>. Wild geese were well represented with 6 **Tundra Bean Geese** at Fen Drayton Lakes on Mar 10<sup>th</sup>, 5 **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Wicken Fen on Mar 13<sup>th</sup> and single **Pink-footed** and **Brent Geese** seen at various sites.

A colourful drake **Mandarin Duck** visited a garden in Little Shelford on Mar 31<sup>st</sup> and the following day a pair of were observed at Sawston Hall Meadows. The spring arrival of **Garganey** commenced with the first report coming from the Ouse Washes on Mar 12<sup>th</sup> with the same site hosting 6 birds on Apr 26<sup>th</sup>. A pair of **Red-crested Pochards** were found at Grafham Water on Mar 17<sup>th</sup>, and **Smew** lingered into March with reports from 3 sites with Needingworth Quarry Lakes holding the peak of 21 birds during the WeBS count on Mar 11<sup>th</sup>. A female **Red-breasted Merganser** turned up at Paxton Pits on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and remained there until the end of the month whilst a drake was found displaying at Grafham Water on Mar 26<sup>th</sup>, pity they couldn't find each other! **Goosanders** remained into March with the peak count (13) coming from Grafham Water on Mar 10<sup>th</sup>. **Ruddy Duck** were just holding on with a report of just 2 birds from one site.

**Grey Partridges** began to disperse and pair up with reports received from 8 sites.

**Bitterns** started getting their act together with early 'grunting' birds giving way to proper 'booming' birds being heard from 3 sites.

**Little Egrets** were widely reported with the peak count of 14 coming from the Ouse Washes on Mar 14<sup>th</sup>. **Great Egrets** were also well represented with single birds being

reported from 5 sites, and a further pair turning up at Witcham GP's on Mar 23<sup>rd</sup>. Two **Glossy Ibis** found the Nene Washes to their liking, staying 3 days from Mar 12<sup>th</sup> onwards. Grafham Water held 5 **Black-necked Grebes** on Mar 17<sup>th</sup> but unfortunately the long staying **European Shag**, from the same site, was found dead in April.

Mar 31<sup>st</sup> was another Raptor Watch day but due to inclement weather conditions results were probably lower than usually expected – see full report in this bulletin. **Red Kites** continued to be widespread peaking with 9 birds from Morborne Hill during the Raptor Watch. Outwith the Raptor Watch, **Marsh Harriers** began to pair up, and displaying and food passing was witnessed from favoured sites. **Hen Harriers** remained during the period and up to 5 birds could be seen coming to roost at Wicken Fen. Single **Northern Goshawks** were reported from 3 sites including a displaying male at one location. The Ouse Fen **Rough-legged Buzzard** continued to entertain visitors until Apr 16<sup>th</sup> and the first returning **Osprey** was noted at Brampton on Mar 14<sup>th</sup>. A dusting of **Merlins** remained throughout the period with a pair being seen at Fowlmere RSPB on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Hobbies** started to reappear from Apr 14<sup>th</sup> and **Peregrines** were noted from many sites including 3 over Castle Hill central Cambridge on Mar 19<sup>th</sup>. Encouraging news of nesting **Peregrines** also came from 2 sites, and possibly from a third, showing how well this bird is now doing.

**Water Rails** could be heard 'squealing' from many sites with 4+ birds being heard at Wicken Fen, Kingfishers Bridge, and Fowlmere. **Common Cranes** could be seen around the Nene Washes with up to 4 birds being regularly observed at Guyhirn opposite the Chill Out Café. 3 birds flew over Ouse Fen on Mar 25<sup>th</sup> and the A142 near Witchford on Apr 15<sup>th</sup>, but the peak count was 9 at the Nene Washes at Eldernell on Mar 11<sup>th</sup>.

