

Cambridgeshire Bird Club



E-Bulletin 58 April 2018



Common Terns (and one Black-headed Gull) at Grafham Water : photo by Phil Smith.

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

HEADLINES

PURPLE HERON Burwell Fen a 2 C.Y. from the 11th until the 13th.

WHITE STORK Stretham on the 10th - with blue rings on each leg almost certainly an escape and presumed same at Stuntney on the 18th. Another (red ring) at Sutton Gault and Wardy Hill on the 20th was said to be an escape from a zoo, also seen at Ely on the 24th, then at, or around, Fen Drayton Lakes for the rest of the month.

SPOONBILL Ouse Fen a sub-adult on the 30th.

SLAVONIAN GREBE Grafham Water 2 on the 1st, one on the 2nd.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE Ouse Washes 2 on the 21st, one on the 22nd.

BLACK KITE Abbotsley a flyover on the 25th.

GOSHAWK Nene Washes March Farmers an immature on the 7th, Ramsey one flew over on the 14th.

BLACK WINGED STILT Nene Washes on 28th until the end of the month.

STONE CURLEW Cambridge a night-time flyover on the 10th.

BONAPARTE'S GULL an adult in summer plumage first seen at Witcham Gravel on the 11th then at Fen Drayton Lakes on the 14th.

This is the first record for Cambridgeshire. According to the Rare Birds Report for 2016 (British Birds October 2017) there have been around 225 records in Britain since 1950 with an annual occurrence of 7-8 records.

ICELAND GULL Ouse Washes an adult on the 1st, 2 on the 7th, Grafham Water a 2 C.Y. on the 1st, Witcham Gravel a 2 C.Y. on the 4th, 14th and 15th, and an adult on the 6th.

PIED FLYCATCHER Marsh Lane GP (permit only) on the 23rd.

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: the month began much as March ended with cool and wet conditions that prevailed until just after the middle when a long-awaited warmer spell arrived. The slow spring arrival suddenly gave way to a rush of migrants. After a few days of glorious summer the weather reverted to unsettled, some rain and average temperatures with winds from every direction except South.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Redmere 24 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 9 on the 12th, Great Fen Project 29 on the 14th, Burwell Fen 14 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 6 all month.



Mute Swan at Grafham Water : photo by Phil Smith.

Whooper Swan West Cambridge site on the 3rd and 5th, Nene Washes March Farmers 51 on the 4th, c7 on the 14th, Great Fen Project 3 on the 14th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 29th.

Pink-footed Goose Barleycraft GP 4 on the 23rd.

Greylag Goose (*counts of 30 plus*) Burwell Fen 49 on the 18th including a brood of 2, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 97 on the 21st, Wicken Fen 28 on the 22nd including a brood of 7, Cam Washes Upware 40 on the 26th.

Canada Goose (*counts of 20 plus*) Kingfishers Bridge 150 on the 1st and 131 on the 12th, maximum 183 on the 21st, Burwell Fen 27 on the 18th, Cam Washes Upware 22 on the 26th.

Barnacle Goose Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 28th.

Brent Goose a passage on the 12th with c12 at Byall Fen Coveney, and singles at Ferry Meadows CP and Wimpole (a flyover), then Ferry Meadows CP 7 on the 13th, Swavesey Middle Fen on the 14th.

Egyptian Goose Kingfishers Bridge 9 on the 1st, 10 on the 21st, Burwell Fen 1-3 on several dates, Cam Washes 3 on the 16th and 28th, Paxton Pits a pair on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month, Redmere 2 all month.

Shelduck , Wicken Fen 6 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 8 on the 5th, Grafham Water 2 on the 13th, Great Fen Project 3 on the 15th, Burwell Fen maximum 32 on the 18th, Paxton Pits 9 on the 19th, Fowlmere NR 3 on the 20th, Wicken Fen on the 22nd, Cam Washes Upware 9 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm 2-4 all month.

Mandarin Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on the 4th, a male on the 16th Little Shelford a pair flying over on several dates, Castor Hanglands on the 14th, Woodwalton Fen a female flying over on the 20th, Littleport May Farm a male on the 26th.

Wigeon Kingfishers Bridge numbers show the gradual departure over the month with 88 on the 1st, 38 on the 7th then down to just 8 by the 12th, 3 on the 21st and one on the 26th, Redmere 8 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 14 on the 3rd, Wicken Fen 10 on the 5th and 2 on the 22nd, Berry Fen 200 on the 7th, Great Fen Project 2 on the 14th, Ouse Washes 15 on the 28th.

Gadwall Wicken Fen 23 on the 5th and 12 on the 22nd, Grafham Water 20+ on the 13th, Great Fen Project 4 on the 14th, Burwell Fen 30 on the 18th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 25 on the 21st, Cam Washes Upware two pairs on the 26th.

Teal Littleport May Farm 67 on the 1st, 112 on the 3rd, 20+ to the end of the month, Wicken fen 29 on the 5th and 2 on the 22nd, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 112 on the 7th, Great Fen Project 65 on the 14th, Orton BP 3 on the 15th, Burwell Fen 14 on the 18th, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 20th, Ferry Meadows CP on the 22nd, Cam Washes Upware 6+ on the 26th.

Mallard (*counts 20+*) Kingfishers Bridge maximum 42 on the 12th and only 6 by the 26th, Great Fen Project 25 on the 14th, Burwell Fen 23 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Redmere 200+ all month.

