

Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 61 July 2018



A Tufted Duck family at Wicken Fen : photo by Roger Cresswell.

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

HEADLINES

WHITE STORK Dog-in-a-doublet on the 10th and 20th - of unknown origin probably an escape.

CATTLE EGRET Nene Washes 2 on the 14th, one on the 28th.

PURPLE HERON Nene Washes on the 14th.

SPOONBILL Nene Washes a juvenile on the 6th.

RED-FOOTED FALCON Witcham a female-type on the 7th.

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: July began as June ended, hot and very dry and continued *ad infinitum* until, finally in the last days of the month thunderstorms made a lot of noise but didn't drop much rain!

Summary the hot weather brought an abrupt end to bird song and breeding in most urban and suburban settings, particularly for ground feeders such as Blackbirds, Song Thrushes and Chaffinches. Wader return passage commenced in the first few days. But as the month wore on many wetlands dried out and even the wet mud did not last for long.

Site notes: As a result of building and widening the A14 two large areas of open water close to Longstanton/Northstowe have attracted some waterbirds - Longstanton lagoons. Also reported are a number of observations from Dernford Farm Reservoir Stapleford which is on private land.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Burwell Fen 27 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge 7 on the 1st, Hobson's Park 7 on the 25th.

Greylag Goose (counts over 20): Kingfishers Bridge maximum 124 on the 5th, Hobson's Park 46 on the 25th, Fowlmere NR 100+ on the 31st.

Canada Goose (counts over 20): Kingfishers Bridge maximum 181 on the 5th, Burwell Fen 27 on the 13th.

Barnacle Goose Grafham Water on the 12th and 28th.

Egyptian Goose Burwell Fen one on the 1st and 6th, 2 on the 9th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes 18 on the 26th.

Shelduck *reported from*: Burwell Fen 6 on the 1st, Wicken Fen (a juvenile).

Mandarin Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir a female on the 24th, Grafham Water one on the 29th and a pair in eclipse plumage on the 30th.

Wigeon Fen Drayton Lakes 7+ on the 9th, 8 on the 12th.

Gadwall Kingfishers Bridge maximum 35 on the 1st, Wicken Fen an adult and a brood of 8 on the 1st, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir 2 on the 24th.

Teal Nene Washes 110 on the 1st, Longstanton 8 on the 7th, 4 on the 17th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 12th, Burwell Fen 14 on the 13th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 5 on the 15th, Fowlmere NR 4 on the 17th, 5 on the 31st.

Mallard (*counts over 20*): Burwell Fen 111 on the 1st, Longstanton Lagoon 120 on the 17th, Hobson's Park 30 on the 25th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 105 on the 26th, Fowlmere NR 85 on the 31st.

Pintail Stapleford a flyover by Dernford Farm Reservoir on the 16th.

Garganey *reported from*: Fen Drayton Lakes.

Shoveler Burwell Fen adult plus brood on the 3rd, Longstanton Lagoon 2 on the 17th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 31 on the 22nd.

Red-crested Pochard Fen Drayton Lakes a male on the 12th.

Pochard Kingfishers Bridge maximum 14 on the 8th, Grafham Water 3 on the 15th.

Tufted Duck (*counts over 20*): Grafham Water 744 on the 15th, Fowlmere NR bred, Hobsons Park 22 on the 25th (many half-grown).

Scaup Grafham Water a drake on the 31st.

Common Scoter Stapleford Dernford Reservoir on the 12th, Grafham Water 9 immature/females on the 31st.

Goldeneye Grafham Water 3 on the 15th, one on the 28th.

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge Longstanton Lagoon on the 24th.

Quail Hope Farm Knapwell one singing on the 5th.

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from:* Grafham Water and Kingfishers Bridge (12).

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes, Kingfishers Bridge and Wicken Fen.