Passage wader numbers started to build up during the period after a slow start. **Oystercatchers** peak count again, not surprisingly, came from Foul Anchor, Wisbech with 43 being present on Apr 22<sup>nd</sup>, whilst at

Isleham Water Meadows **Avocet** numbers reached a very respectable 46 on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>. A single **Stone Curlew** was noted at Overcote Lane, Needingworth on Mar 15<sup>th</sup> and **Little Plover** numbers reached just 4 at the Ouse Washes and Cambridge Research Park. **Ringed Plovers** fared little better with the peak count being just 5 birds at the Ouse Washes on Apr 28<sup>th</sup>. **Golden Plovers** remained into April with 120 birds seen from the Monks Wood area, and singles of **Grey Plover** were noted from 3 sites. **Dunlin** numbers peaked at 30 from the Ouse Washes on Mar 16<sup>th</sup> with the same site holding 65 **Ruff** on Apr 11<sup>th</sup>. Singles of the elusive **Jack Snipe** turned up at 5 sites with 2 birds being noted at Kingfisher Bridge on Apr 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Roding Woodcock** were seen at both Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen and a large flock of 3,921 **Black-tailed Godwits** were carefully counted on the Ouse Washes on Mar 12<sup>th</sup>. A small passage of waders towards the end of Apr saw 71 **Bar-tailed Godwits** pass over Ouse Fen with a further 45 over Witcham. At the same time **Whimbrel** were also on the move with 1 to 3 birds at four sites, whilst an impressive 62+ **Curlew** on the tidal Nene at March Farmers on Apr 29<sup>th</sup> easily topped the 7 that could be seen at Kingfishers Bridge and the Nene Washes at Eldernell. The long staying **Spotted Redshank** remained at the Cam Washes until Mar 26<sup>th</sup>, and **Common Greenshank** numbers peaked at 4 from Witcham Gravel on Apr 29<sup>th</sup>. **Green Sandpiper** numbers peaked at 4 from Colne Fen GP's on Apr 6<sup>th</sup>, and 2 **Common Sandpipers** were at Grafham Water from Apr 12<sup>th</sup>.

A **Great Skua** flew low over the Nene Washes, Eldernell on Apr 26<sup>th</sup> and single **Mediterranean Gulls** were picked out from **Black-headed Gulls** from 4 sites, including an adult at Milton Country Park on Mar 9<sup>th</sup>. **Little Gulls** started passing through during March and up to 6 birds were at Grafham Water on Apr 7<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. **Yellow-legged Gulls** were reported from 5 sites including 7 roosting at Grafham Water on Apr 6<sup>th</sup>, whilst the same site held a **Caspian Gull** on Mar 26<sup>th</sup> and 2 were at Milton Tip on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>. March & April is a good time to pick up **Iceland Gulls** and this year was no exception. Reports came in from 6 sites including an adult at Milton Tip on Apr 21<sup>st</sup> and two 2<sup>nd</sup> winter birds at CEGB Reservoir, Fletton on

Mar 17<sup>th</sup>. Singles of **Glaucous Gull** were reported from 4 sites. A **Sandwich Tern** flew over Kings Dyke NR on Mar 25<sup>th</sup>. **Arctic Terns** moved through during April including an estimated peak of 100 birds at Grafham Water on Apr 24<sup>th</sup>, with the same site also holding 7 **Black Terns** on Apr 30<sup>th</sup>. The aptly named **Little Tern** made a brief but welcome appearance during the last week of April with birds being witnessed at 4 sites.

The first **Turtle Dove** of the year was seen at Aldreth on Apr 14<sup>th</sup> (one day later than last year's first record) whilst the record for the first **Cuckoo** was shared by Wicken Fen and Crown Lakes CP on Apr 11<sup>th</sup>. Reports of a single **Rose-ringed Parakeet** came from 4 sites in March but none seemed to linger. Owls appeared to be doing okay after a harsh period of weather and reports of **Barn Owl** were widespread with 3 birds seen at Ouse Fen and Nene Washes, Eldernell. **Little Owls** cropped up at various sites including a pair at Needingworth Quarry Lakes and between Newton and Fowlmere, whilst **Tawny Owls** were already busy feeding young or on nests throughout the county. The welcome winter invasion of **Short-eared Owls** carried on unabated and included 5 at Larkrise Farm, Barton on Apr 16<sup>th</sup>, but not surprisingly numbers started to decrease towards the end of April. **Common Swifts** made a welcome return with the first record from Ferry Meadows CP on Apr 16<sup>th</sup>, and **Kingfishers** could be seen at various sites including 2 at Wicken Fen and Fowlmere NR. A **Hoopoe** over-wintered at a location near Little Shelford in south Cambs from late October last year until early April (on private land out of public view). Hoopoes have been encountered in the UK in all months of the year, but for an individual to over-winter for several months is unusual. Reports of **Lesser-spotted Woodpecker** including calling and drumming males came in from 5 sites but they still remain very scarce in the county.

