

Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 39 October 2016



Isabelline Wheatear at Wardy Hill: photo by Brendan Doe

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

HEADLINES

AMERICAN WIGEON* May Farm Littleport from 6th to 13th.

CATTLE EGRET* Nene Washes 4 on the 7th, one on the 10th, one at the Dog-in-a Doublet on the 11th, Whittlesey on the 12th, Nene Washes (Low Wash) on the 14th - 15th.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER* Maxey GP on the 11th.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS* at an undisclosed location on the 21st. *If accepted this will be the eighth record for the county, the last one was in 2008.*

GREAT SKUA Ouse Washes a flyover (low) on the 2nd, Orton on the 10th,

WRYNECK Linton on the 1st.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER* a remarkable series of 9-10 sightings following on from the 3 September birds given only 17 previous accepted records for the county: Fowlmere NR from September still present on the 1st and 2nd, Mepal on the 2nd, Ely on the 2nd and 3rd, one at Dunkirk on the 5th, Peterborough (Fitzwilliam Bridge) on the 6th, 7th and 9th, Paxton Pits on the 8th, Chesterton Cambridge on the 11th, Peterborough (Wharf Rd railway crossing) on the 14th, Yaxley Lode on the 15th, and possibly the same bird 1.5 km away at Holme Fen on the 16th.

ISABELLINE WHEATEAR* Coveney (Byall Fen) on the 29th - 30th - *a first for the county and according to the wise men the first inland record for Britain, probably the bird of the year!*

TWITE* Coveney (Byall Fen) on the 10th.

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.

Weather: a slow change from the balmy days of September with a mixture of cool cloudy periods mixed with sunny and warm spells although still not much rainfall. Significantly, with high pressure over Scandinavia, the predominant wind direction was easterly or north-easterly leading to the abrupt departure of the summer migrants and an influx of winter visitors and passage migrants. This continued until the end of the month when there were slightly milder days as a result of westerly winds and another area of high pressure over southern England which continued the dry theme. With many areas of standing water drying up there was undoubtedly a negative effect on wader and wildfowl records.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan May Farm Littleport 2-9 all month, Trumpington Clay Farm 5 on the 31st.

Bewick's Swan Coveney 3 flying over on the 21st - the first of the winter.

Whooper Swan Ouse Washes 23 on the 2nd, Nene Washes 6 on the 7th and 10th, Pymoor 26 on the 9th, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens on the 12th, Fen Drayton Lakes 4 on the 19th, Ferry Meadows CP 6 flying over on the 20th, Marsh Lane GP 5 flying over on the 21st, Eldernell on the 29th May Farm Littleport 75 on the 29th (30% juveniles).

Pink-footed Goose May Farm Littleport 70 flying south on the 7th.

White-fronted Goose Paxton Pits 8+ flew over on the 8th, one on the 15th and 21st, Ouse Washes RSPB 3+ on the 17th.

Canada Goose Trumpington Clay Farm 54 on the 31st.

Barnacle Goose Sutton North Fen 25+ on the 9th.

Egyptian Goose Fen Drayton Lakes 18 on the 6th, Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on the 11th and 12th, May Farm Littleport 2 on 22nd and 28th.

Shelduck May Farm Littleport 2 juveniles all month.

Mandarin Peterborough (Crown Lakes) 11 in a family group on the 4th - see photo.



Mandarin at Peterborough Crown Lakes: photo by Roger Orbell

Wigeon May Farm Littleport 50+ all month, Fowlmere NR 13 on the 3rd, a drake on the 24th, Wicken/Burwell Fens WeBs count 22 on the 21st then 59 on the 21st.

Gadwall Wicken/Burwell Fens 8 on the 21st.

Teal May Farm Littleport c40 all month, Wicken/Burwell Fens c150 on the 9th, 58 on the WeBs count on the 21st.

Mallard May Farm Littleport c500 all month Trumpington Clay Farm 33 on the 12th, 37 on 31st.

Pintail Paxton Pits on the 1st, 2 on the 3rd, and on several dates after the 16th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 8th, 2 on the 13th, Sutton (North side) 2 on the 9th, Fowlmere NR a female on the 30th.

Garganey Fen Drayton Lakes on the 4th, Grafham Water on the 9th - *the latest date*.

