

**Wensum Valley
Birdwatching Society**



**Fifteenth Annual
Report 2017**

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Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

2017 Annual Report

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Compiled by Ray Gribble and Richard Norris

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Covering the Wensum Valley from Norwich to Fakenham and beyond

Founded in March 2003 our aims are to:-

- encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching in the Wensum Valley
- encourage novice birdwatchers to take an active part in birdwatching
- share information with other members
- gather and collate data on birds in the area
- participate in regional and national surveys within the defined area
- liaise with other conservation groups within the area and more widely
- administer the Society in an environmentally sensitive manner

Meeting venue Great Witchingham Village Hall on the third Thursday of each month.

Committee 2017

President	Liz Bridge
Chairman	Alwyn Jackson
Secretary	Lin Pateman
Treasurer	Martin Spriggs
Membership Secretary	Richard Norris
Publicity	Sue Gale
Newsletter Editor	Alan Hughes
Recorder	David Gibbons
Member	Mary Walker Keith Walker Ray Gribble
Webpage	www.wvbs.co.uk
Website Manager	Richard Norris
Loan Library	Selwyn & Kathy Jones

Front cover: Snipe, taken by Ray Gribble

Chairman's Report covering the period 20th April 2017 to 19th April 2018.

It has been another successful year in the relatively short life of the Society.

Members have had an interesting array of topics to enjoy and learn about during the course of the year's indoor meetings. We have learnt about the migration of birds through Gibraltar, the gallant efforts of one man to raise money for Turtle Dove research, the bird life of Israel, the birds of Japan in winter, the wildlife of Blakeney Point, the life of Reed Warblers in a patch of Norfolk reed, the history of Norfolk ornithology, the research into Nightjars in the Brecks, how our birds are being affected by climate change and one speaker's opinions about driven Grouse shooting and the effect it is having on our upland birds. I would like to thank Mary Walker for arranging such a stimulating series of presentations.

Of course no indoor meeting would be complete without having a raffle and refreshments so I would like to thank all those who have volunteered to help to provide these each month.

The Society is also very lucky to have members who are willing to give freely of their time to lead the monthly outdoor meetings. During the course of the year members have had the opportunity to share some good birdwatching at Thorpe Marshes, the Kelling Heath area, Snettisham, Burnham Overy Dunes, Surlingham Marshes, the Cley/Blakeney area and Courtyard Farm near Ringstead. Two meetings were held in the valley – a successful stroll around the Great Witchingham area and a walk around Swanton Morley GP for the Morning Chorus followed by a hearty breakfast. Visits have also been further afield – to Minsmere and Lackford Lakes in Suffolk and to the conservation award winning Vine House Farm in the Lincolnshire fens as the guests of the farmer Nicholas Watts. A very successful visit was also made to Upton Fen led by Dr Pam Taylor looking for dragonflies (especially the Norfolk Hawker) and butterflies. I would like to thank the leaders – Phil Borley, Glenn Collier, Alan Fordham, Sue Gale, David Gibbons, Ray Gribble,

Martin Spriggs, Lucy Topsom and Mary Walker – for all the effort and time they gave to make these visits so worthwhile and enjoyable for everyone.

In addition to these visits we also had a very successful bird count in January ably coordinated by Lin Pateman. Nine teams took part.

A Quiz and Supper Evening was held at The Swan, Ringland in August. An invitation was extended to other bird clubs and a good evening was had by all. The quizmaster was Keith Walker and Mary Walker organised the ordering of meals and together with Keith put together a Grand Raffle. In December we had our popular Christmas Social which once again proved to be a lovely evening. Many thanks must go to Mary, Keith and Lin Pateman for organising these events.

The Society was represented at the annual Wild About the Wensum Conservation Fair at Pensthorpe Natural Park in May 2017. This is a good opportunity to tell other people about our activities and to meet representatives from other groups. Some members acted as Guides in the Hide whilst others helped with a children's activity organised by Rosie Dickens. Many thanks to her and the other volunteers who contributed to such a successful day.

Increasing the Society's exposure to a wider audience, especially to the younger generation of birdwatchers has been the focus of some of the committee's efforts during the year. Lin Pateman has produced an excellent information leaflet which is being made available at various public places like libraries and local nature reserves. She has produced a business card which can be given to those people expressing an interest in the Society and which gives details of our website and space for a contact person. Keith and Mary Walker have devoted a lot of time to setting up a Twitter link which enables members and other users a chance to exchange news about the local birds or bird related activities including ours. Keith has also linked this to our website so users can see the latest sightings and other news. As the younger generation are constant users of smart phones it will spread the word about our Society. It is important that we try to engage younger people in appreciating the wildlife around them and the benefits of being part of a group of likeminded people. Keith has also started producing quarterly posters

advertising our activities and these are being placed in public places. Sue Gale has continued to produce some really interesting reports of our speakers' presentations as well as accounts of our outdoor meetings. These are published in local village magazines so they are reaching a very wide audience throughout the valley. I would like to thank Lin, Mary, Keith and Sue for all their hard work. I would also urge all members to take every opportunity to tell interested people about our Society so that it continues to thrive.

You may have noticed that the format of our monthly newsletter has changed during the year. Our long serving newsletter editor David Knight decided to put his John Bull printing set away having worn it out and very gallantly Alan Hughes took over the editorial duties. Being a "new face on the block" Alan has introduced a fresh pair of eyes to the task and re-jigged the format and presentation. I know Alan would welcome even more contributions to the newsletter from members so I would like to repeat his appeal for any articles, however brief, members could submit for publication. I would like to express thanks to Alan for all his efforts.

David Gibbons has also been busy collating all the bird sightings members send to him each month. With only a short period to do so he has produced his usual summary of sightings for the newsletter so members can get an idea of what birds have been seen in the valley over the previous month. It's always interesting to cast your eye over this as it highlights the variety of species which occur in the valley and you also get to know about the birds you missed! Exchanging information like this is one of the main aims of the Society and it is gratifying to know that by forwarding these records to the County Bird Recorder and the Norfolk Biological Records Service the Society members are contributing to a greater understanding of the avifauna of the area. Keep sending your records please and thank you David.

Another group of members, under the guidance of Ray Gribble, has continued to monitor the wild birds seen within the confines at Pensthorpe Natural Park at fortnightly intervals throughout the year. This enables the Pensthorpe Conservation Trust to gauge whether their management work on the site is working, as well as providing valuable data over an

extended period for this local patch. Ray and another group of members have also been maintaining the Society's tern rafts situated on Sparham Hall Farm's fishing lakes (by kind permission of the landowner and Society member Charles Sayer). Being licensed ringers Ray and Allan Hale have continued to ring the juvenile terns as well as some of the Black-headed Gulls which have adopted the rafts. Again this is adding to our knowledge of the breeding success of these birds and could help towards indicating their survival rate when any controls are reported. Many thanks must be given to Ray, Allan and all the Pensthorpe and tern raft volunteers in carrying out this work.

During the year Keith Walker took over responsibility for managing the Society's website from Richard Norris. I would like to thank Richard for all his conscientious efforts in updating the information on the website over the past few years and also member Tony Forster for his continued support.

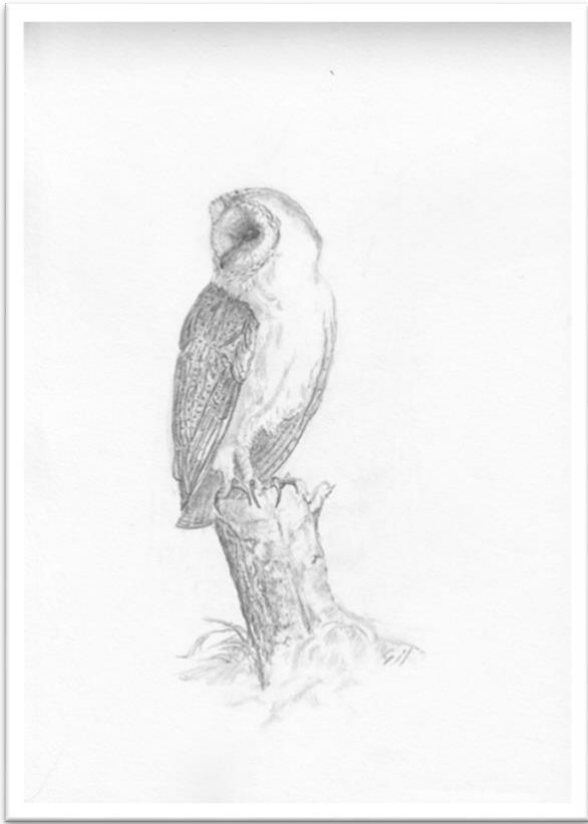
Selwyn and Kathy Jones should also be thanked for organising the Society's library. I hope members find this facility useful and I'm sure Selwyn and Kathy would welcome suggestions of any books members think would be of interest.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to my fellow Committee members for all their time, effort and commitment over the year to ensure that the Society flourishes. The Committee is fully aware that they are acting on behalf of the members and have done their utmost to put together a programme of events that they think members would enjoy. The proof is in the pudding but as members are a main ingredient it would be useful to know if we are getting it right. Do you have any new ideas on how we might improve the Society? Please speak to a committee member if you have as we are aware that the WVBS is your Society.