Pintail Wicken Fen a pair on the 1st, Nene Washes Eldernell 80+ on the 2nd, Fen Drayton Lakes 8 on the 11th and a male on the 20th and 28th, Swavesey Middle Fen 9 on the 16th.

Garganey Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 1st, Nene Washes a male on the 2nd, 3 on the 7th, singles 14th and 15th, Burwell Fen 1-2 on several dates, Cam Washes Upware 2 on the 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on the 15th, Swavesey Middle Fen 2 on the 16th, Wicken Fen maximum 6 on the 16th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 20th, one on the 21st.

Shoveler Burwell Fen c100 on the 4th, 60 on the 18th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 62 on the 5th, Wicken Fen 24 on the 5th and 5 on the 22nd, Berry Fen 77 on the 7th, Great Fen Project 17 on the 14th, Ferry Meadows CP 3 pairs on the 22nd, Cam Washes Upware 6 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm 2-6 all month.

Red-crested Pochard Paxton Pits 4 on the 2nd, 5 on the 8th, 4 on the 9th, one on the 24th and 25th, Earith a male on the 25th.

Pochard Wicken Fen 2 on the 1st and 29th, Kingfishers Bridge 28 on the 1st, 11 on the 21st and 7 on the 26th, Burwell Fen on the 18th.

Tufted Duck (*counts of 10 plus*) Redmere 47 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge 20 plus all month - maximum 27 on the 7th, Grafham Water 40+ on the 13th, Burwell Fen 21 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 20+ all month.

Scaup Grafham Water a female on the 13th.

Common Scoter Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 8th, Grafham Water 6 on the 8th, 24 on the 9th and 11 on the 14th, Paxton Pits a pair on the 8th, Nene Washes March Farmers 5 on the 14th, Sutton North Fen on the 15th.



Common Scoters at Fen Drayton Lakes: photo by Jon Heath.

Goldeneye Fen Drayton Lakes 39 on the 11th, 2 on the 28th, Grafham Water 20+ on the 13th, Ouse Washes a female on the 28th.

Smew Needingworth GP 4 on the 1st, Colne Fen GP a redhead on the 8th, 12th and 15th.

Gamebirds

Red-legged Partridge Kingfishers Bridge 16 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere 20+ all month.

Grey Partridge Ferry Meadows CP 2 on the 4th, Great Fen Project on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Pheasant Kingfishers Bridge 39 on the 7th and 28 on the 21st, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from:* Burwell Fen (7), Cam Washes Upware, Grafham Water (20+), Great Fen Project (3), Holme Fen, Kingfishers Bridge (11), Littleport May Farm (8), Orton BP, Redmere (26), Wicken Fen (14 into roost), Wimpole Park (3),



Cormorant at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith

Egrets and herons

Bittern reported from six sites across the county all north of Cambridge.

Little Egret *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Cam Washes, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (6), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits (6), Redmere and Wicken Fen (8).

Great White Egret Littleport May Farm on the 1st - 4th, Redmere on the 1st, Houghton on the 10th, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on the 15th, Little Paxton a flyover on the 23rd, Ouse Washes on the 29th.

Grey Heron Burwell Fen 5 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm up to 8 all month.

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (5), Cam Washes (4), Hobson's Park (3), Kingfishers Bridge (10), Littleport May Farm (10+), Paxton Pits (2), Redmere (4) and Wicken Fen (4).

Great Crested Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (4), Cambridge Research Park (2), Cam Washes (2), Grafham Water (20+), Hobson's Park, Kingfishers Bridge (12), Littleport May Farm (2), Orton BP, Ouse Washes (10 pairs), Redmere (12) and Wicken Fen.

Raptors

Red Kite *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Grafham Water (4), Great Fen Project (3), Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Nene Washes Eldernell, Paxton Pits (2), Peterborough, Swaffham Bulbeck, Wicken Fen and Wimpole Park.

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Cam Washes, Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project (2), Helpston, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (3), Nene Washes Eldernell (10+), March Farmers (6), Trumpington Meadows NR, Wicken Fen (5), Woodston Ponds and Woodwalton Fen (5).

Hen Harrier Littleport May Farm a male on the 1st, Wicken Fen a male on the 1st and a male and a female into roost on the 2nd, a female on the 7th, one on the 12th, Comberton a male on the 11th, Burwell Fen a female on the 15th, Paxton a male over on the 21st.

Buzzard *reported from:* Anglesey Abbey, Burwell Fen (2), Cambridge Research Park, Grafham Water (3), Great Fen Project, Great Shelford, Fen Drayton Lakes (6), Ferry Meadows CP (7), Kingfishers Bridge (4), Littleport May Farm (10), Nene Washes (2), Ouse Washes (4), Pampisford (2), Paxton Pits (6+), Redmere (10), Whittlesford and Wicken Fen (7).

Osprey Ferry Meadows CP on the 4th, Hemingford Grey a flyover on the 9th, Sawston one GPS tracked over on the 15th, Eltisley on the 19th.

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (4), Redmere (4) and Wicken Fen (3).

Moorhen Kingfishers Bridge 14 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.



Moorhen at Cherry Hinton Brook : photo by James Hanlon

Coot Kingfishers Bridge 54 on the 1st, 27 on the 21st, Wicken Fen 40 on the 5th and 21 on the 22nd, Burwell Fen 105 on the 18th.

Common Crane *Large counts:* Dog-in-a-Doublet 10 flying over on the 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP 11 flying over on the 5th - believed not to be local birds; elsewhere 1-4 reported from seven other sites.