Shoveler May Farm Littleport 8-12 all month, Fowlmere NR on the 10th, 2 on the 23rd and 3 on the 28th, Wicken/Burwell Fens WeBs count 10 on the 21st.

Red-crested Pochard Fen Drayton Lakes a male on the 13th, and one on the 22nd not assigned to gender.

Pochard Fowlmere NR a female on the 26th, Whittlesford GP 8 on 27th.

Tufted Duck May Farm Littleport 12+ all month, Whittlesford GP 24 on the 27th.

Scaup May Farm Littleport a female 5th - 6th, Paxton Pits 3 females on the 26th.

Common Scoter Ferry Meadows CP 3 on the 30th.

Goldeneye Grafham Water 6 on the 16th, Paxton Pits a male on the 23rd.

Goosander Fowlmere NR a redhead on the 18th.

Gamebirds

Red-legged Partridge May Farm Littleport 12-20 all month.

Grey Partridge May Farm Littleport seven counts of coveys from 2 to 11, Fowlmere 5 on the 31st.

Pheasant May Farm Littleport 50+ all month.

Cormorants

Cormorant May Farm Littleport 6 all month, Fen Drayton Lakes 120 on the 13th, 179 on the 22nd, Wicken/Burwell Fens WeBs count 12 on the 20th.

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Wicken Fen.

Little Egret *reported from:* Burwell Fen (9), Fen Drayton Lakes (30), Fowlmere NR (4), May Farm Littleport (4), Paxton Pits (6), Trumpington Clay Farm and Wicken Fen.

Great White Egret Fen Drayton Lakes on the 4th and 8th, Paxton Pits on several dates all month.

Grey Heron Long Drove Cottenham a group of 12 (see below).



A remarkable collection of Grey Herons at Long Drove Cottenham: photo by Garth Peacock

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (4), May Farm Littleport (15+), Trumpington Clay Farm (8) and Wicken Fen (2, exceptionally an adult with 3 young on the 17th).

Great Crested Grebe May Farm Littleport 2 adults and a juvenile all month.

Red-necked Grebe* Witcham Gravel on the 4th.

Slavonian Grebe* Fen Drayton Lakes on the 30th.

Raptors

Red Kite Paxton Pits on the 3rd, 3 on the 19th, Fowlmere NR singles on several dates, Yaxley 7 on the 16th, May Farm Littleport several sightings of 1-3 all month.

Marsh Harrier Fowlmere NR a female on 1st and 5th, Fen Drayton village on 2nd, Paxton Pits a juvenile male on the 3rd, Wicken Fen on the 9th, 15th, 20th and 22nd, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens on the 12th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 13th, a female on the 22nd, Yaxley 4 on the 16th, Burwell Fen 5 on the 24th, May Farm Littleport all month maximum 5.

Hen Harrier Cam Washes a male on the 16th and 25th, Wicken Fen a male on the 24th, Fowlmere NR a ringtail on the 25th, Ouse Washes a male on 27th, Eldernell on the 29th.

Sparrowhawk *reported from:* Chippenham Fen (2), Great Shelford, May Farm Littleport (4) and Paxton Pits (3).

Buzzard *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Chippenham Fen, Fowlmere/Newton, Great Shelford, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (5), Haslingfield, May Farm Littleport (4), Paxton Pits (6), Sawston bypass (2), Sawston village, Stapleford, Trumpington, Wicken Fen (2) and Yaxley (6).

Osprey Eldernell on the 29th - *latest date of the year so far.*

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR (3), May Farm Littleport (6), Wicken Fen.

Moorhen May Farm Littleport c40 all month, Burwell Fen maximum 8 on the 15th.

Coot May Farm Littleport c20 all month, Wicken/Burwell Fen Webs count 157 on the 20th.

Common Crane Ouse Washes 8 on the 2nd and 20 in flight on the 24th (*this equals the county record for the largest number recorded - previously in 2014 on the Nene Washes*), Pymoor 3 (2 adults and one juvenile) on the 9th, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 3 on the 12th.

Waders

Oystercatcher May Farm Littleport 2 on the 19th.

Golden Plover May Farm Littleport 6 on the 5th, 23 on the 13th, Burwell Fen 520 on the 9th, Pymoor 720 on the 9th, Sutton 100 on the 9th, Wicken Fen 520 on the 9th, c50 on the 12th, Fowlmere 126 on the 12th in a field opposite the reserve entrance, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 25+ on the 12th, Wardy

Hill Coveney c650 on the 14th, Trumpington A10/M11 junction 400 in one of the fields on the 20th and 21st, Burwell Fen 1,000 on the 28th.



