

Cambridgeshire Bird Club



E-Bulletin 44 March 2017



Whooper Swan on the Ouse Washes: photo by Brendan Doe

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

HEADLINES

RING-NECKED DUCK* Paxton Pits the long-stay female from the 1st, until the end of the month.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER* Grafham Water one of the long-stay birds remained until at least the 22nd.

CATTLE EGRET* Duxford on the 16th.

GLOSSY IBIS* Ely on the 21st, probably present all month.

ICELAND GULL Dogsthorpe Tip on the 17th - 19th.

GLAUCOUS GULL Cambridge Research Park: the long-stay 2 c.y. bird reported up to the end of the month, Grafham Water an adult on the 18th.

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.

Rare Breeding birds

In order to give some protection to the rare breeding birds in the county specific locations will not be given over the next three months for certain species. Please remember to report rare breeding birds to the Recorder who will advise you about the suitability of making the information public (e.g on Cambirds).

Weather: the month began mild, windy at times and showery and it continued much the same with no overnight frosts and an early arrival of Chiffchaffs until, towards the month's end the wind turned to the east which forced temperatures down so that Cambridgeshire was among the colder parts of the Country and that may have inhibited the arrival of early migrants.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan May Farm Littleport: 10-20 all month.

Bewick's Swan May Farm Littleport: reported all month with 18 on the 3rd and 17 on the 20th.

Whooper Swan Sutton North Fen: 300 on the 5th, Sutton Gault: 130 on the 8th, Cam Washes: c20 on the 15th, Cam Washes/Burwell Fen: 17 on the 18th, Earith: 21 on the 18th, Ferry Meadows CP: 7 on the 23rd, an immature on the 24th, Ouse Washes near Four Balls Farm: 'several hundred' on the 25th, 64 on the 27th, May Farm Littleport reported all month with 21 on the 3rd and 24 on the 20th.

Greylag Goose Fowlmere NR: 145 on the 5th, Wicken Fen: maximum 56 on the 4th, Trumpington Clay Farm: 45 on the 9th, Fowlmere (near the reserve): 185 on the 9th, Burwell Fen: 80 on the 9th, 36 on the 16th, 29 on the 21st, Cam Washes Upware: 32 on the 17th.

Canada Goose Cam Washes Upware: 21 on the 17th.

Barnacle Goose Colne Fen GP: 2 on the 5th, Trumpington Clay Farm: 2 on the 9th, Burwell Fen: on the 21st.

Egyptian Goose Paxton Pits: on the 4th, 2 on the 18th and 31st, Grafham Water: 2 on the 12th, Marsh Lane GP: 2 on the 13th, Milton CP: 2 on the 20th, Ouse Washes: 2 on the 27th, Kingfishers Bridge: 2 on the 28th, May Farm Littleport: 2 all month.

Shelduck Burwell Fen: 5 on the 1st, Paxton Pits: on the 6th, 2 on the 16th, Wicken Fen: maximum 6 on the 11th, Burwell Fen: maximum 22 on the 16th and 21st, Earith: 20 on the 18th.

Mandarin Ferry Meadows: on the 20th, Fowlmere NR: on the 20th.

Wigeon Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 1000 on the 4th Cam Washes: c190 on the 12th, c110 on the 17th, Burwell Fen: maximum c400 on the 9th, Wicken Fen: maximum 780 on the 16th, Fen Drayton Lakes: 20+ remained on the 31st.

Gadwall Burwell Fen: 7 on the 1st, 14 on the 9th, 3 on the 16th, Wicken Fen: maximum 20 on the 4th, Sutton Gault: 114 on the 8th, Milton CP: 8 on the 12th, Cam Washes: 26 on the 12th.

Teal Fowlmere NR: 14 on the 11th, Burwell Fen: maximum 98 on the 16th, Wicken Fen: maximum 220 on the 16th, Cam Washes Upware: c30 on the 17th, May Farm Littleport: 60+ all month.

