

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

## Bulletin No. 430



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

## Welcome to the September / October 2013 Edition

### From the Chair

Winter is certainly on its way and this week or so I've seen my first Brambling, Redpoll, Woodcock and other nice seasonal treats. It prompts me to remind you to come along to our Christmas Social at St John's Church Hall on December 13<sup>th</sup> – if you have a few slides you would like to share with us there is still room to squeeze one or two into the programme; we have a great selection of speakers lined up to do a 'turn' and there will be a festive selection of treats to share. I will also take this early opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year, a good list for 2014 (if that's your thing) and hope you will continue to support the Club in our various endeavours.

The new e-Bulletin, which Peter Bircham has been producing, is available to read or download from the Club website – Peter's monthly compilation of bird records forms the basis for the two-monthly summary presented here, although a few later records may make it into this traditional bulletin. The e-Bulletin has the advantage of full colour and a more rapid publication date, so is more up to date. Also, we are not constrained by space for postage and printing costs, so can include more material online, and the long-term vision is that this will become the main regular communication stream. We do appreciate, however, that many members will want to retain the paper bulletin and we will not remove this feature of membership benefits while it remains popular. One thing which we are conscious of in relation to the e-Bulletin is that not all members know when it gets posted on the website; so if you would like to be informed when each issue is published, please send your current email address to [cbcbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk](mailto:cbcbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk). We can either email the e-Bulletin to you directly or send an alert to your inbox to let you know when it is available to download; it would be useful to know what route members prefer. We would also like to see more contributions from club members in this format, particularly if you would like to write site guides to your favourite local patch or bird identification articles. Thanks go to the many observers who now submit their records monthly, which really helps with the production of the e-Bulletin.

Here are the answers to last time's quiz. I asked about the following groups of four birds; which is the odd one out in each group, and what links them all? The odd ones out are now underlined:

1. Wigeon, Pintail, Pochard, Common Scoter
2. Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Peregrine
3. Little Ringed Plover, Dotterel, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff
4. Red-backed Shrike, Firecrest, Bluethroat, Black Redstart

No-one quite got the right answer, but congratulations to Bruce Martin who came closest with his guess.

The link between them all is that they are considered by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. The idea for this came to me while reading the annual review by the RBBP in British Birds. The latest, published in the September 2013 BB, covered the 2011 breeding season. It struck me just how many of these species we had in the county. The quiz includes a small selection of those that occurred here 2011. In each set of four, just one species (underlined) did not have a Cambridgeshire breeding record in the 2011 review. I will return to this topic when we get closer to the breeding season, but for now I recommend anyone wanting to find out more about the Rare Breeding Birds Panel goes to their website at <http://www.rbbp.org.uk/> and I encourage anyone with any records of these species in the breeding season to ensure that they are submitted to our County Recorder. All such records are forwarded to the RBBP, and are handled by us and them with utmost care to maintain the sensitive nature of these records.

Vince Lea

## RECENT BIRD REPORTS September/ October 2013

*This bulletin uses as its template the recently published Checklist of the Birds of Britain (8<sup>th</sup> edition) by Harrop, Collinson, Dudley, Kehoe and the BOURC (Ibis 155 p 635). This changes the order of presentation – once again – and some species appear in what may seem a strange place. Where no numbers are given the records below relate to single birds. They are as before, unchecked reports.*

### Summary

Three County firsts over this two month period (see below)! September: No records of Whimbrel – it seems that the passage was finished in August. Hirundines seemed to leave around the last third of the month. Many records of Ospreys moving through, and the customary sightings of Hobbies, always more visible once the breeding season is over. A sign of things to come with the first Redwing on 28<sup>th</sup>. A nicely documented passage of Whinchats shows how accumulation of individual records can give us a clearer picture of these seasonal movements.

October: Perhaps most significant was the weather, with a prevailing southerly airstream restricting both the departure of summer and arrival of winter migrants. For a few days from the 10<sup>th</sup>, the wind turned to the north and brought the expected winter visitors (Whooper Swan, Redwing, Fieldfare, Brambling) and a few of the typical crop of storm-driven seabirds (see above). However some summer visitors lingered, with Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Reed Warbler caught at Wicken Fen up to the 19<sup>th</sup>. The mild weather and wind direction checked the numbers of winter thrushes with very few reports of large numbers apart from the arrival around the 10<sup>th</sup>.

### September Headlines

**COMMON SCOTER** Orton BP ( 8 males and 7 females briefly on 12<sup>th</sup>).

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** Grafham Water (26<sup>th</sup>) . If accepted this will be the first record for Cambridgeshire; ironically the previous possible record was rejected last year, (see CBR 85).

**GREAT WHITE EGRET** Wicken Fen (1<sup>st</sup>–30<sup>th</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (1<sup>st</sup>–26<sup>th</sup>).

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** Paxton Pits (8<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (12<sup>th</sup>) Ouse Washes RSPB (28<sup>th</sup>).

**ARCTIC SKUA** St Neots (3 flying south-west on 26<sup>th</sup>).

**WRYNECK** Ouse Washes RSPB (a juvenile on 13<sup>th</sup>).

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** Milton (28<sup>th</sup>).

### October headlines

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** Grafham Water (juvenile male on 12<sup>th</sup>–31<sup>st</sup>).

**GANNET** Unprecedented numbers through the county, all juveniles unless stated: on **11<sup>th</sup>** over Newborough and Whittlesey, **12<sup>th</sup>** at Ouse Washes RSPB (caught and delivered to RSPCA), Hemingford Grey, Little Wilbraham Fen (west) and Grafham Water, on **13<sup>th</sup>** over Wimpole, Fen Drayton Lakes (2 west), Witcham GP (2), Ferry Meadows (2 adults, south) and Ouse Fen (north), and on **14<sup>th</sup>**, Nene Washes, Grafham Water (2) and 16th Hinxton (5).