The **Great Grey Shrike** remained around Ely until Mar 18<sup>th</sup>, and shortly after another was discovered at Thorney which settled there until Apr 1<sup>st</sup>. Records of single **Common Ravens** came in from 3 sites during the period, but although they are still rare in the county, reports appear to be becoming more regular.

Reports of **Marsh Tit** came from only 3 sites with a peak count of just 4 from Gamlingay

Wood on Apr 21<sup>st</sup>; surely there must be more out there waiting to be found? There's no doubt that **Bearded Tits** have been hit by the harsh weather with only 4 wetland sites reporting up to a maximum of 4 'pinging' birds. An intriguing and rare report for the county of 2 **Woodlarks** seen and heard flying over Fowlmere was received from Rare Bird Alert on Apr 1<sup>st</sup> (not an April fool joke I hope!) Hirundines started arriving in March with **Sand Martins** being followed in by **Swallows** and **House Martins**, but numbers appeared slow to arrive no doubt due to the cold and wet conditions. **Cetti's Warblers** appear to have escaped the ravages of the winter with 16 birds being heard or seen at their stronghold of Wicken Fen on Apr 6<sup>th</sup>. Common warblers began to return in earnest during the period, with **Blackcaps** in particular seemingly doing well. The first **Grasshopper Warbler** could be heard 'reeling' from Lords Holt on Mar 30<sup>th</sup>, but there have been none at Fowlmere for the first time ever. **Lesser Whitethroat** rang out from many sites. An **Iberian Chiffchaff** turned up at Castor Hangland on Apr 22<sup>nd</sup> and settled for over a week, giving time for the many visitors to study it carefully. After a while it was apparent that the bird was able to sing both Iberian and **Common Chiffchaff** songs perfectly and appearance wise seemed rather drab. Many opinions came in as to whether it was a true Iberian, a **Common Chiffchaff** that had learnt Iberian song, or the possibility of it being a hybrid. I guess we will never know for certain. **Nuthatch** numbers appear to be rising, but the peak count by far came from Monks Wood where 20 pairs were recorded on Mar 24<sup>th</sup>. A few **Ring Ouzels** passed through during April including 3 seen between the A14 and Milton Tip on Apr 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Redwings** and **Fieldfares** hung around into April but by then most had moved on. No reports were received of **Spotted Flycatcher**, but a male **Pied Flycatcher** was recorded and photographed at Woodwalton Fen on Apr 11<sup>th</sup>, equalling the County's earliest record. The first **Nightingale** was reported on 16<sup>th</sup> Apr from Crown Lakes CP and Marsh Lane GP's but worryingly numbers appear well down on last year; at least 14 at Castor Hanglands is notable, but no Paxton Pits records were received! Reports of single **Black Redstarts** came in from 3 sites including one at Addenbrookes Hospital on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, whilst **Common**