Mallard Burwell Fen: maximum 25 on the 9th and 16th, Wicken Fen: maximum 62 on the 16th, May Farm Littleport: 300+ all month.

Pintail Burwell Fen: a pair on the 1st, 6 on the 13th, Paxton Pits: 1-2 drakes on several dates up to the 20th, Wicken Fen: 2 on the 4th and 11th, Sutton Gault: c200 on the 8th, Cam Washes: 2 on the 15th, Witcham Gravel: 160 on the 26th.

Garganey Ouse Washes: 3 on the 11th, Grafham Water: 3 males and a female on the 11th, (first reports of the year), thereafter Ouse Washes 1-4 on several dates, Burwell Fen: 1-3 from the 13th, Nene Washes: 2-3 from the 13th, Fowlmere NR: on the 25th (unusual in South Cambs), Paxton Pits: 5 on the 26th, Kingfishers Bridge: 5 on the 26th, 3 on the 28th, Cam Washes on the 29th.

Shoveler Cam Washes: 11 on the 12th, Burwell Fen: 143 on the 9th, 75 on the 16th and 186 on the 21st, Wicken Fen: maximum 157 on the 16th.

Red-crested Pochard Paxton Pits: 3 - 5 from the 6th - 23rd.

Pochard Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 40 on the 4th, Burwell Fen: 3 drakes on the 1st, 5 on the 9th, Paxton Pits: 130+ on the 6th, Sutton Gault: c45 on the 8th, Trumpington Clay Farm: a pair on the 9th, Ouse Washes: 30 on the 27th.

Tufted Duck Sutton Gault: c45 on the 8th, Wicken Fen: maximum 10 on the 9th, Trumpington Clay Farm: 16 on the 9th, Milton CP: 10 on the 12th, Burwell Fen: maximum 18 on the 16th, Ouse Washes: 180 on the 27th.

Scaup Paxton Pits: a male on the 4th - 6th, 8-10 from the 16th - 29th, 3 still on the 31st, Ouse Washes (Chain Corner): 9 on the 4th - 11th, (Four Balls Farm): 4 on the 15th, 10 on the 25th and 13 on the 26th, Fen Drayton Lakes: a female on the 7th, Grafham Water: a female on the 27th.



Scaup at Paxton Pits: photo by Garth Peacock.

Goldeneye Fen Drayton Lakes: 30+ on the 6th, 10 on the 15th, 3 still on the 31st, Grafham Water: 30+ on the 12th, 65 on the 21st down to 29 on the 22nd and 17 on the 31st.

Smew Ouse Washes: 4 on the 5th, 2 on the 10th, 3 on the 11th, Earith Old West river: a redhead on the 18th.

Red-breasted Merganser Grafham Water: a male on the 11th.

Goosander Grafham Water: 6 on the 7th, a female on the 21st - 22nd, one on the 30th and 3 on the 31st, Paxton Pits: on the 10th, Cam Washes: a redhead on the 15th.

Gamebirds

Red-legged Partridge May Farm Littleport: 50-60 all month.

Grey Partridge Fowlmere NR: a pair on the 2nd and 8th, May Farm Littleport: 20+ all month.

Pheasant May Farm Littleport: 50-60 all month.

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from*: Burwell Fen (11), May Farm Littleport (6) and Wicken Fen (5).

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from* four sites.

Little Egret *reported from*: Burwell Fen (6), Cam Washes (6), Fowlmere NR (2), May Farm Littleport (6), Nene Washes (50), Ouse Washes (53), Paxton Pits (2), Sutton Gault (7) and Wicken Fen (4).

Great White Egret Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 6th, Ouse Washes: on the 8th, 2 on the 26th, Ferry Meadows CP: on the 13th, Nene Washes: on the 13th and 23rd, Mepal: 2 on the 23rd, Ferry Meadows CP: a flyover on the 26th.

Grey Heron Wicken Fen: 12 nests on the 9th, May Farm Littleport: 15+ all month.