Golden Plover at Wicken Fen: photo by Roger Cresswell

Grey Plover Ouse Washes on the 2nd, Farcet Fen a flyover on the 15th, Paxton Pits 3 flying over on the 16th, one flying over on the 24th.

Lapwing Paxton Pits 74 on the 3rd, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 1,500+ on the 12th, Coveney (Byall Fen) 170 on the 19th, May Farm Littleport c80 on the 22nd, Burwell Fen 330 on the 24th.

Ringed Plover Paxton Pits 2 on the 1st, one on the 22nd, Ouse Washes 8 on the 2nd, Wicken Fen 4 on 3rd.

Curlew Paxton Pits on the 22nd.

Black-tailed Godwit Ouse Washes 4 on the 2nd, Wicken Fen on the 6th, 2 on the 9th and 8 on the 20th.

Ruff Paxton Pits on the 1st, 2 on the 3rd, 2+ on the 7th, 3 on the 8th, one on the 16th, Wicken Fen 4 on the 3rd, May Farm Littleport 2 on the 7th, Pymoor 70 on the 9th, Ouse Washes RSPB 12 on the 17th.

Dunlin Paxton Pits 1-3 all month, Wicken Fen on the 3rd, Ouse Washes 3 on the 10th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 22nd.

Curlew Sandpiper Ouse Washes on the 10th.

Common Sandpiper Paxton Pits on the 1st and 3rd - latest date so far.

Green Sandpiper *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Grafham Water (3), May Farm Littleport (4), Ouse Washes (Chain Corner and Pymoor), Paxton Pits (2).

Greenshank Coveney (Byall Fen) on the 19th - *possibly the latest date this year, although records in winter are not impossible.*

Redshank May Farm Littleport 2 on the 6th, Wicken/Burwell Fens WeBs count 3 on the 20th, Cam Washes 2 on the 25th.

Jack Snipe Fowlmere NR 1-2 on 11th-12th (see photo).



Jack Snipe at Fowlmere NR: photo by Gary Thornton

Woodcock May Farm Littleport 6-8 all month, Chippenham Fen at dawn on the 5th, Milton (in a garden) on the 9th, Farcet Fen on the 20th, *The November issue of British Birds carries an article by Christophe Z about the decline and loss of this species as a breeding bird at Wicken Fen and Christophe compares Wicken to Chippenham Fen where he records c12-13 breeding birds and he asks the question - why?*

Snipe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Chippenham Fen (2), Fowlmere NR (2), May Farm Littleport c100 max during the month and Paxton Pits (7+).

Terns and gulls

Common Tern Paxton Pits on the 7th - *the latest date so far.*

Black-headed Gull May Farm Littleport c50 all month, Trumpington Clay Farm 12 on the 31st, Fowlmere 39 in field opposite the NR on the 31st.

Common Gull Trumpington Clay Farm 5 on the 31st.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 150+ on the 12th, Fowlmere/Newton c250 in ploughed fields on 31st.

Herring Gull Wicken/Burwell Fens WeBs count 3 on the 20th, May Farm Littleport 2 juveniles on the 22nd.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from:* Fowlmere NR and Paxton Pits (3).

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Paxton Pits.

Great Black-backed Gull May Farm Littleport a flyover on the 13th, Swaffham Bulbeck in a ploughed field on 21st.

Doves, owls and kingfisher

Stock Dove Paxton Pits a roost of 80 on the 21st.

Woodpigeon May Farm Littleport c200 all month.

Collared Dove May Farm Littleport c50 all month.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Fowlmere NR and May Farm Littleport.

Little Owl May Farm Littleport maximum 4.

Tawny Owl May Farm Littleport 2 calling on the 29th.

Short-eared Owl Burwell Fen on the 9th, 2 on the 24th, 4 on the 26th, 5 on the 28th, Grange Farm Knapwell on the 21st, May Farm Littleport one all month.

Kingfisher *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, May Farm Littleport (4), Paxton Pits (2), Wardy Hill Coveney and Wicken Fen (2).

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel May Farm Littleport maximum 6, Burwell Fen maximum 7 on the 24th.