**Redstarts** were seen at 7 locations, with 2 being at Wicken Fen on Apr 15<sup>th</sup>. Only one report was received of a single **Whinchat** which was briefly at the Cam Washes on Apr 29<sup>th</sup>, and lone **Stonechats** remained at 3 sites. Passage **Wheatear** numbers, including some Greenland birds, peaked at 8 from Fen Drayton Lakes and Haddenham/Aldreth Fen. **Tree Sparrow** reports were down on last year with the peak count being 10 at March on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>. **Meadow Pipits** appear under recorded, but a flock of 50+ were noted at the Cambridge Research Park on Mar 11<sup>th</sup>. Two **Rock Pipits** were seen at Tanolt GP's on Mar 19<sup>th</sup>, and a single **Water Pipit** was picked out at the Nene Washes, Eldernell on Mar 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Yellow Wagtails** started arriving in April with 65+ recorded with cattle at March Farmers on Apr 15<sup>th</sup>. **Grey Wagtails** popped up at various locations including 3 at Grafham Water, which also hosted 3 **White Wagtails**. Reports of **Bramblings** were very thin on the ground with just single birds recorded from 6 sites, but **Siskin** numbers fared a little better with 8 birds being reported at Fen Drayton Lakes on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>. An impressive flock of c300 **Common Linnets** was recorded at Dotterel Hall Farm, Balsham on Apr 17<sup>th</sup>, and 32 **Lesser Redpolls** were seen at the Cam Washes in early March. Singles of **Common Crossbill** were reported from 3 sites and a single **Snow Bunting** was discovered at the Nene Washes on Mar 12<sup>th</sup>. Good flocks of **Corn Buntings** were found at Grunty Fen with 60 birds on Mar 11<sup>th</sup>, but that was trumped by the Ouse Washes which held 140 birds the following day.

The Recent Reports were compiled and written by David Heath, assisted by Doug Radford.

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Creswell, Mike Curtis, Dave Deboo, Tim Dee, Steve Dudley, Graham Easy, Mark Eaton, S Eltringham, Mike Evans, Mike Everett, Ben Fallon, Anthony Fenn, David Fisher, David Fotherby, Mike Foley, Martin Fowlie, Mat Francis, Andrew Gardener, Don Gardener, Brian Groombridge, Mark Grooms, Dennis Hall, James Hanlon, Andrew Hannaford, Vicki Harley, David Hatton, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jonathan Heath, Peter Herkenrath, Michael Holdsworth, David Hollin, Alex Holt, Pete Holt, Jonathan Hook, Ken Hook, Richard Hook, David Hopkins, John Hoppitt, Roger Horton, Carl Howard, Mark Hows, Roger Hughes, Bob Humphrey, Paige Hunter, Edward Imber, Derek Jackson, Bob Jarman, Eion Jennings, Richard Johnson, Josh Jones, Colin Kirtland, Richard Kenzie, Tim Knight, Andrew Knights, Mike Knowles, Rob Law, Vince Lea, John Le Gassick, Martin Leader, Tony Lowe, Andrew Maddocks, Tony Mallyon, Owen & Monica Marks, Andy Massey, Bruce & Gwen Martin, Paul Mason, Duncan McNiven, Stuart Matthews, Matthew Mellor, Mark Missin, J Missin, Graham Moates,

Chris Monk, David Nation, Dave Palmer, Richard Palmer, Philip Parker, Rob Partridge, Alan Paterson, Gavin Paterson, Richard Patient, Pam Peacock, Mark Peck, Stuart Pedley, Andy Plumb, Rob Pople, Paul Pulman, Doug Radford, Felix Rainbow, Mark Rayment, Sue Rogers, the RSPB (all our reserves & RSPB HQ), Gareth Rees, Duncan Ritchie, Tony Roberts, John Saunders, Phil Savage, Ann Scott, Clive Sinclair, Nick Sinden, Stuart Sharp, Bob Smith, Nigel Sprowell, Jeff Stanning, Ben Stephen, Simon Stirrup, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, Paul Taylor, Christoph Teufel, Richard Thomas, Joan Thompson, Chris Thorne & the Wicken Fen Ringing Group, Erica Towner, Hugh Venables, Alan Wadsworth, P M Warrington, Russell Watkins, Tim Watling, Matt Webb, Richard Webb, David Wege, Jamie Wells, John Wells, Peter Wells, Chris Went, Kevin Wolstencroft. Also, records were taken from the CBC website and Cambirds, with special thanks to Tony Roberts. And thanks to all other contributors to the CBC database.