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from*: Burwell Fen (19), Cambridge (West Cambridge Site) (4), Cam Washes Upware (2), Fowlmere NR (2), May Farm Littleport (4), Trumpington Clay Farm (3) and Wicken Fen (a pair plus another 4).

Great Crested Grebe *reported from*: Burwell Fen (pair) and May Farm Littleport.

Red-necked Grebe* Grafham Water: the long-stay bird reported on the 24th by which time it was in full summer plumage remained until the end of the month.

Black-necked Grebe Fen Drayton Lakes: a winter plumage bird on the 30th - 31st.

Raptors

Red Kite near Norman Cross: 20-30 on the 9th, Paxton Pits: on the 10th, 16th, Fowlmere NR: on several dates.

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Fen Drayton Lakes, Kingfisher Bridge (3), May Farm Littleport (6), Nene Washes (3), Ouse Washes (2), Paxton Pits, Sutton Gault, Woodwalton Fen (4 males and 2 females into roost) and Wicken Fen (4).

Hen Harrier Wicken Fen: a male on the 3rd and 6th, Woodwalton Fen: roost a male on the 4th, Haddenham: on the 5th, Sutton Gault: a male on the 8th and 29th, Burwell Fen a male on the 21st and 25th, Swavesey a male on the 24th, Cam Washes a male on the 29th.

Most readers will be aware of recent reports of the unexplained losses of the satellite-tagged birds in northern Britain and the continued persecution of this beautiful bird so it is worth noting that this winter the population in Cambridgeshire has been below the levels of recent years. I should point out that we have only one piece of evidence of the origin of our wintering birds (a wing-tagged bird from northern England), so the two events may be coincidental. But it is interesting that this winter there have been fewer reports of immature (ringtail) birds and the reports all winter have mainly been of mature males.

Sparrowhawk *reported from:* Burwell Fen, May Farm Littleport (4), Nene Washes, Paxton Pits,

Buzzard *reported from:* Brinkley (3), Burwell Fen (2), Cambridge (Brookland's Avenue), Fowlmere NR (6), Great Shelford, Great Wilbraham, Kingfishers Bridge, May Farm Littleport (6), Newmarket Racecourse (Cambs end), Paxton Pits (c10), Sutton Gault (5), Tubney Fen and Wicken Fen.

Osprey St Neots a flyover on the 27th (first of the summer).

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen (4) and Woodwalton Fen.

Moorhen May Farm Littleport: 40+ all month.

Coot Burwell Fen: maximum 245 on the 16th, Wicken Fen: maximum 56 on the 16th, Cam Washes Upware: 41 on the 17th, May Farm Littleport: 20+ all month.

Common Crane reported from 2-3 sites in groups of up to 17, many sightings of birds flying over.

Waders

Avocet Grafham Water: 3 on the 11th, 2+ on the 12th and 30th, Wicken Fen: 4 on the 11th, Paxton Pits: 2 on the 16th and 18th, 4 on the 25th, Ouse Washes: 2 on the 25th, 5 on the 26th, Cam Washes: 16 on the 25th.

Oystercatcher Paxton Pits: 2 -7 from the 3rd, Colne Fen GP: 2 on the 5th, Burwell Fen: 4 on the 6th, 2 on the 21st, Sutton Gault: 8 on the 8th, Wicken Fen: on the 9th, 3 on the 16th, Grafham Water: on the 12th, Marsh Lane GP: 3 on the 13th, Nene Washes: 3 on the 13th, Cam Washes: 4 on the 15th, Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 15th, May Farm Littleport: 4 all month.

Golden Plover Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 1,500 on the 4th.

Grey Plover Eldernell-March Farmers: on the 25th, Paxton Pits: on the 25th, (first of the year), and 27th, Ouse Washes: on the 26th and 29th.

Lapwing May Farm Littleport: 20+ all month.

Little Ringed Plover Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 18th (the first of the year), Maxey GP: on the 23rd, Ouse Washes: on the 26th, Paxton Pits: on the 27th, Cam Washes: 2 on the 29th - 31st, Godmanchester NR :on the 31st.