It has been a pleasure sharing the activities through the year with you all and I hope you continue to enjoy your membership over the coming year.

Alwyn Jackson

Barn Owl, by Gil Brooking



WVBS 2017 programme of Meetings and Events

Monday 2nd January	The Annual Winter Bird Count. Coordinated by Lin Pateman
Thursday 19th January	The Birds and Animals of Argentina – Speaker Allan Hale
Saturday 28th January	A Field Trip to Holkham – Coordinated by Alan Fordham.
Thursday 16th February	Unravelling the Mysteries of Bird Migration – Speaker Ieuan Evans
Sunday 26th February	A Field Trip to Horsey – Coordinated by Glenn Collier and Lucy Topsom
Thursday 16th March	Tracking Studies of Gulls and Seabirds – Speaker Dr Viola Ross-Smith (BTO)
Sunday 26th March	The Hoe Bird Walk – Coordinated by David Knight
Thursday 20th April	AGM followed by: The Gibraltar Flyway – Speaker Jake Gearty
Sunday 23rd April	A Field Trip to Thorpe Marshes – Coordinated by Mary Walker
Saturday 6th May	Pensthorpe – Wild about the Wensum

Sunday 7th May	A Field Trip for the Dawn Chorus – Coordinated by Glenn Collier and Lucy Topsom
Thursday 18th May	Dove Step, a Journey for Turtle Doves – Speaker Jonny Rankin
Saturday 10th June	A Field Trip to Cley NWT followed by Nightjars at Kelling Heath - Coordinated by Phil Borley
Thursday 15th June	Birding Israel – Speaker Yoav Pearlman
Saturday 24th June	A Wensum Valley Stroll – Coordinated by David Gibbons
Saturday 1st July	A Field Trip to Upton Fen for Dragonflies – Coordinated by Phil Borley
Thursday 20th July	Life on the Edge, the Birds, Plants and Butterflies of Blakeney Point – Speaker Richard Porter
Sunday 30th July	A Field Trip to RSPB Minsmere – Coordinated by Ray Gribble.
Thursday 17th August	A Summer Social – A Pub Meal and Quiz at Ringland Swan
Saturday 26th August	A Field Trip to RSPB Snettisham for Waders – Coordinated by Liz Bridge
Thursday 21st September	A History of Birding in Norfolk – Speaker Moss Taylor

Saturday 23rd September	A Field Trip to Burnham Overy Dunes – Coordinated by Sue Gale
Thursday 19th October	A Life in the Reeds – Speaker Dave Leech
Sunday 29th October	A Field Trip to Winterton Dunes – Coordinated by Phil Borley
Thursday 16th November	Winter Birding in Japan – Speaker James Lowen
Saturday 25th November	A Field trip to Blakeney Fresh Marsh and Stiffkey
Thursday 14th December	Annual Xmas Social.

Diary of Events in 2017

Monday 2nd January - The Annual Winter Bird Count - Coordinated by Lin Pateman.

A total of nine teams took part in this year's event which was held in a period of very variable weather and was won with a total of 79 species seen by Lucy Topsom and Glenn Collier. To finish the day tea and cakes were served in the Village Hall at Weston Longville.

Thursday 19th January – The Birds and Animals of Argentina – Speaker Allan Hale

This was our first monthly meeting at our new venue and we were entertained by another of Allan's humorous and interest filled accounts of birding trips he has undertaken all over the world. This time a trip to Argentina during which he travelled to many parts of the country and as always the talk was accompanied by some brilliant photographs. Among which were shots of Great Rhea in the foothills of the Andes and an encounter with a soaring Condor. A whale watching boat trip produced yet more beautiful photographs.

Saturday 28th January - A Field Trip to the North Norfolk Coast – Coordinated by Alan Fordham

The weather was cold but bright for what has become a fairly regular January trip for the Society. Starting on the beach and in good light we were able to see a good selection of species on the sea including Common and Velvet Scoter, Red-throated Diver, Red-breasted Merganser and a Slavonian Grebe. Later a walk alongside the woods of Holkham Park produced most common woodland species including Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Nuthatch and Brambling. A total of 59 species was recorded for the day.

Thursday 16th February – Unravelling the Mysteries of Bird Migration – Speaker – Ieuan Evans.

In his interesting and stimulating talk Ieuan gave us the latest developments on bird migration which are being conducted by the BTO. He showed how satellite tracking is much more effective than ringing but is very expensive although it provides detailed information not only of final destination but also of their migratory routes all without recapturing the birds. Technological advances are producing smaller and smaller devices that are enabling studies to be carried out on smaller birds and it is hoped eventually insects.

Sunday 16th February – A Field Trip to Horsey and Hickling Broad – Coordinated by Glen Collier and Lucy Topsom.

Two minutes after starting this walk those present “bagged” the target bird for the day which was Common Crane. Among other notable birds seen during the morning session were Marsh and Hen Harriers (ring-tailed) together with Skylarks that were singing everywhere. Later after brief interludes at Waxham and Hickling Broad, Stubbs Mill was visited for the Raptor Roost. In good light fine views were had of Peregrine, Merlin, Sparrowhawk, Hen Harrier and Whooper Swans.

In all a fabulous day during which a total of 76 species was recorded.

Thursday 16th March – Gulls, Seabirds and Tracking Studies – Speaker Dr Viola Ross-Smith.

We were entertained to a very informative talk that showed that gulls do not deserve the reputation that they have earned in some circles. In some areas they are considered a pest and yet some species are of serious conservation concern. Viola thought that possibly a reduction in landfill might be a contributory factor. Regarding wind turbines at sea all might not be as bad as first thought. Now the bases have been shown to produce good fishing grounds. Recent studies have shown that some gulls whilst happy to forage for their own food over land mostly take to the sea to feed their young.

Sunday 26th March – The Hoe Bird Walk – coordinated by David Knight.

During the walk David explained how there is a constant battle to keep down the spread of bracken and now an area has been fenced off to enable ponies to be able to graze the land and therefore help to enhance the habitat. On what was a beautiful morning a wide range of birds were seen and by the end of the morning a total of 45 different species was recorded.

Thursday 20th April - AGM followed by – Gibraltar Flyway – Speaker – Jake Gearty.

The AGM business was soon dispensed with and we were entertained to a very interesting talk by possibly our youngest ever presenter.

The talk was about a trip that Jake took during migration season when he saw among many other species, flocks of 500 Black Kites and 250 Short-toed Eagles passing over. The talk also touched on various conservation projects being carried out such as one for the Bald Ibis, not as Jake commented one of the most beautiful birds but still very worthy of conserving.

Members were so enthused by the evening that a trip to Gibraltar has been undertaken during 2018.

Sunday 23rd April – A Field Trip to NWT Thorpe Marsh - Coordinated by Mary Walker.

Thorpe Marsh is one of the Trust's newest reserves and is the first urban reserve to be created by them. It consists of wetland and marsh and is home to over 20 species of Dragonflies and Damselflies including the rare Norfolk Hawker. All this is close to the bustling city of Norwich.

Reed and Sedge Warblers were in abundance accompanied by Cetti's Warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap. In all a total of 52 species was seen during the walk.

Saturday 6th May - Wild About the Wensum – Coordinated by Rosie Dickens

This is a regular event in our calendar and as usual we provided a supply of volunteers to man the hides and help a steady stream of visitors to see the birds feeding on the scrapes and by the end of the day a total of 79 species had been recorded. In the marquee we had our Society Display erected and also we ran a competition for the children making and colouring paper birds for which we had a steady stream of participants.

Sunday 7th May – A Field Trip for the Dawn Chorus – Coordinated by Glen Collier and Lucy Topsom.

Another new venue for our Annual Dawn chorus this year was Swanton Pits which is well known both for wildlife and fishing. At the very start a Cuckoo was heard and this bird heard throughout the walk and later flew into sight giving us good views which for many was the first sighting of the year. Later in the walk we noticed a large flock of Swifts swirling about in a feeding frenzy over the lake and it was felt this could be their first landfall after migration. In total 71 species were recorded in the morning.

Later we moved on to the Kings Head at North Elmham for bacon butties and a welcome cup of coffee.

Sunday 14th May – A Field Trip to Vine House Farm, Lincolnshire – Coordinated by Mary Walker.

Vine House Farm has been in the same family for four generations and Nicholas told how the farm had evolved to enable biodiversity to flourish and after noticing in the eighties how bird population were declining he started to feed birds in the farmyard. He then had an open day for people to observe the results. From this people asked him to supply them with seed and the business developed from there.

