

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

BIRD CLUB

Bulletin No. 441



Opinions expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of the Club.

Welcome to the July / August 2015 Edition

From the Editor

For the last two years we have been producing the Recent Reports section of this bulletin in a different way, but is this meeting your needs? The section now contains much more detail than hitherto, but is this better than the former 'narrative' style? The editor would be very interested to know the views of club members, particularly on the level of detail included. It may be helpful to explain how the section is put together.

In the monthly e-bulletin, Peter Bircham produces a summary of the key reports of the month using a number of sources - the What's About section on the club website, the Cambirds google group, and his own contacts around the county. The e-bulletin gives readers a picture of what has been seen, as soon as possible after the end of each month; it prioritises timeliness rather than completeness. The intention had also been to draw on reports sent to the County Recorder, but for various reasons this has not proved possible on a monthly basis; these reports are currently collated on a bi-monthly basis and are not available until after the issue date of each e-bulletin.

As editor of the printed bulletin my original intention had been simply to combine the reports of the two e-bulletins, with a little editing and re-formatting. But I also have the bi-monthly data available, which draw on the e-bulletin sources plus a wider range of observers and the BTO Birdtrack facility. Whilst I have found that the e-bulletin hardly ever misses a sighting in the 'Highlights' section, and carries all the early and late dates and the main movements, there are plenty of other interesting reports from members which give a fuller picture of the geographical spread of many species, and indeed of high counts.

Increasingly I have been drawing on these reports to enhance the Recent Reports section in this publication; hence the length of report you currently see. But this is time consuming and still carries a degree of subjectivity as to what is 'interesting enough' to add in. Contributors can of course be reassured that even if their reports do not make it into the printed bulletin they do contribute to what is the Club's key output, the annual Cambridgeshire Bird Report.

So back to the question, does the current style and level of detail broadly meet your needs? If so, to continue in the same way, the Editor would welcome some assistance, in the form of someone to study the bi-monthly spreadsheet and add information to the combined e-bulletin reports. If you feel you could do this, even two or three times a year (rather than for all six editions) please contact me. You would need to have access to Microsoft Office and be familiar with Word and with Excel spreadsheets. The task is not hugely laborious, (unless you are producing the rest of the bulletin as well!) though there may be around 4000 individual sightings to scan and it might take 5 to 10 hours depending on how rigorous you are; but it can be absolutely fascinating!

So whether you can help or just have a view on the current Recent Reports section, please get in touch. If you are not receiving the e-bulletin and would like to, just email the editors (see box on page 12). One of the advantages is that you get some fantastic colour photographs, including ones which wouldn't reproduce well in this black and white edition. Chris Brown

RECENT BIRD REPORTS

The records in this bulletin are unchecked and may be revised at a later date. An asterisk after the name of the species indicates that it is necessary to send a description to the County Recorder before the record will be accepted. Some species are 'reported from' to give an indication of distribution. Some entries (particularly wildfowl) have maxima given when a number of counts have been received. Where no numbers are given the record relates to single birds.

July – August Headlines

GREAT WHITE EGRET Aug: Ouse Fen on 2nd and 21st, Wicken Fen on 10th, 14th and 23rd.
SPOONBILL Aug: Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 30th and one on 31st.
MONTAGU'S HARRIER* Jul: Wimpole and later Orwell on 4th.
BLACK KITE* Jul: Stretham a probable over on 25th.
AMERICAN/PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER* Jul: Paxton Pits a bird exhibiting characteristics of this species pairing was seen briefly on 27th.
WRYNECK Aug: King's Dyke NR on 28th, Pymoor on 30th.
PECTORAL SANDPIPER* Jul: Fowlmere NR on 20th.
ICTERINE WARBLER* Aug: Cherry Hinton on 30th, *only 8 previous records the last in 2012*.
PIED FLYCATCHER Aug: Fen Drayton Lakes on 25th – 26th, Ferry Meadows CP on 27th, Eaton Ford on 29th, Balsham on 29 – 30th and Peterborough Old Broadway cemetery on 29th – 30th. *Five birds over 5 days, coinciding with a passage of Redstart, Whinchat and Wheatear (see below)*.

Summer 2015 seems to have been rather a poor one for headline species. In 2014 June, July and August yielded 11, 9 and 4 respectively, compared with 4, 4, and 5 in 2015. Hopefully there will be a bit more excitement in the autumn. However, August was a remarkably good month for wader watchers especially on Burwell Fen where the water levels were near perfect and attracted exceptional numbers of a variety of species, summarised in the section below.

A word of explanation is needed about a site referred to below as 'Lazy Otter'; this relates to flooded fields close to the Lazy Otter pub on the Old West River near Stretham, and sometimes also referred to as Chear Fen Farm. The temporary flooding aims to kill off parasitic infestations in the soil. Other fields in the area have been flooded this year, at Fidwell Fen and Waterbeach Fen.

Other records

Wildfowl

Whooper Swan Jul: River Cam Dimmocks Cote 2 on 25th.
Greylag Goose Jul: Trumpington Clay Farm 37 on 22nd, Fowlmere NR 67 on 22nd and 200+ on 28th.
Aug: Burwell Fen c300 on 11th, Block Fen GP 220 on 19th, Needingworth GP 700 on 23rd.
Canada Goose Jul: Trumpington Clay Farm 28 on 8th and 19 on 22nd, Fowlmere NR 7 on 28th. Aug: Wicken Fen 65 on 14th, Burwell Fen 70 on 14th, Needingworth GP 400 on 23rd.
Barnacle Goose Aug: Granta Park 15 on 19th, Block Fen GP 11 on 20th, Grafham Water on 23rd.
Egyptian Goose Jul: Paxton Pits 3 pairs on 7th, 4 on 21st and 6 on 30th, Fen Drayton Lakes 5+ on 23rd. Aug: Fen Drayton Lakes 7 on 4th, 5 on 11th, Paxton Pits 4 on 8th, 2 on 14th, 6 on 28th, Lazy Otter on 12th, Block Fen GP 2 on 20th, Needingworth GP 16 on 23rd, Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on 27th.
Shelduck Jul: Burwell Fen 10 on 11th. Aug: Burwell Fen 8 on 8th, 6 on 25th.