**RED-THROATED DIVER** Grafham Water (12<sup>th</sup>)

**GREAT WHITE EGRET** Nene Washes (flyover on 3<sup>rd</sup>), Maxey Cut (14<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen (1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup>).

**'NORTHERN HARRIER'** Ouse Washes a juvenile female (19<sup>th</sup>–31<sup>st</sup> at least ) [this is the north American subspecies of Hen Harrier (*Cyaneus cyaneus hudsonius*) with only 3 national records in the BOURC British checklist 2013]. This will be a county first if accepted.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** Ouse Washes RSPB (5<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup>), Nene Washes (flyover calling on 14<sup>th</sup>).

**POMARINE SKUA** Foul Anchor (an adult on 11<sup>th</sup>).

**ARCTIC SKUA** Foul Anchor (4 on 11<sup>th</sup>)

**GREAT SKUA** Ferry Meadows (flyover on 11<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (12<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup>), Witcham GP (flyover on 13<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water ( 2 juveniles on 13<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (3 flyovers on 15<sup>th</sup>).

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** With an influx of over 320 nationally, birds eventually filtered into Cambs at Witcham (5<sup>th</sup>), Soham (8<sup>th</sup>), Yelling (22<sup>nd</sup>), and St Neots (27<sup>th</sup>).

**LITTLE BUNTING** Dunkirk (one trapped and ringed 6<sup>th</sup>). The first county record.

### Wildfowl

**Mute Swan** Highest counts **Sept:** (Grafham Water 130 on 5<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (c30 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Whooper Swan** **Oct:** First report Prior's Fen GP (3 on 5<sup>th</sup>). Highest, Ouse Washes (500 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Bewick's Swan** **Oct:** First Report Nene Washes (20<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (6 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Pink-footed Goose** **Oct:** Ferry Meadows CP (flyover on 10<sup>th</sup>), Foul Anchor (28 on 11<sup>th</sup>).

**Greylag Goose** Highest count **Sept:** Colne Fen GP (1300 on 26<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Sutton North Fen (maximum 730 on 20<sup>th</sup> and 9 other sites with flocks of over 100).

**Canada Goose** Highest count **Sept:** Sutton North Fen (327 on 21<sup>st</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes 350 on 19<sup>th</sup>).

**Barnacle Goose** Highest count **Sept:** Sutton North Fen (19 on 7<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Sutton North Fen (17 on 20<sup>th</sup> plus a hybrid reported from 5 other sites).

**Brent Goose** **Sept:** Colne GP (26<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (13<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (20<sup>th</sup>), Grafham W (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Egyptian Goose** **Sept:** Colne GP (39 on 21<sup>st</sup>, a new county record). **Oct:** Earith GP (19 on 3<sup>rd</sup>).

**Mandarin** **Sept** Wimpole (4 on 17<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Tetworth Hall estate (maximum 9 on 23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Wigeon** Highest counts **Sept:** Ouse Washes (1000 on 29<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Colne Fen GP (1075 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Gadwall** Highest counts **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes (330 on 14<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Kingfishers Bridge (189 on 3<sup>rd</sup>).

**Teal** Highest counts **Sept:** Ouse Washes (600 on 4<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (maximum 5180 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Mallard** Highest counts **Sept:** Ouse Fen (371 on 22<sup>nd</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Fen (337 on 13<sup>th</sup>).

**Pintail** Highest counts **Sept:** Paxton Pits (25 on 6<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (6 on 27<sup>th</sup>) and at 7 other sites.

**Garganey** **Sept:** Maximum 5 at Fen Drayton Lakes (on 14<sup>th</sup>) and Ouse Washes RSPB (5 on 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>) with no repeat of the large influx recorded at the later site in 2012. Reported from 5 other sites **Oct:** Latest report, Fen Drayton Lakes (2 on 6<sup>th</sup>).

**Shoveler** Large counts **Sept:** Cam Washes (142 on 7<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Kingfisher's Bridge (max 178 on 23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Red-crested Pochard** **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes (a juvenile on 4<sup>th</sup>), Orton BP (2 on 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup>), Colne Fen GP (4 on 20<sup>th</sup>).

**Tufted Duck** **Sept:** Large count Grafham Water (1937 on 22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Scaup** **Sept:** Ouse Washes (female-type 27<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Grafham Water (female on 15<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup>, 3 females & immature male on 27<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Scoter** **Sept:** Ferry Meadows (female on 12<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water ( 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Grafham Water (female on 13<sup>th</sup>).

**Goldeneye** **Sept:** First returning birds at Paxton Pits (2 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Ruddy Duck** **Sept/Oct:** (1–6 birds reported from 2 sites).

### Game birds

**Red-legged Partridge** **Oct:** Duxford Grange (119 on 26<sup>th</sup>, recently released).

**Grey Partridge** **Sept/Oct:** 10+ reported from: Comberton (39), Great Kneighton CP (15), Great Shelford Nine Wells (12), Thriplow (15), Toft (17), Trumpington (17) and Wandlebury (21).

### Divers, cormorants

**Cormorant** **Oct:** Large count, Fen Drayton Lakes (194 on 17<sup>th</sup>).

### Egrets and herons

**Bittern** **Sept/Oct:** Reported from Ely BF, Fen Drayton Lakes, Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Ouse Fen (3) and Wicken Fen (2).

**Little Egret** Highest count **Sept:** Ouse Fen (maximum 21 on 14<sup>th</sup>), reported from 9 others sites. **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 14), reported from 6 other sites.