Ringed Plover Cam Washes: 2 on the 18th, Earith: 5 on the 18th.

Curlew Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: on the 4th, Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 6th, Nene Washes: on the 13th, 3 on the 23rd, Ouse Washes: 2 on the 25th.

Black tailed Godwit Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 62 on the 4th, Wicken Fen: on the 6th, Sutton Gault: 2 on the 8th, Nene Washes: 700 on the 13th, c300 at March Farmers on the 23rd, Ouse Washes (all): 1,565 on the 25th - 26th, Paxton Pits: on the 26th - 27th.

Bar-tailed Godwit Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 30th (first of the year).

Ruff Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 2 on the 4th, 15 on the 18th, c20 on the 25th, Eldernell: 20+ on the 6th, Nene Washes: 60+ on the 13th. Ouse Washes (all): 25 on the 26th, Paxton Pits: on the 26th then 5 on the 27th.

Dunlin Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 100 on the 4th, 25 on the 18th, Sutton Gault: 65 on the 8th, Nene Washes: 125+ on the 13th, Paxton Pits: on the 20th.

Green Sandpiper *reported from*: Cam Washes (2), Colne Fen GP (2), Ouse Washes (2) and Paxton Pits.

Redshank *reported from*: Burwell Fen (6 pairs), Cam Washes (6+), Earith (30+), Grafham Water (4), May Farm Littleport (6), Paxton Pits (5), Sutton Gault (3) and Wicken Fen (5).

Jack Snipe Fowlmere NR: on 1st and 5th, Paxton Pits: on the 3rd, Colne Fen GP: 4 on the 5th.

Woodcock Monks Wood: 8 on the 2nd, Cambridge: on the 9th, May Farm Littleport: 4 all month.

Snipe *reported from*: Burwell Fen (16), Cam Washes (14), Fowlmere NR (18), Grafham Water (15), May Farm Littleport: 50-60 all month, Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen (26).

Terns and gulls

Common Tern Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 28th (first of the summer), Grafham Water: 3 on the 31st, Paxton Pits: on the 31st.

Black-headed Gull Grafham Water: 4,000 on the 7th, Trumpington Clay Farm: 128 on the 9th, Wicken Fen: c650 on the 11th, Burwell Fen: maximum 53 on the 21st, Paxton Pits: 200 on the 28th, May Farm Littleport: 200+ all month.

Little Gull March Farmers: 3 on the 11th, Ouse Washes: 4 on the 27th, Paxton Pits: 6 on the 28th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 28th and 6 on the 31st, Grafham Water: 7 on the 27th.

Mediterranean Gull Grafham Water: on the 7th, Ouse Washes: 2 on the 7th and 8th, Cam Washes: 2 on the 18th, Hemingford Grey: 2 adults flying over on the 30th.



Mediterranean Gull at the Cam Washes: photo by Jonathan Heath

Common Gull Grafham Water: 2,000 on the 7th, Trumpington Clay Farm: 4 on several dates, May Farm Littleport: 10+ all month.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Wicken Fen: 14 on the 4th, 4 on the 11th, 3 on the 16th, one on the 25th, Burwell Fen 2 on the 21st, May Farm Littleport: 5-6 all month.

Herring Gull Burwell Fen: 2 on the 1st, one on the 9th, Wicken Fen: 3 on the 11th, May Farm Littleport: 12+ all month.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from:* Dogsthorpe Tip and Grafham Water (2).

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Dogsthorpe Tip and Fen Drayton Lakes (3).

Great Black-backed Gull Burwell Fen: an immature on the 1st, May Farm Littleport: on the 20th Burwell Fen on the 21st.

Doves, owls and Kingfisher

Stock Dove May Farm Littleport: 30+ all month.

Woodpigeon May Farm Littleport: 200+ all month.

Collared Dove May Farm Littleport: 50-60 all month.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Cottenham, Fowlmere NR, May Farm Littleport (6), Nene Washes, Twenty Pence and Wicken Fen (2).