Mandarin Jul: Grafham Water on 13th and 31st, *on both occasions reported as being harried by gulls.* **Aug:** Grafham Water a female on 12th and 22nd.

Wigeon Jul: Ouse Washes 2 on 11th, Paxton Pits 1st, 5th and 2 on 30th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 2 on 1st, Ouse Fen 5 on 21st, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 22nd, Ouse Washes 6 on 24th, Burwell Fen 2 on 25th.

Gadwall Jul: Paxton Pits 82+ on 5th. **Aug:** Burwell Fen 130 on 6th, Kingfishers Bridge 55+ on 16th.

Teal Jul: Ouse Fen 20 on 10th, Paxton Pits 3 on 17th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits on 3rd, 3 on 8th, 11 on 14th, Ouse Washes 100+ on 28th, Burwell Fen 90+ on 29th.

Mallard Jul: Whittlesford GP 39 on 22nd. **Aug:** Burwell Fen 440+ on 11th, 218 on 18th, Trumpington Clay Farm 40 on 14th, Wicken Fen 36 on 14th, Block Fen GP 30 on 19th.

Pintail Aug: Paxton Pits on 15th.

Garganey Jul: Ouse Fen an eclipse male on 25th, Burwell Fen 3 on 26th, 5 on 30th and 31st.

Aug: Burwell Fen up to 5 from 2nd, exceptionally 9 on 22nd and 10 on 24th, Kingfishers Bridge a female on 4th and 11th, 3 birds on 15th and 2 on 16th, 22nd and 29th, Ouse Fen on 21st, Ouse Washes 5 on 22nd, Fen Drayton Lakes on 23rd. *While the drakes (in non-eclipse plumage) are easily identified, the females are more tricky. Size, but above all shape and posture play an important part. The pale supercilium and the dark line across the cheeks are diagnostic for this species.*

Shoveler Jul: Lazy Otter 27 on 18th. **Aug:** Burwell Fen c70 on 11th and 29th, 20 on 14th, 9 on 18th, Block Fen GP 2 on 20th, Kingfishers Bridge 20+ on 22nd.

Red-crested Pochard Jul: Paxton Pits a drake on 1st – 5th, a female on 19th and 3 on 30th, Grafham Water a pair on 19th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 1 – 3 all month, then exceptionally 7 on 31st, Wicken Fen a male on 14th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 30th.

Pochard Jul: Paxton Pits 6 on 16th and 10 on 17th, Wicken Fen an adult (with young) during the month, Fen Drayton Lakes 100+ on 25th – 26th. **Aug:** Drysides BP 25 on 7th, Ouse Fen 110 on 21st.

Tufted Duck Jul: Trumpington Clay Farm 2 broods on 8th, 12 adults and young on 28th, single broods at Fowlmere NR on 28th and Burwell Fen on 30th, Fen Drayton Lakes a count of 300+ on 25th.

Aug: Paxton Pits 100 on 4th, Drysides GP 114 on 17th, Mepal GP 95 on 19th.

Goldeneye Aug: Fen Drayton Lakes 2 immatures on 11th, Needingworth GP on 23rd.

Goosander Aug: Paxton Pits a juvenile on 8th.

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge Jul: Orwell on 1st, Burwell Lode 5 on 18th. **Aug:** Orwell on 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes on 11th, Fowlmere 'families' on 19th.

Quail Jul: Orwell the bird from June was seen up to 11th, Ouse Fen on 10th, Earith on 10th, Knapwell on 10th, Longstanton on 28th.

Cormorants, egrets and herons

Cormorant Jul: Paxton Pits 36+ on 5th. **Aug:** Barleycraft GP 44 on 16th.

Shag Aug: Grafham Water on 28th, 2 on 29th – 30th.

Bittern Jul: Woodwalton Fen on 12th, Burwell Fen on 27th, Wicken Fen several sightings all month, Kingfisher Bridge 2 broods. **Aug:** Wicken Fen on 13th.

Little Egret Jul: reported from Barleycraft GP (32), Burwell Fen (10), Grafham Water (12), Ouse Fen (20), Paxton Pits (11), Wicken Fen (8). **Aug:** reported from Barleycraft GP (30), Burwell Fen (13), Grafham Water (6), Ouse Fen (15), Paxton Pits (5), and Trumpington Clay Farm.

Great White Egret Jul: Ouse Fen on 10th, 23rd, 28th and 2 on 19th and 25th, Kingfishers Bridge on 17th, Burwell Fen on 18th. **Aug:** Barleycraft GP 2 on 16th, Wicken Fen and Ouse Fen various dates.

Grebes

Little Grebe Jul: Trumpington Clay Farm (maximum 3). **Aug:** Paxton Pits 3 on 8th, Lazy Otter 10 – 12 from 8th – 12th, Trumpington Clay Farm 5 on 27th.

Great Crested Grebe Jul: Paxton Pits (where bred), Whittlesford GP 2 juveniles on 19th, Sixteen Foot Drain 6 (a pair with a brood), Fen Drayton Lakes maximum 115 on 26th. **Aug:** Fen Drayton Lakes 40+ on 10th, Grafham Water 50 on 12th, Drysides BP 82 on 3 dates.

Black-necked Grebe **Jul:** Paxton Pits a juvenile on 19th and until 1st August. **Aug:** Ferry Meadows CP on 2nd, Lazy Otter single on 7th then 2 on 8th, single (juvenile) until 12th.