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### From the Chairman

While I am writing this column, we are in the middle of spring. All our summer migrants have returned, Swifts scream overhead, the first fledged Starlings and Robins roam our gardens, and Common and Lesser Whitethroats sing from the hedges. A few days ago, I heard the constant squeaking calls of young Tawny Owls from a large tree in the centre of Cambridge and I could just make out the silhouette of an adult in flight against the background of the old colleges. It is an exciting time of the year, with unusual species turning up such as the Red-rumped Swallow at Grafham Water or the Golden Orioles that were found at several locations in the county – so it might pay off to double check anything looking, or sounding, unfamiliar. It is also the time of year when, sadly, too many nests and clutches of birds are lost through unnecessary disturbance. Hence my appeal to be very careful with trimming hedges, scrub or trees – you might hit an undiscovered nest or expose a nest to predators.

On 19th May, we had our annual birdsong workshop at Fowlmere Nature Reserve, with 17 participants. Tony Fulford and I each led a group around the reserve and we were busy listening to the calls and songs of many summer migrants, including Turtle Dove, Cuckoo, Garden Warbler, Lesser and Common Whitethroat, Reed and Sedge Warbler. We plan to continue workshops like this given that there clearly is a demand for field visits with opportunities to learn the more difficult songs and calls.

The Club has an extensive summer field programme for our members – and non-members are welcome too. We will get out to Portholme Meadow, one of the most important wet lowland meadows in the country, to Castor Hanglands and Grafham Water (see the details further down in this Bulletin or visit our website). We will be guided by local experts, some of whom work, or are volunteers, for another organisation. We have had tours led by RSPB, the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, and Natural England. The RSPB has hosted our summer barbeque for many years. In April we had a joint owl pellet workshop with the Cambridgeshire Mammal Group. I am glad to see good co-operation with these various other

organisations, of which many of our members will be members as well. I strongly believe in the diversity of natural history and conservation organisations, which, together, make a difference to our biodiversity and countryside. Our forthcoming conference on birds of prey is being organised in association with the BTO and RSPB – another example of working together (see details elsewhere in this Bulletin).

We have just had the excellent news that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership will sponsor our Cambridgeshire atlas with substantial funding. We are very grateful to the Partnership – their support is an incentive for us to do our best to produce an informative and high-quality atlas that will help planners and decision-makers with taking birdlife and biodiversity into account. A writing team has got together to produce the maps and draft text for the atlas and we are confident that the *Atlas of the Birds of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough* will be published early next year. Again a note of thanks to all the field workers who assembled the field data all over the county over the past five years. Another piece of good news is that Michael Holdsworth, the Club's Ringing Secretary, has agreed to be co-opted to Council as Secretary of the Club.

Finally a call to subscribe to this Bulletin by e-mail. With the substantial increase of postal charges, we can save funds when more members receive their Bulletin by e-mail. Please get in touch with the Bulletin Editor if you feel you can do so.

*Peter Herkenrath*

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## **From the Research Committee**

### **Raptor Watch Day March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012**

Unlike the great conditions of our first raptor watch two years earlier, the morning of 31<sup>st</sup> March dawned cold, with a brisk northerly wind. At least we lost the fog of the previous few mornings.

Watchers were in position at 13 locations across the county to count raptors, some dedicated folk repeating the watch at six sites from two years before. The prevailing wind did not really bode well for a spectacle of soaring raptors, and this is borne out by the figures. However, at least 40 people spent an hour or two watching the skies and enjoying local raptors in their territories.

Some people have asked why we did the raptor count so early in the year. Our increasingly common resident raptors, such as Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and Red Kite display in early spring, thus late March is a very good time to enjoy their display and assess how many birds may be active locally. This was always the objective of both the 2010 and 2012 raptor watches. Picking a date far in advance, to observe raptor migration across the county, would be unlikely to coincide with suitable weather.

In 2010 watches were from 15 locations, of which six were repeated in 2012. At those sites, numbers of raptors seen were down, but this is likely to be a consequence of the weather. Observers in 2010 noted that for Buzzard, there was a mix of territorial birds and birds seemingly passing through higher in the sky, but in 2012, the latter element was clearly missing, with the weather on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 not being conducive to raptor migration. The number of Kestrels seen was more comparable, again lower but not markedly so – this is far more representative of the local population. Tables of counts at each site in 2010 and 2012 are below.