**Grey Heron** **Oct:** Toft (an exceptional count of 40 on 4<sup>th</sup>).

#### Grebes

**Little Grebe** **Sept:** Exceptional number Colne Fen GP (77 on 14<sup>th</sup>), *a new county record*.

**Great Crested Grebe** **Sept:** Webs count Grafham Water (306 on 22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Red-necked Grebe** **Oct:** Grafham Water (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Black-necked Grebe** **Sept:** Grafham Water (2 on 29<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Grafham Water (mostly singles but maximum of 3 from 10<sup>th</sup>–27<sup>th</sup>).

#### Raptors

**Red Kite** **Sept:** Reported from 13 sites. **Oct:** Sawtry (12 including 7 in a field near Lodge Farm), reported from 19 sites.

**Marsh Harrier** Max site counts **Sept:** Ouse Fen (5). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (13+) and Wicken Fen (6).

**Hen Harrier** **Oct:** Roost count Wicken Fen (maximum 2 males and 2 ringtails). Woodwalton Fen (wing-tagged male on 25<sup>th</sup>).

**Buzzard** High counts **Sept:** Ouse Fen (14 on 18<sup>th</sup>), Tick Fen 20 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Dry Drayton (7 on 12<sup>th</sup>).

**Osprey** **Sept/Oct:** Reported from 16 sites including Kingfishers Bridge where noted from Sept 16<sup>th</sup>–Oct 5<sup>th</sup> with 2 on Sept 29<sup>th</sup>. Latest date, Holme Fen (Oct 17<sup>th</sup>).

**Merlin** **Sept** Fowlmere NR (8<sup>th</sup>), Colne GP (21<sup>st</sup>), Ouse Washes (28<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (2<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>), Littleport (15<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (20<sup>th</sup>), Hemingford Grey (21<sup>st</sup>), Nene Washes (22<sup>nd</sup>), Whittlesford (23<sup>rd</sup>), Ouse Fen (24<sup>th</sup>), RAF Wyton (27<sup>th</sup>) and Haddenham/Aldreth Fen (31<sup>st</sup>).

**Hobby** **Sept:** Reported from 20 sites. **Oct:** Ouse Fen (4 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 7<sup>th</sup> the latest record received).

**Peregrine** **Oct:** Cambridge (from 21<sup>st</sup> usually 2 and a maximum of 3 birds seen at variously King's College Chapel Spire, St George's Church, OLEM Catholic Church and over Jesus Green).

#### Rails and crane

**Water Rail** **Sept:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes, Kingfisher's Bridge, Ouse Fen, Wicken Fen (3 on 15<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** at Colne Fen GP, Earith GP, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Kingfisher's Bridge, Little Wilbraham Fen, Ouse Fen, Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.

**Coot** Highest counts **Sept:** Grafham Water (641 on 22<sup>nd</sup>). **Oct:** Barleycraft GP (419 on 13<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Crane** **Sept:** Kingfishers Bridge (2 on 26<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes RSPB (3 on 7<sup>th</sup>), Tubney Fen (2 flew over 22<sup>nd</sup> single on 24<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen (2 on 24<sup>th</sup>–27<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Nene Washes (Eldernell and Guyhirn, 2–4 regularly, maximum 6 from 9<sup>th</sup> to the end of the month).

#### Waders

**Golden Plover** Highest counts **Sept:** Cambourne (c150 on 21<sup>st</sup>), Chettisham (150 on 30<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Fen (1700 on 31<sup>st</sup>), Ouse Washes (1000 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Grey Plover** **Oct:** Paxton Pits (2<sup>nd</sup>), Ouse Washes (5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (12<sup>th</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Lapwing** **Sept:** Ouse Fen (1100 on 12<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Haddenham/Aldreth (c1000 on 7<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (2400 on 24<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (maximum 1500 on 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Little Ringed Plover** **Sept:** latest date, Paxton Pits (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Ringed Plover** **Sept:** Unusual record in south Cambs, Bassingbourn (8 on 22<sup>nd</sup>). **Oct:** Recorded up to 22<sup>nd</sup> (2 at Grafham Water).

**Curlew** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (8<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and a single on 30<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (7<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>, single on 30<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (4 on 9<sup>th</sup>), Kingfishers Bridge (25<sup>th</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (6 on 26<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Colne (6<sup>th</sup>).

**Black-tailed Godwit** **Sept:** Ouse Fen (2 on 14<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes RSPB (7 on 30<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen (9 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 29<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (maximum 45 on 20<sup>th</sup>).

**Bar-tailed Godwit** **Sept:** Ferry Meadows (30<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup>).

**Ruff** **Sept:** Ouse Fen (112 on 24<sup>th</sup>), Colne GP (144 on 27<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes RSPB (161 on 30<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (171+ on 5<sup>th</sup>).

**Curlew Sandpiper** **Sept:** Isleham Washes (1<sup>st</sup>), Fen Drayton (2 on 14<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (2 on 24<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (24<sup>th</sup>), Sutton North Fen (2 on 21<sup>st</sup>), Ouse Washes (2 on 7<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Sutton North Fen (2 on 5<sup>th</sup>).

**Dunlin** Highest counts **Sept:** Ouse Fen (40 on 24<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (20 on 27<sup>th</sup>).

**Little Stint** **Sept:** Ouse Fen (4 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 20<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (2 on 21<sup>st</sup>), Grafham Water (25<sup>th</sup>), Barleycraft GP (2 on 29<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (2 on 29<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Prior's Fen GP (5<sup>th</sup>), Kingfishers Bridge (5<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes RSPB (12<sup>th</sup>), Sutton North Fen (14<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>) and Grafham Water (on 27<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Sandpiper** **Sept:** 1–4 reported from 9 sites. **Oct:** Grafham Water (12<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>).