The farm boasts an impressive array of nest boxes for various species including 170+ for Tree Sparrows, 20 for Barn Owls and a homemade sandbank attracts 60+ pairs of Sand Martins each year.

During our visit a total of 68 species were recorded.

Thursday 18th May – Dove Step, a Journey for Turtle Doves – Speaker Jonny Rankin

Jonny is a keen birder from Suffolk who realising the decline of Turtle Doves visiting this country decided to raise money for research into the causes. So Dove Step was born in which he has undertaken some marathon walks sometimes alone and occasionally supported by friends to highlight the problem and raise funds as well. The aim being to walk the migration route of the Turtle Dove and over a number of walks a lot of this has been achieved.

One project that has been funded is the seeding of 9 hectares of land in this country and research on the wintering grounds in Africa. During the evening a total of over £125 was raised to add to over £12000 that Jonny has been able to raise so far.

Saturday 10th June – A Half-day birding and Nightjar Evening at Kelling Heath - coordinated by Phil Borley.

After birding in the Cley Area during the afternoon everyone adjourned to Holt for fish and chips before moving on to Kelling Heath to enjoy the evening sunshine enlivened by the odd glass of Pimms. Later, we had fine views of a Turtle Dove in an adjacent tree and then as darkness started to fall Nightjars “churred” and started to fly around us.

In all a total of 66 species were recorded for the day

Thursday 15th June – Birding Israel “Where Migration is Defined” Speaker Yoav Pearlman.

Yoav’s talk left us in no doubt that migration in Israel is like nowhere else being a land bridge between Asia and Europe. The number of small birds moving through Israel in a year has been put at nearly a billion. Apart from this 23,000 Lesser Spotted Eagles have been observed passing in 24 hours and every year 500,000 Honey Buzzards are observed on migration. As the country is understudied and there are not many birders new discoveries are always being made. The talk was accompanied by many stunning photographs.

Saturday 24th June – A Ramble in the Wensum Valley – Coordinated by David Gibbons

This was a new trip for the Society and took in several sites in the valley including Whitwell and Alderford Commons and Marriots Way alongside the Wensum. After a successful day in beautiful countryside a total of 62 species were recorded for the day and as a fitting end everyone adjourned to the Bridge Inn for refreshment.

Saturday 1st July – A Field Trip to Upton Fen – Coordinated by Phil Borley and led by Dr Pam Taylor.

Pam led us on a stroll around the reserve which for many was a new venue. Upton Fen which is managed by NWT is rated in the UK top ten for dragonflies and damselflies. Along the way she caught many varied specimens and pointed out the many subtle differences between both species and gender. Thanks were given to Pam for giving her time and expertise to make such an interesting and informative session possible.

Thursday 20th July – Life on the Edge, the Wildlife of Blakeney Point – Speaker Richard Porter

Many of our members are no doubt familiar with the location of the Point and Richard was keen to show us the abundance of wildlife that inhabit it at various times of the year, including up to 7000 Common and Grey Seals that use Blakeney Point for breeding purposes. The Point is also an important refuge for flocks of Brent Geese and Golden Plover that are present in winter and for many species that pass through on migration. In addition 298 species of plant have been recorded some of which are nationally scarce.

This was an enthralling account that left many resolving to visit the Point more often.

Sunday 30th July – A Field Trip to RSPB Minsmere – Coordinated by Ray Gribble.

This is always a popular event in our calendar and this year was no exception. The weather was fine but somewhat overcast. Among notable

sightings were a Black Tern, several Turtle Doves, Spotted Flycatchers, and a Yellow Wagtail. Also a flock of some 50 Little Gulls were visible on the scrapes and a good range of other wildlife species such as various Butterflies and rare Wasps were seen during the day.

Thursday 17th August – Summer Social and Quiz – Coordinated by Keith and Mary Walker.

This now annual event was held again at the Swan Inn at Ringland and was attended by 50 members and friends. After a fish and chip supper a very competitive but good natured quiz was held with prizes provided by Virgin Wines. With donations from several local business and other raffle prizes given by club members a total of £160 was raised for club funds.

Saturday 26th August – A Field Trip to RSPB Snettisham – Coordinated by Martin Spriggs.

As always a trip to Snettisham for the high tide is always an eagerly anticipated event and this one was no exception. From the edge of the Wash vast flocks of waders could be seen moving towards the shoreline in front of the advancing tide. Sometimes taking wing and wheeling around in the sky before settling again until in the end having to move to higher ground. Later, after a short visit to Holme Dunes the day ended at Thornham Harbour where a group of four Spoonbills were busy in the creeks and pools.

Thursday 21st September – A History of Birding in Norfolk – Speaker Moss Taylor.

Moss' talk was divided into two parts the first was entitled "The Age of Collecting" and showed how at that time rare birds were shot and preserved for people to mount in cases and display.

Then came the "Age of Protection" which began in Norfolk when Sydney Long and a group of friends raised funds to purchase Cley Marsh and in so doing created the first Wildlife Trust. Moss then concluded his talk with a resume of Norfolk birders that had inspired him through a long and distinguished birding life.

Saturday 23rd September – A Field Trip to Burnham Overy Dunes and RSPB Titchwell – Coordinator Sue Gale.

Burnham Overy Dunes possibly a fairly new venue for some of our members and while there was not a vast array of species about on this visit the highlight was provided by a family of Bearded Tits that repeatedly called and rose high above the reed bed delighting everyone present. Among some waders on the shore were some Grey Plover displaying their beautiful summer plumage and later a quick visit to Titchwell produced fine views of a Hobby hunting over the marsh.

In all a total of 77 species was recorded for the day.

Thursday 19th October – A Life in the Reeds aka The Life Aquatic – Making the most of a Damp Patch – Speaker Dave Leech.

Dave is out on most days during the breeding season recording the life of Reed Warblers and Cuckoos in a patch of wetland at Cranage in the Brecks. It is not unusual to find between 120 – 150 Reed Warbler nests in the course of a season and up to 10% of these will be parasitized.

Dave records all the wildlife on the site and has a special interest in Grass snakes of which there can be nearly 3000 present at peak times. Many further studies are planned on these and other inhabitants of the site.

Sunday 29th October – A Field Trip to Surlingham Church Marsh and Buckenham Marsh – Coordinated by Phil Borley.

Unfortunately due to recent high spring tides most of the paths around the marsh were flooded and later moving on to Strumpshaw the same situation was found so a quick move to Buckenham Marsh was made where fine views of a variety of geese and a lone Avocet made the move worthwhile. A total of 30 species were recorded.

Thursday 16th November – Winter Birding in Japan – Speaker James Lowen

This talk was enthusiastically received by the audience and created a lot of discussion about a possible trip to the country such was the enthusiasm generated by James during the evening. From a sub tropical south to the snow covered north he made Japan sound a fascinating place to visit.

Saturday 25th November - A Field Trip to Cley, Blakeney and Stiffkey - Coordinated by Glenn Collier and Lucy Topsom.

On a cold and frosty morning the group headed out on the path to the coast and were treated to views of Marsh Harriers wheeling in the sky and a family of Bearded Tits in the reeds. Large flocks of Brent Geese were on the salt marshes including one Pale-bellied hidden amongst them. Nearer Blakeney the mudflats were harbouring large flocks of Oystercatchers, Dunlin, Lapwing, Knot and in one creek there were six Red-breasted Mergansers displaying to each other. Later on Cley beach there was a flock of of seventy Snow Buntings feeding. To finish the day on a good note on Stiffkey marsh, there were prolonged views of a female Hen Harrier together with a Merlin chasing a flock of Starlings for his evening meal.

Thursday 14th December – Our Annual Xmas Social.

As usual a good number of members attended the Social and the evening was enlivened with glasses of punch and several thought provoking quizzes. The evening was a fitting end to another successful year for the Society and thanks must go to Lin for organizing yet another successful event.

This diary has been compiled from contributions to the Newsletter by David Knight, Lucy Topsom, Glenn Collier, Mary Walker, Keith Walker, Jaquie Fenn, David Gibbons, Martin Spriggs, Alan Hughes, Lin Pateman, Sue Gale, Ray Gribble and Rosie Dickens. Our thanks go to them all for their contributions over the year.



Brambling, by Steve Cale

The Systematic List

This Systematic List contains records from the Society's defined recording area astride the River Wensum valley. Most records are *ad hoc* observations so the Report is therefore unsystematic and inevitably incomplete, reflecting observer interests, distribution and their inclination to submit records. Thank you to all the members who have contributed their records.