Waders

Avocet Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 7th and 21st, Paxton Pits on the 13th, 2 on the 20th, Burwell Fen 2 on the 14th and 18th, Colne Fen GP one briefly on the 15th, Grafham Water 2 on the 17th and 20th, Wicken Fen 2 on the 17th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 19th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 29th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month,

Oystercatcher *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Cam Washes Upware (5), Ferry Meadows CP (pair), Grafham Water (5), Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (7), Littleport May Farm (10), Ouse Washes (6), Paxton Pits (6), Redmere (2) and Wicken Fen.

Golden Plover Littleport May Farm 27 on the 2nd.

Lapwing (counts 20+) Kingfishers Bridge 38 on the 1st.

Little Ringed Plover Paxton Pits on several dates, Ferry Meadows CP on the 6th, Etton/Maxey GP 2 on the 20th and 27th, Kingfishers Bridge 1-2 on the 21st and 26th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month.

Ringed Plover Paxton Pits 2 on several dates, Littleport May Farm on 9th - 13th.

Whimbrel Berry Fen on the 7th - *first of the year*, Burwell Fen on the 18th, and a flyover on the 20th, 2 flyovers on the 27th, Grafham Water on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 4 on the 19th, Paxton Pits on the 20th, Fowlmere NR a flyover on the 28th, Ouse Washes on the 29th.

Curlew Paxton Pits 3 flew over on the 8th, one on the 15th, Great Fen Project on the 14th, Woodwalton Fen 2 flying over on the 19th, and one on the 20th, Wicken Fen on the 21st, Dullingham on the 26th.

Black tailed Godwit Berry Fen c650 on the 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes 200+ on the 2nd, 1000+ on the 11th, one on the 28th, Nene Washes Eldernell 85 on the 2nd, Nene Washes March Farmers 800 on the 3rd, Cam Washes Upware on the 6th, 3 on the 28th, Berry Fen 1500 on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 3 on the 10th - 15th and 7 on the 19th, Swavesey Middle Fen 1000 on the 14th, 250 on the 16th, Etton/Maxey GP on the 20th, Ouse Washes on the 22nd, 20 on the 28th, Paxton Pits 28 on the 27th.

Bar-tailed Godwit Cam Washes on the 16th, Ouse Washes on the 22nd, 5 on the 29th, Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on the 30th.

Ruff Nene Washes March Farmers 92 on the 3rd, Littleport May Farm 3 on the 5th, 11 on the 9th and 7 on the 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 7th, Ouse Washes 7 on the 19th.

Dunlin Littleport May Farm on the 4th and 2 on the 10th, Paxton Pits on the 19th and 24th - 27th, Etton/Maxey GP on the 20th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 28th, one on the 29th.

Common Sandpiper Grafham Water 2 on the 24th, Kingfishers Bridge on the 26th, Paxton Pits on the 27th, Cam Washes on the 28th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 28th, Trumpington Meadows NR on the 29th. *Looks like a distinct period of passage.*

Green Sandpiper *reported from:* Burwell Fen (5), Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Kingfishers Bridge (3), Littleport May Farm (3) and Paxton Pits.

Spotted Redshank Littleport May Farm on the 19th, Paxton Pits on the 19th, Ouse Washes on the 29th.

Greenshank Littleport May Farm on the 5th and 19th, Burwell Fen a flyover on the 18th, Ouse Washes on the 19th, Paxton Pits 2 on the 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 20th - 21st.

Wood Sandpiper Kingfishers Bridge - *first of the year*.

Redshank *reported from:* Cam Washes Waterbeach (8+), Etton/Maxey GP (5), Ferry Meadows CP (2), Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (18), Littleport May Farm (4), Ouse Washes (4), Paxton Pits (5) and Wicken Fen (2).

Jack Snipe Paxton Pits on the 8th, Littleport May Farm on the 13th, Trumpington Meadows NR on the 18th, Paxton Pits on the 25th.

Woodcock Kingfishers Bridge on the 1st, Redmere on the 5th, Holme Fen on the 14th, Wicken Fen on the 14th, Ferry Meadows on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 4-6 all month.

Snipe *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Great Fen Project (5), Helpston (flyover), Kingfishers Bridge (9), Littleport May Farm (50) Northstowe, Paxton Pits (5), Redmere (4) and Wicken Fen.

Terns and gulls

Little Tern Nene Washes March Farmers on the 4th - *first of the year. This is 15 days earlier than the current record which was April 19th 1952!* Ferry Meadows CP on the 18th also beats the old record, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 28th.

Black Tern Grafham Water one and Paxton Pits 4 on the 20th *were the first of the year*.

Sandwich Tern Ferry Meadows CP 2 flying past on the 6th - *the first of the year*, Paxton Pits on the 7th and 10th, Grafham Water on the 10th, 2 on the 16th, Ouse Washes on the 17th, 2 - 5 on the 19th - 22nd, Earith 4 on the 19th.

Common Tern Ferry Meadows CP and Grafham Water on the 4th (and 5th) - *first of the year*, thereafter reported from: Ferry Meadows CP (9), Grafham Water (6), Kingfishers Bridge (8), Littleport May Farm (2), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits (12), Redmere (2), Trumpington Meadows NR, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (3).

Arctic Tern Paxton Pits 2+ on the 16th - *the first of the year*, Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on the 17th, 10 on the 26th, 2 on the 28th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 19th, 5 on the 21st, 4 on the 22nd, 7 on the 29th, Etton/Maxey GP 5 on the 20th, Ferry Meadows CP 5 on the 20th, Paxton Pits on the 20th and 21st, 7 on the 22nd, Wicken Fen 9 on the 29th.