Raptors

Red Kite **Jul:** Folksworth 5 on 6th, Ferry Meadows 5 on 11th, Paxton Pits 3 on 11th and 19th, Monks Wood 2 on 12th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits on 1st and 8th, 2 on 15th, Wicken Fen on 4th, Fowlmere 2 on 12th, Duxford 2 on 12th, Grafham Water on 16th and 29th.

Marsh Harrier **Jul:** reported from Ely BF (6), Kings Dyke NR (5), Burwell Fen (2), Chippenham Fen, Fowlmere NR a bird with a green wing tag was seen on 25th. **Aug:** Fowlmere NR a pair reared 4 young, Ouse Fen c10 on 2nd, Burwell Fen 1 – 3 on several dates, Wicken Fen 4 on 11th, Woodwalton Fen 5 on 14th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 15th.

Buzzard **Jul:** reported from Burwell Fen, Chippenham Fen, Great Shelford (2), Mepal (3), Paxton Pits (7), Chrishall Grange (bred), Hinxton and Fordham Wood. **Aug:** reported from Babraham, Burwell Fen, Great Shelford, Nine Wells (3), Wicken, Toft and Barton.

Osprey **Jul:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 3rd, Grafham Water on 19th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits a flyover on 8th, Grafham Water singles 10th – 14th and 25th – 30th, Cam Washes a flyover on 30th.

Rails and crane

Water Rail **Aug:** reported from Burwell Fen, Lazy Otter and Wicken Fen (2).

Corn Crane **Jul:** Nene Washes 2 on 21st.

Coot **Jul:** Trumpington Clay Farm 19 on 8th, Paxton Pits 422 on 10th, Block Fen GP 200 all month.

Aug: Barleycraft GP 118 on 16th, Block Fen GP 100 on 19th, Mepal GP 85 on 19th.

Common Crane **Aug:** Ouse Washes up to 8 present all month, Burwell Fen and Kingfishers Bridge 3 on 16th (presumably the same birds at these two sites). *See also page 9.*

Waders

Avocet **Jul:** Kingfishers Bridge 6 on 19th, Paxton Pits 2 on 19th, Wicken Fen 2 on 7th. **Aug:** Kingfishers Bridge on 6th.

Oystercatcher **Jul:** Block Fen GP 6 on 2nd, Kingfishers Bridge 10 on 19th, Barleycraft GP 5 on 24th.

Aug: Paxton Pits 3 on 12th and one on 22nd, Burwell Fen on 11th, Grafham Water on 25th.

Golden Plover **Jul:** Wicken Fen 14 on 6th *the first of the autumn*, Paxton Pits on 16th and another on 27th with a possible American/Pacific Golden Plover. **Aug:** Lazy Otter 10 on 8th and 31 on 15th, Nene Washes 33 on 14th, Paxton Pits a flyover on 16th, Kingfishers Bridge 60+ flyovers on 16th, Burwell Fen 30 flyovers on 18th, 6 on 27th.

Grey Plover **Aug:** Paxton Pits on 7th *the first of the autumn*, also on 8th, Burwell Fen flyover on 8th.

Lapwing **Jul:** Block Fen GP 270 on 14th, Burwell Fen 384 on 14th, Kingfishers Bridge 470 on 16th.

Aug: counts over 300 at Kingfishers Bridge 600+ on 15th, Burwell Fen 480 on 22nd, Fen Drayton Lakes 300 on 10th, Nene Washes 500 on 14th.

Little Ringed Plover **Jul:** reported from Burwell Fen (6), Fen Drayton Lakes, Fidwell Fen, Paxton Pits (4) and Hauxton. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 1 – 4 from 3rd, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 4th one on 10th, Lazy Otter on 9th, Burwell Fen 4+ on 24th, one on 27th and 3 on 29th, Kingfishers Bridge on 29th.

Ringed Plover **Jul:** Paxton Pits on 7th and 19th and 3 on 30th, Burwell Fen on 14th – 18th, then 3 on 27th. **Aug:** Burwell Fen 1 – 7 from 2nd, then 14 on 22nd, c30 on 24th – 27th and 40 on 29th, Paxton Pits on 8th, 3 on 22nd and one on 24th, Lazy Otter on 8th, Grafham Water on 25th.

Whimbrel **Jul:** Burwell Fen 3 on 12th *the first of the autumn*, Paxton Pits 4 flyovers on 14th, Burwell Fen 2 on 16th, Grafham Water 3 on 19th and 26th, Lt Shelford 4 on 27th. **Aug:** Ouse Washes on 6th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 14th, Paxton Pits on 14th, Lazy Otter over on 16th, Burwell Fen 4 over on 28th.

Curlew **Jul:** Fidwell Fen on 19th, Burwell Fen 2 on 26th, Paxton Pits on 27th, Grafham Water a flyover on 28th. **Aug:** Lazy Otter on 15th, Burwell Fen 2 on 16th, 8 on 19th, and a single on 22nd, Paxton Pits 5 flyovers on 31st.

Black-tailed Godwit **Jul:** Paxton Pits 6 on 1st, 13 on 16th, 21 on 17th and 12 on 19th, Wicken Fen 29 on 6th, Burwell Fen up to 17 from 13th – 27th, possibly the same group at Kingfishers Bridge on 19th,

Grafham Water 2 on 19th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 4 on 1st, Lazy Otter on 6th and 2 on 12th, Burwell Fen 10 on 8th, 14 on 11th, 2 on 16th, 5 on 23rd and 8 on 24th, Isleham Washes 17 on 15th, Grafham Water 2 on 13th, 17 on 31st, Kingfishers Bridge 3 on 15th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 30th – 31st.

Turnstone Jul: Paxton Pits on 25th, *the first of the autumn*, and on 26th, Grafham Water 2 on 26th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits on 3rd and 14th – 19th, Grafham Water on 12th, then 3 on 16th and 2 on 23rd.

