

# Cambridgeshire Bird Club



E-Bulletin 28 October 2015



Velvet Scoter at Grafham Water: photo by Neil Bramwell

**(The records in this bulletin are unchecked and may be revised at a later date)**

**Weather** *bit of a mixed bag with a northerly airstream dominating the first half of the month, cool often overcast; followed by a southerly airstream with some pleasant autumn warmth more sunshine than earlier. Overall low rainfall and fairly still.*

## HEADLINES

**VELVET SCOTER\*** Grafham Water 3 female/immatures from 26<sup>th</sup> – end of the month.

**SPOONBILL** Paxton Pits a juvenile on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD\*** Ouse Washes a juvenile on 15<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen on 17<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen on 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, (also seen at Burwell Fen), Six Mile Bottom on 21<sup>st</sup>, Grafham Water on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** Fowlmere NR one among a tit flock on 15<sup>th</sup>, - *only the second record this year of an increasingly scarce bird. Ten years ago (2005) there were 27 records including 3-4 breeding records.*

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER\*** Witchford on 4<sup>th</sup>, King's Ripton on 5<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 6<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**WOODLARK** Grafham Water a flyover on 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Other records

*All records below refer to the month at the head of the E-bulletin and where no numbers are given the record relates to single birds.*

*Where there is an asterisk after the name of the species this indicates that it is necessary to send a description to the County Recorder before the record will be accepted.*

### *Wildfowl*

**Mute Swan** Burwell Fen 7 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 55 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Whooper Swan** Ouse Washes c12 flyovers on 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 19 flyovers on 13<sup>th</sup>, 13 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 11 on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Pink-footed Goose** Holme Fen on 17<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Greylag Goose** Burwell Fen 290 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 375 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Canada Goose** Trumpington Clay Farm 22 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 41 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 8 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Egyptian Goose** Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on several dates, Fen Drayton Lakes 4 on 27<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen 25 on 29<sup>th</sup>.  
– *the county record is 39 (2013).*

**Wigeon** Burwell Fen 172 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 80+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, 200 on 19<sup>th</sup>, c100 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton lakes c450 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Gadwall** Burwell Fen c220 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 80+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, 98 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 145 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 145+ on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Teal** Burwell Fen c140 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 80+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, 28 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 36 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR 7 on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Mallard** Burwell Fen 21 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 11 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 32 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 27 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 12 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Pintail** Paxton Pits 37 on 1<sup>st</sup>, single on 25<sup>th</sup>, Elford's Closes 2 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Adam's Crossing Waterbeach on 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>

**Shoveler** Burwell Fen 103 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 100+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, 327 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 183 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR 2 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 45+ on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-crested Pochard** *an arrival on 21<sup>st</sup>*: Fen Drayton Lakes 6, Ferry Meadows CP 5, Paxton Pits 2 and on several dates thereafter.

**Pochard** Whittlesford GP 21 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 82+ on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Tufted Duck** Trumpington Clay Farm 2-3 all month, Whittlesford GP 29 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 181+ on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Scoter** Elford's Closes on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldeneye** Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 3 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 9 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Ruddy Duck** Wicken Fen on 4<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Gamebirds***

**Grey Partridge** Chrishall Grange 2 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 37 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Nine Wells coveys of 13 and 8 on 15<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Gannet and cormorants***

**Gannet** Paxton Pits flyover on 13<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes a juvenile on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Cormorant** Burwell Fen 7 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 8 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 15<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 4 on 20<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 7 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Egrets and herons***

**Bittern** Wicken Fen on 9<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, one on 31<sup>st</sup>,

**Little Egret** *reported from:* Adam's Crossing Waterbeach (4), Burwell Fen (9), Cam Washes (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (4), Houghton Meadows, Paxton Pits, Pondersbridge (2) and Yaxley Fen (3).

**Great White Egret** Wicken Fen several dates from 1<sup>st</sup>, Pondersbridge area from 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 5<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, Godmanchester GP on 9<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water on 12<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on several dates from 17<sup>th</sup>.