**Green Sandpiper** **Sept:** Ouse Washes RSPB (8 on 6<sup>th</sup>) and at 16 sites. **Oct:** reported from 10 sites.

**Wood Sandpiper** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (6<sup>th</sup>), Offord Cluny (21<sup>st</sup>), Ouse Washes (21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup>–29<sup>th</sup>).

**Spotted Redshank** **Sept:** Ferry Meadows CP (1<sup>st</sup>), Kingfishers Bridge (1<sup>st</sup>), Swaffham Prior Fen (2 on 1<sup>st</sup>), Ouse Washes RSPB (6<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>).

**Greenshank** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (6 on 9<sup>th</sup>) reported from 10 other sites. **Oct:** Wicken Fen (1<sup>st</sup>), Paxton Pits (2<sup>nd</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>) and Kingfishers Bridge (9<sup>th</sup>).

**Redshank** **Oct:** Grafham Water (20+ on 27<sup>th</sup>).

**Turnstone** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (13<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 14<sup>th</sup> and a single on 26<sup>th</sup>).

**Jack Snipe** **Sept:** Earliest date Paxton Pits (27<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>), Nene Washes (6 on 14<sup>th</sup>) and Fowlmere NR (2 on 31<sup>st</sup>).

**Snipe** **Sept:** Ouse Washes RSPB (139 on 5<sup>th</sup>).

**Woodcock** **Oct:** Cambridge (Oct 13<sup>th</sup>).

*Skuas, terns and gulls*

**Black Tern** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (14 on 6<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows (11<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Tern** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes (the last juveniles still present on 14<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Grafham Water (late date 25<sup>th</sup> nearly a month later than in 2011).

**Arctic Tern** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (juvenile on 27<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Grafham Water (1–2 from 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> and a single on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>), and Buckden GP (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Little Gull** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (6<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (25<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Foul Anchor (11<sup>th</sup>), Brampton Pits (2 on 12<sup>th</sup>) and Grafham Water (4 on 12<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 13<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>).

**Mediterranean Gull** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes (juvenile on 5<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows (1<sup>st</sup> winter on 20<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes (adult on 9<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (12<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup>), Aldreth (15<sup>th</sup>) and Paxton Pits (19<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** **Oct:** Large numbers attracted to ploughing at Melbourn (1265 on 12th) and South Cambs (1600 on 16th).

**Herring Gull** **Oct:** Tanholt GP (50 on 5<sup>th</sup>) and Peterborough Millenium Bridge area (100 on 12<sup>th</sup>).

**Yellow-legged Gull** **Sept:** Autumn day roost at Paxton Pits (maximum 20 on 12th) and birds attracted to ploughing at Melbourn (9 on 12<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Grafham Water (1–6 from 5<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Caspian Gull** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes (19<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (20<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>) and Waterbeach GP (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Great Black-backed Gull** **Oct:** Tanholt GP (20 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>) and Peterborough Millenium Bridge area (50 on 12<sup>th</sup>).

*Pigeons, doves, owls, Kingfisher and woodpeckers*

**Stock Dove** **Oct:** counts of 20+ Colne Fen GP (40 on 1<sup>st</sup>), Abbots Ripton (35 on 15<sup>th</sup>), Waterbeach Fen (56 on 25<sup>th</sup>) and Tetworth Hall estate (36 on 26<sup>th</sup>).

**Woodpigeon** **Oct:** 500+ at Comberton (600+ on 29<sup>th</sup>) and Tetworth Hall estate (620 on 26<sup>th</sup>).

**Collared Dove** **Oct:** Waterbeach Fen (a pre-roost gathering of 171 on 24<sup>th</sup>).

**Turtle Dove** **Sept:** Sutton North Fen (7<sup>th</sup>), Fowlmere NR (10<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Cuckoo** **Sept:** only reported from Papworth (14<sup>th</sup>).

**Barn Owl** **Oct:** Ouse Fen (5 ringed on 1<sup>st</sup>), Fowlmere NR (2 young still in a nestbox on 20<sup>th</sup>).

**Tawny Owl** **Sept:** calling birds reported from 10 sites. **Oct:** reported from only 6 sites.

**Short-eared Owl** **Oct:** Ouse Washes (2 on 23<sup>rd</sup>) and Haddenham (2 on 31<sup>st</sup>).

**Swift** **Sept:** Latest date reported, Grafham Water (3 on 15<sup>th</sup>).

**Kingfisher** **Sept/Oct:** Reported from 38 sites.

*Shrikes and corvids*

**Great Grey Shrike** **Oct:** A good influx of over 140 nationally with local birds at Nene Washes (20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup>), Little Eversden (23<sup>rd</sup>), Holme (30<sup>th</sup>) and Great Fen (Trundle Mere 30<sup>th</sup>–31<sup>st</sup>).

**Jackdaw** **Sept/Oct:** Thousands roosting at Fen Drayton GP and hundreds at Fowlmere NR.

**Raven Sept:** An increasing sight now in the county with records from at Brampton/Buckden Tip (2 over on 14<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (2 on 14<sup>th</sup>, single on 26<sup>th</sup>), Peterborough Milton Estate (23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows (3 flying south-west 28<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Castor Hanglands (2 on 6<sup>th</sup>), Dogsthorpe (flyover on 5<sup>th</sup>), Hayley Wood (6<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows (2 flyovers on 11<sup>th</sup>), Wimpole (2 on 13<sup>th</sup>) and Great Fen (14<sup>th</sup>).

Crests, tits, larks, hirundines and warblers

**Firecrest Oct:** Wandlebury (5<sup>th</sup>), Fowlmere (9<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows (11<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen (1 ringed, 30<sup>th</sup>).