Knot Jul: Paxton Pits on 26th, *the first of the autumn*.

Ruff Jul: Ouse Washes 2 on 11th, Burwell Fen 10 on 12th, 3 to 5 on 13th – 27th, Lazy Otter 8 on 16th and 12 on 18th, Paxton Pits on 26th – 28th. **Aug:** Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on 23rd, Burwell Fen maximum c25 on 24th and 27th, Ouse Washes 20+ on 6th and 40+ on 20th, Lazy Otter 22 on 6th, 10 on 9th, 8 on 8th down to 2 by 10th, 4 on 11th and 15th, Kingfishers Bridge 8 to 12 from 11th – 29th, Grafham Water on 16th and 28th – 29th.

Sanderling Jul: Grafham Water on 19th (*the first of the autumn, last year's first was on 22nd*), Paxton Pits 2 on 28th and 3 on 30th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits on 1st and 19th.

Dunlin Jul: reported from Burwell Fen (5), Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water (4), and Paxton Pits (11).

Aug: reported from Burwell Fen (maximum 13 on 29th), Grafham Water (2 on several dates max 38 on 31st), Paxton Pits (max 6 on 24th), Lazy Otter (max 5 on 6th and 10th), Fen Drayton Lakes (max 3 on 10th) and Kingfishers Bridge (max 2 on 15th).

Little Stint Aug: Burwell Fen on 16th, another on 24th, another or the same 28th – 29th.

Curlew Sandpiper Jul: Buckden GP / Paxton Pits on 26th. **Aug:** Ouse Fen on 21st.

Common Sandpiper Jul: Block Fen GP 2 – 3 all month, Paxton Pits 1 – 3 all month from 7th, Burwell Fen 1 – 3 all month from 11th, Grafham Water 2 on 19th, 18 on 21st and 2 on 26th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 23rd and 25th, Ouse Fen on 25th. **Aug:** reported from Burwell Fen (maximum 5 from 24th), Chain Corner (max 4+ on 22nd), Fen Drayton Lakes (max 5 on 4th and 29th), Grafham Water (max 3 on 16th and 21st), Kingfishers Bridge (max 8 on 15th), Lazy Otter on 6th and 12th, Ouse Fen, Ouse Washes (6th), Paxton Pits (max 5 on 9th and 24th), Trumpington Clay Farm.

Green Sandpiper Jul: Block Fen GP 2 – 4 all month, Paxton Pits maximum 6 on 1st, Grafham Water 8 on 1st and 9 on 19th, Burwell Fen 3 – 10 all month from 11th, Lazy Otter on 16th, Kingfishers Bridge 14 on 22nd, Ouse Fen 5 on 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 25th. **Aug:** reported from Burwell Fen (maximum 15+ on 28th), Fen Drayton Lakes (max 4 on 10th), Grafham Water (max 6 on 1st and 18th), Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed (3+), Kingfishers Bridge (max 14 on 4th), Lazy Otter (max 3 on 11th), Ouse Fen, Ouse Washes (max 12 on 20th), Paxton Pits (max 3 on 13th), Wicken Fen.

Spotted Redshank Aug: Burwell Fen 2 on 12th, singles on 16th, 22nd and 25th – 29th, Ouse Washes RSPB on 16th and 20th.

Greenshank Jul: Singles at Paxton Pits from 5th and then at 4 other sites, Burwell Fen 1 – 6 all month from 11th, Kingfishers Bridge 3 on 16th. **Aug:** Burwell Fen maximum 9 on 6th and 11th, Lazy Otter 1 – 3 from 6th – 15th, Grafham Water on 12th, Paxton Pits on 12th, 19th, and 3 on 23rd, Wicken Fen 2 on 14th, Ouse Washes RSPB 10+ on 20th, Chain Corner 7 on 22nd, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 23rd, Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed 2+ on 30th.

Wood Sandpiper Jul: Fen Drayton Lakes on 25th, the first of the autumn, Paxton Pits on 26th. **Aug:** Lazy Otter on 6th and 2 on 14th – 16th, Paxton Pits on 12th – 14th, Burwell Fen 2 on 16th then 2 on 22nd, 3 on 23rd, 6+ on 24th, 5 on 25th, 10+ on 27th, 14 on 28th and c15 on 29th, Ouse Washes RSPB 3 on 20th, Needingworth GP on 23rd, Kingfishers Bridge on 29th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 29th – 30th.

Redshank Jul: reported from Burwell Fen, Lazy Otter, Paxton Pits (3) and Wicken Fen (bred). **Aug:** Lazy Otter on 6th, Paxton Pits on 8th, Burwell Fen 2 on 8th, Grafham Water on 25th and 31st.

Woodcock Jul: Wicken Fen 2 on 13th.

Snipe Jul: Burwell Fen 2 on 13th and 3 on 23rd. **Aug:** Grafham Water on 1st, Ouse Fen on 2nd, Burwell Fen on 2nd, 13 on 16th, and c20 from 24th, Lazy Otter 11 on 11th, Fen Drayton Lakes 4 on 10th, and 10 on 23rd, Paxton Pits 4 on 12th, Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed 6 on 30th.

Terns and gulls

Black Tern Jul: Grafham Water on 26th. **Aug:** Lazy Otter an adult on 6th, Grafham Water on 10th, 2 juveniles on 16th, 6 on 19th, 5 on 20th, 22 on 21st, 15+ and a further 3 on 22nd, 10 on 23rd – 24th, 2 on

25th, one on 26th, 5 on 27th, 3 on 28th, 5 on 29th – 30th, Paxton Pits 3 on 23rd and one on 24th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 29th – 30th.

Sandwich Tern Jul: Cambridge a flyover on 5th, St. Neots 2 flyovers on 16th. **Aug:** Grafham Water 3 and then 2 more on 23rd, 2 on 27th, one on 29th, Ferry Meadows CP on 28th.