Merlin Fowlmere NR a female on the 8th, another or the same on the 16th, Paxton Pits on the 22nd, Wicken Fen a female/immature on the 27th.

Hobby Burwell Fen 2 on the 2nd, May Farm Littleport up to the 7th, Wicken Fen 2 on the 9th - *the latest date*.

Peregrine May Farm Littleport a female on the 5th, Wicken Fen on the 17th, Eldernell 2 on the 29th.

Shrikes and corvids

Great Grey Shrike* Burwell/Wicken Fen on 24th.

Magpie May Farm Littleport 18+ all month.

Jay extremely visible all month; there are differing views on whether these are immigrants or merely our indigenous population foraging for and storing acorns.

Jackdaw May Farm Littleport c100 all month, Great Shelford 50+ circling on a thermal on the 23rd, Burwell Fen c30 on the 26th.

Rook May Farm Littleport 100+ during the month.

Carrion Crow Burwell Fen 20 on the 1st, May Farm Littleport c100 all month, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 37 on the 21st and 34 on the 22nd when they were observed harrying a Buzzard that appeared to be also feeding on soil invertebrates.

Raven Fen Drayton Lakes a flyover on the 3rd, Fowlmere 2 flying low over the village on the 4th, May Farm Littleport on the 5th, Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on the 6th, Orton Wistow a flyover on the 9th, Trumpington a flyover on the 15th.

Crests, tits and larks

Goldcrest a bird ringed at Burnham Deepdale in Norfolk on the 6th was retrapped at Wicken Fen on the 9th. *Obviously a migrant travelling 80km in 3days headed SSW.*

Firecrest Wicken Fen one trapped on the 12th.

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Paxton Pits.

Bearded Tit *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Cam Washes (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (6), Fowlmere NR and Wicken Fen (30).

Skylark Fowlmere 20 on the 9th, Yaxley 45+ on the 16th May Farm Littleport c20 during the month.

Hirundines, and warblers

Swallow *late dates:* Wicken Fen on the 6th, Ouse Washes (Sutton Gault) 25 on the 9th, Wicken Fen 5 on the 9th, one on the 11th and 17th, May Farm Littleport c50 up to the 13th, Yaxley on the 16th, Ouse Washes RSPB 24 on the 17th, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 26th - *the latest date so far.*

House Martin Fen Drayton village 10 on the 2nd, May Farm Littleport c10 up to the 7th, Ouse Washes (Sutton Gault) 3 on the 9th.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Eldernell (3), Fowlmere NR (3), May Farm Littleport (2), Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.

Chiffchaff *late dates (complicated by wintering birds):* Wicken Fen on the 9th, Yaxley on the 15th, Cam Washes on the 25th, May Farm Littleport 2 on the 29th.

Blackcap *late dates (complicated by wintering birds):* Paxton Pits on the 8th, Fowlmere NR on the 9th, May Farm Littleport a female on the 10th, Wicken Fen on the 29th.

Sedge Warbler Wicken Fen on the 3rd - *latest date.*

Waxwing, nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Waxwing March (briefly, in a garden) on the 26th.

Starling Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 300 on the 12th, Burwell Fen c400 on the 15th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) c250 on the 21st, and c130 on the 22nd, Fowlmere NR c1,000 to roost on the 21st, May Farm Littleport up to 2,000 during the month.

Ring Ouzel Fowlmere a first-year female in the paddock close to the reserve on the 9th, Mepal a male on the 9th, Little Paxton one on the 10th.

Fieldfare Burwell Fen 5 on the 9th, c600 on the 24th, Fowlmere NR 16 on the 9th, (general movement reported on 9th), Wicken Fen c100 flying over on the 12th, c350 on the 22nd, c1,000 by the 28th, Wardy Hill Coveney 120 on the 14th.

Redwing first arrivals were reported widely across the county on the 2nd, e.g. Wicken Fen 35 on the 6th, 50 at Fowlmere NR on the 7th, 20 at Soham, Paxton Pits 102 on the 8th, and 1,200 at Fowlmere NR on the 9th; thereafter counts of 200+ at: Wicken Fen 350+ on the 21st.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Farcet Fen on the 17th.

Whinchat Fen Drayton Lakes on the 1st, Wicken Fen on the 9th - 10th - *latest date*.

