

## Cambridgeshire Bird Club



### E-Bulletin 60 June 2018

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



Rose-coloured Starling at Hinxton : photo by James Hanlon.

### HEADLINES

**GANNET** Witcham an adult flyover on a misty morning on the 26<sup>th</sup>. There are two or three records most years, but midsummer is unusual to say the least!

**CATTLE EGRET\*** March Farmers on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

**PURPLE HERON\*** March Farmers on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**WHITE STORK** the 'escape' still around, Dog-in-a- doublet on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**BLACK KITE\*** Fen Drayton Lakes on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** Ouse Washes a female on the 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>.

**HOOPOE\*** Ferry Meadows CP one reported on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

**GREAT REED WARBLER\*** Fen Drayton Lakes from 15<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>. Four previous records, the most recent in 2016 at Paxton Pits where a singer stayed for over a month May-June. An annual visitor to Great Britain with around seven records each year.

**ROSE-COLOURED STARLING\*** Hinxton on the 5<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough 26<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>. There have been twelve previous county records, the most recent in 2003. These birds were part of a nationwide invasion with 60+ reported in the late May - early June period.

#### **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 first ten days were warm and largely sunny with only a rare downpour and after that it was exceptionally dry, warm and usually sunny ending with high temperatures.

**Summary:** characteristically a quiet month with outward wader passage ending in the days of late May and return passage only beginning in the very last days of this month. Most other species were engaged in breeding as some of the records show. Despite fears for vulnerable species after the rather vicious winter, both Cetti's Warblers and Bearded Tit seem to have survived, with number of the former holding up well but numbers of the latter showing a slight possible decline. However, given the prolonged extremely warm weather and drought it is likely that many species, particularly ground feeders, will be badly hit by the impenetrable soil, especially so early in the summer that even soft fruit and harvest spill will not be available.

## **Wildfowl**

**Mute Swan** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 8 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Burwell Fen maximum 46 on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Whooper Swan** Ouse Washes one on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Pink-footed Goose** Paxton Pits one with Greylags on the 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>.

**White-fronted Goose** Ouse Washes 3 adults of the 'eurasian' race on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, were most likely from a feral source.

**Greylag Goose** (*counts 30+*), Wicken Fen 70 with 10 broods adding up to 50 young, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 57 on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 39 on the 18<sup>th</sup> with 5 broods adding up to 15 young, Grafham Water 14+ on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Hobson's Park 30 on the 21<sup>st</sup> with broods of 3 and 5, Burwell Fen 41 on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 600 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, (see News and Comment).

**Canada Goose** (*counts 20+*) Kingfishers Bridge maximum 67 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Hobson's Park 27 on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Egyptian Goose** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Kingfishers Bridge (4).

**Shelduck** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (bred), Farcet Fen (bred), Kingfishers Bridge maximum (2).

**Mandarin** Woodwalton Fen an eclipse male on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Wigeon** Kingfishers Bridge on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ouse Washes 8 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 3 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 5 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Gadwall** Wicken Fen 13 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (a brood of 11), Kingfishers Bridge maximum 42 on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 81 on the 13<sup>th</sup> (3 broods), Paxton Pits on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Fowlmere NR 5 males in eclipse plumage on the 25<sup>th</sup>.



Gadwall female with offspring at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

**Teal** Kingfishers Bridge on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 2 males on the 17<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Mallard** (*counts 20+*) Kingfishers Bridge maximum 41 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Wicken Fen 27 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Burwell Fen maximum 66 on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Garganey** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Kingfishers Bridge, Nene Washes (2), Ouse Washes (3), Paxton Pits (2) and Wicken Fen.

**Shoveler** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 4 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Fowlmere NR 10 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 5 males on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 14 on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Pochard** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 5 on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 6 (5 young) on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Breeding in Cambridgeshire is unusual.

**Tufted Duck** (*counts 20+*) Kingfishers Bridge maximum 22 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### ***Gamebirds***

**Grey Partridge** Cambridge Research Park 2 on the 1<sup>st</sup>,

**Quail** Chesterton Cambridge a flyover noc.mig. on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Cormorants***

**Cormorant** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (12), Fowlmere NR (2 flyovers), Grafham Water, Great Fen Project, Hobson's Park (2), Kingfishers Bridge (9), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits, and Wicken Fen (2).