Little Egret at Burwell Fen: photo Garth Peacock

## **Grebes**

**Little Grebe** Burwell Fen one on 4<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 9-10 all month, Ouse Washes on 18<sup>th</sup>, Whittlesford GP on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Crested Grebe** Whittlesford GP on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 29 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Raptors**

**Red Kite** Wicken Fen on 4<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne on 8<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 2 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Stilton counts of 25 and 24 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> respectively at a site where numbers congregate, Paxton Pits on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Harrier** *reported from:* Adam's Crossing Waterbeach, Burwell Fen (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Holme Fen, Ouse Washes and Wicken Fen (2).

**Hen Harrier** Farcet Fen a ringtail on 7<sup>th</sup> – *the first of the winter*, then a male on 26<sup>th</sup>, Swaffham Prior Fen a ringtail on 16<sup>th</sup>, Pymore Ouse Washes a male on 17<sup>th</sup>, a ringtail on 18<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen a ringtail on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, a female on 20<sup>th</sup>, and a male and a ringtail on 30<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen a male on 18<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen a ringtail on 18<sup>th</sup>, Tubney Fen a female on 18<sup>th</sup> – likely to be the same as seen at Wicken on 20<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen 2 males on 29<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 2 into roost (with 5 Marsh Harriers) on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Buzzard** *reported from:* Haddenham/Aldreth Fens, Farcet Fen, Haslingfield, Hemingford Grey, Holme Fen (2), Paxton Pits (2), Sawston by pass, Shepreth (2), Six Mile Bottom, Stilton, Wicken Fen (2) and Yaxley Fen (3).

**Osprey** Stirtloe GP a juvenile roosting on 6<sup>th</sup>, Maxey Cut a flyover on 22<sup>nd</sup> – *likely to be the latest date*.

## **Rails and crane**

**Water Rail** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (7), Chippenham Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (6).

**Coot** Burwell Fen 18 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 23 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 26 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 29 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 47 on 20<sup>th</sup>, Whittlesford GP 19 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 316 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Moorhen** Burwell Fen 10 on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crane** Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen 2 - 3 on several dates all month, Ouse Washes RSPB reported all month maximum 13 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes 3 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Eldernell 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>. *Readers are reminded that the Club is trying to identify pairs with young, for this purpose descriptions are very useful (concentrate on the bustles) and best of all a photograph. (See website for sketches of the four known families:*

<http://www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk/research.html> )

## **Waders**

**Golden Plover** Burwell Fen 17 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 300 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 35 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 130 on 20<sup>th</sup>, c185 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 910 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 213 on 5<sup>th</sup>, c250 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne c30 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Shelford Bottom c250 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Wilburton 100+ on 7<sup>th</sup>, Soham

– Stuntney c100 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 32 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington c400 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 150 – 200 on several dates, Holme Fen 550 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Linton 75 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen c2,200 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Lapwing** Burwell Fen c250 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 775 on 4<sup>th</sup>, c600 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 500+ on 11<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere 500 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 210 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 250 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen c1,600 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover** Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Ringed Plover** Adam's Crossing Waterbeach 3 on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Black tailed Godwit** Cam Washes 4 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 7 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 9 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** Burwell Fen 4 flyovers on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Turnstone** Paxton Pits on several dates.

**Ruff** Paxton Pits 2 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen 12 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Adam's Crossing Waterbeach 4 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes 7 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin** Paxton Pits 2 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 8 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 7 on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Sandpiper** Foul Anchor 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper** Burwell Fen 2 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 25<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 3 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Spotted Redshank** Burwell Fen on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenshank** Paxton Pits on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Snipe** Burwell Fen 9 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 40+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, 23 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 12 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 200+ on 30<sup>th</sup>, Adam's Crossing Waterbeach on 11<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 3 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Skuas, terns and gulls***

**Arctic Skua\*** Cambourne a flyover on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Tern** Grafham Water on 1<sup>st</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> – *likely to be the latest date of the year.*

**Black-headed Gull** Burwell Fen 30 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 33 on 19<sup>th</sup>, c850 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 63 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 100+ on 26<sup>th</sup>, Swaffham Bulbeck c250 in freshly sown field on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Gull** Clay Farm Trumpington 1-3 on several dates.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Fowlmere 120+ in a single field on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-legged Gull** Paxton Pits 30 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Caspian Gull** Paxton Pits on 1<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Doves, owls and Kingfisher***

**Stock Dove** Burwell Fen 2 on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodpigeon** Fowlmere-Newton 1,000+ in a stubble field on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Dove** Farcet Fen 93 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Soham 36 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Barn Owl** *reported from:* Holme Fen, and Wicken Fen.