Common Tern Jul: bred at Burwell Fen, Kingfishers Bridge, Maxey GP, and Trumpington Clay Farm, maximum count at Barleycraft GP 56 on 24th. **Aug:** reported from Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 24 on 18th), Lazy Otter and Needingworth GP.

Arctic Tern Jul: Grafham Water on 26th. **Aug:** Grafham Water a juvenile on 27th and 29th then 6 on 31st, Fen Drayton Lakes on 29th.

Kittwake Aug: Fen Drayton Lakes on 14th.

Black-headed Gull Jul: Kingfishers Bridge 243 including 36 young on 4th, Trumpington Clay Farm maximum 78 including young on 8th, Barleycraft GP 300 on 24th. **Aug:** Swaffham Bulbeck c2200 on fields being ploughed on 1st.

Little Gull Jul: Grafham Water on 26th.

Mediterranean Gull Jul: Ouse Fen an adult on 10th, NW Cambridge an adult with BH Gulls on 28th. **Aug:** Fen Drayton Lakes a juvenile on 1st, Grafham Water an adult on 6th and a juvenile on 18th – 23rd, Paxton Pits on 8th, Lazy Otter on 9th and 10th.

Common Gull Jul: Heydon 10 on 25th, Ely BF 6 on 31st.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Jul: Lazy Otter 122 on 9th, Heydon 400 on 26th, Fidwell Fen 665 on 31st.

Aug: Swaffham Bulbeck c320 on fields being ploughed on 1st, Grafham Water 2500 + on 9th, Fowlmere c1500 on 19th, Block Fen GP 60+ on 31st.

Herring Gull Jul: Burwell Fen 27 from 23rd – 27th. **Aug:** Burwell Fen 20 on 8th, Granta Science Park 30 on 28th.

Yellow-legged Gull Jul: Burwell Fen a 3 c.y. on 12th, Fidwell Fen on 16th, Paxton Pits maximum 17 on 28th, Grafham Water a large count of 50+ also on 28th (*the county record is 150 at the same site in September 2012*), Boxworth on 25th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits c20 on 1st, Grafham Water 40+ on 6th, Paxton Pits 22+ at pre-roost gathering on 9th, 36 on 13th, 18 on 14th, 6 on 16th, 45 on 22nd, Fowlmere 6 on 19th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 30th.

Caspian Gull Jul: Paxton Pits 20th. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 1 – 2 on several dates, Grafham Water 6 on 9th.

Great Black-backed Gull Aug: Kings Dyke NR 8 on 29th.

Doves, cuckoo, owls and kingfisher

Turtle Dove Jul: reported from Block Fen GP, Fowlmere NR (5 territories), Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham Common, and 9 other sites. **Aug:** reported from Helpston, Mepal and Witcham.

Cuckoo Jul: Paxton Pits on 1st; late adults at Fen Drayton Lakes (a rufous form bird) on 23rd, and Wicken Fen a male calling on 25th, *this at a time when some of the BTO satellite tagged birds had already crossed the Sahara!* **Aug:** Ouse Washes on 6th, juveniles at Burwell Fen on 6th and 11th, Kingfishers Bridge on 15th, and Fen Drayton Lakes on 31st.

Barn Owl Jul: reported from Landbeach 2 pairs, Barton 2 pairs, Bottisham Lode (2), Burwell Fen, Colne, Histon, Oakington, Waterbeach (2) and Wicken Fen (2). **Aug:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Wicken Fen, and Great Fen.

Little Owl Jul and Aug: reported from 12 sites mostly in the south or centre of the county except Whittlesey 30th Jul and Peterborough 28th Aug.

Tawny Owl Jul: reported from Chippenham Fen and Colne. **Aug:** reported from Grafham Water, Pampisford and Wicken Fen.

Long-eared Owl Jul: Whittlesey on 22nd. **Aug:** Grafham village on 17th. **Long-eared Owl/Short-eared Owl** (not identified as to species) Burwell Fen on 16th.

Swift Jul: Rings End 100 on 19th. **Aug:** late dates and high counts at Fen Drayton 40 on 3rd, 30+ on 15th, Needingworth GP c34 on 23rd, Landbeach c30 on 23rd, Paxton Pits c50 on 24th, Burwell Fen 3 on 25th, Paxton Pits on 28th, Burwell Fen 4 on 29th, Block Fen GP 3 on 31st, Paxton Pits 15 on 31st.

Kingfisher Jul: widely reported including from Block Fen GP (3), Clayhithe, Fowlmere NR (2), Chippenham Fen, Sixteen Foot Drain and Witcham Gravel. **Aug:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Lazy Otter, Mepal, Ouse Washes (3), Paxton Pits (2) and Wicken Fen (2), Drysides BP (3) and Castor Mill.

Falcons

Kestrel Jul: Hinxton 3 on 23rd. **Aug:** Burwell Fen 4 on 5th, Wicken Fen 3 on 14th.

Merlin Jul: Little Wilbraham Fen on 28th *the earliest this autumn, compared to Sept 2nd 2014*. **Aug:** Nene Washes on the 14th, Oxloode a male on 31st.

Hobby Jul: reported from Block Fen GP, Burwell Fen (3), Duxford, Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water, Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits (3), Six Mile Bottom, and Wicken Fen. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 1 – 2 on several dates, Burwell Fen 1 – 2 on several dates, Mepal on 8th, Wicken Fen on 10th and 14th, Kingfishers Bridge on 15th – 16th, Lazy Otter on 15th, Grafham Water 1 – 2 on several dates from 16th, Monks Wood a 'family' on 27th, Ferry Meadows CP on 29th, Ailsworth on 31st, Foxton 31st.