Records have been entered into the Society's spreadsheet by David Gibbons. The species texts have been drafted by Alwyn Jackson, David Gibbons, Ray Gribble and Richard Norris. The Systematic List has then been compiled by Alwyn Jackson. The line drawings were produced by Gil Brooking and Steve Cale

The Systematic List follows *The British List: a checklist of the birds of Britain* published by the British Ornithologists' Union. Those species which are proven or near proven escapes are treated in the Appendix. Throughout the List the English vernacular name is given first followed by the current scientific name.

Each entry contains a reference to the species' considered local status and the following status descriptors:-

Vagrant	A bird well outside its usual range
Passage Migrant	Mainly a migrant in spring and/or autumn
Resident	Breeds and present all year
Winter Visitor	Mainly occurs in winter
Summer Visitor	Mainly occurs as a breeding visitor in summer
Naturalised	Introduced deliberately or accidentally by man and now breeds in the wild

Each species header also indicates whether the species is included in the “Red”, “Amber” or “Green” List of *Birds of Conservation Concern 3 – The population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*.

“Red List” species are those which are “Globally Threatened” according to IUCN criteria, those whose population or range has declined rapidly over a twenty-five year period and those which have suffered a historical decline in breeding population.

“Amber List” species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe, those whose population or range has declined moderately over a twenty-five period, those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery, rare breeders and those with internationally important or localised populations.

“Green List” species are those which meet none of the above criteria.

Abbreviations used in the Report may be found in the following list:-

BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
GP	Gravel Pit
HBW	Hoe Bird Walk
HOT	Hawk & Owl Trust
NarVOS	Nar Valley Ornithological Society
NR	Nature Reserve
NWT	Norfolk Wildlife Trust
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SW	Sewage Works
SMHOT	Sculthorpe Moor Hawk & Owl Trust

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeding resident. Amber listed.

Occasional records from 25 sites. The highest counts were 36 at Bittering & 16 at Drayton in Jan, 11 at Pensthorpe in Feb & Mar, 12 at Guist Common in Mar, 10 at Great Witchingham Common in Aug, 11 at Pensthorpe in Nov & 10 in Dec.

Breeding recorded at Costessey Pits, Lyng where 1 pair with 6 cygnets seen walking along the street, Pensthorpe, Sparham Pools, Taverham Mill Fishery and Worthing village.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus colombianus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers. Amber listed.

Seventy flying over Sparham on 28th Feb (CS).

Bean Goose *Anser fabilis*

Both nominate form (Taiga Bean Goose) and Siberian form rossicus (Tundra Bean Goose) very scarce winter visitors to valley. Taiga form Red listed. Tundra form Amber listed.

Six at Ringland flying up the Wensum towards Attlebridge on 2nd Feb and 6 again on 11th (MMc).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Uncommon winter visitor to WVBS area, most birds are recorded flying over. Amber listed.

In first winter period during Jan 17+ at Buxton Heath on 2nd (JH), 40 Hockering on 4th (BP), c150 Bittering Pits on 8th (IBI), 40 at Drayton on 21st (NE) and in Feb 1 at Ringland on 11th (MMc). All presumably fly overs.

In second winter period in Sept 40 flying south over Costessey (AB), On 1st Dec two flocks of 150 each flying up the valley at Costessey 40 minutes apart & two flocks at Sparham 150 at 10am & 105 at 2pm (AB & CS) and 130 flying NW at Brandiston (SB), on the 2nd 7 also flying NW over Lenwade (RG). The flight direction suggesting birds moving between the Broads and NW coastal flocks.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce winter visitor. Red listed.

On Jan 2nd counts of 30-50 in Great Ryburgh/ Little Ryburgh area and 15-41 at Bittering GP on 2nd/3rd; on 18th Jan 22+ at Bittering GP with 30 on 23rd (IB *et al*).

On 8th & 9th Feb 12 at Sparham Hole (JH & CS).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common naturalised resident and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Highest counts in Jan 300 at Bittering GP on 2nd, c200 West Raynham on 8th, 130 Lyng on 13th; in Feb 137 at Ringland on 11th; in Mar 85 at Pensthorpe on 6th; in Apr 82 at Pensthorpe on 7th.

In July c350 at Bittering GP on 23rd, 157 at Pensthorpe on 27th; in Aug 270 at Pensthorpe on 10th; in Sept 218 at Helhoughton on 24th.

In Oct 184 at Haveringland Hall and 133 in Nov; in Dec 200 at Bittering GP on 9th & 100 at West Raynham Hall on 14th.

Evidence of breeding at Great Witchingham Common, Lenwade Bridge, Lenwade Common, Pensthorpe, Swanton Morley GP & Taverham Mill Fishery (total 9 pair & 37+ goslings).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common naturalised resident.

Occasional reports of flocks of up to 19 from 13 sites.

Higher counts of 20 at Great Ryburgh on 2nd Jan, 21 at Lyng on 13th Jan, c50 at Lenwade Bridge on 24th June, 21 during HBW on 16th July & 23 at Pensthorpe on 10th Aug.

Proof of breeding at Great Witchingham Common, Lenwade Bridge, Lenwade Common, Pensthorpe & Taverham Mill Fishery (1 pair 5 goslings).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Mainly naturalised resident but birds from east Greenland and the Russian/Baltic populations possibly scarce winter visitors. **Amber listed.**

Flock of naturalised resident birds recorded in high numbers Jan-Aug at Pensthorpe with highest count of 50 in Jan. Just 5 in Oct and 1 in Nov suggests the birds could have relocated to an unknown site from Sept onwards. Adults with juveniles in May & June.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Naturalised resident, locally common.

Occasional reports of 1-6 birds from 11 sites. Higher counts in Jan of 30+ at Great Ryburgh, 17 at Bittering GP, 15 at West Raynham; in Mar 17 at Pensthorpe; in Apr 22 at Great Ryburgh & 22 at Pensthorpe; in July 31 at Pensthorpe; in Aug 44 at Bittering GP, 54 at Pensthorpe; in Sept 80 at Pensthorpe & 60 at Bittering; in Oct 42 at Pensthorpe & 12 at Bittering; in Dec 18 at Pensthorpe. Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe and Taverham Mill Fishery where a pair with 6 goslings had adopted a Greylag gosling.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A scarce visitor to the valley. **Amber listed.**

Records from 5 sites mainly during Jan-June period. Max counts at each site - 2 at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes on 1st Apr where CS says the species is quite scarce now; 10 at Pensthorpe and 6 at Great Ryburgh both on 7th Apr; 2 at Gately on 29th Apr; 12 at Bittering GP on 30th Apr.

Just two records of 3 at Pensthorpe in Nov & Dec.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Very scarce naturalised resident.

Recorded at 5 sites. In Jan 1 at Pensthorpe on 23rd with 2 on 15th Feb & 3 on 29th Mar; 2 at SMHOT on 26th Mar; 2 at Pensthorpe on 6th & 8th May; single in Lyng on 1st Jun and 2 at Pensthorpe on 15th; 1 female at Sparham Pools on 11th Aug with a pair there on 16th Sept; in Oct 4 at Pensthorpe on 21st; in Dec 1 male on Blickling Lake on 10th.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe where adult with young in June.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Reports from 8 sites. During first winter period - Jan max 373 at Bittering GP, 35 at Pensthorpe & max 50 at Sparham Hall Fishing Lakes; in Feb 42 at Pensthorpe; in Mar 80 at Bintree Mill, 22 at Pensthorpe & 20 at Sparham Pools. Elsewhere 1-2 during HBW and at Reepham, also birds heard at West Raynham.

During second winter period three separate counts of 80 (Oct), 100 (Nov) & c50 (Dec) at Pensthorpe; in Dec 200 at Bittering GP & 20 at Gateley. Elsewhere 1-2 at Haveringland Hall.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Highest counts in Jan max 60 at Bittering GP, 48 Lexham Hall, 20 Pensthorpe, 30 Sparham Pools NR; Feb 18 Lyng Easthaugh GP, 49 Pensthorpe, 34 Sparham Pools; Mar max 22 Pensthorpe then 17 in May, 70 June, 17 July, 38 Aug, 80 Sept.

In Oct 20 Bittering, 64 Haveringland Hall, 111 Pensthorpe; Nov max 126 Haveringland Hall, 35 Pensthorpe; Dec 55 Bittering GP, max 87 Haveringland Hall, 34 Pensthorpe. Elsewhere occasional reports of small flocks of 2-8 at Beetley, Bintree Mill, Elsing, Great Ryburgh & HBW.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe where 26 adults plus 12 juvs on 22nd June.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Fairly scarce winter visitor and rare breeder. Amber listed.

Records from 12 sites.

Highest counts during Jan 174 at Bittering GP, max 30 East Lexham Hall, 100 Great Ryburgh, 450 Pensthorpe; Feb 190 Pensthorpe and subsequently, 18 Mar, 23 Apr, max 42 Sept.

During Oct 13 Great Ryburgh, max 42 Haveringland Hall, max 203 Pensthorpe; Nov max 40 Haveringland Hall, max 272 Pensthorpe; Dec 100 Bittering GP, max 300+ Pensthorpe.