**Little Owl** *reported from:* Waterbeach.

**Tawny Owl** *reported from:* Hemingford Grey.

**Short-eared Owl** Holme Fen 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 31<sup>st</sup>, Paxton Pits on 20<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 - 3 on several dates from 20<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley on 25<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen 5+ on 29<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 29<sup>th</sup>, Eldernell 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>.



Short-eared Owl at Burwell Fen : photo by Simon Watling.

**Kingfisher** *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Chippenham Fen, Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits (3) and Wicken Fen (2).

### ***Falcons and parrots***

**Kestrel** *counts of 5 (+)* Holme Fen 5 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Merlin** Toft on 17<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen an immature/female on 18<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Castor on 28<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Hobby** Houghton on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> – *latest dates*.

**Peregrine** Burwell Fen a flyover on 11<sup>th</sup>, Cambridge Catholic Church spire on 14<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen an adult female on 18<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits an immature on 25<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes RSPB on 25<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Ring-necked Parakeet\*** Pymore Ouse Washes 4 on 17<sup>th</sup>.

## ***Shrikes and corvids***

**Great Grey Shrike\*** Ouse Washes RSPB on 7<sup>th</sup> – first record of the winter.



Rook with a prize at Fen Drayton Lakes: photo by Colin Brown.

**Raven** Elton a flyover on 5<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on 11<sup>th</sup>.

## ***Crests and tits***

**Firecrest** Fen Drayton Lakes on 7<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen one caught and ringed on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Coal Tit** *further signs of dispersal* Wicken Fen 3 caught and ringed 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Tit** Burwell Fen in a mixed tit flock on 18<sup>th</sup> (possibly a Willow Tit), Castor on 28<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 4+ on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Bearded Tit** Burwell Fen 9 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 20 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 6 on 9<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 20 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 4 on 20<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 3+ on 25<sup>th</sup>, and (number unknown) on 31<sup>st</sup>.

## ***Hirundines and warblers***

**Swallow** *late dates*: Houghton Meadows 8 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Horningsea 5 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes on 15<sup>th</sup>, Sutton Gault 4 on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Cetti's Warbler** *reported from* Burwell Fen, Farcet Fen, Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen (5) and Woodwalton Fen (3).

*A word of warning on Cetti's Warblers; they are quite good at moving around so that you get the impression of numbers greater than the true figure.*

**Chiffchaff** *late dates or overwintering birds:* Wicken Fen 6 caught and ringed on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 2 on 7<sup>th</sup>, on 18<sup>th</sup>, Foul Anchor on 17<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Willow Warbler** *late date:* Cambourne on 16<sup>th</sup> – *in 2013 the latest date was September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup> in 2014.*

**Blackcap** *late dates or winter migrants:* Wicken Fen caught regularly until 14<sup>th</sup> (4) then latest on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *late dates:* Burwell Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Whitethroat** Farcet Fen on 6<sup>th</sup> – *late date in 2013 Sept 30<sup>th</sup>.*

**Sedge Warbler** *late dates:* Farcet Fen on 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Warbler** *late dates:* Burwell Fen on 8<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge one caught and ringed on 12<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Starling, thrushes and Spotted Flycatcher***

**Starling** Nine Wells c250 in ploughed field on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere c300 in a ploughed field on 15<sup>th</sup>, Tubney Fen roost 6,000 – 8,000 on 20<sup>th</sup>, c12,000 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 4,000 – 5,000 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Fieldfare** Hemingford Grey c12 flyovers on 13<sup>th</sup> – *first of the year, arrivals widely reported elsewhere from 15<sup>th</sup>.*



Fieldfare at Wicken Fen: photo by Roger Cresswell



**Redwing** Castor Mill 3 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Great Shelford 17 flyovers on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Lode 2 flyovers on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Farcet Fen 3 flyovers on 7<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne 14 on 8<sup>th</sup>, *large arrival on 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> including*: Farcet Fen 230, Cambridge 670 flyovers, Fen Drayton Lakes 200+; *thereafter widely reported*.

