

Cambridgeshire Bird Club



E-Bulletin 16 November 2014

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



Rough-legged Buzzard at Holme Fen by Brendan Doe

HEADLINES

GREEN-WINGED TEAL* Berry Fen on 9th – 11th, Ouse Washes on 14th, (only 17 previous records the latest in 2011).

GLOSSY IBIS* singles at Ouse Fen 4th and Fen Drayton Lakes on 11th and a flyover on 29th then present on 30th.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD* Wentworth/Coveney on 10th, Great Fen/Trundle Mere from 9th to the end of the month.

GREY PHALAROPE* Burwell Fen a single on 21st (c50 previous records).

LITTLE AUK* Soham 6th - one found and taken into care later died (72 previous records the latest in 1999).

RICHARD'S PIPIT* Fordham from 1st – 18th (18 previous records the latest in 2013).

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.

Summary: very few waders records this month, all passage over, wildfowl counts are always welcome, especially of the less exotic species.

Wildfowl

Bewick's Swan Grafham Water 3 on 5th – 9th then 5 adults on 24th, Nene Washes/Eldernell 12 on 15th, Tubney Fen 2 on 27th.

Whooper Swan Ouse Washes 78 on 11th, then 980 on 22nd, Reach-Upware 14 on 15th, Burwell Fen on several dates maximum 13 on 13th, Little Downham 500+ on 22nd, Great Fen 2 on 29th.



Whooper Swans at Burwell Fen. Photo by Ade Long.

Pink-footed Goose Grafham Water single on 7th, several sites reported flyover birds on 23rd including 30+ at Witcham, Great Fen c100 flyovers on 30th.

Barnacle Goose Cam Washes a single on 30th.

Greylag Goose Wicken Fen 90 on 10th.

Egyptian Goose Fen Drayton Lakes 26 on 29th.

Wigeon Wicken Fen 205 on 10th.

Gadwall Wicken Fen 140 on 10th.

Teal Wicken Fen 266 on 10th.

Mallard Wicken Fen 141 on 10th.

Pintail Grafham Water single on 9th, Paxton Pits maximum 4 on 15th and 29th, Fen Drayton Lakes 7 on 29th.

Garganey *late date*: Ely BF a male on 15th – 16th.

Shoveler Wicken Fen 97 on 10th.

Red-crested Pochard Ferry Meadows CP 4 on 10th, Paxton Pits a female on 16th.

Tufted Duck Wicken Fen 43 on 10th.

Scaup Grafham Water 5th.

Goldeneye Paxton Pits 2 on 1st, 3 on 9th, then 25 on 15th, Fen Drayton Lakes maximum 10 on 9th.

Smew Fen Drayton Lakes a single on 29th.

Red-breasted Merganser Paxton Pits 6 on 22nd.

Goosander Castor Mill a male on 7th, Grafham Water a female on 9th, Ferry Meadows CP a single on 10th, 2 on 11th and 6 on 27th.

Gamebirds

Red-legged Partridge Swavesey 27 on 13th, Duxford 28 on 21st.

Grey Partridge Haddenham 15 on 7th, Burwell Fen 2 on 9th, Hinxton a single on 16th.

Cormorants

Cormorant Wicken Fen c20 on 20th, Cambridge/Barnwell Bridge a single on 25th.

Egrets and herons

Bittern Fen Drayton Lakes on 9th, Ely BF on 15th, Wicken Fen several dates maximum 2 on 17th and 23rd.

Little Egret Paxton Pits 19+ on 15th, Cambridge/Barnwell Bridge a single on 24th, Trumpington/Clay Farm a single on 24th, Wicken Fen 3 on 29th.

Great White Egret Grafham Water 1st and 7th, Paxton Pits 3rd and 28th- 30th, Ouse Fen at least 2 reported on several dates, Cam Washes 2 on 9th, single on 15th and 30th, Brampton a single flyover on 16th, Wicken Fen singles on several dates maximum 2 on 17th.

Grebes

Little Grebe Trumpington/Great Kneighton Lake 6 on 24th,

Slavonian Grebe* Fen Drayton Lakes a single on 9th - 19th.