Black-headed Gull (*counts 50 plus*): Wicken Fen 70 on the 5th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 213 on the 7th, Ferry Meadows CP c700 flying over on the 6th, Ely 150 in a flooded field on the 11th, Littleport May Farm 200 all month, Redmere 100+ all month.

Little Gull Paxton Pits 2 on the 2nd, one on the 15th, 1-4 from the 19th - 22nd, Ely BF 3 adults on the 3rd, Kingfishers Bridge on the 6th, Burwell Fen 8 adults on the 14th, 12 on the 15th, one on the 16th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 14th, 11 on the 15th, 3 adults on the 16th, one on the 17th and 20th, 2 on the 21st, Grafham Water 2 on the 15th.

Mediterranean Gull Littleport May Farm 2 on the 7th, Paxton Pits on the 7th, 2 on the 15th, Witcham Gravel two on the 14th, Ouse Washes a 2 C.Y. on the 29th.

Common Gull Littleport May Farm 5 on the 1st, Ferry Meadows CP 80 flying over on the 6th, Grafham Water 6+ on the 13th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*counts of 10 plus*) Ferry Meadows CP 30 on the 3rd, 55 on the 6th, Littleport May Farm 16 on the 3rd, Fowlmere NR 12 on the 29th.

Herring Gull Littleport May Farm 4 on the 3rd, Ferry Meadows CP 30 on the 6th, Great Fen Project 9 on the 14th, Hobson's Park a pair on the 26th.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from:* Paxton Pits.

Caspian Gull Burwell Fen a 2 C.Y. on the 15th, 16th and 19th.

Great Black-backed Gull Ferry Meadows CP on the 3rd, 2 on the 6th, Littleport May Farm on the 3rd, Grafham Water 3 on the 13th, Wicken Fen on the 19th.

Doves, cuckoo, owls and Kingfisher

Stock Dove Kingfishers Bridge 7 on the 1st, Great Fen Project 12 on the 17th, Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 20 all month.

Turtle Dove Fowlmere NR on the 20th.

Woodpigeon Kingfishers Bridge 129 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 1000 all month, Redmere 1000 all month.

Collared Dove Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Redmere 20 all month.

Cuckoo Paxton Pits on the 15th - *first of the year*, thereafter - Wicken Fen one on the 16th, 2 on the 17th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 18th, Paxton Pits 2 from the 18th, Cottenham on the 19th, Ouse Washes on the 19th and 28th, Woodwalton Fen on the 20th, Ferry Meadows CP on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm on the 22nd and 29th, Redmere on the 22nd, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water 2 and Soham one all on the 24th, Maxey GP on the 27th.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (8), Nene Washes Eldernell, Redmere (4), Stow cum Quy, Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen.

Little Owl *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Great Staughton, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (4), West Cambridge Site and Wicken Fen.

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Hare Park (2), Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (2) and Woodwalton Fen (2).

Short-eared Owl Littleport May Farm on the 5th, Nene Washes 4 on the 14th.

Swift Burwell 2 flying over on the 17th - a remarkably early record; next 2 on the 22nd at Fowlmere NR - 5 days later, Wicken Fen on the 23rd, Paxton Pits 6 on the 24th, 4 on the 27th, Marsh Lane GP 9+ on the 25th, Grafham Water 25 on the 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes c20 on the 26th and 28th, Wisbech 2 on the 27th, Ouse Washes on the 29th.

Kingfisher *reported from:* Holme Fen, Littleport May Farm (6), Milton CP, Orton BP, Redmere (2), Stow cum Quy, and Wicken Fen.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel Kingfishers Bridge 5 on the 1st, Grafham Water 5 on the 24th, Littleport May Farm 20 all month, Redmere 5+ all month.

Peregrine Nene Washes March Farmers on the 3rd, Littleport May Farm a male on the 4th, Castor Mill on the 6th, Ferry Meadows CP a male on the 7th.

Hobby Trumpington Meadows NR on the 15th, Littleport May Farm on the 19th and 2 on the 26th, Wicken Fen on the 22nd and 23rd, Paxton Pits on the 25th and 27th, Maxey GP 2 on the 28th, Fowlmere NR on the 29th.

Ring-necked Parakeet* Swaffham Bulbeck on the 15th, Peterborough on the 19th, Impington on the 19th, Ouse Washes on the 28th.

Corvids

Magpie Kingfishers Bridge 17 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 30 all month.

Jackdaw Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Rook Littleport May Farm 500 all month, Redmere 100 all month.

Carrion Crow Kingfishers Bridge 14 on the 1st, Great Fen Project 14 on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 100 all month, Redmere 40 all month.

Raven Paxton Pits 2 on the 15th, one on the 16th, Nene Washes Eldernell on the 14th, Littleport May Farm on the 25th.

Tits and larks

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Bluebell Wood and Great Fen Project.

Bearded Tit *reported from:* Ouse Fen, and Nene Washes (2).

Skylark Great Fen Project 66 on the 14th, 52 on the 15th and 17th, 28 on the 20th, *these counts are from different sections of the Fen and suggest an overall total larger than any one count.*
Littleport May Farm 40 all month, Redmere 20 all month.

Hirundines and warblers

Sand Martin (*counts 30 plus*) Fen Drayton Lakes 200+ on the 2nd, Paxton Pits c40 on the 8th.