**Spotted Flycatcher** Caxton 3+, Girton on 1<sup>st</sup> – *the latest date so far received*.

### ***Starts and chats***

**Black Redstart** Ouse Washes RSPB on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Redstart** Cam Washes on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Stonechat** Burwell Fen 3 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne on 16<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Wheatear** Peterborough on 4<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 8<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Sparrows, wagtails and pipits***

**Tree Sparrow** Burwell Fen 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 2 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Adam's Crossing Waterbeach on 11<sup>th</sup>, Woodhurst on 11<sup>th</sup>, Oxlade on 13<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes RSPB on 18<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 19 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 10+ at nearby Tower Farm on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Yellow Wagtail** *late dates*: Grafham Water on 4<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Wagtail** Barton (a flyover on 1<sup>st</sup>), Houghton Meadows 3+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 11<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, Ouse Washes on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied Wagtail** Farcet Fen 26 on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Meadow Pipit** Holme Fen 125 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Rock Pipit** Grafham Water on 4<sup>th</sup>, Foul Anchor on 17<sup>th</sup>, Pondersbridge on 19<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 2 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Water Pipit** Paxton Pits on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Finches and buntings***

**Chaffinch** Fowlmere 140 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Six Mile Bottom 100+ on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Brambling** Cambridge flyovers on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen one caught and ringed on 14<sup>th</sup>, Horningsea on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 3 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Six Mile Bottom on 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes on 18<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenfinch** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 30-35 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldfinch** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 200-250 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 47 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 45 on teasels on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Siskin** *the exceptional influx continued: counts of 100+*: Southey Wood 200+ on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Linnet** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 2 flocks of 300-350 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Redpoll** *widely reported; counts of 50+*: Holme Fen 50+ on 31<sup>st</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 100+ on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Yellowhammer** Farcet Fen 11 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Bunting** Holme Fen 44 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Corn Bunting** Woodwalton Fen roost of 50+ on 31<sup>st</sup>.

## ***Exotica***

**Black Swan** at Paxton Pits still.

**Ross's Goose** around Wicken/Burwell Fens associating with Greylags.

## ***Contributors:***

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## ***WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP***

### **Brief news for October 2015**

There was ringing activity at the Fen on 20 different days in October. October's ringing total was 809. The species breakdown was:

Jay	1	Robin	17
Goldcrest	77	Stonechat	2
Firecrest	1	Dunnock	4
Blue Tit	92	House Sparrow	20
Great Tit	30	Meadow Pipit	84
Coal Tit	7	Chaffinch	18
Cetti's Warbler	1	Brambling	1
Long-tailed Tit	21	Greenfinch	104
Chiffchaff	20	Goldfinch	33
Blackcap	38	Siskin	16
Reed Warbler	1	Linnet	1
Wren	21	Lesser Redpoll	26
Blackbird	14	Bullfinch	5
Song Thrush	5	Yellowhammer	5
Redwing	18	Reed Bunting	126

Old birds caught in the month were:

Blue Tit X077938 at 6 years 4 months, Chaffinch X079551 at 6 years 1 month, Long-tailed Tit DDA101 at 4 years 7 months and Great Tit L505752 at 4 years 2 months.

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## *Next indoor meetings:*

**Friday 13th November, St Johns Hall, Cambridge**

### **Cuckoo – cheating by nature by Nick Davies**

Nick Davies says his academic career has been an excuse to do lots of bird watching. He is Professor of Behavioural Ecology at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of the Royal Society. His cuckoo research has been featured as two BBC Radio 4 broadcasts and as a BBC Natural World Film, produced by Mike Birkhead and narrated by David Attenborough. His most recent book 'Cuckoo - Cheating by Nature' is published this year by Bloomsbury. His talk will show how cuckoos across the world have evolved remarkable tricks to deceive and manipulate their hosts, and how field experiments are now uncovering a continuing evolutionary arms race as hosts evolve new defences and cuckoo, in turn, evolve novel trickery.

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December, St John's Hall, Cambridge**

### **Christmas Social**

Come and enjoy mince pies and mulled wine in good company while listening to inspiring short talks by Club members.

Please contact Vicki Harley if you would like to give a short presentation.

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## *Johnson Diaries*

A lady called Audrey Salters made contact with the Bulletin Editors to say that she was in possession of some bird notebooks that had been the property of her aunt, a Kathleen Johnson. While the entries relate to a number of locations much of the content concerns Cambridge (she lived in De Freville Avenue) and Cambridgeshire dating from 1938.