Raptors

Red Kite Great Fen a single on 29th and 2 on 30th, Needingworth-Bluntisham a single on 30th, Wicken Fen a single on 30th.

Marsh Harrier Ouse Fen 4 on 7th and 25th, Burwell Fen 1-2 on several dates, Nene Washes/Eldernell 3+ on 15th, Kingfishers Bridge single on 15th, Ouse Washes (15th), Great Fen a single on 30th, Wicken Fen maximum 4-5.

Hen Harrier Nene Washes/Eldernell 2nd and 15th, Burwell Fen a single ringtail on several dates then 3 on 16th plus an adult male on several dates, Ouse Washes a single on 22nd, Tubney Fen a single on 22nd, Great Fen a single on 29th, Cam Washes a single on 30th.



'Ringtail' Hen Harrier at Burwell Fen. Photo by Neil Bramwell

Buzzard reported from: Ouse Fen (2), Great Wilbraham, Little Downham, Lode, Paxton Pits, Wimpole (2).

Rails and crane

Water Rail reported from: Barleycraft GP, Berry Fen, Burwell Fen (2), Paxton Pits, Soham, Wicken Fen (3).

Coot Wicken Fen 36 on 10th.

Common Crane Nene Washes 20 on 2nd and 4th, then 12 on 15th, Burwell Fen 2 flyovers on 18th and 19th.

Waders

Golden Plover Haddenham/Aldreth Fens maximum c1500 on 7th, Ouse Fen c500 on 7th, Trumpington 1580+ on 19th, Burwell Fen maximum 2,000 on 20th, Colne GP 3,000 on 22nd, Wicken Fen 100 on 28th.

Lapwing Burwell Fen c500 on 20th, Colne GP 1,500+ on 22nd, Wicken Fen/Baker's Fen 2,000+ on 28th,

Black tailed Godwit Paxton Pits single on 15th, Ouse Washes 150 on 22nd.

Ruff Grafham Water 5 on 5th, 4 on 9th, Ouse Fen 5 on 8th.

Sanderling Haddenham Fen one on 7th.

Dunlin Burwell Fen 3 on 9th, Cam Washes a single on 30th.

Green Sandpiper Grafham Water 2 on 5th, Ouse Fen 2 on 8th, Wicken Fen a single on 9th, Paxton Pits singles on several dates, Trumpington/Great Kneighton Lake a single on 24th.

Redshank Grafham Water maximum 8 on 9th, Cam Washes a single on 30th.

Jack Snipe Sutton/Mepal airfield 6 on 19th and 12 on 30th, Paxton Pits a single on 22nd, Ouse Fen a single on 25th.

Woodcock Peterborough single on 21st, Paxton Pits a single on 29th, Great Shelford a single flew over the editor's garden at dusk on 28th.

Snipe Burwell Fen 6 on 9th, Sutton/Mepal airfield c30 on 19th and c16 on 30th, Wicken Fen c20 on 29th, Cam Washes 23 on 30th.

Gulls

Black-headed Gull Little Downham 500+ on 22nd, Colour-ring observation: A BHG ringed as a well-grown chick in Cambridgeshire in June is currently wintering on a rubbish tip in Portugal.

Mediterranean Gull Ferry Meadows CP and adult on 13th and 20th, Grafham Water an adult on 19th.

Common Gull Haddenham/Aldreth Fens c100 on 21st, Great Kneighton Lake 16 on 24th,

Lesser Black-backed Gull Fowlmere Airfield 350 on 29th

Yellow-legged Gull Grafham Water 3 on the 2nd plus the 'Azorean' type bird, Paxton Pits 2 on 15th,

Caspian Gull Grafham Water 4 on 2nd



Black-headed Gull at Fowlmere by Brian Wallace

Doves, owls and kingfisher

Collared Dove Wicken Fen 60+ on 28th.

Turtle Dove Haddenham a juvenile on 3rd – this is not the latest date which was November 16th in Cambridge in 1957.

Barn Owl *reported from* Burwell Fen (3), Kingfishers Bridge, Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits.