A fledgling ringed at Landbeach on August 5th was found dead on Holy Island, Northumberland on January 16th. While it is well known that young Barn Owls disperse in order to find unoccupied territory during the winter this is a slightly strange movement, not just north but also off-shore.

Little Owl *reported from:* Cambridge (West Cambridge Site), Fen Drayton Lakes and May Farm Littleport (4).

Tawny Owl Wicken Fen: a local resident (human) witnessed an extraordinary 'parliament' one evening mid-month when an estimated 15 individuals gathered at the north end of the Fen near St Edmund's Fen with a considerable racket and flying to and fro such that a neighbour hearing the noise assumed it was a cat fight. BWP reports examples of 'caterwauling' but mostly in autumn and early winter but does not describe this behaviour which was almost certainly part of some territorial dispute(s). The observer reported that he had seen this once before many years ago in Cumbria. Also May Farm Littleport: 2 all month.

Short-eared Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Cambridge (Lovell Road a flyover), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), May Farm Littleport (2), Tubney Fen and Wicken Fen (4).

Kingfisher *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water (2), Kingfishers Bridge (2), May Farm Littleport (6), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits (2) and Wicken Fen (2).

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel May Farm Littleport: 8+ all month.

Merlin Burwell Fen: a male on the 13th, Wicken Fen: a female on the 13th, Little Staughton: on the 14th, Haddenham: a female on the 17th, Fowlmere NR: a female on the 19th.

Peregrine Cambridge: on the 1st and 12th, Paxton Pits: an immature on the 5th, a male on the 18th, Colne Fen GP: on the 5th, Sutton North Fen: on the 5th, Eldernell: on the 6th, Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 6th, Wicken Fen: on the 6th, Nene Washes: on the 13th, Cam Washes: on the 18th, Fowlmere NR: a male and a female on the 18th, Burwell Fen: on the 25th, Ouse Washes: on the 26th.

Shrikes and corvids

Great Grey Shrike* Wicken Fen: the long-stay bird reported on several dates from the 4th until at least the 27th, Paxton/Little Staughton: from the 14th - 19th, also seen in Bedfordshire.

Jackdaw May Farm Littleport: 200+ all month.

Rook rookeries: Burwell 30, 17, 2, 2, and 4 (55), Along the A 14 corridor counts of 20, 15, and 10, Duxford airfield 30, Great Shelford railway bridge 22, Littleington 21 in three small groups and 14 in a shelterbelt, Sawtry North 30, Sawtry South 20+, A505 near the Thriplow turn 17, Whittlesford Station 16,

May Farm Littleport: 200+ all month.



Rook gathering nesting material at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith

Carrion Crow Wicken Fen: 18 on the 4th, May Farm Littleport: 200+ all month.

Raven Grafham Water: 2 on the 11th, Marsh Lane GP: a flyover on the 13th, Fowlmere NR: 1-2 on several dates, Barton: a flyover on the 24th.

Crests, tits and larks

Firecrest Mepal: on the 23rd.

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Paxton Pits.

Bearded Tit Wicken Fen 8 on the 9th, Burwell Fen 6 on the 16th.

Skylark May Farm Littleport: 40+ all month.

Hirundines, long-tailed tit and warblers

Sand Martin Ferry Meadows CP: on the 14th (the first record of the year), 6 on the 17th, Grafham Water: 3 on the 16th, Paxton Pits: 4 on the 16th, Marsh Lane GP: 5+ on the 17th, Paxton Pits: 3 on the 18th, Fen Drayton Lakes: 30-40 on the 23rd, thereafter reported widely at water bodies.

Swallow Paxton Pits: on the 21st (the first of the summer), Fowlmere NR: on the 25th, Papworth Everard: on the 28th, Sutton Gault: on the 29th, Fen Drayton Lakes: on the 29th, Grafham Water: on the 31st.