Swallow arrivals: Burwell Fen 5 on the 4th, Ferry Meadows 4+ on the 4th, 2 on the 5th, Guyhirn on the 4th, Grafham Water 3 on the 4th, Cam Washes on the 5th, Littleport May Farm on the 5th, thereafter increasingly reported, *large counts (20 plus):* Kingfishers Bridge 34 on the 12th, Burwell Fen c200 on the 27th, Ouse Washes c500 on the 29th,



Swallow at Wicken Fen : photo by Roger Cresswell

House Martin Ferry Meadows CP on the 5th - *first of the year*, Ferry Meadows CP 2-3 on the 12th, Paxton Pits 'a few' on the 13th, thereafter a slow arrival. *Counts over 20*: Littleport May Farm 40+ from 25th - 30th, Fen Drayton Lakes 50 on the 28th.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from*: Burwell Fen (2), Cambridge Research Park, Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (3), Littleport May Farm (4), Marsh Lane GP (3), Maxey Cut (2), Nene Washes (3), Orton BP (3) Paxton Pits (4), Redmere, Wicken Fen (6+) and Woodston Ponds.

Chiffchaff Kingfishers Bridge 8 on the 1st, 11 on the 21st, Fowlmere NR 11 on the 13th.

Willow Warbler Wicken Fen on the 6th, - *first of the year*, Fowlmere NR and Paxton Pits (3) on the 7th, Woodston Ponds on the 9th.

Blackcap Grafham Water 5 on the 13th, Kingfishers Bridge 14 on the 21st.

Garden Warbler Paxton Pits on the 19th - *first of the year*, Etton/Maxey GP on the 20th, Ferry Meadows CP on the 21st, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 22nd, Wicken Fen 2 on the 26th.

Lesser Whitethroat Castor Hanglands NR, Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR 3, all on the 14th - *first of the year*, then Upware and Paxton Pits on the 15th, followed by a general arrival. *Large counts:* Witchford Long Drove 9 singing on the 22nd.

Whitethroat Fen Drayton Lakes on the 11th - *first of the year*, Trumpington Meadows on the 15th, Cam Washes (3+), Fen Drayton Lakes, Ferry Meadows CP and Paxton Pits on the 16th indicate a more widespread arrival.

Grasshopper Warbler Wicken Fen on the 8th - *first of the year* - 2 on the 17th, Paxton Pits on the 18th, Woodwalton Fen on the 19th, Burwell Fen on the 20th, Swaffham Bulbeck White Fen on the 26th, Fowlmere NR on the 28th.

Sedge Warbler Fowlmere NR, Nene Washes (3) and Paxton Pits on the 7th - *first of the year*, Fen Drayton Lakes 'several' on the 8th, Wicken Fen 3 on the 8th, Ferry Meadows CP and Woodston Ponds on the 9th, thereafter reported from most wetland sites.

Reed Warbler Ferry Meadows CP and Woodston Ponds on the 9th - *first of the year*, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 16th, Fowlmere NR 3 on the 17th, Paxton Pits on the 19th, Woodwalton Fen on the 19th, then gradually reported from wetland sites, Fowlmere NR 33 singing on the 29th.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch *reported from:* Littleport May Farm.

Wren Kingfishers Bridge 26 on the 7th, Holme Fen 33 on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 20+ all month.

Starling Kingfishers Bridge 114 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 100 all month, Redmere 200+ all month.

Ring Ouzel Conington Airfield on the 2nd, Burwell Fen on the 6th, Witcham Gravel on the 9th, Steeple Morden a male on the 10th, Byall Fen Coveney 3 on the 12th, Ferry Meadows CP a male plus 3 flying over on the 14th, Nene Washes Eldernell on the 14th, Paxton Pits on the 16th and 21st.

Blackbird Cam Washes 20+ on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 50 all month.

Fieldfare Kingfishers Bridge 50 on the 1st, 104 on the 7th but none by the 12th, Redmere 200 on the 1st, 14 on the 5th, Paxton Pits 30 flying over on the 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP 9 on the 4th, 11 on the 6th, 12 on the 13th, 9 on the 14th and 15th, Cam Washes Upware 3 on the 6th, 4 on the 14th, Bradley Fen on the 21st - maybe the latest date of the winter.

Redwing Kingfishers Bridge 135 on the 1st, 3 on the 7th and none by the 12th, Ferry Meadows CP 4 on the 4th, 6 on the 6th, 1-2 on the 14th, 2 on the 17th, Cam Washes Upware 13 on the 6th, Helpston a flyover on the 8th, Orton Brambles on the 12th.

Mistle Thrush *reported from:* Barton, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (6-8), Redmere (2-4) and Wicken Fen.

Nightingale Wicken Fen on the 13th - *first of the year*, Marsh Lane GP 2 on the 18th and 20th, then up to 8 on the 23rd, Paxton Pits 2 on the 19th.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Grafham Water on the 6th, Wood Green Godmanchester on the 8th, Pondersbridge on the 8th, Littleport May Farm a male on the 23rd.

Redstart Fowlmere NR and Wicken Fen a male on the 14th - *first of the year*, Ferry Meadows CP a male on the 20th.

Whinchat Byall Fen on the 28th - *first of the year*, Cam Washes on the 29th.

Stonechat *reported from:* Littleport May Farm, Redmere and Wicken Fen.