Of the "scarcer" raptors, Peregrine was seen at two places in 2010 but not at all in 2012, and Marsh Harriers were recorded at watch points nearer to large wetland sites, as one might expect. Red Kites appeared surprisingly scarce, despite increasing numbers of sightings across the county in

general – presumably not many of our watch points were in kite hot-spots. Morborne Hill, in central Hunts, was the prime view point for this species in 2012.

As this is such an enjoyable way to enjoy some of the county's large and charismatic birds (when the weather is good), and encourages people to watch as groups and learn more as they go, we will repeat raptor watches in the future.

The sites and species recorded in both years are shown in tables 1 and 2 below. BZ, Buzzard, K. Kestrel, SH Sparrowhawk, KT Red Kite, MR Marsh Harrier, BO Barn Owl, PE Peregrine:

Table 1: 2012

Site	BZ	K.	SH	KT	MR	total birds per site
Eversden/Kingston	9	3	0	0	0	12
Fen Drayton Lakes	4	2	1	0	0	7
Fowlmere Manor Farm	7	1	0	1	0	9
Haddenham North Hill	2	0	0	0	0	2
Kingfisher Bridge	2	3	1	0	6	12
Wennington/Raveley Woods	8	5	1	2	0	16
Brinkley	3	1	1	0	0	5
Linton Rivey Hill	6	2	3	0	0	11
Madingley Hill	17	1	1	0	0	19
Magog Down	5	4	0	1	0	10
Morborne Hill	7	2	2	9	0	20
Nene Washes Eldernell	6	5	1	2	5	19
Wistow Fen	7	2	0	1	0	10
Totals per species	83	31	11	16	11	152

Table 2: 2010

Site	BZ	K.	SH	KT	MR	BO	PE	total birds per site
Eversden/Kingston	19	4	3	0	0	0	0	26
Fen Drayton Lakes	25	5	4	0	0	1	0	35
Fowlmere Manor Farm	18	2	1	0	0	0	0	21
Haddenham North Hill	27	7	3	0	0	0	0	37
Kingfisher Bridge	6	4	4	0	7	0	0	21
Wennington/Raveley Woods	12	4	4	2	0	0	1	23
Bluntisham	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	11
Cambourne	13	6	2	0	0	0	0	21
Coldham's Common	3	3	5	0	0	0	2	13
Croydon Hill	21	3	5	0	0	0	0	29
Grafham Water	13	2	1	1	0	0	0	17
Pymore	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Redmere Farm	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	6
Tetworth	18	5	2	0	0	0	1	26
Woodwalton N.Bank	6	3	0	3	2	3	0	17
totals per species	195	56	35	6	9	4	4	309

Summary comparison. **2010:** 15 sites with 309 birds recorded. **2012:** 13 sites, 152 raptors recorded. At the six repeat sites, total raptors went down from 163 to just 58, with the biggest total drop seen

in Buzzard numbers, but the proportional drop in Sparrowhawk was even greater. Red Kite and Marsh Harrier numbers remained about the same at these six sites.

We have decided to try a watch in autumn, as a prelude to our forthcoming conference on raptors, so you are all welcome to join in on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 10 till 12, at watch points to be announced. Late September should be a good time to see dispersing juvenile birds, and also hopefully connect with Hobby at some sites, as they should still be around. You never know, if the weather is right, there might even be something scarcer migrating, too!

*Louise Bacon*

### **From the Membership Secretary**

We welcome the following new members – Roger Cresswell of Cambridge, Steven Hughes of Perry, Graham Loasby of Soham and Lewis York of Eynesbury.

*Bruce Martin*

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### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June Cambridge Conservation Forum Summer Symposium**

The CCF Summer Symposium will be held at the Judge Business School, Cambridge, on 21st June 2012. Registration from 09.00, programme runs 09.30 to 17.45 followed by a wine reception. As is now traditional, the one-day summer symposium provides an opportunity to focus on a theme of interest to CCF members and friends, and to explore opportunities for collaborative working. This year that focus is the role and potential of new technologies and novel applications of technology in nature conservation. We are planning a programme that will include an overview of technologies, a key note address and ten other presentations including smartphones, social networking, remote sensing, satellite tracking, camera traps, smart taxonomy and GIS techniques. During the day there will be an interactive session, led by Professor Bill Sutherland, to horizon scan which new technologies or technological advances you would wish to have to boost conservation outcomes. A voting system will reveal which are the most wanted technological advances. The booking fee is £40 (including tea/coffee, lunch and wine). For a booking form, please see [www.cambridgeconservationforum.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeconservationforum.org.uk) or contact Peter Herkenrath (see contact details on the last page).