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

**Bittern** *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge, Maxey GP, Ouse Washes, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen.



Bitterns at an undisclosed site : photo by Kevin Taylor.

**Little Egret** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (c40), Cambridge Research Park (2), Ferry Meadows CP, Grafham Water, Kingfishers Bridge (3), Nene Washes and Wicken Fen (12).

**Great White Egret** Ouse Washes 3 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 6 on the 17<sup>th</sup> (a record high count for Cambridgeshire), 5 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, one on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, March Farmers on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Fordham-Burwell road 2 flying over on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Heron** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 5 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### ***Grebes***

**Little Grebe** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (6), Ferry Meadows CP (2), Fowlmere NR (bred), Grafham Water, Hobson's Park (8 at least 2 half grown), Kingfishers Bridge (3), Wicken Fen (11), Woodwalton Fen (6 plus 3 young).

**Great Crested Grebe** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Hobson's Park, Grafham Water, Kingfishers Bridge (7), Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen (7 and bred).

### ***Raptors***

**Red Kite** *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR (3), Grafham Water, Great Wilbraham, Kingfishers Bridge, Stow-cum-Quy, Wicken Fen and Willingham.

**Marsh Harrier** *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Paxton Pits, Ramsey St. Mary, Wicken Fen (4).

**Buzzard** *reported from:* Bartlow, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Great Shelford (2), Haslingfield (2), Hauxton (2), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Paxton Pits, Stow-cum-Quy and Wicken Fen (2).

**Osprey** Grafham Water a flyover on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Rails and crane***

**Coot** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 86 on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 202 on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Wicken Fen 34 on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crane** Burwell Fen/Wicken Fen 2 on several dates, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on several dates, Ouse Washes on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. These are reports of non-breeding birds.

### **Waders**

**Avocet** March Farmers on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 16 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 38 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Oystercatcher** *reported from:* Bottisham Fen (2), Kingfishers Bridge (4) and Pymoor.

**Grey Plover** Coveney Byall Fen on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Lapwing** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 23 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Burwell Fen 62 on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Wicken Fen 21 on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Fowlmere NR post-breeding flock of 13 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 40+ on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover** Kingfishers Bridge on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Black tailed Godwit** Ouse Washes 47 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 48 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Burwell Fen 20 on the 29<sup>th</sup> (see News and Comment).

**Ruff** Burwell Fen 5 on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Sanderling** Grafham Water 3 on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Kingfishers Bridge.

**Greenshank** Burwell Fen 2 on the 29<sup>th</sup> flew over Wicken Fen the following day.

**Redshank** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (11), Kingfishers Bridge (12) and Wicken Fen (3).

**Snipe** *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge.

### **Terns and gulls**

**Common Tern** *reported from:* Burwell Fen (6), Cambridge, Cambridge Research Park (2), Grafham Water, Hobson's Park (2), Kingfishers Bridge (12), Paxton Pits (58) and Wicken Fen.

**Black-headed Gull** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 52 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Hobson's Park 50 adults and a single juvenile on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Common Gull** *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP (4), Great Fen Project.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Great Fen Project on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Great Shelford 5 flying east on the 17<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 6 on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Herring Gull** Burwell Fen on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Wicken Fen on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Peterborough a report of a breeding pair with recently fledged juveniles on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

**Stock Dove** Kingfishers Bridge 8 on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodpigeon** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 78 on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Turtle Dove** *reported from:* Cambridge Research Park, Cottenham Lode, Cromwell Golf Course, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR (3), Graveley, Histon-Westwick road, Longstanton, Maxey GP, Molesworth, St Ives and Swaffham Bulbeck.

**Cuckoo** *reported from:* Castor Hanglands, Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen (3 males 1 female maximum) and Woodwalton Fen (5 males and 2 females).

**Barn Owl** *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Ouse Washes (Purl's Bridge), Paxton Pits, and Wicken Fen.

**Little Owl** *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge, Landbeach, Marholm and New Shardelows Farm (bred).



**Tawny Owl** *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge and Wicken Fen.

**Swift** Ferry Meadows CP c150 on the 7<sup>th</sup>.



Swift at Willingham : photo by Colin Brown.