Tawny Owl *reported from* Burwell Fen, Waterbeach (3), Wicken Fen (2).

Long-eared Owl Fordham a single on 8th.

Short-eared Owl Cambourne 2nd, Nene Washes/Eldernell 2 on 2nd and 15th, Burwell Fen 3-4 on several dates from 9th, maximum 5 on 29th, Great Fen 4 on 29th.

Kingfisher *reported from:* Cam Washes (2), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits (4), Sutton/Mepal airfield and Wicken Fen.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel Wicken Fen 11 on 9th.

Merlin Nene Washes on 2nd, Burwell Fen singles on 9th and 27th, Tubney Fen a possible on 22nd, Paxton Pits a single on 29th.

Peregrine Burwell Fen a single on 8th-9th and 2 on 28th, Paxton Pits on 10th and 2 on 29th, Great Fen a single on 29th.

Corvids

Jackdaw/Rook/Carrion Crow Wicken Fen emerging from the roost at dawn 2,000 – 3,000 throughout the month.

Raven Wimpole a single on 10th and 11th, Peterborough/Milton estate a pair flyovers on 30th.

Tits and larks

Coal Tit *reported from:* Chippenham Fen 6 caught and ringed on 18th, Paxton Pits.

Marsh Tit Chippenham Fen 4 caught and ringed on 18th.

Bearded Tit Ouse Fen 3 on 7th and 5+ on 25th, Wicken Fen one caught on 16th maximum count 9.

Hirundines, crests and warblers

Swallow Brampton Wood flyover on 24th – remarkably the latest date is December 16th at Caldecote in 2005.

Firecrest Barleycraft GP a single on 23rd.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from* Wicken Fen (7).

Chiffchaff Wicken Fen a single caught and ringed on 4th, Fen Drayton Lakes 3+ on 9th, Paxton Pits singles on 15th and 29th, Great Fen a single on 29th.

Blackcap Wicken Fen 2 caught and ringed on 19th.

Waxwing, nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Waxwing Wicken Fen one reported on 19th, Peterborough a single on 20th,

Nuthatch Chippenham Fen a retrapped bird on 18th,

Starling Fen Drayton Lakes the roost was present all month with c 28,000 roost on 16th, Tubney Fen roost 12,000 on 20th, Ouse Fen roost of 5,000 on 25th, Burwell Fen 4,000+ into roost on 28th.

Ring Ouzel Ouse Washes on 1st.

Fieldfare Burwell Fen c200 on 20th, Haddenham 1,000 on 21st, Barton 700 on 24th then 1500 in a mixed flock on 26th (c20% were Redwings), Wicken Fen c1,000 on 29th.



Fieldfares at Wicken Fen. Photo by James Hanlon

Mistle Thrush Wicken Fen a single caught and ringed on 1st, Paxton Pits 3 on 28th.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Duxford 2nd.

Whinchat Ouse Fen a single on 8th – still a month earlier than the latest date Dec 5th 1976.

Stonechat *reported from:* Burwell Fen (4), Ferry Meadows CP, Great Fen, Kingfishers Bridge, Nene Washes (2), Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits (2).

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

Tree Sparrow Hope Farm Knapwell RSPB 3 on 9th.

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Paxton Pits.

Water Pipit Paxton Pits 1st and 2 on 29th, Sutton Gault a single on 8th and 4+ on 11th.

Finches and buntings

Brambling Hare Park 7 feeding on Beech mast, Wicken Fen a single on 8th, Beechwoods NR 8+ on 21st, Cambridge a single on 22nd.

Goldfinch Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 30-40 on 21st.

Siskin Paxton Pits a single on 16th.

Lesser Redpoll Wicken Fen 2 on 25th.

Snow Bunting Fordham a single from 1st – 8th.



Snow Bunting at Fordham. Photo by Neil Bramwell

Reed Bunting Granta Park roost of 60+ on 17th.

Corn Bunting Paxton Pits 4+ on 2nd and 5+ on 16th, Ouse Fen 8 on 7th and 14 on 25th, Ouse Washes 10 on 11th, Colne GP 47 on 22nd, Little Downham 30 on 22nd.