#### **Friday 13th July Barbeque at RSPB Fen Drayton Lakes**

Enjoy a social evening at the Discovery Zone and see the latest developments on one of our county's RSPB reserves.

Guided walk at 6:30pm.

Barbecue cooking at the Discovery Zone from 7:30pm. Bring your own food to cook (meat or veggie). Salad, baps, sauces, soft drinks available - donations towards costs welcome.

The venue will be signposted and toilets available. Booking is essential for this event. Please contact Vicki Harley for more information or to book. Contact details on back page.

#### **Friday 10th August Guided walk at Grafham Water Nature Reserve**

A guided walk with the warden Aidan Matthews.

Meet at 19:00hrs at The Fishing Lodge, Mander Car Park, West Perry, PE28 0BX. Directions to Grafham Water on <http://www.wildlifebcn.org/reserves/grafham-water> We will look at the Bird Sanctuary and the surrounding habitats (approx. 3 miles round trip). No charge but donation to the Wildlife Trust welcome.

To give our guide some idea of numbers to expect, if possible please contact Vicki Harley if you intend to join this visit. Contact details on back page.



### **Last weekend in September CBC/BTO/RSPB Conference:**

Raptors: Conservation and Ecology

The conference will be held at Cottenham Village College on Saturday Sept 29<sup>th</sup>, with field visits the following day to RSPB Nene Washes and Ouse Fen Reserves.

The programme will be made up of overviews and species studies.

Overviews: what the atlas has told us about raptor populations in the UK by Simon Gilling (BTO), conservation of raptors by Jeff Knott (RSPB), avian predator and prey populations by Malcolm Nicoll (University of Reading).

Species studies: Buzzard by Robin Prytherch; Marsh Harrier by Nigel Middleton and Phil Littler (Hawk and Owl Trust); Hen Harrier by Daniel Hayhow (RSPB); Kestrel by Staffan Roos (RSPB); Peregrine by Ed Drewitt.

The booking form is supplied with this bulletin. See the club website for updates.

*Vicki Harley*

**\*\*\*\*\***

### **RSPB CAMBRIDGE LOCAL GROUP**

Saturday, July 7th: Lakenheath Fen, then Weeting Heath and Mayday Farm or Kings Forest. Meet at Lakenheath Fen car park at 2.30pm.

For more details and bookings, please see <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/cambridge/events> or call Andrew Camps, 01638 741018.

**\*\*\*\*\***

### **Volunteers sought for liaising with farms and farmers**

As previously announced, Council has discussed closer collaboration with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group. FWAG assists farmers and other people who manage the countryside by providing environmental management expertise. We are seeking Club members who would like to establish an informal long-term relationship with farmers by recording birds on their farms during the seasons and during changes in habitats and discussing their observations with the farmers. This does not involve full-scale farmland bird surveys or a professional environmental advice service for farmers. It provides a unique opportunity to access farms, observe the birds and other wildlife and to relate them to the management of the farm with interest and benefits for both the farmers and the birdwatchers. If you are interested, please contact Peter Herkenrath (see contact details on the last page) and we will try and bring you in touch with farmers.

**\*\*\*\*\***

### **WILD BIRD FOOD**

Members of the Cambridgeshire Bird Club can buy wild bird food at a 10% discount from Rectory Farm, Landbeach, CB24 6DA (on the A10 1.5 km N of the A14). Just show your most recent Bulletin or Annual Report as proof of membership. Just one more benefit of joining CBC.

## Club Contacts

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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.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk](http://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: Mike Foley by July 7th 2012, and send records by post to Mike Foley by July 5th.

Next Bulletin due out late July / early August 2012, covering May / June 2012

# GOOD BIRDING!