**Kingfisher** *reported from:* Hinxton, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.

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

**Hobby** *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR (3), Great Fen Project, Paxton Pits, Swaffham Prior and Wicken Fen (2)

**Peregrine** Cambridge on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Orton Brambles on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough an immature female on the 27<sup>th</sup> had been present for two weeks preying on feral pigeons.

**Ring-necked Parakeet\*** Peterborough on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Corvids***

**Jackdaw** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 34 on the 9<sup>th</sup>,

**Raven** Castor Hanglands on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

## ***Crests, tits and larks***

**Bearded Tit** *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes (2) and Wicken Fen.

**Skylark** Great Fen Project 20 on the 6<sup>th</sup>,

## ***Warblers***

**Cetti's Warbler** *reported from:* Cambridge Research Park, Fowlmere NR, Hinxton, Kingfishers Bridge (3), Paxton Pits (2) and Wicken Fen (5).

**Whitethroat** Great Fen Project 10 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 11 on the 9<sup>th</sup>.



Whitethroat juveniles at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *reported from:* Wicken Fen (2).

**Reed Warbler** Great Fen Project 14 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## ***Nuthatch, Wren, Starling and thrushes***

**Nuthatch** *reported from:* Brampton Wood, Hare Park, ten Wood (4+).

**Wren** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 18 on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Starling** Kingfishers Bridge maximum 31 on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen c100 on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen c50 on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Project 32 on the 26<sup>th</sup>.



Starlings coming to roost at Grafham Water : photo by Mark Hawkes.

If you want to test your skills at bird counting, the exact number will be revealed at the end of the Bulletin

**Mistle Thrush** *reported from:* Castor Hanglands.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Hayley Wood, Molesworth, and Wimpole Park,

Michael Holdsworth reported on June 26<sup>th</sup>:

‘What a crazy year! Early pairs fledged last week; late birds are only just arriving and sorting out finding a partner; which is definitely not as easy as it used to be.’

**Nightingale** *reported from:* Castor Hanglands and Paxton Pits (3).

## ***Wagtails and pipits***

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Anglesey Abbey and Toft.

Meadow Pipit Great Fen Project 16 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>,

## ***Finches and buntings***

Crossbill Earith 2 flying over on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

Reed Bunting Great Fen Project 20 on the 26<sup>th</sup>,

## ***Exotica***

Peafowl Cambridge Research Park 2 calling nearby on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The E-bulletin species total for 2018 is now 190. New species in June were: Gannet, Great Reed Warbler, Rose-coloured Starling and Crossbill. In 2017 it was 197.

## ***Contributors:***

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## ***Next indoor meetings:***

**Cottenham Village College**

**14th Sept: *Counting wintering waterbirds - the UK's Wetland Bird Survey* by Teresa Frost**



Non-breeding waterbirds have been systematically monitored for seventy years. Teresa's talk will cover the history and background of the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) and how it has helped us understand and conserve our internationally important populations of wintering waterbirds.

WeBS is a partnership between the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in association with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Teresa works with colleagues at BTO and a network of 160 volunteer local organisers to run the scheme. She leads on development and is responsible for annual reporting of results including the WeBS Online Report and the summary report sent out to around 3000 WeBS counters annually.

Prior to joining the BTO in November 2015, Teresa worked in Local Environmental Records Centres for several years after completing her PhD, which was on analysing WeBS data. She sits on the Council of the National Forum for Biological Recording and is enthusiastic about engaging people in recording and monitoring their local wildlife and fostering cross-taxa collaboration between wildlife organisations and groups; and in making better and more extensive use of biodiversity recording and monitoring data for policy, research and conservation at all scales.

**12th Oct: *Life in a world full of predators : saving the UK's black-tailed godwits* by Jen Smart**

Breeding waders are in trouble and the beautiful black-tailed godwit is among the most threatened, with fewer than 50 breeding pairs and 90% of these at one nature reserve. I will talk about an ambitious and novel partnership project between RSPB and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, with funding from EU LIFE, which aims to secure the future of godwits as a breeding species in the UK.

Dr Jennifer Smart is a Principal Conservation Scientist at the RSPB Centre for Conservation Science. Much of her career has been focused on the ecology of breeding waders developing conservation solutions to reverse their severe population declines. Increasingly this involves understanding and managing the impacts of predation and finding ways to influence landscape-scale management of wet grasslands.