Wheatear Littleport May Farm on the 1st, 3 on the 2nd, 2 on the 5th, Cam Washes on the 5th, 3 on the 28th, 8 on the 29th, Witcham Gravel on the 6th, Sutton North Fen on the 15th, Reach on the 17th, Burwell Fen on the 17th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 18th, Paxton Pits on the 18th, 20th and 25th, Ouse Washes on the 19th, 3 on the 29th, Nene Washes Eldernell on the 21st, Ferry Meadows CP a male on the 21st, 3 on the 22nd, Wicken Fen a female on the 22nd, Burwell Fen on the 22nd, 10 on the 25th, 3 on the 27th, Pymoor 6 on the 24th, Yaxley Fen on the 25th, Maxey GP 2 on the 27th - 28th, Byall Fen 6 on the 28th.

Birds seen all month with 1-2 up to the 6th but then none until the 15th and from the 17th to the end of the month seems to have been the major movement.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Tree Sparrow Ouse Washes 2 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Yellow Wagtail Grafham Water on the 4th - *first of the year*, 3 on the 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on the 8th and 10th, Burwell Fen 11 flying over on the 11th, Upware 10 on the 12th, thereafter reported from suitable sites. *Counts 10 plus*: Nene Washes Eldernell 40+ on the 21st,

Grey Wagtail *reported from*: Anglesey Abbey, Bradley Fen, Cam Washes Upware and Lode Mill.

Pied Wagtail Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere 20+ all month.

White Wagtail Ferry Meadows CP 3 on the 6th, one on the 16th and 17th, Grafham Water on the 17th.

Meadow Pipit Great Fen Project 55 on the 14th and 36 on the 15th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Water Pipit Paxton Pits 2 on the 13th, Nene Washes Eldernell on the 15th.

Finches and buntings

Chaffinch Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Redmere 100+ all month.

Brambling Redmere on the 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 2nd and 11th, Littleport May Farm 4 on the 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP on the 6th, 2 on the 12th, one on the 14th, Landbeach on the 8th, Wicken Fen 2 on the 8th, Hare Park on the 11th and 13th, Grafham Water 3 on the 13th, Bait's Bite Lock a pair on the 14th, Fowlmere NR on the 14th, Little Shelford on the 14th, Castor Hanglands NR on the 14th, Paxton Pits 2 on the 20th - *a late date*.

Greenfinch Littleport May Farm 50+ all month.

Goldfinch Kingfishers Bridge 53 on the 1st, Great Fen Project 21 on the 17th and 34 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 50 all month.

Siskin *reported from*: Fen Drayton Lakes, Hemingford Grey (7), Holme Fen (30), Ouse Washes (12) and Wicken Fen.

Linnet Ferry Meadows CP on nearby farmland 70 on the 6th, Cam Washes 30+ on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Redmere 200 all month.

Lesser Redpoll *reported from*: Castor Hanglands (6), Great Shelford, Ferry Meadows CP (2), Orton BP (2), Paxton Pits (2) and Wicken Fen (20+).

Hawfinch St. Ives one on a garden feeder on the 3rd, Castor Hanglands NR 2 on the 14th.

Corn Bunting Redmere 30 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 84 on the 2nd.

Reed Bunting Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Redmere 50 all month.

Exotica

Black Swan Ouse Washes 2 on the 22nd.

Ross's Goose still around the Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen area.

Hybrids

Shelduck type Cam Washes and Burwell Fen an Australian Shelduck type hybrid on the 21st - 22nd.

The E-bulletin list: new birds in April were: Purple Heron, Slavonian Grebe, Black-winged Stilt, Whimbrel, Little Tern, Black Tern, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Bonaparte's Gull, Cuckoo, Swift, Hobby, House Martin, Willow Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Nightingale, Redstart, Whinchat, Yellow Wagtail. Plus missed from the March list: White Stork, Long-eared Owl and Turtle Dove. The 2018 list is now **181** species.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Richard Astle, Malcolm Ausden Carole Baber, Louise Bacon, Helen Bailey, Stuart Ball, Geoff Barlow, Peter Beckenham, Paul Bennett, Peter Bircham, Mark Brandon, Carole Barber, Chris Bowden, Philip Bubb, Alan Bull, Mike Burdekin, Ian Burfield, Nigel Butcher, Josh Carter, Andy Clements, Pete Cook, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Paul Craske, Martin Davis, Ian Dawson, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, David Ellis, Stuart and Gill Elsom, Mike Everett, Stuart Feeney, Ben Fraser, Andy Frost, Mark Galloway, Andrew Gardener, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Ian Gordon, David Goulding, Bob Grice, Richard Grimmett, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Dean Harlow, Kevin Harris, Ron Harrold, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, David Hopkins, Sarah Howlett, Bob Humphries, Richard Johnson, Chris Jones, Colin Kirtland, Charlie Kitchin, Nick Langley, Derek Langslow, Diana Leech, James Littlewood, Nick Littlewood, Robert Mansfield, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin (KFB), Duncan McNiven, Matt Mellor, Giles Merritt, Andy Merryweather, Steve Mumford, Richard Nicol, Daniel Osborne, Gill Parish, Richard Patient, Mark Peck, Tony Plant, Duncan Poyser, Norman Ratcliffe, Petru Rednic, Chris Rider, Graeme Reed (KFB), Ian Seamark, Bill Simmonds, Phil Smith, Henry Stanier, Jonathan Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Iain Webb, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, David Wege, Jamie Wells, John Wells, Nicholas Wilkinson, Kevin Wilson, Mat Wilson, David Withrington, Hugh Wright and Christoph Zöckler.