**Blue Tit Oct:** High count Tetworth Hall (32 on 26<sup>th</sup>).

**Marsh Tit Oct:** At Castor Hanglands, Chippenham Fen, Grafham Water and Tetworth Hall estate.

**Bearded Tit Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes (2 juveniles on 14<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (12 on 8<sup>th</sup>), Somersham GP (3 on 27<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen. **Oct:** Ferry Meadows (30<sup>th</sup>), Ham Mere, Little Wilbraham Fen (2 on 8<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (4 on 20<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (4 on 20<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen (11 on 6<sup>th</sup>).

**Swallow Sept:** Grafham Water (3000 on 15<sup>th</sup>), Great Shelford (c. 1000/hr flying south 12–3pm on 20<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (last reported on 19<sup>th</sup>).

**House Martin Sept:** A strong passage during the month, Haddenham (1000 on 5<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (2500 on 15<sup>th</sup>).

**Cetti's Warbler Sept/Oct:** Reported from 12 sites (maximum 7 at Wicken Fen on Oct 5<sup>th</sup>).

**Long-tailed Tit Oct:** Chippenham Fen (showing flock fidelity and survival: of 8 birds caught and ringed on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 6 were caught again on October 11<sup>th</sup>). A bird retrapped at Wicken Fen aged 4 years and 6 months shows the longevity of this small bird.

**Reed Warbler Sept:** Wicken Fen (469 ringed in 2013 down slightly down on 2012 (480) and considerably lower than the 860 ringed in 2011). **Oct:** Wicken (late birds ringed on 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>).

**Sedge Warbler Sept:** Wicken Fen, 185 ringed in 2013 up on 2012 (109) but down on 2011 (279). **Oct:** latest date Wicken Fen (6<sup>th</sup>).

**Garden Warbler Sept:** Latest date Block Fen (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Whitethroat Sept:** Latest date Paxton Pits (24<sup>th</sup>).

**Grasshopper Warbler Sept:** reported from Paxton Pits (6<sup>th</sup>).

Thrushes and chats

**Nuthatch Sept:** Monks Wood (8 on 26<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Out of range record at Wicken Fen (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Wren Sept:** Fowlmere NR (18 on 14<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (a bird retrapped at 5 years and 6 months breaks the longevity record for the site).

**Ring Ouzel Oct:** Only record, Witcham Gravel (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Blackbird Oct:** Wicken Fen (a very leucistic bird caught and ringed on 30<sup>th</sup>).

**Fieldfare Oct:** a few reported with Redwings (10<sup>th</sup>), largest count Haddenham (100 on 31<sup>st</sup>).

**Redwing Sept:** Wicken Fen (one caught and ringed on 28<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Large movement through the county on 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>, e.g. Colne (1110 in 35 minutes on 12<sup>th</sup>).

**Spotted Flycatcher Sept:** Ferry Meadows (3 on 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>), Monks Wood (4 on 26<sup>th</sup>), reported from 7 other sites.

**Redstart Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes (14<sup>th</sup>).

**Whinchat Sept:** Burwell Fen (5 on 4<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (5 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>), Great Fen (5 on 22<sup>nd</sup>), elsewhere reported from 15 sites. Latest report, Eynesbury (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Stonechat Oct:** Only reports from Great Fen (Darlow's Farm 22<sup>nd</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (24<sup>th</sup>), Tetworth Hall estate (26<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (12<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 20<sup>th</sup>), Wicken Fen (2 on 21<sup>st</sup>) and Fen Drayton (24<sup>th</sup>).

**Wheatear Sept/Oct:** Another poor autumn for this species in the county with 1–2 reported from Beeby's Pit, Block Fen, Coton, Foxton, Grafham Water, Great Eversden, Hardwick, Ouse Washes RSPB, Paxton Pits, Toft. Latest report was from Grafham Water (Oct 29<sup>th</sup>).

Sparrows wagtails and pipits

**Tree Sparrow Oct:** Knapwell (15<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes RSPB (5 on 20<sup>th</sup>) and Wicken Fen (2 ringed).

**Yellow Wagtail Sept:** High counts Paxton Pits (80 on 8<sup>th</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (42 on 14<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** late date Harston (1<sup>st</sup>).

**Grey Wagtail Sept/Oct:** Reported from 22 sites.

**Tree Pipit Sept:** Grafham Water (13<sup>th</sup>), Colne (single over calling on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>).

**Meadow Pipit** **Sept:** Kneesworth (70 on 20<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (94 on 22<sup>nd</sup>). **Oct:** Burwell Fen (121 passage/wintering birds ringed on in October), visual migration over Cambridge (68 on 5<sup>th</sup>).  
**Rock Pipit** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (3 on 29<sup>th</sup> and a single on 30<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Paxton Pits (2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>) and Grafham Water (1–2 from 5<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>).  
**Water Pipit** **Oct:** Ouse Washes RSPB (3 on 20<sup>th</sup>).

#### Finches and buntings

**Brambling** **Oct:** Cambridge (Huntingdon Road on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), Elton (flyover on 5<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows CP (flyover on 7<sup>th</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (3+ flyovers on 10<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows (33 flyovers and 65 counted on 11<sup>th</sup>), Knapwell (11<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Washes (12<sup>th</sup>), Cam Washes (13<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (2 on 12<sup>th</sup>), Waterbeach GP (flyover on 12<sup>th</sup>) and Wicken Fen (one ringed on 19<sup>th</sup>).

**Greenfinch** **Sept:** Highest count received Tetworth (only 15 on 18<sup>th</sup>).

**Siskin** **Sept:** Ferry Meadows (30<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Cambridge flyovers on 5<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water (2 on 6<sup>th</sup> and single on 12<sup>th</sup>), Ferry Meadows CP (2 flyovers on 11<sup>th</sup> and c20 on 28<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (13<sup>th</sup>), Paxton Pits (maximum 7 on 20<sup>th</sup>) and Fen Drayton Lakes (24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>).