You can find out more about her and the RSPB Centre for Conservation Science at the following webpages:

<https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/centre-for-conservation-science>

<https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/centre-for-conservation-science/our-team/jennifer-smart/>

see below for news of local Black-tailed Godwit research

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## ***News and Comment***

### **Car security - again**

Break-in this time at Fen Drayton Lakes. Advice is always to take care that nothing of any value is visible but this crime continues to be a potential problem at all local reserves where there is not a regular warden present. It seems that the Police have apprehended the person responsible for Holme Fen car break-ins but....Stop press: at Castor Hanglands a car was left with the glove box open and the boot cover off so as to show that there was nothing worth stealing but the window was smashed and the number plates stolen!

## Black-tailed Godwit Project

The RSPB Black-tailed Godwit field team have been very busy in recent weeks. 37 godwit chicks have been colour ringed and 10 adult birds have been fitted with geolocators. This will help them find out about the birds' local and migratory movements. See below.....

# Have you seen a colour ringed black-tailed godwit?

We'd like you to tell us about it

We have marked and released some wild black-tailed godwits, and we would like your help to track their movements. Please send your colour ring sightings and find out more information at: [projectgodwit.org.uk](http://projectgodwit.org.uk)

Please take note of the date, time and location where you saw the bird, along with its colour ring combination. If you would like information about the bird that you have seen, please provide a contact email address.

All black-tailed godwits colour ringed under our project have two colour rings above the knee on each leg. The lower colour ring on the right hand leg is lime in colour with the black letter "E".

If you spot a black-tailed godwit with a different colour ring or flag combination, please contact [limosalimosa@waderstudygroup.org](mailto:limosalimosa@waderstudygroup.org)



Working together to give nature a home



giving  
nature  
a home



Mark Whiffin (RSPB)  
The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.  
OUW-0677-17-19

## Greylags and others..

Controversial no doubt, but with a count of 600 at Fen Drayton Lakes and at least 50 young raised this year at Wicken Fen is it time to ask if this is about to become, or indeed already is, a problem? Non-native and feral species are always the subject of differing views. What, if any, impact do Greylags have on native populations of other wildfowl or the habitat? Are they in fact effective lawn-mowers? There is evidence of Greylags breeding here in times past and so, to an extent, they could be classed as native. Personally, I have a soft spot for Barnacle geese and therefore I enjoy seeing the small feral flocks in the County - but there lies the problem, it is a matter of taste. Control of populations is a very emotive subject.

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

Brief news for June 2018

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 9 different days in June (all CES) - with additional nestbox sessions. The month's ringing total was 274; a further 132 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 406. Individual species totals (the first figure new birds, the second retraps) were:

Cuckoo	1	
Barn Owl	2	
Kingfisher	1	
Green Woodpecker	2	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	
Pied Wagtail	6	
Wren	18	13
Dunnock	15	10
Robin	36	14
Blackbird	13	16

Song Thrush	6	2
Cetti's Warbler	4	6
Sedge Warbler	5	3
Reed Warbler	23	12
Lesser Whitethroat	1	
Whitethroat	2	
Garden Warbler	3	4
Blackcap	28	11
Chiffchaff	26	7
Willow Warbler	3	
Bearded Tit	4	



Long-tailed Tit	3	2
Blue Tit	42	8
Great Tit	10	6
Treecreeper	3	2
Jackdaw	1	
House Sparrow	1	2

Chaffinch	1	2
Goldfinch	2	
Bullfinch	6	8
Reed Bunting	5	2
	274	132

The next E-bulletin will be published on August 10<sup>th</sup>, contributions to me by the 4<sup>th</sup> please.

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Two exceptional 'old' birds were a Garden Warbler X 875672 at 8 years and a month and a Chaffinch V834220 at 10 years and 9 days.

Finally.....

The Starling flock count .....



Once you have the photograph it helps to mark the birds up in circles of say 100. The next bit is easy, count up your hundreds and add in the odd birds not encircled. Mark's result was 3,294. At a casual glance I thought 2,000 which is a great example of the way in which most birders consistently underestimate flock size. Partly this is because one tends to concentrate on the mass and not give enough attention to the peripherals.