Peregrine Jul: Cambridge (Barton Road) 2 on 4th, Cambridge Science Park on 11th, Burwell Fen a juvenile on 13th, Cambridge (central) 3 on 17th. **Aug:** Ouse Fen on 2nd, Burwell Fen on 4th, Impington 2 on 12th, Fowlmere on 12th, Earith on 12th, Cambridge on 13th and 17th, Paxton Pits on 15th, Foxton 20th and 31st.

Corvids

Jackdaw Jul: Block Fen GP 150 on 22nd. **Aug:** Queen Adelaide 80 on 16th, Great Shelford a flock of 100+ over on 14th, Ouse Washes Mepal 200 with Rooks on 17th.

Jackdaw/Rook Jul: Chippenham Fen c2000 emerging from roost at dawn on 30th.

Rook Jul: Block Fen GP 300 on 22nd, Manea c550 on 27th, and Chrishall Grange 500 on 30th.

Raven Jul: Fowlmere NR on 25th, Wimpole Park on 31st. **Aug:** Burghley Park 2 on 8th, Ferry Meadows CP on 21st, Ouse Washes on 25th.

Tits, hirundines and warblers

Coal Tit Aug: Monks Wood (25+ maximum count).

Marsh Tit Jul: reported from Fordham Wood and Hayley Wood. **Aug:** reported from Grafham Water, Monks Wood (29 ringed/handled) and Paxton Pits.

Bearded Tit Jul: reported from Ouse Fen, Wicken Fen and Kingfishers Bridge. **Aug:** Burwell Fen 4 on 29th.

Sand Martin Jul: Wicken Fen c250 to roost on 29th. **Aug:** Burwell Fen c500 on 27th, Fen Drayton Lakes 200+ on 31st.

House Martin Aug: Wicken Fen c80 at a flying ant hatch on 2nd, Upware c100 on 6th.

Swallow/House Martin Aug: Block Fen a 200+ mixed flock on 23rd.

Swallow Aug: Wicken Fen/Priory Farm c120 on 14th, Chittering an 'all white' bird on 23rd.

Long-tailed Tit Jul: Newmarket (Suffolk?) 27 on 12th. **Aug:** Fen Drayton Lakes 48 on 23rd.

Cetti's Warbler Jul: reported from St. Neots Pocket Park, Wicken Fen (3+), Kingfishers Bridge (2). **Aug:** reported from Cambridge (Storey's Way), Fen Drayton Lakes, Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen and Drysides BP.

Blackcap Aug: as with Reed Warbler, the total of 96 new birds ringed at Wicken Fen indicates the level of passage/dispersal.

Grasshopper Warbler Jul: reported from Chippenham Fen, St Neots Pocket Park, Wicken Fen (3), Dogsthorpe Star Pit. **Aug:** Bradley Fen on 12th, Stanground Gullet on 17th.

Reed Warbler Jul: Ely BF 80 on 31st. **Aug:** an indication of the largely unseen passage/dispersal is revealed in the 212 birds ringed at Wicken Fen during August.

Nuthatch, starling, thrushes and flycatchers

Nuthatch Jul: Wimpole Park 2 on 2nd, Monks Wood 2+ on 12th, Ditton Park Wood 3 on 20th. **Aug:** Six Mile Bottom on 12th, Orton Longueville on 20th.

Starling Jul: Block Fen GP 450 in a feeding flock on 30th.

Mistle Thrush Jul: Mepal 15 on 12th, Ferry Meadow CP 18 on 25th. **Aug:** Lordsbridge 17 on 4th, Mepal 14 on 23rd.

Spotted Flycatcher Jul: reported from Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Marholm, Monks Wood (bred), Gamlingay (bred), Six Mile Bottom, Stukeley Park, Thorney and Wimpole Park. **Aug:** Six Mile Bottom a pair on 12th, Granta Park 2 pairs plus young on 19th, Grafham Water on 19th, Paxton Pits on 22nd, Witcham 2 on 26th, Mepal 3 on 27th, Ferry Meadows CP 4 – 5 on 28th – 29th, Fen Drayton Lakes 6 on 29th, Cambridge Lovell Road on 30th, Woodwalton Fen on 30th, Pymoor on 31st.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Jul: Bluntisham on 6th, Fowlmere a female on 24th.

Redstart Aug: Kings Dyke NR on 12th, Barnack on 17th, Ferry Meadows CP a female on 25th and (the same?) to 28 – 31st, Mepal a male on 27th, Cambourne on 28th, Eldernell 3 on 30th, Ailsworth 31st.

Whinchat Jul: Burwell Fen on 30th, *the first of the autumn*. **Aug:** Paxton Pits 2 juveniles on 28th, Cambourne 2 on 29th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 30th, Pymoor on 30th, Ailsworth 2 on 31st, Hamerton on 31st.

Stonechat Aug: Wicken Fen 3 at least one juvenile on 16th, Burwell Fen 2 on 19th then up to 4 for the rest of the month.

Wheatear Aug: Trumpington on 19th, Burwell Fen on 26th – 27th, Ouse Washes on 28th.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow Aug: Coveney 80+ on 16th, Wardy Hill 25 on 16th, Mepal 35 on 25th.

Yellow Wagtail Aug: counts over 15 at Lazy Otter 40+ on 9th, Stapleford Recreation Ground 18 on 10th, Nene Washes 100+ on 14th, Diddington c30 on 24th, Burwell Fen c30 on 19th, Grafham Water c30 on 29th.

Grey Wagtail Jul: Bait's Bite Lock Waterbeach (2). **Aug:** Hinxton on 6th, Grafham Water on 26th, Fidwell Fen on 28th.

Tree Pipit Aug: Eynesbury a flyover on 22nd, Fen Drayton Lakes 3 flyovers on 29th, Cambridge Lovell Road a flyover on 29th.

Finches and buntings

Goldfinch Aug: Wicken Fen c100 flock being pursued by a Sparrowhawk on 14th, c200 on 18th, Ferry Meadows CP 200+ on 26th.