More nocturnal recordings....

Nocturnal migration recorded by Simon Gillings in Cambridge over-night 13th-14th:

Common Scoter (3 groups), Ring Ouzel (3), Redwing, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Wigeon, Teal, Shelduck, Golden Plover, Curlew and Oystercatcher.

And by Jon Heath in Cambridge too, over the same night:

Common Scoter (4 groups), Avocet (2+), Redshank (1+), Water Rail, Golden Plover (1), Moorhen (5), Redwing (49), Song Thrush (13) and Fieldfare (7).

This is what we miss by sleeping by what proportion of the total night-time passage is this?

And Simon Gillings's April totals

Species	Number of nights	Total call notes	Minimum individuals
Canada Goose	1	21	1
Shelduck	1	1	1
Wigeon	6	163	23
Teal	6	81	13
Mallard	10	174	15
Shoveler	1	13	2
Common Scoter	3	103	8
Little Grebe	4	15	5
Grey Heron	2	2	2
Water Rail	8	20	8
Moorhen	15	173	43
Coot	9	78	14
Oystercatcher	2	27	2
Stone-curlew	2	2	2
Golden Plover	4	11	4

Dunlin	2	7	2
Whimbrel	1	31	3
Curlew	2	6	2
Common Sandpiper	3	3	3
Green Sandpiper	1	1	1
Redshank	3	6	3
Black-headed Gull	2	15	3
Common Gull	1	11	2
Common Tern	1	2	1
Barn Owl	4	4	4
Tawny Owl	3	6	3
Skylark	2	4	2
Pied Wagtail	1	1	1
Ring Ouzel	1	3	3
Blackbird	1	4	3
Fieldfare	1	75	48
Song Thrush	10	81	57
Redwing	9	225	149
Lesser Whitethroat	2	4	2
Chaffinch	1	2	1
Hawfinch	1	1	1
Unknown bird	13	78	38

From James Hanlon in Cambourne

Spurred on by Jon's and Simon's success in Chesterton, I've been carrying out nightly sound recording from my home in Cambourne throughout April. I missed only 4 nights and managed 150+ hours of recording, which involved about 20 hours of processing work. Though I didn't get anything as rare as stone curlew, there was plenty passing over and I've learnt much about bird calls of

species I previously thought I'd known well. Numbers relate to number of records rather than number of calls or individuals.

Common scoter 2 (15th & 23rd)

Wigeon	2	Teal	2+
Water rail	1	Oystercatcher	3
Golden plover	2	Redshank	2
Dunlin	2	Ringed plover	1
Tawny owl	2	Barn owl	1
Redwing	2		

Lesser whitethroat - one probable nocturnal migrant in addition to regular bird that sings during the day

Anyone wanting to know more would do well to see Simon's blog at <https://nocmig.wordpress.com/> Or search for #nocmig on Twitter. My set up was inexpensive, a £75 recorder plus £25 accessories, and it can be done for less than that. It's great for building your garden list but I realise many people wouldn't count anything they didn't hear in real time! I have no such qualms and am pleased to report no less than 7 new birds here, taking me to 98 species. Not bad for my 1st 3 years living here! My thanks go to Jon Heath for advice and encouragement in this interesting new field.

Next indoor meetings:

11th May: Social learning in great tits and blue tits : how birds use information about defended prey by Liisa Hämäläinen



Birds can gather information about their food from two sources: through personal experience and by observing the foraging behaviour of others (social information). Many insects have evolved chemical defences against predators and my research focuses on how birds use social information when learning to avoid these chemically defended prey. I use great tits and blue tits as my model predators and conduct learning experiments both in the wild, and with birds in captivity. In my talk, I will present the results from these studies, describing how great tits and blue tits use social information in their food choice, and how this can influence the evolution of prey defences.

Liisa Hämäläinen is a third year PhD student at the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge. She is working in the behavioural ecology group and is supervised by Dr Rose Thorogood.

Outdoor Meetings

Contact/booking via Louise Bacon, cbcrecorder@gmail.com

8th June: Chippenham Fen (booking will be essential) A chance to enjoy a permit-only national Nature reserve with the site manager. Places limited so book soon.

Due to significant periods of absence this summer, the team of recorder & Chairman who have organised the previous few summers of outdoor trips do not have time to do so this summer, so unfortunately, unless someone steps in at very short notice we will not have July or August trips. A volunteer to organise these for next summer would be most welcome, otherwise we will probably lose this activity.

News and comment

REMINDER.....Help required with various projects.....

Farmland Surveys

The Redlist Revival Project needs volunteers to survey farmland. The survey is identical to the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey. If you are interested or require further information please contact Vince Lea at vincelea@btinternet.com

Sand Martins

Records required:

- The date.

- The number of nests.
- The nature of the ground the colony was in - “active sand quarry” or such.

Grey Wagtails

If you have a lock or a weir near you and could survey over the breeding season. Ideally, it would be helpful if you could visit the site every three weeks or so but more or less frequent visits would still be valuable. Please record:

- The location with a grid reference.
- The type of habitat
- The date and time of your visit.
- The weather conditions.
- The number of birds present.
- If possible the age and gender of the birds.
- Their behaviour.
- Any evidence of breeding or attempted breeding.

Wagtails have a long breeding season, lasting from late March to the end of August so this phase of the survey covers the period from 17/3/18 to 1/9/18.