House Martin Fowlmere NR: 2 on the 17th (the first record of the year),

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR (3), Grafham Water, Kingfisher Bride (several), May Farm Littleport (3), Nene Washes (4), Wicken Fen (12) and Woodwalton Fen.

Long-tailed Tit May Farm Littleport: 50+ all month.

Chiffchaff complicated by over-wintering birds (W) and newly arrived summer migrants (S): Hauxton: a singing bird on the 4th (S), Needingworth SW: 10 on the 5th (W), then an obvious mass arrival over the weekend 11th - 12th for example: Grafham Water and Wicken Fen 'several' reported on the 11th, Marsh Lane GP: 7 on the 13th. By the 17th at least 2 colour-ringed birds that bred on site last year had returned to Wicken Fen.

Willow Warbler Fen Drayton Lakes, Ferry Meadows CP, Godmanchester NR, and Paxton Pits(5), all on the 31st, (first date of the summer).

Blackcap Hemingford Grey: a male singing on the 13th was considered to be a wintering individual, Melbourn: a male on the 16th, Grafham Water: a bird singing on the 24th was the forerunner of summer migrant arrivals, Paxton Pits: 4 on the 28th.

Sedge Warbler Fen Drayton Lakes and at Wicken Fen where one was caught and ringed on the 31st (first of the year and only 6 days behind the all-time record which is March 25th 2002 at Paxton Pits).

Waxwing, Nuthatch, Starling and thrushes

Waxwing the birds reported since January continued to be seen around Cambridge: Botanic Gardens 12 on the 1st, Trumpington: 12 on the 2nd - 11th, Duxford: on the 2nd, Cambridge: 3 near Orchard Park, then the 12 were back at the original site near Milton Road from the 16th and 7+ on Fitzwilliam Road on the 30th, Stukeley Meadows: c10 on the 16th, 11 on the 17th - 19th.

Nuthatch May Farm Littleport: on the 20th.

Starling Wicken Fen: c130 on the 4th, a roost of c100 on the 8th, Burwell Fen: c150 on the 9th, May Farm Littleport: 100+ all month.

Fieldfare Wicken Fen: a roost of c50 on the 8th and 14th, Fowlmere NR: 20 on the 18th, May Farm Littleport: 1,000+ on the 26th.

Redwing widely reported on return passage mid-month: Paxton Pits: 51 on the 10th, Woodhurst: c200 over on the 15th, Wicken Fen: a steady passage over on the 15th, Fowlmere NR: 30 flying over on the 14th, 6 on the 18th, Great Shelford: c30 flying over on the 31st.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Cambridge: on the 7th.

Stonechat Wicken Fen: on the 1st, 2 males and a female on the 4th, Burwell Fen: 5 on the 1st, 2 on the 15th, Tubney Fen: 5 on the 1st, Stirtloe: 2 on the 4th, Trumpington Meadows: a pair on the 4th, Colne Fen GP: on the 5th.

Wheatear Litlington: a male on the 23rd (the first of the year), Cam Washes: on the 31st.

Dunnock Hinxton: in a mixed finch flock 58 - an unusually large number at a site where there is supplementary feeding.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow May Farm Littleport: 25+ all month.

Tree Sparrow Redmere Farm: c85 all month.

Yellow Wagtail Sutton Gault: on the 29th (first of the summer), Grafham Water on the 30th.

Grey Wagtail *reported from*: Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR and Wimpole Hall.

Pied Wagtail Little Downham SW: 20 on the 2nd, Burwell Fen: 12 on the 25th, May Farm Littleport: 100+ all month.

‘White’ Wagtails as follows: Burwell Fen: on the 25th, Eldernell: on the 25th,

Meadow Pipit Nene Washes: 50+ on the 13th, May Farm Littleport: 100+ all month.

Rock Pipit Grafham Water: on the 24th.

Water Pipit Ouse Washes Sutton Gault - Earith: 5 on the 4th, 2 on the 18th, Ouse Washes: 9 on the 5th.