**Linnet** Counts of 100+ in **Sept:** Tetworth (115 on 18<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Bassingbourn (c150 on 6<sup>th</sup>), Ouse Fen (200 on 13<sup>th</sup>), Fen Drayton Lakes (100 on 13<sup>th</sup>) and Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (300 on 15<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Redpoll** **Oct:** reported from Castor Hanglands, Earith GP, Eaton Socon, Fen Drayton Lakes, Ferry Meadows CP, Hauxton, Knapwell, Kingfisher's Bridge and Wicken Fen.

**Crossbill** **Sept:** Wicken Fen (2 on 15<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (2 on 15<sup>th</sup>), Grafham Water (2 flyovers on 19<sup>th</sup>), Southey Wood (flyover on 19<sup>th</sup>) and Cambridge (Kendal Way flyover on 20<sup>th</sup>).

**Reed Bunting** **Sept:** Ouse Fen (35 on 26<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Wicken Fen (109 wintering/passage birds ringed on Burwell Fen in October), Fen Drayton Lakes (100 on 13<sup>th</sup>).

**Corn Bunting** **Sept:** Ouse Fen (6 on 26<sup>th</sup>). **Oct:** Ouse Washes RSPB (12 on 20<sup>th</sup>).

Recent reports were compiled by Peter Bircham and Steve Cooper sourced from sightings received by our County Recorder or reported on the 'What's About?' page on the CBC website. Records were also taken from BirdTrack, the CBC website and Cambirds with special thanks to Tony Roberts. Many thanks to all who contributed their records. **Contributors:** Richard Allison, David Avis, Louise Bacon, Rowena Baxter, Andy Bayes, Guy Belcher, Chris Brown, Malcolm Busby, James Cadbury, David Collins, Ali Cooper, Steve Cooper, Andy Cotton, Tim Dee, Ian Dickerson, Sheila Dickerson, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Mark Eaton, Ian Ellis, Mike Everett, Mike Foley, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Andrew Green, David Green, J. Hagger, Dennis Hall, James Hanlon, David Heath, Michael Holdsworth, David Hollin, David Hopkins, Sue Jarrett, Eoin Jennings, Richard Johnson, Colin Kirtland, Charlie Kitchin, Andrew Knights, John Le Gassick, Vincent Lea, Paul Lippett, Tony Mallyon, Bob Mansfield, Monica Marks, Owen Marks, Bruce Martin, Paul Mason, Duncan McNiven, Matthew Mellor, Andy Merryweather, M. J. O'Leary, Daniel Osborne, Richard Palmer, John Parslow, Rob Partridge, Gavin Paterson, Richard Patient, John Pavey, Pam Peacock, Mark Peck, Rob Pople, Duncan Poyser, Doug Radford, Mike Redshaw, Gareth Rees, Duncan Ritchie, Tony Roberts, RSPB Reserves, Paul Rule, Clive Sinclair, Ken Smith, Simon Stirrup, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, Kevin Taylor, Richard Thomas, Andrew Tongue, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Matt Webb, John Wells, Chris Went, Kevin Wilson, Christoph Zöckler.

### From the Treasurer

Thank you, to all our members for your valued support throughout the year. Annual subscriptions for 2014 fall due on 1 January 2014. If you do not have a current standing order in place, please ensure that you send a cheque to me as soon as possible. Existing standing orders will need to be amended. Please arrange this with your bank or complete the standing order section of the membership form, which can be downloaded from the CBC website at (<http://www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk/joinus.html>) and forward this to me.

Please note that subscriptions for 2014 have been increased to:

Full	£17
Senior/Concessionary	£12
Student	£8

Kevin Harris

## **Gwen Martin**

There cannot be a single member of the Club who does not know Bruce Martin if not by sight (though he is pretty unmistakable), then by name and reputation such has been his unparalleled contribution to the management and the success of the Cambridgeshire Bird Club. Every member of the Club who attends our meetings will also have noticed Gwen, inseparable from Bruce and on the next seat to him on the front row. As in the lyric, they “went together like a horse and carriage” and everyone was truly saddened when Gwen finally lost her courageous struggle with her final illness on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013.

Bruce and Gwen were a true partnership, married for 57 years and birding together for almost as long. Not only did Gwen contribute to their field activities both in Cambridgeshire and extensively abroad, but she was an integral support to Bruce in all he has done for the Club, whether as field meetings secretary, general secretary, membership secretary, council member or numerous other unofficial positions. If she was not advising and assisting Bruce directly she was working for the Club on her own, either making tea, handing out Reports, distributing bulletins or just welcoming members and contributing in her own irrepressibly cheerful way to the conviviality of the occasion. We must also not underestimate the influence she had on Bruce’s wise counsel, especially at the time when the Club was separating from the University. Gwen was too modest ever to speak about what she did for the Club but those of us who were privileged to have recognised her contributions know that her passing will leave a void that is unlikely ever to be filled by a single person.

Gwen was irreplaceable but she set an example which others can follow; the Club needs several more members who will turn its wheels as she did. Bruce and the Club are the poorer by Gwen’s passing but we and he will, forever, be strengthened by the happiest memories.

*Robin Cox*

## **Woodland bird research at Monks Wood**

*Dr Richard K Broughton, Ecologist & GIS Specialist, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Wallingford.*

County birders may be aware that ecologists and ornithologists from the NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH, formerly the ITE) have been at large in Monks Wood for many years, using the wood as a natural laboratory to study birds and woodland habitat. The research station at Monks Wood was closed in 2008, ending 45 years as a renowned scientific institution, and it is now owned by the Cambridgeshire constabulary. But research at the wood carries on, albeit from CEH’s headquarters in Oxfordshire, and long-running studies continue to give important insights as well as contributing to county birding.