Elsewhere occasional reports of 2-9 from 6 sites.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Records from 23 sites.

Highest counts at Bittering GP 440 (Jan); at Dereham Neatherd Moor 57 (June) & 80 (Dec); at Haveringland Hall max 90 (Oct); at Pensthorpe 110 (Jan), 51 (Mar), 75 (May), 50 (June), max 130 (July), max 65 (Aug), max 130 (Sept), 116 (Oct), 85 (Nov), 134 (Dec).

Proof of breeding at Great Witchingham Common & Pensthorpe.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Presumably 5 wild birds at Pensthorpe on 21st Oct (BP, ID).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A winter visitor and rare breeder. Amber listed.

Recorded during each month except July at one or more locations.

Highest counts in Jan 23 at Bittering GP, 32 at Haveringland Hall, 36 at Pensthorpe; in Feb 10 at Lyng Easthaugh GP, 44 at Pensthorpe then 72 in Mar & 12 in Sept; in Oct 54 at Haveringland Hall and 53 in Nov; also in Nov 21 at Pensthorpe and 27 in Dec.

Elsewhere occasional reports of 1-2 at Bintree Mill, Great Ryburgh, Great Witchingham & Sparham.

No proof of breeding noted but a pair present at Bintree Mill in May.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Very rare wild or naturalised vagrant.

At Pensthorpe a pair in late Mar assumed to be escapes from the wildfowl collection on site. Subsequently single birds in May, June, Aug & Sept.

It is difficult to decide whether wild birds from continental populations occur at this site.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

Fairly common passage migrant & winter visitor, rare breeder. Red listed.

Occasional reports of 1-3 birds at 6 sites largely in first winter period. Higher count at Pensthorpe of 13 (Feb) & 5 (Mar & Apr); at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes 5 in Apr where CS reported they are scarce but there was a light April movement.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce breeder, fairly common passage migrant & winter visitor. Green listed.

Occasional reports of small flocks of less than 20 from 15 sites. Higher counts in Jan 48 Lyng Easthaugh GP, 38 Pensthorpe, max 260 Sparham Hall Fishing Lakes, c200 Sparham Pools; in Feb 20 Lyng Easthaugh GP, 42 Pensthorpe, 36 Sparham Pools; in Mar max 52 Pensthorpe then 68 (Apr), 69 (May), 38 (June), 44 (July), 55 (Aug), 52 (Sept), 55 (Oct); in Nov 20 Haveringland Hall, 21 Lyng Easthaugh, max 62 Pensthorpe; in Dec 21 Lyng Easthaugh, 64 Pensthorpe.

Scaup

Aythya marila

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Red listed.

Single bird at Sparham Hall Fishing Lakes on 4th Sept (JL).



Scaup, by Gil Brooking

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Very scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. Amber listed.

At Pensthorpe in Jan 1 on 12th & 4 on 23rd; in Feb 2 on 8th, 11 on 15th; in Mar 3 on 29th; in Apr 4 on 7th; in May 1 on 25th; in Sept 1 on 14th & 22nd; in Dec 2 on 5th & 7 on 18th (PA *et al*). It is difficult to decide whether some of these birds were wild birds from continental populations.

A further report of single bird at Gateley on 26th Dec (BP).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. Green listed.

In first winter period 2 at Sparham Pools on 27th Jan, 1 at Lyng Easthaugh GP on 28th Jan, 1 at Sparham Pools on 5th Feb, 1 at Ringland on 9th Mar and 1 at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes on 14th Apr was last record for this site during this period.

In second winter period 1 at Haveringland Hall lake on 25th Nov and 2 drakes at Blickling Hall lake on 10th Dec.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor. Amber listed.

Three present at Gateley on 27th May (PA).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Common naturalised resident.

Reports from 21 sites of 1-9 birds with higher counts of 20 at Fustyweed, Elsing in Mar and 20 in Worthing Church area in Nov.

Up to 5 birds regular garden visitors through the year in Worthing village.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Scarce resident, declined in recent years. Red listed.

Occasional reports from 16 sites largely of 1-5 birds. Higher counts at Gateley of 8 (Apr), 6 (May); Scarning 8 (July), N Tuddenham 17 (July), Daffy Green 8 (July & Aug); Gateley 11 (Aug); Mill Farm, N Tuddenham 12 (Aug) & 17 (Sept); Scarning 6 (Oct) & 9 (Nov).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common naturalised resident.

Occasional records of 1-9 birds from 24 sites at various times throughout the year.

An interesting report of one appearing over the observer's car windscreen and being chased by a Buzzard low over the road between Saxthorpe and Matlaske (DG).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Fairly common winter visitor increasing in numbers, some non-breeding birds present in summer. Green listed.

Reports from 15 sites with counts of 10 at Bittering GP in Jan; 15 at Pensthorpe in Jan then 18 Feb, 9 Mar, 5 Apr, 8 Aug & Sept, 10 Oct & Nov, 11 Dec; during HBW 7 in Feb then 7 in Oct, 8 Nov & 11 Dec.

At a further 12 sites occasional records of 1-4 birds.

No breeding records received.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Very scarce resident. Green listed.

Occasional records from 39 sites throughout the valley.

At Bintree Mill single in Jan then 1-3 during Apr/May; at Great Ryburgh 1-3 Oct-Dec; during HBW 2-3 Feb-June; at Pensthorpe 3-4 Jan-May, 7 in Nov & 4 Dec; at Potter's Fen, Dereham single bird through the year; at Sculthorpe Moor NR 3 in Feb; in Worthing village area 1-2 Jan-May & Oct-Dec.

No reports of winter roosts.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Rare but increasing visitor.

A single bird at Alderford on 14th Apr (JH).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident. **Green listed.**

No breeding records received. Occasional reports in the year of 1-3 birds from 31 sites.

Higher counts 4 at Sculthorpe Moor NR in Feb, 4 during HBW in May and 7 in Aug, 4 at Bittering GP in Oct.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Very scarce visitor.

Unconfirmed report of single birds over Lenwade on 25th & 26th Oct (RB).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Scarce vagrant.

Single bird at Pensthorpe on 29th Mar (LB,RG); single bird flying over Sparham on 4th Apr (CS); 2 at Pensthorpe on 7th Apr (PA,MS); single bird at Lenwade (DD,JP) and 2 at Pensthorpe including a bird with a ring on its right leg (PA,BH) on 8th May; 2 over Sparham Hall Farm moving east on 14th May (CS).

Little Grebe *Trachybaptus ruficollis*

Very scarce resident and winter visitor. Breeds in small numbers. **Green listed.**

No proof of breeding reported.

Occasional records of 1-2 birds from 13 sites.

Higher counts of 6 at Beetley Common Lake & 6 at Lexham Hall in Jan; 3 during HBW in Feb; 4 at Stanfield Rd, Bittering in July; 5 at Bittering GP in Aug and 8 in Sept; 6 at Bittering GP and Pensthorpe in Oct.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Scarce resident often departing to the coast in winter months. Green listed.

Occasional reports of 1-4 birds from 13 sites. Higher counts of 5 at Lyng in Jan; 7 at Swanton Morley GP in Mar and 9 in May; 5 at Costessey Pits in June; 7 at Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes in the autumn and 15 at Lyng Easthaugh fishing pits in Dec.

Proof of breeding at Costessey Pits (1 pair), Lenwade Bridge (1 pair), Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes (3 pairs) and Taverham Mill fishing lakes (1 pair).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Very scarce resident established from reintroductions elsewhere in England. Green listed.

Majority of sightings of single birds up to mid-Aug then as birds dispersed no reports in Sept and just a few from 4 localities in the rest of the year.

Two birds at N Tuddenham and Honingham in Feb; 3 at Horsford in Mar; 2 at Dereham in June and possibly 2 at Sparham in July.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Very rare visitor. Red listed.

Single bird over Sculthorpe Moor NR on 23rd Apr (PJ).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce passage migrant and increasing summer visitor to valley breeding in small numbers. Amber listed.

Occasional records between Jan and end of August of mostly single birds at a total of 8 sites. A pair in late Apr and early May and then a male plus 2 females at the same site in June suggests possible breeding but no subsequent reports of juveniles received.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Red listed.

A single ringtail at Sparham on 8th Nov (CS).

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

A pair food passing presumably feeding young at a site within our recording area on 25th Jun (RG,RN). A female at same site on 3rd July (AH,IBla).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green listed.

Occasional reports of mainly single birds from a total of 31 sites. Pair seen displaying at Potters Fen, Dereham in early Apr, a male plus 2 females at Lyng Easthaugh in late June and a juvenile calling at Netherd Moor, Dereham in late Aug the only possible breeding records.