Exotica

Ross's Goose reported from Cam Washes/Upware and Wicken Fen associating with Greylags.

Ruddy Shelduck Fen Drayton Lakes a single with the Egyptian Geese – possibly an escape? 29th – 30th

Black-winged Stilt Ouse Washes a single on 12th was too distant to be certain that it was the escaped bird reported in previous months.

Reeve's Pheasant Wicken Fen a single on 28th.

Contributors:

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Davis, Roger Davies, Ian and Sheila Dickerson, Brendan Doe, Mark Eaton, Mike Everett, Mike Foley, Tim Fryer, Don Gardener, Ian Gordon, David Griffiths, Richard Grimmett, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, David Heath, Gary Heath, Jonathan Heath, Graham Hiron, David Hollin, Michael Holdsworth, Ken and Jonathan Hook, David Hopkins, Sarah Howlett, Richard Jackson, John Le Gassick, Peter Loudon, Tony Lowe, Andrew Maddocks, Owen Marks, Paul Mason, Matt Mellor, Donal McCarthy, Martin O'Leary, Daniel Osborne, Dave Palmer, Richard Palmer, Duncan Poyser, Doug Radford, Gareth Rees, Anthony Rhodes, Duncan Ritchie, Ken Sanderson, Rick Saunders, Norman Sills, Jeff Stenning, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, Paul Taylor, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Kevin Wilson and Matt Wilson.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for November 2014

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 14 different days in November. The month's ringing total was 224; a further 295 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 519. Individual species totals (the first figure new birds, the second retraps) were:

Kingfisher	1, 0	Chiffchaff	1, 0
Green Woodpecker	1, 0	Goldcrest	9, 5
Great spotted Woodpecker	1, 4	Bearded Tit	0, 1
Pied Wagtail	5, 0	Long-tailed Tit	8, 32
Wren	13, 11	Blue Tit	32, 98
Dunnock	2, 10	Great Tit	7, 83
Robin	5, 13	Tree Creeper	1, 1
Blackbird	15, 5	Jay	0, 1
Song Thrush	4, 1	Chaffinch	20, 6
Mistle Thrush	1, 0	Greenfinch	9, 1
Redwing	31, 0	Goldfinch	8, 3
Fieldfare	12, 0	Bullfinch	18, 6
Cetti's Warbler	1, 2	House Sparrow	11, 5
Blackcap	2, 0	Reed Bunting	6, 7

Old birds retrapped during the month were:

Great Tit X077956 at 5y 5m,
Robin X876198 at 4y 8m,
Chaffinch L094145 at 4y 2m,
Long-tailed Tit CHX294 and Reed Bunting L504440 both at 3y 8m,
Dunnock L504834 and Blue Tit L505237 both at 3y 5m.

Next indoor meetings:



Friday 12th December, St Johns Hall, Cambridge

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.

2015 INDOOR MEETINGS At St John's Community Hall

FRIDAY JAN 9th Adam Rowlands
Stray Feathers and Tall Tales – behind the scenes at the BBRC

FRIDAY FEB 13th Chris Hewson
Tales of the Unexpected - new insights from tracking our Afro-Palaeartic migrants

FRIDAY MAR 13th AGM
followed by Chris Collins : Guyana – South America's hidden gem

Overview of the BTO Cuckoo tracking project – the outward journey

Many readers will be familiar with the ground-breaking Cuckoo satellite-tracking migration-mapping project being conducted by the BTO – now with three completed cycles.

Since the BTO run a blog on the Cuckoo project it is possible to analyse the data they have collected to provide an insight into that finer detail. For your amusement/information/interest (or really for mine) I have put together some of the findings in the form of answers to certain questions.

Where do they leave Britain and in what direction are they heading?

Slightly more birds leave from the south-east coast of Kent and Sussex and cross to France by a short route. Birds from the south-west of England (Hants, Devon) go straight from the south coast but slightly surprisingly birds originating from Scotland and Notts also go that way. Once across the channel most head almost always in a south-easterly direction which takes them across central France to the Mediterranean coast.

Which pathway do they take out of Europe?