Little Egret Nene Washes from 172 on the 1st, to 76 on the 28th - maximum 180 on the 20th, Paxton Pits 3 on the 1st, Burwell Fen 55 on the 3rd, 52 on the 4th, c40 on the 8th, 83+ on the 9th, Wicken Fen a roost of 12 on the 11th, then 21 on the 16th, 33 on the 25th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum of 47 on the 12th, Ouse Washes on the 15th, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 17th, Longstanton Lagoon 10 on the 7th, 20 on the 17th - 23rd, 23 on the 24th, Grafham Water 4 on the 23rd, c20 on the 28th.

Great White Egret Nene Washes 3 on the 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 6th and 7th, 2 on the 9th and 12th, one on the 16th - 17th and on the 26th, Wicken Fen on the 9th.

Grey Heron Burwell Fen 16 on the 1st, Nene Washes 45 on the 6th, Kingfishers Bridge 10 on the 12th.

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (13), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Hobson's Park (12 some young), Kingfishers Bridge (9) and Wicken Fen (14 several broods).

Great Crested Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Ferry Meadows CP (4 pairs at least one bred), Grafham Water, Hobson's Park (2), Kingfishers Bridge (8), and Wicken Fen (5).

Raptors

Red Kite *reported from:* Aldreth, Cambridge, Fowlmere NR, Great Fen (13), Great Shelford, Hemingford Grey, Pampisford, Peterborough (50) and Stapleford. (At Great Fen a possible Black Kite was reported - see News and Comment).

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Chippenham Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project (5), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Nene Washes (5) and Wicken Fen (4).



Female Marsh Harrier at Wicken Fen ; photo by Roger Cresswell.

Buzzard *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Hemingford Grey, Horseheath, Great Fen Project (3), Great Shelford (2), Kingfishers Bridge (3), Paxton Pits, Sawston by-pass and Stretham. (4).

Osprey Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on the 20th.

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Burwell Fen (adult + brood), Chippenham Fen, and Fowlmere NR.

Moorhen Fowlmere NR 24 on the 17th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 15 on the 22nd.

Coot Burwell Fen maximum 155 on the 1st, Wicken Fen maximum 21 on the 10th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 292 on the 26th.

Common Crane Wicken Fen 2 on the 9th and 21st, Ouse Washes 11 on the 10th, Nene Washes 9 on the 14th, 3 on the 24th, 11 on the 28th.

Waders

Avocet Nene Washes 33 on the 1st, 28 on the 29th, Wicken Fen on the 9th, Burwell Fen 4 on the 13th.

Oystercatcher *reported from:* Grafham Water (8), Kingfishers Bridge (2) and Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir.

Lapwing (*counts 20+*) Longstanton 25 on the 7th, Burwell Fen 122 on the 13th, c200 on the 21st, Fowlmere NR 171 on the 16th, 230 on the 27th, Wicken Fen c50 on the 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes 75+ on the 26th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 385 on the 26th.

Little Ringed Plover Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 1st and 22nd, Nene Washes on the 1st, Burwell Fen see table, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir 2 on the 5th, 9th and 28th, Longstanton Lagoon 2 on the 7th, 8 on the 19th, 3 on the 23rd - 24th, one on the 26th, Grafham Water 4 on the 30th.

Ringed Plover Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir on the 21st.

Whimbrel Kingfishers Bridge on the 8th and 22nd, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir on the 9th, 3 on the 11th, one on the 30th, Eaton Ford 2 over on the 10th, Wyton 2 flying over on the 15th, Grafham Water 9 on the 29th, Trumpington Meadows a flyover on the 27th.

Curlew Nene Washes on the 1st, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir 4 on the 10th, one on the 11th, Burwell Fen on the 11th, Cambridge (noc mig) on the 12th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 26th.

Black tailed Godwit Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on the 1st, 4 on the 26th, Burwell Fen see table, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir 5 flew over on the 4th, Kingfishers Bridge 8 on the 8th, 9 on the 15th, 3 on the 22nd and one on the 26th, Longstanton Lagoon 6 on the 19th, Wicken Fen 6 on the 25th, Ferry Meadows CP 6 flew over on the 26th, Nene Washes 40 on the 29th.

Turnstone Grafham Water on 30th - 31st.