Several sightings of birds hunting in gardens taking advantage of multiple prey in a small area and a bird observed terrorising a Sand Martin colony at Lyng Easthaugh in July for the same reason.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Scarce resident and passage migrant. Green listed.

Through the year we received a total of 282 records from 63 sites compared to 3 records from 2 sites in 2003, evidence of the expansion of this species in our area over the last 14 years.

Majority of reports of 1-2 birds, c50 reports of 3-4 birds and the higher counts were of 6 during HBW, 6 at Worthing & 6 at Pensthorpe in Mar; 5 at N Tuddenham in Apr; 6 at Sparham Hall Farm, 8 during HBW & 5 at Elsing in May; 6 at Pensthorpe & 8 at Bintree in June; 6 at Colkirk in July; 8 at Pensthorpe & 6 at Gateley in Aug; 6 at Dereham SW, 7 during HBW & 6 at N Tuddenham in Sept; 8 at Sparham Pools in Oct; 5 at Shereford in Dec.

(continues)

Buzzard (continued)

Two pairs bred on Sparham Hall Farm with another 6 territories visible from the farm, 2 in Lyng and single territories in Elsing, Bylaugh, Bawdeswell and Whitwell. Two birds displaying at Potters Fen, Dereham in early Mar suggests possible breeding.

Osprey *Pandion halaetus*

Very scarce passage migrant, increasing in frequency in recent years.

Amber listed.

Single bird moving east over Sparham Pools on 1st May (JH) then 2 over Sparham Hall Farm moving west pursued by 6 Buzzards.

Sightings between Sparham and Billingford of a single bird between 22nd Aug and 3rd Sept presumed to be the same bird. First seen flying over Sparham Hall, then at Lyng on 23rd Aug, near Billingford Lakes on 24th, at Three Bridges Farm, Elsing & Sparham on 28th, at Three Bridges Farm on 29th to 2nd Sept and finally at Lyng on 3rd Sept. (CS *et al*).

A single bird at Sparham on 11th Sept stayed for one day (CS).

Water Rail

Rallus aquatus

Very scarce resident and winter visitor.

Green listed.

Occasional records from 9 sites of mostly single birds but 2 seen at SMHOT in Jan. At Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes 1-2 birds between Jan & May and at Guist Common single birds between July & Sept.



Water Rail, by Gil Brooking

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Rare summer visitor. Red listed.

Two records of a single bird on consecutive days at North Elmham on July 1st & 2nd (IB).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*.

Common resident supplemented by autumn immigrants. Green listed.

Highest counts of 20 at East Lexham & 28 at Pensthorpe in Jan; 29 at Pensthorpe in Feb, 23 in Apr & Aug with 32 in Sept; 41 at Haveringland Hall & 26 at Pensthorpe in Oct with 42 in Nov and 47 in Dec.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe and Eades Mill, Great Witchingham.

Coot *Falica atra*.

Common resident and winter visitor. Green listed.

Records from 13 sites.

Highest counts at Pensthorpe 64 (Jan), 78 (Feb), 48 (Mar), c30 (May), 36+ (June), 87 (July), 105 (Aug), 90 (Sept), 49 (Nov), 56 (Dec). Elsewhere 42 (Oct) & 49 (Nov & Dec) at Haveringland Hall; 30 at Gateley in Dec. Counts of 1 to 16 recorded at a further 9 sites.

Proof of breeding at Costessey Pits, Pensthorpe, Swanton Morley GP and Taverham Mill Fishing Lakes.

Crane *Grus grus*.

A rare visitor from the small resident population in the Broads, free flying from Pensthorpe's breeding programme or less likely a continental vagrant. Amber listed.

5 records from 3 sites this year.

2 birds flying over Sparham on 21st May (CS), 2 adults with 1 juv at Pensthorpe on 14th Sep (RG,AJ) and 3 present on 11th Oct (PA,MS) and 21st Oct (ID,BP).

One heard during the Hoe Bird Walk on 15th Oct (DK).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare summer visitor. **Amber listed.**

Records from 5 sites, most records from Pensthorpe between Mar and July with highest count of 11 in Mar (LB, RG).

Other reports of 2 at Great Ryburgh in Apr, 1 at Queen's Hill in May, 1 at Rawhall GP in Jun and 2 in the Beetley area in July.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe where there were 6 adults & 8 chicks in June.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Scarce summer visitor. **Amber listed.**

Recorded between Feb 15th to Aug 17th.

Highest counts of 6 to 19 birds at Pensthorpe between 15th Feb – 27th July (PA *et al*), 13 at Neatherd Moor in June (BH) and 6 at Bittering in July (BP, ID).

Occasional records of 2-3 birds recorded at Elsing, Great Ryburgh, HBW, Lyng Easthaugh GP, Potters Fen, Ringland, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP and Worthing.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe in May & June (PA, BH).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. **Green listed.**

Records from 14 sites this year.

Highest counts in the first winter period of 200 at Daffy Green in Jan (IB), 350 at Gressenhall (IB) and c60 at Lenwade in Feb (RG).

Late summer record of a single bird at Bittering GP on 26th July (BP, IN, JH).

The autumn/second winter period c250 at Cawston Heath in Aug (JH), c50 at Foxley in Oct (RG) and 100 at Stanfield and 100 also at Litcham in Dec (BP, ID).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

*Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Occasional breeder. **Red listed.***

Records from 3 sites. Single bird at Pensthorpe on 6th May (PA *et al*) and 2 at Bintree Mill also on 6th (JH), the 7th (MMc) and 14th May (JH).

Autumn record of a single bird at Brandiston on 4th Oct (SB).



Ringed Plovers, by Gil Brooking

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

*Passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor. **Green listed.***

Records from 4 sites. Earliest report of 4 birds at Pensthorpe on 29th Mar (LB, RG). At Bittering GP 4 birds present on 13th Apr with subsequent evidence of breeding during July when up to 5 juveniles with one adult reported.

At Pensthorpe 2-4 birds present between late Mar and late June but no evidence of breeding reported.

Single report of 3 birds at Rawhall GP on 16th July and 1-2 at Bintree Mill between 27th Apr - 9th May.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.

Scarce summer visitor, common winter visitor and passage migrant. **Red listed.**

Records from 20 sites in the valley and birds present during each month.

Highest counts in Jan 120+ at Gressenhall, 200 at Longham, 450 at Pensthorpe, c300 at Sculthorpe Airfield; in Feb 150 at Gressenhall, 400 at Pensthorpe; in Mar c100 near Hoe, 250 at Pensthorpe.

In Aug 250 at Bittering GP, 250 at Pensthorpe; in Sept 190 at Pensthorpe; in Dec 100 at Bittering GP, 100 at Colkirk, c105 at Gressenhall, 100 at Litcham, c150 at Netherd Moor, Dereham.

Elsewhere reports of 32+ at Lyng Easthaugh (Feb), c60 at Rawhall GP (July), Sparham Pools 37 (Oct). In Dec 30 during HBW, 50 at Stanfield and Worthing.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe where 2 nests in Apr and adults with young were noted in June.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Rare passage migrant. **Red listed.**

One sighting this year of a single bird at Bittering GP on 30th Apr (IB).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Rare passage migrant. **Red listed.**

Just one record of 3 birds at Bintree on 29th June (RG).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Very rare passage migrant. **Red listed.**

One record this year of a single bird at Pensthorpe on 10th Aug (LB, RG).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

One record of 2 birds at Ringland on 21st Jan (AB).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Very rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Records from 3 sites.

In Apr single birds at Bittering GP on 13th (JH) and Bintree Mill on 29th (RG). In May single bird at Pensthorpe on 6th and 8th (PA *et al*). In Aug 2 birds at Bittering GP on 5th & 3 on 6th (JH).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Records from 7 locations.

On Jan 2nd a single bird at Bittering GP and on 27th Apr 2 birds at Pensthorpe.

On 5th May 2 birds at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes, a single bird at Pensthorpe on the 6th and 2 on 22nd June.

On 6th July a single bird at Brandiston, 1-2 birds at Bittering GP on 26th & 30th and a single bird at Pensthorpe on 27th.

On 5th & 6th Aug still 1-2 at Bittering GP and single birds at Lyng Easthaugh on the 13th & Potter's Fen, Dereham on the 17th.

On 3rd Sept a single bird at Lyng.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

30 records this year from 12 sites.

Single birds at Neatherd Moor, Dereham in Feb & Mar, Great Ryburgh in Mar and Bittering GP in June.

Counts of 3 to 8 birds at Bittering GP in July and Aug (JH), 3 at Rawhall GP (JH), single birds at Dereham SW and Beetley area in July; 4 at Pensthorpe (PA,CH) and single bird at Brandiston Common in Aug.