One of the first unexpected findings is that there are clearly two different routes out of Europe. While many Cuckoos (27) move down to Italy and leave at various points along the Italian west coast, some birds turn south west and make their way through Spain (15). This is particularly interesting in the light of the discovery by Peter Berthold and his colleagues that many – if not all – migratory birds have a genetically delivered programme to guide their migration. Since Cuckoos migrate alone, they must have such a programme to help them succeed on the first occasion at least. Are there two genetic programmes? One to Italy and one to Spain and does the geographical origin play a part in the choice of route? To date there seems not to be a pattern except that all the birds from Notts (in 2014) went out via Spain.

Do individuals follow the same route year on year?

So far only two Cuckoos (Chris an East Anglia and David a Welshman) have stayed alive with working tags for three successive years. The results indicate that individuals follow the same pathways year on year. This is particularly pronounced with David who takes a very easterly path out of Europe and into Africa (from Greece into Sudan) in 2013.

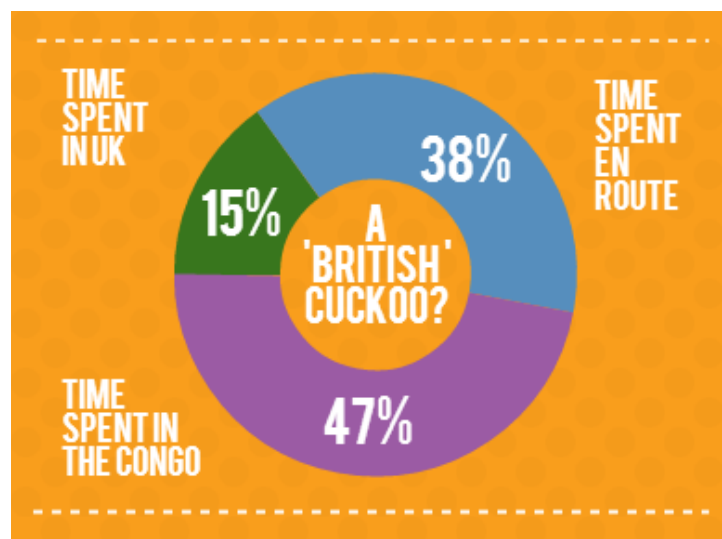
Do they use stopover sites and for how long do they stay there?

There is clear evidence that some (?many) of the birds spend some time in North Italy around the River Po watershed

Inevitably once they have cross the Sahara desert they spend some time refuelling in the Sahel region often for weeks, before heading south, usually ending up in the Congo basin.

Deaths

Since the Cuckoos were almost all adults when ringed deaths were to be expected. Sadly 3 birds died even before leaving Britain. 18 birds died on the outward journey. Of these 7 died in the Sahara/Sahel region, 6 in Spain, 3 in France and 2 in North Africa. Significantly only 3 had taken the Italy route (no birds died in Italy) suggesting that exit via Spain is more hazardous.



Timing

Not only does it appear to vary from bird to bird but also individuals vary from year to year. An example of this variation is that on July 25th this year there were 7 birds in Africa – 6 of them south of the Sahara, 6 in Spain, 5 in the Po Valley in Italy, 2 in France and one in each of Montenegro and Croatia.

Two individuals, BB and Chris had in previous years been in Africa before the end of July, this year both remained in Italy into early September – possibly as a result of poor feeding conditions in the Po valley and therefore taking longer to build up the necessary fat stores for the migration.

In all the birds seem to reach their overwintering area in the Congo by late September.

This is only a snapshot of the very detailed information being collected and a visit to the BTO website would reveal a great deal more. In a future bulletin I will look at the return journey results.

Editor's note.

Site names: a thread on Cambirds has been discussing site names and some contributors wish to adhere to the 'old' names. As a late sexagenarian I sympathise. However I would urge everyone to stick with the names on the gazetteer even if you don't like them! We can't turn back to Peking or Constantinople even if we want to; to say nothing of the 'old' scientific names of birds and plants. It is called progress.

Next e-bulletin will be in 2015, hopefully by the 12th of the month.