Ruff Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on the 1st, Nene Washes on the 1st, 12+ on the 29th, Burwell Fen see table, Kingfishers Bridge 1 on the 12th, 22nd and 3 on the 26th, Wicken Fen 10 on the 16th, Longstanton Lagoon on the 26th.

Curlew Sandpiper Nene Washes 4 on the 29th.

Sanderling Grafham Water on the 20th, Nene Washes on the 29th.

Dunlin Burwell Fen see table, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 15th, Fowlmere NR on the 17th, and 24th, Longstanton Lagoon on the 17th and 24th, Stapleford Dernford Farm reservoir 1-2 from the 19th to the 28th, Grafham Water 3 on the 20th, one on the 30th, Nene Washes 17 on the 29th.

Little Stint Burwell Fen on the 14th.

Common Sandpiper Kingfishers Bridge on the 1st, 2 on the 12th and 19th and one on the 22nd, Stapleford Dernford Farm reservoir on the 5th and 20th, then 2 - 10 from the 24th - 30th, Ferry Meadows CP on the 9th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 12th, 5 on the 26th, Burwell Fen see table, Fen Ditton on the 18th, Longstanton Lagoon on the 19th, 3 on the 24th, Grafham Water 1-2 on the 20th - 23rd, 11 on the 28th, 2 on the 30th, Nene Washes 4+ on the 29th.

Green Sandpiper *reported from:* Burwell Fen (6), Cambridge Research Park, Fen Drayton Lakes (5), Fowlmere NR (2), Grafham Water (6), Kingfishers Bridge (10), Longstanton Lagoon (6), Nene Washes (5+), and Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir.

Greenshank Burwell Fen see table, Fen Drayton Lakes on 2nd, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir on the 4th and 9th, Kingfishers Bridge singles on the 15th, 22nd and 26th, Nene Washes on the 29th.

Wood Sandpiper Burwell Fen see table, Nene Washes on the 29th.

Redshank *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Grafham Water, Kingfishers Bridge (6) and Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir (2).

Snipe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (9), Eldernell (20), Fen Drayton Lakes (8), Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Kingfishers Bridge (11), Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir (4) and Wicken Fen.

Summary of wader passage at Burwell Fen during July

	1	2	3	4	6	8	9	11	13	14	16	17	18	19	20
LRP		3			5	2	7	3	5		4		2		
BtGod		23	13	7	5	50	49		9		14		3		
Ru		3	3	6	1	5	19		17		7		5		
Dun						1	4		2						
CS								1			2				
GS		1						9	5		14		5		6
Gsk	1	2	2	3		2	3	1	2		3				1
WS						1	2								

From the top: Little Ringed Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Dunlin, Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Greenshank and Wood Sandpiper.

Terns and gulls

Black Tern Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir on the 8th - 9th, Grafham Water 2 on the 26th, one on the 28th.

Sandwich Tern Grafham Water 3 on the 12th, Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on the 20th.

Common Tern *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Fen Drayton Lakes (100+), Ferry Meadows CP (5), Fowlmere NR (3), Hobson's Park (2), Kingfishers Bridge (16), Longstanton Lagoon (2), Paxton Pits (64) and Wicken Fen.

Black-headed Gull Burwell Fen 29 on the 13th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 110 on the 15th, West Cambridge 21 on the 19th, Hobson's Park 30 on the 25th (2-3 juveniles), Grafham Water c1000 on the 22nd.



Juvenile Black-headed Gull at Fowlmere NR : photo by Doug Radford.

Mediterranean Gull Ferry Meadows CP a juvenile on the 18th, Fen Drayton Lakes a juvenile on the 18th, West Cambridge a juvenile on the 19th.

Common Gull Ferry Meadows CP 2 on the 2nd, Fowlmere NR on the 17th, West Cambridge on the 19th, Grafham Water 30 on the 22nd .

Lesser Black-backed Gull West Cambridge on the 19th, Fowlmere NR 50+ in the area on the 28th.

Herring Gull West Cambridge 2 on the 19th, Peterborough a breeding record 3 juveniles making a total of 10 in Fengate.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water (c20), Longstanton Lagoon (2), Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir (juvenile).