Siskin Jul: *Movement through the county reflected a national influx:* Great Shelford a male on 2nd, Over several on 11th, Foxton 10 on 11th, Hemingford Grey on 12th, Woodwalton Fen 12 on 12th, Grafham Water 2 on 13th and on 21st. **Aug:** Ferry Meadows CP 4 on 29th, Hemingford Grey on 29th.

Crossbill Jul: Ferry Meadows CP on 9th, Cambridge flyover on 11th. **Aug:** Ditton Park Wood a flyover on 1st.

Exotica

Black Swan Jul: Paxton Pits on several dates and throughout August.

Cape Shelduck Jul: Fowlmere NR on 24th.

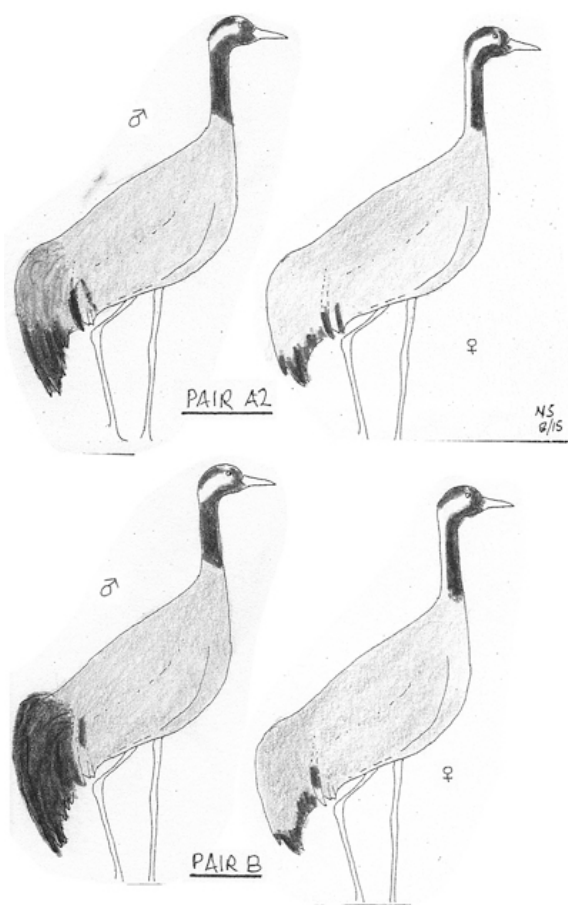
Black-winged Bishop Aug: mist-netted at Dunkirk on 26th (photos in the gallery section of the club website).

Contributors: Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Alex Andrews, David Avis, Louise Bacon, Richard Bashford, Rowena Baxter, Guy Belcher, Peter Bircham, Sam Boden, Richard Broughton, Roger Buisson, Mike Burdekin, Ian Burfield, Malcolm Busby, Howard Butler, James Cadbury, Saimon Clark, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Robin Cox, Carole Davis, Martin Davis, Norman De-ath, Tim Dee, Brendan Doe, Mark Eaton, David Elliott, Mike Everett, Andrew Gardener, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Andrew Green, David Green, Richard Gregory, David Griffiths, Richard Grimmett, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Dean Harlow, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Peter Herkenrath, Philip Hobson, Michael Holdsworth, David Hollin, David Hopkins, Bob Humphrey, Andy Jackson, Sue Jarrett, Richard Johnson, Colin Kirtland, Charlie Kitchin, Marcus Kohler, Vince Lea, Jono Leadley, Diana Leech, Jeremy Lindsell, Peter Loudon, Ade Long, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin, Tony Martin, Matt Mellor, Andy Merryweather, Dick Newell, Barry O'Dowd, Martin O'Leary, Daniel Osborne, James Page, Dave Palmer, Helen Palmer, Richard Palmer, Diana Pargeter, Richard

Patient, Phil Parker, Rob Partridge, Richard Patient, Rob Pople, Duncan Poyser, Paul Pulham, Doug Radford, John Raven, Graeme Reed, Gareth Rees, Tony Roberts, Mathew Rodgers, Martin Shadbolt, Norman Sills, Clive Sinclair, Bob Smith, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, Paul Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Calum Urquhart, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Iain Webb, Mat Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Peter Wells, Kevin Wilson, Matt Wilson, Barbara York and Christoph Zöckler.

More on Common Cranes

We are interested in sightings of these family groups. Counts of accompanying young and any observations on feeding behaviour are of particular value to understanding their post-breeding movements and survival. We also welcome sightings of any other Crane pairs with young, which may tell us about any other East Anglian Crane pairs and their success. Pairs should remain with young until mid-Feb 2016. Ideally field notes on plumages of any Crane pairs should be sent to cbcrecorder@gmail.com - photos may also be of use.



Sketches of the two Lakenheath crane pairs currently visiting Cambridgeshire. ©Norman Sills

Distinctive features of the adults illustrated are:

Male A2 Dark grey/brown bustle with black tips

Female A2 Paler forewing than male but same upper breast grey as male

Male B large, jet-black bustle, broad neck band, noticeably larger than female

Female B Paler upper breast than male, narrower neck band and overall paler than male.

Pair A2 produced 2 fledglings; pair B produced 1 fledgling in 2015.

New Club members: We welcome Richard Dale (Ely)

Countryside House Sparrows

I started birdwatching as a nester mostly in the hedgerows of North Arbury (now Orchard Park) and the Army Camp (now the Science Park). Of course, I soon gave up thieving birds eggs but have clear memories of House Sparrows nesting in loose colonies in the hedgerows. I thought I was imagining this but have asked birders who were about in the 1960s and they also remember these countryside colonies. The nests were untidy domed structures in groups of 6 to 8 nests. There is an old photograph of just such a colony in *The House Sparrow* by Denis Summers-Smith in the *New Naturalist Series*.