The (two) diaries that arrived in the post contain slightly different information. The smaller is a daily weather record from 1979 to 1985. The larger is essentially a bird diary dating from 1937. Much of it relates to the commoner birds as seen in her garden and around Cambridge and elsewhere, however there are some entries of trips made to Cambridge Sewage Farm, Fulbourn Fen and the two earthworks of Devil's Dyke and Fleam Dyke.

Among the highlights are a 'Red-throated Grebe' – a nice name – at the Sewage Farm in June 1944 and a Cirl Bunting on 'Fulbourne Fen' – presumably on the Little Wilbraham Fen/Teversham Fen complex – in July. In July 1947 she reports a Red-backed Shrike found dead on Hills Road, in June 1949 an 'American Pectoral Sandpiper' at the Sewage Farm. The presence of Bewick's Swan (no numbers given) at the Sewage Farm in 1948 is interesting because the first series of records of this species date from around that time. In 1949 she saw a Red-backed Shrike along Fleam Dyke and in 1952 she reports a pair of Shelduck and a pair of Red-necked Grebes at the Sewage Farm.

## NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS

An additional factor in the diary is the inclusion of many newspaper snippets. Many are a little low brow such as the 1939 piece that describes Scaup as 'the laziest bird' due to it's habit of spending much time sleeping on the water contrasted with the Wren that 'crowds more adventure into an hour than will befall these quaint little duck in all the six months they spend by our coast'

### On re-introductions

Just to show that new ideas are rarely new, a piece from *The Times* of August 31<sup>st</sup> 1939 reports attempts to re-establish Buzzards in Surrey, Kites eggs brought from Spain being placed in Buzzard's nests – a programme that was brought to an end by the Spanish Civil War! There was the possibility of Chough's eggs from Brittany to be planted in the nests of Jackdaws near Tintagel, Blackcock from Scandinavia being re-introduced to the New Forest and Lord Walsingham's attempts at the turn of the century to re-establish Great Bustards in Norfolk with eggs from Spain. Also a failed attempt to establish White Storks hatched artificially in Surrey and Kent: the birds migrated but did not return.

### On climate change

Another cutting (May 1952) reports the sighting of Hoopoes and ends..."The suspicion that Hoopoes are becoming more rare here is supported by the certainty that there is a decline in their numbers visiting the Continent. This may be due to slight changes in our climate.....". Concerns about climate change, it seems, are also 'old hat'.

### The Bird Club's 50th

From the Cambridge News of December 1<sup>st</sup> 1955. "Peter Scott at Bird Club Dinner"

"When Peter Scott was a Cambridge undergraduate he was a member of the Cambridge Bird Club, and on Tuesday evening he was the guest speaker at the Club's 50<sup>th</sup> dinner. Held at the Dorothy Café, this Bird Club is the oldest in Britain. The Venetian Room was packed when the President (Mr T.C. Smout) welcomed the guests. He particularly mentioned Anthony Buxton who was a member of the Club when it started in 1905. Before showing his film *The Land of Fire*, which was about ducks in South America, Peter Scott briefly addressed the meeting. 'Yesterday I attended the ceremony at Wicken Fen which was dedicated, and on which already there were a number of ducks' he said, 'This in a roundabout way means that it is quite appropriate that ducks should feature here tonight.' He explained that while the film was about South America it was useful to study birds and their relationships all over the world rather than just British Birds. He said that these foreign birds nearly all had their counterparts in Britain which in itself was fascinating....

.....Dr W.H. Thorpe (Senior Treasurer) proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Scott and the organisers. There was an extensive exhibition of bird paintings, photographs and books on view and Peter Scott was seen autographing a print of one of the paintings before his talk."

More next month including a report of a Shag that was arrested after pecking out part of a workman's nose!

Just before going to press we learnt of the death of John Parslow whose contribution to our knowledge of the birds of the county, especially in 'old' Huntingdonshire was immense over many years, not least as a WeBS counter. If anyone would like to contribute to a short piece for the next bulletin please send it to me.

Next E-bulletin due on December 10<sup>th</sup>, articles for inclusion to reach me by 5<sup>th</sup> please.