Singles at N Tuddenham, Neatherd Moor and Pensthorpe in Sept; 2 at Haveringland Hall in Oct; singles at Neatherd Moor in Nov & Dec and at Scarning and Lyng Easthaugh in Dec.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Very rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

13 records from Bintree Mill and Bittering GP by several members of the Society. Between 27th Apr – 14th May six reports of a single bird at Bintree Mill (BP *et al*) with 2 on 7th May (IB). Between 26th July – 6th Aug six reports of a single bird at Bittering GP (BP, IN *et al*).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Only 1 bird recorded in 2016 but this year we had 11 sightings from two sites, Bintree Mill and Bittering GP. Between 27th Apr-14th May eight reports of 1-2 birds at Bintree Mill (BP *et al*). On 23rd & 26th July a single bird at Bittering GP (JH).

Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Four records this year from 2 sites, Bittering GP and Brandiston.

Single birds seen on three occasions at Bittering GP on 23rd, 26th & 30th July (IB, JH). One record of a single bird at Brandiston on 8th Aug (SB).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Green listed.



Jack Snipe, by Steve Cale

Four records from 2 sites. A single bird at Buxton Heath on 2nd Jan (JH) and Beetley GP on 5th Mar (IB). Two birds recorded at Buxton Heath on 10th Nov (JH) and a single bird seen at Beetley GP on 17th Nov (IB).

Woodcock *Scotopax rusticola*

Scarce resident, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. **Red listed.**

Fourteen records from 8 sites. In the first winter period 3 birds at Hoe and a single bird at Scarning in Jan. Also a single bird at SMHOT in Jan and Feb.

In the second winter period single birds at Brandiston and Scarning in Oct, at Buxton Heath and Marsham Heath in Nov, the latter being an immature bird. Also a single bird on the HBW in Nov and single birds at Lyng Easthaugh, Pensthorpe and Scarning in Dec.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

Very scarce resident and scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

Twenty-five records from 12 sites. Highest counts of 10 birds at Beetley in Jan and Nov (IB), 9 birds at Pensthorpe in Feb (PA, JH), 14 at Guist Common in Mar (RG, RN), 4 to 6 at Buxton Heath in Nov (JH, SB) and 3 at Scarning in Dec (IB). During first winter period 1-2 birds at Buxton Heath, Pensthorpe & SMHOT.

Between 27th Apr-9th May up to 4 at Bintree Mill (MMc, SB *et al*). In late summer/second winter period 1-3 birds at Bittering GP, Brandiston, Dereham SW, Lyng Easthaugh GP, Neatherd Moor Dereham and Pensthorpe.

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

Scarce passage migrant.

Amber listed.

A single bird at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes on 1st May (CS).



Little Tern, by Steve Cale

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Very scarce passage migrant. Green listed.

Eight records from 2 sites during Apr and May.

On 30th Mar 7-8 birds at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes and 2 at Lyng GP (IB, RG, JH, CS).

On 8th May 2 birds at Sparham Hall Fishing Lakes (JH, CS).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Twenty-six records from 13 sites. Earliest sighting at Lyng GP on 9th Apr (CS) and latest at Pensthorpe with 9 birds on 27th July (MS, CH).

High counts of 8 birds at Swanton Morley GP on 7th May (GC *et al*), 8 at Pensthorpe on 27th May (RG, RN) and 8 on 7th July (BP, RG, IB), also 12 at Bittering on 16th July (JH).

Proof of breeding in June at Pensthorpe (PA, BH, RG) and at Sparham (RG).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Seven records from 3 sites in Apr and May.

Earliest count of 10 birds at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes on 21st Apr (CS), then 1 on 28th and 1- 6 on 30th (IB, RG, JH).

Single birds seen at Pensthorpe on 6th May (PA *et al*) and at Swanton Morley GP on 7th (GC *et al*).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeder. Amber listed.

In first winter period the highest counts were c200 Bittering GP (IBla), c250 at Pettywell, Reepham, (DG) and c200 at Guist in Jan (RG); c300 at Wood Dalling in Feb (DG); 102 at Pensthorpe in Mar (LB, RG).

During the breeding period up to 236 including juvs at Pensthorpe in Jul (PA *et al*); c100 at Reepham (DG) and 350+ at Neatherd Moor Dereham in Aug (BH). (continues)

Black-headed Gull (continued)

In second winter period max 194 at Pensthorpe in Oct (BP,IN); 200 at N.Tuddenham in Nov (BP); c150 adjacent to Marriott's Way between Reepham & Whitwell (DG), 103 at Netherd Moor Dereham (BH) and 100 at Colkirk (BP,IN) in Dec.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe (RG *et al*).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Scarce passage migrant. Green listed.

Single bird at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes on 29th Apr (CS).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce increasing visitor. Amber listed.

Six records from 3 sites.

In Mar single birds at Bintree Mill on 21st (RG,RN) and Fakenham on 24th (BP) and 2 birds seen at Pensthorpe on 29th (LB,RG).

In Apr 2 again at Pensthorpe on 7th where it was noted that there were two possible nests (PA,MS). No subsequent record of breeding received. Also a second summer bird at Sparham Hall Farm Fishing Lakes on 30th Apr (CS).

A further single bird at Pensthorpe on 7th July (BP,RG,IB).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common winter and scarce summer non-breeding visitor. Amber listed.

Recorded in the valley mostly in small numbers throughout the year.

Higher counts 10 at Lyng in Jan; 33 at Pensthorpe in Feb; 34 at Neatherd Moor and 18 at Pensthorpe in Mar; 16 at Pensthorpe in May; 12 at Bittering GP in July; 20+ at Netherd Moor Dereham in Aug and 11 in Sept; 15 at Pensthorpe in Oct; 65 at Neatherd Moor, 44 at Pensthorpe and c50 at Reepham in Dec.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Fairly common winter and scarce non-breeding summer visitor. Amber listed (graellsii).

Occasional records from 8 sites of 1-8 birds and present in each month at one or more of the sites.

Higher counts of 11 at Neatherd Moor in June (BH), 7 at Potters Fen in July (PA), 20 at Bittering in Aug (BP, ID) and 20 at Mill Farm, N.Tuddenham in Aug and Sept (BP).

Five juveniles at Pensthorpe in Dec.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor with some birds remaining throughout the year. Red listed.

Records from 10 sites scattered throughout the valley of 1 to 4 birds. Birds recorded in the valley throughout the year.

At Pensthorpe 2-9 birds in most months with highs of 12 in Oct (BP, ID) and 13 in Nov (BH, CH).

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe where one nest in Apr (PA,MS).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Scarce non-breeding visitor present throughout the year. Amber listed.

Single bird in Jan at Gateley; in Mar & May at Pensthorpe; in May at Swanton Morley GP & Pensthorpe; in June during HBW; in July & Oct at Pensthorpe and 2 in Dec.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed.

Records usually of 1-10 birds from a total of over 20 sites in the valley.

Higher counts of 50 on the HBW in Feb and 12 in Oct (DK); 13 at Lyng Easthaugh in Mar (JH); 20 at N Tuddenham in Apr and 15 May (BP); 18 at Barmer in May (R&CG); 13 at Pensthorpe in June (PA, BH); 20 at Bittering in Aug (BP); 20 at Stanfield (BP) and 120+ at Great Witchingham (AB) in Dec.

(continues)

Stock Dove (continued)

Evidence of nesting at Dereham Watermeadows and Pensthorpe in May (PA,MS).

Records of birds feeding in gardens in Lenwade and Worthing.



Stock Dove, by Gil Brooking

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident. Green listed.

Highest counts 250+ on the HBW in and 54 at Neatherd Moor in Jan (BH); c200 at Pensthorpe and c100 at Sparham Hole in Feb; 150+ at Neatherd Moor in Sept; 100 during HBW in Oct; c120 at Neatherd Moor and c120 between Reepham and Whitwell in Dec.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Fairly common resident associated with human habitation. Green listed.

Records from over 20 sites usually of 2 to 6 birds.

Highest counts 12 at Swanton Drive, Dereham in Sept and 30 at N Tuddenham in Oct.

Proof of breeding at Elsing.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed.

Records of mostly single birds from 13 sites.

Earliest sighting was at Marsham Heath on 17th Apr (JH) and the latest at Brandiston on 8th Sept (SB).

No proof of breeding reported. Two birds were seen at Brisley in May (JC) and at Beetley in June (TA).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed.

Records of mostly single birds from 21 sites.

Earliest sighting of single bird at Sparham Pools on 21st Apr (CS, PA).

In May 2 birds at Bintree Mill, Brandiston, Great Witchingham Common and on the HBW.

The latest report was of a single bird at Guist Common on 11th June (RG).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Fairly common resident. Green listed.

Reports of mainly singles from 29 sites in the area.

Sightings of 2 birds came from Brandiston, Castle Acre, Elsing Bridge, N Tuddenham, Scarning and Sculthorpe Moor HOT.

Successful breeding was proven at Sparham Hall Farm (3 pairs) (CS), Swannington and Swanton Morley (3 pairs) (BM).