Stonechat Burwell Fen on the 1st, Ouse Washes on the 2nd, Chippenham Fen a pair on the 5th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 6th, 2 on the 13th, Wicken Fen on the 9th and several other dates, Paxton Pits 3 on the 14th, one on several dates after the 22nd, Magog Down on the 16th, Cam Washes on the 25th, May Farm Littleport 2 on several dates.



Stonechat at Burwell Fen: photo by Garth Peacock

Wheatear Nene Washes on the 10th, May Farm Littleport 2 on the 13th, Cam Washes on the 16th - latest date.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow May Farm Littleport c25 all month.

Yellow Wagtail Paxton Pits on 3rd, Pymoor on the 9th, Fowlmere NR on the 12th, Yaxley on the 17th, - the latest date.

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, May Farm Littleport 1-3 during the month, Paxton Pits (2), Wardy Hill Coveney.

Pied Wagtail May Farm Littleport c30 during the month, Block Fen GP 250 on the 21st.

Meadow Pipit May Farm Littleport c100 all month, Burwell/Wicken Fen 140 ringed during the month. These were almost certainly mainly, if not all, passage birds as is shown by two ringing recoveries: one from Kilsea Clays Yorkshire ringed on the 21st of September was retrapped on the 1st at Burwell Fen having travelled 147 km due south and another from Silt Fen Farm in Norfolk (near Denver) ringed on the 1st was retrapped at Burwell Fen on the 9th, having travelled a shorter 32km but also due south.

Rock Pipit Paxton Pits 2 on the 1st, one on the 7th, 2+ on the 8th, one on the 22nd, Ouse Washes 2 on the 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP on the 7th, Chain Corner on the 9th, Grafham Water 2 on the 14th - 15th, one on the 16th.

Finches and buntings

Chaffinch May Farm Littleport 20+ all month.

Brambling Fulbourn on the 5th, Fowlmere NR 3 on the 12th, 2 on the 30th, Farcet Fen on the 17th, Little Shelford on the 19th, St Ives on the 20th, Hare Park Six Mile Bottom 2 on the 23rd, Paxton Pits 2 on the 22nd.

Goldfinch May Farm Littleport c80 during the month.

Siskin Fen Drayton Lakes 2+ on the 8th, Fowlmere NR up to 10 on several dates.

Linnet Fen Drayton Lakes c200 on the 6th, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 150 on the 12th, May Farm Littleport c60 on the 22nd.

Lesser Redpoll *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.

Yellowhammer Farcet Fen 19 on the 17th.

Corn Bunting Fowlmere NR up to 50 on several dates, May Farm Littleport 10 - 20 all month.

Reed Bunting Burwell Fen - movement indicated by catches of 77 on the 1st, 48 on the 12th and 81 on the 15th, almost entirely new birds each time and an overall total of 343 birds ringed in October (see below), Fowlmere NR c650 into roost on the 26th, May Farm Littleport c100+ during the month.



Reed Bunting at Fen Drayton Lakes: phot by Colin Brown

Exotica

Black Swan Fen Drayton Lakes on the 13th.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Louise Bacon, Rowena Baxter, Peter Bircham, Jez Bird, David Bradley, Neil Bramwell, Chris Brown, , Mike Burdekin, Howard Butler, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Gerry Davies, Martin Davis, Roger Davis, Tim Dee, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Steve Dutton, Mike

Everett, Mike Foley, Ben Fraser, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Ben Green, Ian Gordon, Andy Hannaford, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Phil Hicks, Michael Holdsworth, David Hopkins, Neil Howard, Pam Jacobs, Charlie Kitchin, Vince Lea, David Lee, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin, Tony Martin, Paul Mason, Steve May, Rob McEwen, Matt Mellor, Steve Mumford, Martin O’Leary, Dave Palmer, Rob Partridge, Richard Patient, Rob Pople, Doug Radford, Graeme Reed, Chris Rider, Bill Simmonds, Claire Spottiswoode, Jonathan Taylor, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Bob Titman, Hugh Venables, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Mark Welch, Jamie Wells, Hugh Wright, and Christoph Zöckler.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for October 2016

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 14 different days in October. The month’s ringing total was 793, a further 138 birds were retraps, so the overall October “catch” was 931 birds (ringed birds are shown first, followed by retraps, below).