At around 160 hectares and growing (with 5 hectares of natural regeneration in adjoining fields), Monks Wood is the largest wood in Cambridgeshire, an ancient oak-ash-hazel wood that pre-dates historical records, and a National Nature Reserve overseen by Natural England. The majority of the wood is under a ‘minimum intervention’ regime and has been unmanaged for a century, but a 5% block is coppiced on a 15–30 year rotation. More than 50 species of bird regularly breed in the wood or its immediate vicinity, including Red Kite, Nightingale, Woodcock and possibly still Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Occasional or irregular breeding has been recorded for Hawfinch, Crossbill and Long-eared Owl, but Willow Tit and Turtle Dove are species lost since the Millennium.

Surveys of breeding birds take place each spring but the main research focus is the tits, with Shelley Hinsley’s long-running nest-box study of Great and Blue Tits, and my colour-ringing population study of Marsh Tits. The woodland habitat has been surveyed in incredible detail, using lidar laser scanners and



hyperspectral sensors mounted on aircraft flown over the wood. This lets us map the height, coverage and tree species of every 50 cm square in the entire wood, and the habitat composition of every Marsh Tit territory and around every tit nest-box. This reveals that the wood is composed mostly of a 25 m tall tree canopy above a dense understorey layer of shrubs at 1–8 m and that Marsh Tits shun the coppice block and prefer the mature, unmanaged parts of the wood.

The entire Marsh Tit population is colour-ringed, averaging 20 breeding pairs each spring and 45 juvenile recruits each autumn, and more than 100 nestlings are ringed in some years. Over 1000 Marsh Tits have been ringed and monitored over the past decade, providing a valuable picture of how the population is regulated and where there are pressures in the annual cycle, and this is helping to unravel the causes of the national population decline (72% since the 1960s).

Dispersal has emerged as one of the biggest events in a Marsh Tit's life, and one of the biggest constraints on populations. Juveniles disperse as soon as they are feeding themselves, about ten days after leaving the nest in June, when they are just a month old. Average dispersal distances are about 1 km, and within a couple of days many have settled in a home-range and will remain there for the rest of their life. A few will move again in autumn after the post-juvenile moult, and one such bird ringed in Monks Wood in August 2009 was at a garden feeder 10.5 km away at Folksworth by November – the largest movement in the study. But there is a second dispersal phase at the end of winter, when unpaired birds leave their home-range to find a breeding opportunity. Populations rely on these immigrants, and in Monks Wood up to 20% of the breeding population is formed of spring immigrants replacing winter losses. Colour-ringing has showed that some come from surrounding woods, but many unringed birds appear to have come much further, arriving in poor condition with worn plumage. Maintaining corridors between woods with hedgerows and tree lines allows these birds to move around and survive long enough to find somewhere to breed. But hedgerow removal until the mid-1990s meant many woods and their Marsh Tits became increasingly isolated and dispersal became more difficult; this is now part of the main focus of research.

It has been a strange couple of years for the Marsh Tit study. The exceptionally wet weather in 2012 led to the worst breeding season on record, and the number of juvenile recruits in autumn was down by two-thirds on previous years. That had a knock-on effect in the following spring, as the lack of recruits meant that the number of breeding pairs was almost halved in a single year. After a cold spring delayed breeding in 2013, good weather eventually led to a more productive year for the Marsh Tits, and juvenile recruitment increased to 75% of normal. With about 50 Marsh Tits in the wood right now this is still not a full recovery, so it will be interesting to see how many breeding pairs are present in 2014, and how long it takes for the impact of the 2012 deluge to disappear. This 'natural experiment' serves to demonstrate the crucial role that juvenile recruitment plays in maintaining Marsh Tit populations, and current research is looking at how this is related to the national decline via problems with dispersal and survival. A review article on Marsh Tits and their problems is currently being prepared for *British Birds*, and a thesis based on research carried out mostly in Cambridgeshire is also available to download from the NERC website: <http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/20719/>

Great and Blue Tits also had an abysmal breeding season in 2012, but they outnumber Marsh Tits by more than 5 to 1 so were able to bounce back more quickly. However, Nuthatches did something different; this species colonised Monks Wood in the late 1990s and gradually built up to be as common as the Marsh Tits, with around 20 pairs. Numbers of Nuthatches visiting the Marsh Tit traps in autumn have been fairly constant in the last few years, at about 30–40 birds, but numbers seemed to slump this autumn when only a small handful were seen. This is probably a combination of a poor breeding season in 2012 followed by a very low seed and berry crop over the winter of 2012/3. It took Nuthatches about a decade to fully colonise Monks Wood and its neighbours, so this could set them back a few years. But that's the good thing about long-running studies – they give you the perspective needed to separate the trends from the blips!

## Christmas Quiz

Perry Green, who has kindly provided a quiz for the last two years, has now winged his way to pastures new. Fortunately we have among our members the eminent literary critic and poet, Professor Shaw Tierdowell. He has graciously agreed to compile this year's quiz, which will test your knowledge of birds in literature. Some of the references are well known and oft-quoted, others are more obscure but may sometimes be deduced from the descriptions.