Grey Wagtails appear to be both long and short-range migrants. They seem to leave the breeding sites in autumn and disperse. It would be interesting to see where they are in Cambridgeshire outside the breeding season. So, if you see a Grey Wagtail between 2/9/18 and 31/3/19 could you report it?

The contact address is Research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

AND.....Continuing Spotted Flycatchers (Michael Holdsworth)

We will continue this project for its third season in 2018. Cambridgeshire (with Devon) has been piloting ground-breaking geolocator research with the BTO and this will also continue, subject to funding.

Quite simply, we need EVERY record of SpotFlys in the county, from arrival in mid-May to departure. There are more details on the Club's Research web-pages

Reports of Wiffwaffs wanted (Tony Fulford)

I am once again putting out the call for reports of mixed-singing Willow Warblers, especially those that include Chiffchaff notes in their song. Last year, with the help of members' reports, I found and recorded the songs of 15 mixed singing males in the county, mostly in the Cambridge area. These were sufficient to carry out a very informative playback study. This year I plan further studies designed to home in further on the reasons why some members of this species do this.

So please listen out for any off-sounding Willow Warbler or overly fast Chiffchaff song - it may turn out to be a mixed singer. I would again be extremely grateful to receive reports of such birds heard this spring: please send details of where and when as soon as you can to tonyfulford@gmail.com (or tel 0774 666 5195).

Holme Fen

There continues to be a problem with theft and vandalism at the Holme Fen car parking. Recently windows have been smashed to gain access, not just the loss of possessions but also the cost of repairs involved. Be warned.

Wicken Fen Group 50 years

Both past and present members gathered on April 27th to recognise the fiftieth anniversary of the first ringing session by the Group. Of the original members the only one still active is Chris Thorne who has decided to relinquish his role as group leader to be replaced by Chris Quy (the CBC webmaster). Your editor began ringing at Wicken eleven months later than the first session, ringing his first bird at Wicken in March 1969. As a matter of interest, the changing fortunes of some species are illustrated by the numbers in 1969 compared with numbers in 2017 - in parenthesis. Dunnock 185 (77), Wren 95 (155), Willow Warbler 149 (31), Chiffchaff 23 (335), Blackbird 180 (90), Song Thrush 175 (33), Tree Sparrow 200 (0). Ringing effort may have been different in the two years but still the differences can be seen to be dramatic.

The 300 club

The Bonaparte's Gull enabled two of the County's stalwarts to pass the magic 300 species seen in Cambridgeshire - Bruce Martin and Richard Patient. According to Mark Hawkes - the List Master, the County species total is 343.

The gull is named after Charles Lucien Bonaparte (1803-57) - a nephew of the Emperor. Bonaparte attempted to produce a list of every species the *Conspectus generum avium*. Eight hundred pages long (and unfinished due to his early death) it was a list based on names and distribution and considered to be a high class work at the time.

Birders Against Wildlife Crime

Hopefully you will have come across BAWC over the past few years and will have heard about our wildlife crime conferences (Eyes In The Field) in 2015 and 2016 and the Hen Harrier Days (2013 to date).

Since we started our grass roots movement, we recognised that helping folk who go into the countryside to Recognise, Record and Report potential wildlife crime was a key element in stepping up the battle against those who commit such crime. We produced a 3Rs leaflet to help nature lovers / walkers / birders do just that.

We are reaching out to bird clubs to raise awareness. By joining in and spreading the word you would be helping in the fight against wildlife crime. More information can be found at [on our work at *birdersagainst.org/*](http://birdersagainst.org/) and facebook.com/BAWCUK/

Paul Bray

Jeremy Mynott talk

On Thursday 24th May at 6.30, Jeremy Mynott will be talking at Heffers in Cambridge about his forthcoming book, *Birds in the Ancient World*. The event is free.

In his book, Jeremy explores the many roles birds played in ancient culture looking at the similarities and differences between ancient conceptions of the natural world and our own. Birds and bird language infiltrated every part of everyday life in the ancient world. They were indicators of time, weather and the seasons. They were a resource for hunting, farming, eating, medicine. They were kept as domestic pets and entertainments, and were seen as omens and intermediaries between the gods and humankind. The book includes a wealth of fascinating and sometimes surprising examples, and includes images.

Today, our language continues to be rich in figures of speech derived from familiar birds and we still hold fast to some superstitions - for example, one for sorrow, two for joy when spotting magpies. Birds still appear on coins and national emblems and the call of the cuckoo is still associated with the first signs of spring. But birds are fast disappearing from our modern world. In writing this book, Jeremy also hopes to remind us why we should not let this happen.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for April 2018

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 9 different days in March. The month's ringing total was 82; a further 87 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 169. Individual species totals (the first figure new birds, the second retraps) were:

Great spot Woodpecker	0, 1	Blackbird	2, 4
Cetti's Warbler	0, 1	Redwing	1, 0
Blue Tit	2, 13	Robin	1, 5
Great Tit	1, 21	Dunnock	1, 4
Long-tailed Tit	2, 4	House Sparrow	6, 3
Chiffchaff	7, 4	Chaffinch	1, 2
Willow Warbler	1, 0	Bullfinch	2, 2
Blackcap	15, 3	Goldfinch	14, 1
Lesser Whitethroat	1, 0	Siskin	1, 0
Reed Warbler	0, 1	Lesser Redpoll	3, 2
Treecreeper	0, 1	Greenfinch	2, 1
Wren	4, 2	Reed Bunting	12, 12
Starling	3, 0		