Sparrowhawk	1, 0	Goldcrest	43, 3
Kestrel	1, 0	Firecrest	1, 0
Collared Dove	1, 0	Bearded Tit	1, 0
Great spotted Woodpecker	0, 1	Long-tailed Tit	7, 10
Meadow Pipit	140, 2	Blue Tit	20, 29
Wren	27, 9	Great Tit	16, 27
Duncock	5, 5	Tree Creeper	1, 3
Robin	11, 7	Magpie	1, 0
Blackbird	6, 5	House Sparrow	22, 2
Song Thrush	24, 1	Chaffinch	5, 1
Redwing	31, 0	Greenfinch	17, 11
Cetti’s Warbler	2, 0	Goldfinch	32, 4
Sedge Warbler	1, 0	Lesser Redpoll	1, 0
Blackcap	22, 1	Bullfinch	1, 2
Chiffchaff	10, 0	Reed Bunting	343, 15

Rare Breeding Birds Conference - Vince Lea

The dust has settled and the organisers have breathed a sigh of relief as another successful Cambridgeshire Bird Club Conference has passed. We hope those who attended enjoyed the day, and the field trips if they made it to one of those as well; certainly comments received to date have all been positive, and we hope that the recording of rare breeders will be enhanced in future as a consequence. As well as raising awareness of the topic and providing fascinating insights into some of these species, the event also raised some money for conservation; £163 was raised by the raffle which will go towards Hen Harrier satellite tagging work by the RSPB. There was also a budget surplus from the event, some of which will be donated towards this work (a further £100) and £150 will be donated to the BTO for their BirdTrack Research Appeal - Stephen McAvoy gave a presentation highlighting why BirdTrack is a valuable recording tool for all birds, with special features for maintaining the confidentiality required for rare breeding birds. Funds are needed to analyse declining species data from BirdTrack to help inform conservation strategies.

One thing which had been intended, but due to a photocopying error failed to happen on the day, was to get feedback from Club members on what sort of conference you want next. We would particularly like to hear from those who have not yet attended a conference - what would tempt you, if anything?

The first questions are relevant to those who attended the conference, but all are invited to comment on this and send your thoughts to me on vincelea@btinternet.com

How did you first hear about the conference, and when?

How do you rate the event (1= poor, 10 = excellent) for:

Value for money?

Food and refreshments?

Suitability of venue?

Organisation?

Content?

What are the most useful things you have learnt from the conference?

Do you think you will change any of your birdwatching habits next year as a result of the conference?

Would you like to join the Cambridge Rare Breeding Bird group to be kept informed of recording/monitoring or site protection opportunities and activities during 2017?

We usually arrange a themed conference every 2 years. Please give us your opinions on future conferences:

What time of year would be preferred - some suggest that autumn is too busy a time for birding!

Previous topics have included Farmland Birds, Woodland Birds and Wetland Birds. What topics or themes would you like to hear about?

Next indoor meetings:

Friday 11th November, St Johns Hall, Cambridge

Identifying Birds for 40 years by Paul Stancliffe

Paul Stancliffe, author of the latest Collins BTO field guides - *Common Birds of Britain and Ireland*, and, *Rare birds of Britain and Ireland* - looks at how bird identification has changed during the last forty years.

A lifelong birder, Paul works for the British Trust for Ornithology as their Media Manager. Paul has been fortunate to live in the New Forest, the Isles of Scilly and now Norfolk, amongst a few other bird rich places. He has served on various bird identification panels and is one of the BTO identification experts.

This will be a return visit for Paul who talked to the Club about wildlife of the Isles of Scilly in 2012.



Friday 9th December, St Johns 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.

For your diary:

2017 Programme of Meetings

St Johns Church Hall

[13th Jan:](#) *European Red List of Birds* by Ian Burfield

[10th Feb:](#) *Looking for the Goshawk - the Lost Raptor* by Conor Jameson

[10th March:](#) *Annual General Meeting* followed by

Pineapple Peril for Palearctic migrants & African forest species by Ann Scott

Cottenham Village College

[7th April:](#) *Feathered Friends? Reasons to love your neighbourhood gulls* by Viola Ross-Smith

[12th May:](#) *Reclaiming South Georgia* by Tony Martin

[8th Sept:](#) *Research on the Pied Flycatcher* by Malcolm Burgess

[13th Oct:](#) *Giving Wildlife the Edge on Fenland drains* by Cliff Carson

St Johns Church Hall

[10th Nov:](#) *Cuckoos: an African perspective* by Claire Spottiswoode

[Dec:](#) *Christmas social*

"Birds of the Nene Washes" by Jonathan Taylor Due for publication end 2016.