I have never found these hedgerow House Sparrow colonies since. Perhaps I just don't visit the right rural hedgerows at the right time. I did not find any hedgerow colonies when I surveyed my tetrads for the BTO Atlas. What has happened to countryside House Sparrows? I would be grateful if Club members would let me know of any such hedgerow nesting House Sparrow colonies they know of; I would also like to know if members have NOT come across such colonies. Negative records are as valuable as positive records. Please let me know on: bobjarman99@btinternet.com or text to 07906783256. Thank you.

Bob Jarman

The CBC Winter Garden Bird Survey 2015.

As many of you will know, in the winter of 2014 a survey of the garden birds of Cambridgeshire was set up. Many people said that they enjoyed this and the decision has been made to continue the work. Meanwhile the full results of the 2014 survey results will appear in the next annual report, due in December 2015. If you took part in the summer survey 2015, thank you so much and I hope that you will feel able to take part in this winter survey. The method used is the same as for the previous surveys. If you have not taken part before, full details can be found on the club website.

In essence, we ask that you note the bird species feeding or foraging in your garden from:

4th October 2015 – 5th March 2016

Please then, each week, mark off the species on the list available from the Cambridgeshire Bird Club website. By the 30th April 2016, send the list to: gardenbirds@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

If you are unable to access a computer, Bruce Martin has kindly offered to send a paper recording form, so please do get in touch with him on 01223 700656. Next summer you will be able to discover which species of birds make most use of gardens in the county during the winter months, find out whether new species are coming into gardens and whether the old regular species are making less use of the facilities.

Finally, thank you to everyone taking part in the CBC Summer Garden Bird Survey. The survey is coming to the end and I look forward to receiving the results forms from 4th October onwards until the end of the month. I hope that everyone that wished to take part was able to. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Rebecca Buisson

The summer holidays or migration time?

For many people whose lives are more tied to the school calendar, July and August is the time for holidays. Many of our migrant warblers and waders seem to think so, too.

Working from home this summer means that I have spent more hours than usual watching the bushes of our back garden. Amongst the House Sparrows, Dunnocks and Robin family there have been a small trickle of warblers. The last garden-visiting warblers were occasional blackcaps and chiffchaffs in the spring; July however, saw the arrival of both Lesser Whitethroat and Whitethroat.

Observations through the day seem to show that each arriving warbler, probably once every 3 -7 days, has stayed for a few hours, feeding busily on the berries and insects available in what our neighbours would term a somewhat scruffy garden. One of them was even first spotted feeding busily in the shelter provided by our polytunnel used for cropping tomatoes and peppers. These resources, insect and berry, are vital for migrating birds to be able to refuel as they move south, first to cross the channel then moving again across Europe and north Africa.

I guess many of us don't think of our gardens in this way, but this pattern is really the small-bird equivalent of the waders which have been dropping in to sites such as Burwell Fen and the Lazy Otter flooded fields as they re-fuel for the next leg of their journey south. Around the same time that we started watching the warbler passage get going in the garden, we visited Burwell Fen, where there were Common Sandpipers, Green Sandpipers, Greenshank, Ringed Plovers, Black-tailed Godwits, Ruff and Dunlin feeding busily in the pools. They were doing precisely the same thing as the garden whitethroats - using resources made available by humans along their migratory flyway to warmer winter holiday grounds further south!

Louise Bacon



Wood Sandpiper, Burwell Fen: photo by Neil Bramwell



Green Sandpiper, Wicken Fen: photo by Roger Cresswell

Forthcoming events

Friday 9th October, Cottenham Village College, 7.30 for 8.00pm

'The Lady of the Reeds' – the rediscovery of pioneering bird photographer Emma Turner by James Parry

James is a writer and editor of books on art, history and wildlife and is researching the life and work of Emma Turner, the pioneering bird photographer. Turner developed her craft in the Norfolk Broads, where in 1911 she helped rediscover the bittern as a British breeding bird and took the earliest known images of species such as water rail and bearded tit at the nest. She became one of Britain's leading women ornithologists and was a vice-president of the Cambridge Bird Club. After decades of obscurity following her death in 1940, the recent discovery of some of her diaries and an archive containing original Turner images and correspondence has shed new light on her remarkable achievements.

Friday 13th November, St Johns Hall, Cambridge, 7.30 for 8.00pm

Cuckoo – cheating by nature by Nick Davies

Nick Davies says his academic career has been an excuse to do lots of bird watching. He is Professor of Behavioural Ecology at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of the Royal Society. His cuckoo research has been featured as two BBC Radio 4 broadcasts and as a BBC Natural World Film, produced by Mike Birkhead and narrated by David Attenborough. His most recent book 'Cuckoo - Cheating by Nature' was published this spring by Bloomsbury. His talk will show how cuckoos across the world have evolved remarkable tricks to deceive and manipulate their hosts, and how field experiments are now uncovering a continuing evolutionary arms race as hosts evolve new defences and cuckoos, in turn, evolve novel trickery.

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The Cambridgeshire Bird Club exists to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats in the county, identify areas of conservation value, and advance the education of the public in the study of birds. www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

The editors would welcome contributions to the E-Bulletin and print edition, on topics such as identification problems, behaviour, summaries of club talks, and book reviews. Contact us at cbcbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk, and use this address to let us know if you would like to receive your bulletin in e-mail format rather than paper.

Bird Records, sightings and news

If you have seen a scarce or local bird, please submit the news to the '[What's about](#)' page on the Club website via [Pete and Paul](#) who maintain an up-to-date selection of recent highlights. You can also report interesting sightings on the [Cambirds](#) email group (not run by the Club, but we access the records). Any major rarities can be phoned in to Birdline East Anglia on 07941 333970.

Full lists of your records should continue to be submitted monthly to **Louise Bacon** the County Recorder, preferably using the [spreadsheet](#) available on the Records section of the website, **by the 5th of the following month.**

GOOD BIRDING!