Finches and buntings

Chaffinch Fowlmere NR: a roost of 35+ on the 1st.

Brambling Fowlmere NR: 1-2 into roost with chaffinches early in the month, Melbourn: on the 16th, May Farm Littleport: 3 on the 26th.

Greenfinch May Farm Littleport: 50+ all month.

Goldfinch Woodwalton Fen: a mixed finch flock of 200 on the 17th held an estimated 60% Goldfinches with the rest being Lesser Redpolls and 2 Mealy’s (see below) Fowlmere NR: 20 on the 19th, May Farm Littleport: 80+ all month.

Siskin Fowlmere NR: on 1st, 2 on the 14th, 6 on the 19th, Grafham Water: a flyover on the 12th, Wicken Fen: one ringed on the 16th, c12 on the 17th.



Male Siskin at Paxton Pits: photo by Phil Smith.

Linnet Fowlmere NR: a roost of 20 on the 2nd, Wicken Fen: a roost of 30 on the 8th, May Farm Littleport: 50+ all month.

Lesser Redpoll Woodwalton Fen: (see Goldfinch) on the 17th.

Mealy Redpoll Woodwalton Fen: 2 on the 17th.

Yellowhammer Hinxton: mixed flock 51 on the 5th.

Corn Bunting May Farm Littleport: 50+ all month.

Reed Bunting Hinxton: mixed flock 84 on the 5th, Wicken Fen: 28 on the 16th, May Farm Littleport: 100+ all month.

Exotica

Black Swan Ouse Washes (Four Balls Farm): one on the 25th and 2 on the 26th.

Ross's Goose still around - reported to be with Greylags at Wicken Fen on the 9th.

Hybrids

Tufted Duck/Pochard Ouse Washes (Four Balls Farm): on the 26th.

Keeping up the list: at the end of March (according to the E-bulletin records) the county species total is now 159. New species this month: Garganey, Red-breasted Merganser, Black-necked Grebe, Osprey, Little Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Curlew, Common Tern, Little Gull, Sand Martin, House Martin, Swallow, Sedge Warbler, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, Rock Pipit.

Ageing: a little pedantic but it is not really acceptable to age a bird as a juvenile after the turn of the year. By all means call it a *second calendar-year* (2 c.y.) but a useful catch-all label is *immature*.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Jill and Jeremy Aldred, Richard Allison, Malcolm Ausden, Louise Bacon, Geoff Barlow, Peter Bircham, Chris Boness, Mark Brandon, Richard Broughton, Sophie Burdett, Ellie Burke, David Chandler, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Roger Cresswell, Ian Dawson, Martin Davis, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Mike Everett, Don Gardener, Pete Gilhead, Ian Gordon, Richard Gregory, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, David Hollin, David Hopkins, Carl Howard, Sarah Howlett, Stephanie James, Andy Jennings, David Jones, Colin Kirtland, Nick Laughton, Stella Laughton, Peter Leonard, Alan MacNeill, Owen and Monica Marks, Donal McCarthy, Duncan McNiven, Matt Mellor, Steve Mumford, Dick Newell, John O'Sullivan, Richard Palmer, Richard Patient, Doug Radford, Graeme Reed, Gareth Rees, Chris Rider, Bill Simmonds, Clive Sinclair, Howard Slatter, Jonathan Taylor, Bob Titman, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Hugh Venables, Ken Venus, Luke Wake, Mark Ward, Robin Ward, Tim Watling, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Kevin Wilson, Mat Wilson, David Withrington, Pete Wood and Patrick Woods.