1. "Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!"
2. "High in the blue above ..... whirl and call"
3. "A ..... in a cage puts all Heaven in a rage."
4. " Daffodils, that come before the ..... dares, and take the winds of March with beauty."
5. "Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! bird thou never wert"
6. "That's the wise ..... he sings each song twice over"
7. "O a wondrous bird is the ....."
8. "When the .... breeds, look to lesser linen."
9. "The ..... himself is hoarse that croaks upon the battlements."
10. "The ..... sings on the orchard bough, in England now."
11. "But the .... found no rest for the sole of her foot."
12. "O .....! Shall I call thee bird, or but a wandering voice?"
13. "There's a special providence in the fall of a ....."
14. "He who shall hurt the little ...."
15. "Or like stout Cortez when with ..... eyes"
16. "I come from haunts of .... and ...."
17. "The ..... sat on the Cardinal's chair"
18. "Just then flew down a monstrous .... as black as a tar barrel"
19. "They sprint eight feet and - stop like that"
20. "What is white? A .... is white, sailing in the light."
21. "A ..... towering in her pride of place was by a mousing ... hawked at and killed."
22. "The ..... priested shore"
23. "He's so wet you could shoot ..... off him"
24. " ..... used to sit there with bubbling throats making a spiky beard as they chattered"
25. "Hear about the graves of the martyrs the ..... crying"
26. " And for that minute a ..... sang"
27. "And ..... their villages of twiggy rafts set on the tops of elms"
28. "Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men we pour our dark nocturnal secret"
29. "His eye is dull, his head is bald, his neck is growing thinner."
30. "Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life, the middle tree and highest there that grew, sat like a ....."
31. "Gob at a .... for luck"
32. "There was an Old Man with a beard,  
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!  
Two .... and a ...,  
Four ..... and a .....,  
Have all built their nests in my beard ' "
33. "And below on a rock against the dark sea fretted, pipe-necked and stationary and silhouetted, ..... stood in a wise, black, equal row."
34. "I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a .... from a handsaw."
35. "And evening full of the .....'. wings"

There are forty birds to be identified. Some may be mentioned more than once.

## Forthcoming Events

**Friday 10th January, St John's Community Hall, Hills Rd, Cambridge** Doors open 7.30 pm for 8 pm start  
**Turtle Doves, Trial Plots and Trichomonas** by Jenny Dunn

The Turtle Dove is ecologically unique in the UK, being the country's only migrant bird to be wholly reliant upon seeds for feeding both adults and nestlings. Since the 1960s, the species has switched diet from weed seeds to cereals, and breeding effort has declined from 4 broods per year to 1–2 broods per year. UK Turtle Doves have declined by 93% since 1970, and the UK population decline is paralleled by a 73% decline across Europe making this one of the most rapidly declining bird species in Europe. Research to help conserve the species includes trialling seed-rich patches aimed at providing seed food during early summer, and screening UK doves and pigeons for a suite of diseases found either in Turtle Doves elsewhere in their range, or in doves or pigeons in the UK, to determine whether disease may play a part in influencing productivity - either directly or indirectly.

Jenny Dunn studied for her BSc, MSc and PhD at the University of Leeds. She is now a conservation scientist with the RSPB, working on farmland bird conservation, and holds a visiting research fellowship as part of a collaborative project between the RSPB and the University of Leeds.

**Friday 14th February, St John's Community Hall, Hills Rd, Cambridge** Doors open 7.30 pm for 8 pm start  
**Swans and Swan-upping** by Chris Perrins

Chris Perrins was Director of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology in Oxford until his retirement. His main areas of interest have been the long-term study of tit populations in Wytham Woods, seabirds on the Pembrokeshire Islands of Skokholm and Skomer, and Mute Swans. His studies of the latter have centred on the Thames and its tributaries and the birds in the breeding colony at Abbotsbury, Dorset; his team were also deeply involved in the problems of lead-poisoning and the banning of lead fishing weights. He co-authored a book on the Mute Swan (Croom Helm, 1986) and is The Queen's Swan Warden. His talk will range from the history of swan-upping to more recent studies of the Thames population.

### RSPB Cambridge Local Group Events

Indoor meetings are at St John's Hall, Hills Road, Cambridge starting at 7.30pm

- Sat 11 Jan, Field Trip – Fermyn Woods & WT Titchmarsh (Northamptonshire)
- Weds 15 Jan, Indoor Meeting: Louise Bacon – Butterflies of Cambridgeshire
- Weds 19 Feb, Indoor Meeting: Colin Kirtland – Birding in Kazakstan & Southern Siberia
- Sat 22 Jan, Field Trip – Lyndford Arboretum & Santon Downham

Booking essential for field trips: Telephone: 01638 741018

More information at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/cambridge> or call 01954 202354

### RSPB Huntingdonshire Local Group Events

Meetings at The Free Church, St Ives, Market Hill, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 5AL starting at 7.30pm.

- Weds 29 Jan, Indoor Meeting: Birds of Prey in the UK – on a wing and a prayer - Jeff Knott
- Weds 26 Feb Indoor Meeting. Seabird Cities - Steve Race

More information at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/huntingdonshire/> or call 01480 464769

## New Members

We welcome the following new members – John Holliman of Soham, Stephen Lowe of Cambridge, Dr Tim Moore of Cambridge and Susan & Richard Sewell of Cambridge.

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### *Other Council Members*

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**Mike Foley**

**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)

## **Bird Records, sightings and news**

We want to speed up and increase the flow of news and records to enhance future bulletins and the content of the Club database. If you have seen a scarce or local bird please submit the news to the '[What's about](#)' page on the Club website via [Pete and Paul](#) who maintain an up-to-date selection of recent highlights. You can also report interesting sightings on the [Cambirds](#) email group (not run by the Club, but we access the records). Any major rarities can be phoned in to Birdline East Anglia on 07941 333970.

Full lists of your records should continue to be submitted to the County Recorder, preferably using the [spreadsheet](#) available on the Records section of the website. **To ease the workload and increase the relevance of news in future bulletins, please send your records MONTHLY to Louise Bacon by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month after.**

# *GOODBIRDING!*