Caspian Gull Burwell Fen a juvenile on the 4th (an early date for this species in the county), Grafham Water 2 on the 22nd.

Doves, cuckoo, owls and Kingfisher

Turtle Dove *reported from:* Abbots Ripton, Cottenham Lode (2), Devil's Dyke, Dry Drayton, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR, Fulbourn, Girton, Paxton Pits, and Witcham.

Cuckoo *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge and Nene Washes.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Sawston by-pass and Wicken Fen.

Little Owl *reported from:* Devil's Dyke, Kingfishers Bridge and Wicken Fen (2).

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Hare Park (adult and juvenile) and Kingfishers Bridge (2).

Swift (*large counts*) Orton Brimbles 60 on the 18th, Cambridge 80 on the 25th, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir 50+ on the 28th, Fowlmere NR 100+ on the 31st, Grafham Water 60+ on the 31st, many observers suggested departure around the 25th - 31st.

Kingfisher *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Fowlmere NR (3), Kingfishers Bridge, Paxton Pits (2), and Wicken Fen.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel Great Fen Project 7 on the 26th.

Hobby *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Chippenham Fen, Fowlmere NR, Fulbourn Fen NR, Grafham Water, Great Fen Project (6), Paxton Pits, Stapleford Dernford Farm Reservoir and Waterbeach.

Peregrine Burwell Fen on July 2nd, Cambridge 2 on the 20th, Great Fen Project on the 26th.

Ring-necked Parakeet* Burwell Fen on the 20th, Stapleford on the 20th.

Corvids

Carrion Crow Wicken Fen 12 on the 10th, Kingfishers Bridge 26 on the 19th.

Tits

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Fulbourn Fen NR, Ten Wood (4),

Bearded Tit *reported from:* Wicken Fen.

Hirundines and warblers

Swallow Ouse Washes 100 on the 15th, Grafham Water 250 on the 22nd,.

House Martin at a house in Haslingfield a pair arrived at an artificial nestbox on July 19th, presumably just in time for a breeding attempt! Needless to say, as has been pointed out, for this species and Swallows, the lack of water equals the lack of mud equals no possibility of natural nest construction in the heat of the high summer this year.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.

Grasshopper Warbler *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Eldernell, Fowlmere NR, and Swaffham Bulbeck Lode.

Nuthatch, wren, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch *reported from:* Byron's Pool Grantchester, Ditton Park Wood (3+), Fulbourn Fen NR and Out Wood (2).

Starling Nene Washes c700 on the 6th, Burwell Fen c200 on the 21st, Fowlmere NR roost of 100 on 31st.

Spotted Flycatcher reported from: Buckden Marina (bred), Fowlmere NR (bred), Haddenham and Hare Park (pair).

Starts and chats

Whinchat Ferry Meadows CP 2 juveniles on the 27th.

Wheatear Littleport May Farm a juvenile on the 22nd - 23rd.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

Grey Wagtail reported from: Fowlmere NR and Grafham Water.

Finches and buntings

Crossbill Grafham Water a flyover on the 12th.

Hybrids:

Tufted Duck X Pochard Grafham Water on the 15th,

Nocturnal Migration (noc mig) from Simon Gillings:



Contributors:

Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Louise Bacon, Rowena Baxter, Peter Bircham, Richard Bradbury, Alan Bull, Howard Butler, Josh Carter, Ade Cooper, Paul Craske, Nick Croft, Ian Dawson, Boris Delahaie, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Mike Everett, David Gandy, Simon Gillings, Derek Gruar, Andy Hannaford, Mark Hawkes, Mike Hazleton, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, David Hopkins, Carl Howard, Sarah Howlett, Colin Kirtland, Charlie Kitchin, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin, Steve Mumford, Chris Park, Richard Palmer, Richard Patient, Doug Radford, John Raven, Graeme Reed, Duncan Ritchie, Norman Sills, Phil Smith, Jonathan Taylor, Mark Thomas, The Wicken Fen Group, Calum Urquhart, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Iain Webb, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Kevin Wilson and Christoph Zöckler.