100pages, incl photos and illustrations, retail £10 plus £2 p&p

This new publication introduces the Nene washes, the habitats, management and their vital importance for birds in winter and summer, not just for Cambridgeshire but for the UK. It also provides species accounts for all birds which have been recorded at the Washes.

This is your chance to purchase at a reduced price for club members, of £8 plus £2 p&p (or pick up from bird club meetings from January)

send your cheque (payable to Jonathan Taylor) and name/address to; Jonathan Taylor, 28 Elm Crescent, Glinton, Peterborough, PE6 7LE. please state if you wish to collect from Cambridge.

Raptor conservation and monitoring in Albania.

Kevin Hand, a club member, is involved, with the relevant country-based NGOs. In monitoring and conserving Vultures and other birds of prey in Albania, a very under-visited and poor European country. Some of you at the conference may have seen the basic information sheet which he had present on the day, but we now have an update from him. Various partner organisations are keen to help, and use expertise from the work in Asia on halting the declines of vultures there to take this project further. A student project is also hopefully going to look at all of the known data from the country, without which it is impossible to know where are the best locations to focus work. Club member Bob Jarman has also donated a telescope to the project to aid their monitoring work. Offers of support or financial assistance on this project are welcome, but please contact Kevin Hand for further information on this project. E-mail kevinhand@tiscali.co.uk

From Colin Kirtland:

Letter from America

I first visited the UK when as a young student in the early 1950s I studied for three semesters in Cambridge. During that happy period I regularly attended meetings of the Cambridge Bird Club which at that time seemed extremely formal and dignified or even, dare I say it now, a little old-fashioned. The student officers wore their gowns and each meeting started by reading and signing the minutes. To my surprise these gentlemanly standards were maintained even when birding, or birdwatching as you then called it. Sports jackets, grey flannels, shirts and ties were the norm, with shoes in the summer and rain boots in the winter. I was intrigued to learn that you called these wellingtons, named after some old duke guy! As a concession to colder weather you would wear strange garments quaintly called jumpers or pullovers which were knitted by your good womenfolk.

What a contrast I found when returning to your country for the first time this year. Now y'all look like regular American guys with your T shirts, sweat shirts, jeans, baseball caps and sneakers. No longer a stranger in a foreign land, I now feel so at home here. You even sound American! In the 1950s the usual greeting was Hallo! Now everywhere you hear Hi! And gee! you've adopted our pronunciation of words like harass to rhyme with ass rather than your erstwhile more genteel rhyming with embarrass and you rhyme leverage with beverage. You emphasise the first syllables of research and defence and even talk of power outages. You access and exit a building instead of entering and leaving - it must be the influence of all our awesome TV programmes that you watch! As a birder I'm pleased to see that some of your publications are using our names, replacing skua with jaeger and bunting with longspur. We'll soon have you talking of loons and chickadees! Bowing to transatlantic superiority you have now conceded that we have the Purple Gallinule and your bird is just a Purple Swamphen, even though that guy Linnaeus named yours eight years before ours.

Everywhere I see the influence of modern America and our great culture: McDonalds, Burger King and Subway products are all part of your staple diet, washed down with endless cans of Coke and Pepsi. You're all putting on weight and looking as well-fed and healthy as us, rather than a bunch of goddam skinny dudes. Gee! you're now so American that having voted to leave the EU you could become the 51st state of the great US of A . Then to trump it all you could have the exciting privilege of voting in our wonderful elections. Yeehaw!

A.Harv Eatonberger

I leave you with this quiz on American birds. When you join us you can add them all to your British lists!

1. Which bird is the national emblem of the USA ?
2. Which bird is the emblem of a Missouri baseball team?
3. Which bird is the emblem of an Ontario baseball team?
4. Which bird is also known as the Oldsqaw?
5. Which two states do not have wild birds as their state bird?
6. Which bird is literally immaculate in juvenile and winter plumage?
7. Which bird has a scientific name meaning grey marsh runner?
8. Which bird has a scientific name meaning wandering worm-eater?
9. Which bird has a scientific name meaning bi-coloured quick mover?
10. How many American species have become extinct since 1900?



Lesser Yellowlegs (an American) at an undisclosed site: photo by Steve Cooper