Next indoor meetings:

Friday 12th May, Cottenham Village College<

Reclaiming South Georgia by Tony Martin

Two centuries ago, rats and mice were inadvertently introduced to the UK overseas territory of South Georgia by sealers and then whalers. Over time, these unwelcome guests ate their way through most of the island's wildlife, reducing the bird population by more than 90%. They threatened the extinction of an endemic bird and fundamentally changing the entire ecosystem of this globally important sub-Antarctic wildlife refuge. Tony Martin led a 6-year project to eradicate these invaders on behalf of the South Georgia Heritage Trust, using 3 helicopters, 300 tonnes of bait, £8m and a team of 40 people. This talk will explore what was involved in carrying out the world's largest rodent eradication project on a remote, glacier-encrusted island, the very encouraging results so far, and what lies ahead before South Georgia can finally be declared rodent free.

Tony Martin is Professor of Animal Conservation at the University of Dundee, and currently under secondment to the South Georgia Heritage Trust as Director of the South Georgia Habitat Restoration Project. He was previously a researcher at the Sea Mammal Research Unit and then the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge for 30 years, working on cetaceans and other aquatic vertebrates, especially in polar regions and the Amazon. At home in Cambridgeshire, Tony's garden has grown alarmingly, now hosting breeding avocets, harriers, kingfishers and sand martins.

FIELD TRIPS contact/booking via louise

Friday June 9th...your chance to visit MAY FARM LITTLEPORT courtesy of Steve Mumford, Biodiversity office on site. Please book with Louise Bacon for this evening visit.

Friday July 14th Great Fen project. Meet 6.30pm at the last of the meres trail parking on the B660

Friday August 11th Cavenham Heath. Booking essential

DO YOU TWEET? THE CLUBS TWITTER FEED NEEDS A NEW PERSON TO RUN IT. CONTACT VINCE.

Club research - you can help with.....reminder Sand Martins and Spotted Flycatchers

1. Sand Martin Survey

Robert Brown

The Cambridgeshire Bird Atlas notes that a survey of Sand Martins (*Riparia riparia*) is overdue. I recently volunteered to become the club's research officer and would like to instigate such a study in 2017.

The study will be in two parts. First, I would like to get an accurate and comprehensive record of nesting colonies. Secondly, I believe it would be valuable if we could get a more general idea of where the birds are and what they are doing. Sand Martins are insectivores but arrive early and leave late so certain habitats must be vital to their well-being.

User-friendly forms to assist in the survey work will be available from the club's web site, or by request from Robert Browne or Louise Bacon by email to research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk.

Finally and importantly, care is needed particularly when surveying Sand Martins. Obvious hazards are deep water bodies and steep unstable slopes. The laws relating to trespass and access also apply.

2. Cambridgeshire Spotted Flycatchers

Michael Holdsworth

The CBC is planning to continue the Spotted Flycatcher Project into 2017.

2016 was the second year of this survey and we found many more pairs than we had in 2015, mainly because we put in more effort and hours. A hundred or so observers sent in records. A high proportion of these turned out not to be Club members but ordinary householders (often still BTO and RSPB members) responding to publicity in parish magazines and on websites.

If you just see even a single Spotted Flycatcher after 1 June this year, it will be worth following up. Do you know of a pair nesting near you this year, or of a traditional site which may be being used again?

Email me at spofl@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk with any information you have, including records of single birds; and please provide a map reference, preferably to 100m (as TL000000). Follow your leads up and keep us informed or we can arrange to follow up if you don't have time yourself.

secretary@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

3. Willow Warbler/Chiffchaff singers

Tony Fulford is continuing his investigations into why some Willow Warblers sing like Chiffchaffs. Last year, with help from local birders, he found eight such singers. This allowed some preliminary playback experiments to discover how Willow Warblers (ordinary and wiffwaffs) and Chiffchaffs react to one another's songs. In order to follow up these studies this year he is again asking people

to listen out for and report (to tonyfulford@gmail.com) any wiffwaffs they might come across in Cambridgeshire this spring. Listen for “chiffchaff” songs sung rather too fast (4 notes per second rather than 3) or with odd stray notes in them, or for Willow Warblers adding odd scratchy bits to the end of their usual liquid song; such bird often sooner or later reveal themselves to be mixed singers. They are commoner than you may think.

Next E-bulletin May 10th, any contributions to reach me by the 4th please.