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/>

St Johns Church Hall, Cambridge

9th Nov: *Green birding, the RSPB and the adventures of a biking birder* by Gary Prescott

Gary Prescott, The Biking Birder, will be talking about Green Birding, the growing way in which birders are being more environmentally friendly when birding. You will meet the characters from around the World who participate in Green Birding and find out why they do what they do. Gary will also be talking about his Biking Birder adventures, telling stories from his three years on the road as he cycled around the UK visiting every RSPB and Wildfowl & Wetland Trust nature reserve - twice! The first person ever to do this, Gary also has some Green Birding records to discuss, as well as tales from his latest Biking Birder adventure in Peru last year.

ONE DAY CONFERENCE - advance notice.....

Saturday November 5th at Cottenham Village College, the theme is Migration

A range of speakers and a range of topics including species studies, methodology, all centred on Britain's place in the European migration phenomenon.

Booking from September (more details in the next E-bulletin), cost likely to be the same as at the last conference.



14th Dec: *Christmas social*

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

Please contact [Vicki Harley](#) if you would like to give a short presentation.

Research Projects

Grey Wagtail Survey 2018 - Reminder

You may recall, (hopefully, a good few of you do!) that our research programme for 2018 included a survey of Grey Wagtails. The first phase of this comes to a close on 1/9/18. If you have been collecting data could you send your results to research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk? I would be grateful if I could receive these by 8th October 2018.

The initial results have proved to be very thought provoking, especially with regards the relationship between Homo sapiens and Wagtails. More of that anon.

Could you also note that this is just the first, intensive, phase of the survey? We are also interested in the winter distribution of the species. So if you see a Grey Wagtail between 1/9/18 and 31/3/19 could you record it at the above web site?

Many thanks to all those who have taken part so far. But not too many thanks because I'm sure you enjoyed observing this superb little bird. I was watching an absolutely beautiful male collecting food for a second brood when England were playing Sweden in some recent football match. There was a lot of squawking from the village nearby - Maguire had scored - but hey that can wait for the i-player - I had the best of it.

Robert Brown - Research Officer.

Raptor Survey 22nd or 23rd September 2018

Over the past couple of years we have carried out a biennial raptor survey. This is giving us a better idea of the changing status of these birds in our county. It's a relatively simple and hopefully enjoyable task.

Pick a promising site. Just about anywhere will do and look out for raptors for a period of one hour. Try to do this in the late morning to the mid afternoon. This is when many raptors are at their most active and most visible, especially those species that soar.

If you see a Raptor could you note the

- Species, number and if possible gender
- The location, ideally with a six figure Ordnance grid reference
- The nature of the location - "urban", "woodland", "marsh" etc
- What the bird(s) were doing - hunting, on passage etc.
- The time of day and weather conditions.

Don't be concerned if you cannot answer all the points above. Each observation adds to the snapshot. Send your results to research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

Hopefully, we will be able to repeat this survey in the years to come thereby producing trend data of even value than a one-off.

And especial thanks to those of you who have contributed in the past.

Robert Brown (Research Officer) and Louise Bacon (County Recorder).

BTO Tawny Owl Point Survey

As part of its "[Project Owl](#)", the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) will be running two complementary Tawny Owl surveys over the coming months, the first of which - the [Tawny Owl Point Survey](#) (or "TOPS") - starts in August. Full details of TOPS are available from the survey web page above, but essentially volunteers are required to make two relatively short (20- or 30-minute) early-evening survey visits between the 15th of August and 15th of October to listen for Tawny Owl hooting/calling activity from a safely accessible point within 300 metres of the centre of a survey "tetrad" (i.e. 2x2-km square).

As TOPS is a sample (rather than complete) survey - mirroring the methodology used for previous surveys in 1989 and 2005 - only one in nine 10-km squares has

been selected for sampling across the country. Within Cambridgeshire these 10-km squares are TL18 (including, e.g., Sawtry, Stilton, Holme and the Giddings), TL45 (i.e. central Cambridge and Coton south to Harston and Stapleford), TL48 (including, e.g., Mepal, Manea and Pymoor) and TF41 (e.g. northern Wisbech, Gorefield, Tydd St Giles, etc.). Those of you living or working elsewhere may find a 10-km square falling (mainly) outside the County's boundaries to be more convenient, so please do also check the [interactive map](#) on the survey web pages.

If you would like to get involved in TOPS, please either request a tetrad using the interactive map online, or contact Derek Langslow - the Regional Representative for the BTO's "[Huntingdon & Peterborough](#)" region (regarding TL18) - or me (for TL45, TL48 and TF41) if you have any queries. Please note that to request a tetrad using the public online map you will need a BTO user ID (click "Create BTO account" when prompted, if you don't already have one) and to register for TOPS (click "Login and signup" when prompted, if you haven't registered already). Only existing BTO volunteers who have already registered for TOPS (e.g. from their "My BTO" page) should select the "Request square" option.

Alternatively, the complementary Tawny Owl Calling Survey - which will start at the end of September, and can be carried out from your garden (or other local green space), wherever in the County you are - will also be launched soon (further details to follow in next month's e-Bulletin).

*Rob Pople, Regional Rep. for the BTO's "[Cambridgeshire](#)" region
(robgpople@hotmail.com)*

News and Comment

Kites in Black and Red

A putative Black Kite was reported from the Great Fen towards the end of the month. This set in motion a hunt for the bird and a subsequent debate with some observers finding an aberrant Red Kite at the spot where the Black Kite had been reported (see photo).

Black Kite is one of the most difficult birds to identify beyond reasonable doubt and while there have been a number of reports over the years there are very few accepted records; in fact the most recent CBR (2016) lists only six accepted records! This does not mean a false identification *per se*, but that the description

fails to convince the Records Committee. A hundred years ago they would have shot it to prove the point! The Editor had one such Black Kite moment recently. As we were leaving the house to go to meet friends one flew over our front drive. In view for no more than 10 seconds (longer than you think) I had no optics and no time to get any as the bird flew away over the trees. What did I see? A dark coloured raptor undersides with a shallow forked tail. Definitely a Black Kite, it couldn't have been anything else could it.....?



The Great Fen Kite : photo by Mike Weedon.

Birdfair

The annual Birdfair takes place on 17th - 19th of August at Rutland Water see www.birdfair.org.uk for details. Needless to say it is the usual combination of stalls with the latest products, books etc. wildlife art, events and lectures, so there will be something for everyone. Rutland Water is about an hour from Cambridge when the A14 is not clogged! It opens each day at 9am

Moulting

Countryside or garden, there is now not just a silence but also a gap. Absence of adult birds is due to them moulting and this includes replacing their flight feathers. As a result most are flight impaired, and hide away - a bit like cycling on a flat tyre. Moulting strategies vary. Larger birds tend to do a little over a long period, dropping a flight feather here and there, smaller birds go for the short sharp shock, often being three flight feathers down on each wing. Wildfowl can

even be flightless for a short period. It comes at the end of the breeding season when food should still be plentiful.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for July 2018

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 10 different days in June. The month's ringing total was 366; a further 93 different birds were retrapped, or controlled so the overall total for the month was 459. Individual species totals (the first figure new birds and second retraps) were:

Sparrowhawk	1	
Common Tern	1	
Woodpigeon	2	
Barn Owl	7	
Green Woodpecker		1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	
Wren	35	8
Dunnock	11	5
Robin	11	8
Blackbird	6	4
Cetti's Warbler	12	1
Grasshopper Warbler	1	
Sedge Warbler	18	3
Reed Warbler	67	11

Lesser Whitethroat	4	
Whitethroat	2	
Garden Warbler	9	2
Blackcap	63	8
Chiffchaff	44	5
Willow Warbler	2	
Bearded Tit	1	1
Long-tailed Tit	6	1
Blue Tit	25	12
Great Tit	17	5
Treecreeper	2	
Goldfinch	3	2
Bullfinch	9	11
Reed Bunting	6	3

366 91