Little Owl *Athene noctue*

Fairly common naturalised resident.

Reported from 13 sites in the area.

Proof of breeding at Brandiston 2 pairs (SB); Elsing 1 pair had 3 young (RG, RN); Gateley 1 pair with 2 young (IB); Scarning 2; N Tuddenham 1 pair with 2 young (BP); Swanton Morley 1 pair with 2 young (BM, BH); Weston Equestrian Centre 1 pair with 4 young (RD, RG) and Worthing 1 pair with 2 young (DK, RG).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Fairly common resident. **Green listed.**

Reported from 23 sites. Up to 5 were heard calling in Brandiston in Sept (SB) and 3 males & 2 females were heard at Great Witchingham Common in Nov (RG).

Proof of breeding at Bylaugh, Mattishall (EW) and Swanton Morley (BM).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Scarce summer visitor. **Amber listed.**

One reported from Bawdeswell on 29th Apr and 2nd May (RR,DG).

No reports were received from Marsham Heath.

Swift *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

The first sighting was 1 at Lyng GP on 29th Apr (CS) followed by a major influx on 6th May when there were c20 at Pensthorpe and c100 at Ringland then the next day 10 at Dereham, 100 at Swanton Morley GP and 4 at Worthing.

Other sightings of 20 or more were 20 at Lenwade & Reepham on 4th July; 20 Dereham and 60 Reepham on 16th July and 100 migrating South at N Tuddenham on 29th July.

Last sightings of the year were one at Pensthorpe (AJ,RG) and 3 at Dereham (BH) on 14th Sept.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Scarce resident. **Amber listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 33 sites.

No proof of breeding reported but 2 birds recorded at Dereham SW, Great Ryburgh, Scarning, SMHOT and Swanton Morley GP.

Green Woodpecker *Picis viridis*

Fairly common resident. **Green listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 23 sites. Proof of breeding reported from Barmer, Dereham and Worthing.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident. Increasingly visiting garden feeders. **Green listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 24 sites. Proof of breeding reported from Bintree, Elsing and Worthing.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker,
by Steve Cale

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Dryobates minor

Rare and declining resident.

Red listed.

A single record from Queen's Hill, Costessey on 15th Apr (AB)



Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common resident and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 63 sites. Proof of breeding reported from Bylaugh, Daffy Green, Scarning, Sparham Hall Farm (2 pairs) and Swanton Morley.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed.

A single report near Dereham on 14th Dec (PA).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*.

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Green listed.

First reported on 13th Apr at North Elmham (JH) then from a further 17 locations. No proof of breeding reported. Last report 4th Oct at Sparham (CS).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Green listed.

Despite breeding on Norwich Cathedral very few records were received. Single birds at Lyng Easthaugh 10th Apr (JH), HBW 15th Apr (DK), Brandiston 8th Sept (SB), Sparham 10th Oct (CS) and Colkirk 14th Nov (IB).

Ringed-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Rare naturalised resident or escape.

One Reepham Station on 25th Sept (DK) then probably the same bird Brandiston on 28th and 30th Sept (SB). One by the edge of the river at Dolphin Bridge in Norwich on 23rd Nov (AG).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

A well watched bird ranged widely on Sparham Hall Farm from 4th Jan (CN,AJ) until 17th Apr (BP). The first on the farm since 1987 (CS).



Great Grey Shrike, by Steve Cale

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident. Green listed.

Recorded from 20 sites with the highest count of 8 on 19th Feb HBW (DK) with breeding proven from Neatherd Moor, Dereham; Mattishall and Potter's Fen.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor. Green listed.

Recorded from 31 sites mainly in 1s and 2s but with up to 8 at Neatherd Moor, Dereham on 22nd Sept and HBW on both 17th Sept and 19th Nov. The only proof of breeding was the report of a juvenile at Worthing on 8th June (DK).

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Common resident. Green listed.

Most monthly maxima came from the WVBS's monitoring of Pensthorpe: Feb 22; Mar 20; Apr 28; June 40; July 55; Aug 140; Sept 90.

Elsewhere in Jan 24 Dereham; May c20 Swanton Morley GP; Oct 35 Worthing; Nov 100 N Tuddenham and Dec 40 HBW.

Although recorded from more than 25 sites proof of breeding came from only Mattishall, Pensthorpe and Swanton Morley.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident. Green listed.

Most monthly maxima came from the WVBS's monitoring of Pensthorpe: Feb 100+; Mar 30; Apr 42; June c25; July 25; Aug 120 and Oct 81.

Elsewhere in Jan 100 Guist; May 42 HBW; Sept c100 at both Little Witchingham Hall & Worthing: Nov 100 N Tuddenham and Dec 80 HBW.

Proof of breeding came from only Pensthorpe, Reepham and Worthing but no counts were made of rookeries.

Corvid roost. A mixed flock of c4000 Jackdaws and Rooks went to roost at Elsing Hall on 20th Jan (AJ).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident. Green listed.

Recorded in all months in single figures with c20 at Pettywell, Reepham on 9th May (DG) and 11 at Pensthorpe on 21st Oct (BP, IB) being the only double figure records.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green listed.

Recorded in all months from 20 locations.

There was no proof of breeding and the highest count was only 7 on 18th Jan at Rushmeadow (PJ).

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Common resident. Green listed.

Most records are in single figures but site maxima 20 Pensthorpe, c12 Reepham, 10+ SMHOT and 11 Whitwell Common.

Proof of breeding from 9 of the 27 sites reported.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Most records are in single figures but site maxima 15 HBW, 40 Pensthorpe, c20 Reepham, 15 SMHOT and 13 Whitwell Common.

Proof of breeding from 6 of the 27 sites reported.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

All records are single figure from 19 sites.

Probably because juveniles are not distinctive proof of breeding came from only Pensthorpe and Pightle Way, Reepham.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Fairly common resident. **Red listed.**

Reported from 17 sites in single figures with maxima 5 Pensthorpe and 4 SMHOT. No reports of breeding.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Scarce summer visitor. **Green listed.**

Two Marsham Heath 20th Apr (RG,RN) then singing males on Cawston Heath one on 8th and 2 on 19th Oct (JH).

Woodlark,
by Steve Cale



Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed.

Recorded from 24 localities throughout the year with a maximum count of 36 at Gateley Hill Farm on 27th May and 35 pairs at Sparham Hall Farm. There were 30 at Mill Farm, North Tuddenham on 11th Nov and 12 at Godwick on 14th Dec.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Decreasing. Green listed.

First records of the year came from Pensthorpe (PA, MS) and Sparham (CS) on 7th Apr.

The main colony in the area was at Lyng Easthaugh with 130 active nest holes on 7th June (RG). Ringing at this site indicated a poor fledging rate with only 20% of 122 birds caught being juveniles.

They were recorded from 7 other localities but with much lower counts.

The last record was 17th Sept HBW (DK).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Decreasing. Green listed.

The first record of the year was 2 at Pensthorpe on 29th Mar (LB, RG) but no double figure counts were reported until c30 at Rushmeadow on 26th Apr followed the next day by 40 at Bylaugh SW and the same at Pensthorpe (BP, ID). There were 100+ at Elsing on 17th Aug (BS). There were no significant roosts at Guist with a maximum of 50 on both 18th July and 20th Aug.

During the breeding season 105 nesting attempts were monitored (many pairs are double brooded): Great Witchingham Equestrian Centre 52, Lyng Easthaugh 18, Swanton Morley 23, Themelthorpe 6 and Weston Longville Equestrian Centre 6. The only other proof of breeding was from Worthing.

The last record was 5 at Neatherd Moor, Dereham on 21st Sept (BH).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

The first arrival reported was one at Lyng Easthaugh Lakes on 9th Apr (JH).

There were many double figure counts. Maxima by site: Neatherd Moor, Dereham 20, Swanton Drive, Dereham 34, Dereham SW 200, Guist Common 80, HBW 20, Lyng GP 100, Burgh, Mattishall 100, Pensthorpe 30, Reepham 60, N Tuddenham 50 and Worthing c150.

The last record was at Great Ryburgh on 3rd Oct (LB).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare resident expanding its range through valley. **Green listed.**

An increase on 2016 with reports from Bintree Mill where 2 on 6th / 7th May (JH, MMc), Costessey on 20th Apr (DH), Costessey Fish Farm 14th May (AG), 1 or 2 at Pensthorpe between 8th May and 5th Dec.

Up to 5 were recorded at Swanton Morley GP during the WVBS Dawn Chorus visit on 7th May.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Records were received throughout the year from 31 localities.

Proof of breeding came from Alderford Common, Neatherd Moor & Swanton Drive, Dereham, Pensthorpe, Whitwell Common and Worthing.

Double figure maximum counts by site: Alderford Common 15+, Bylaugh SW c25, Great Ryburgh 13+, Guist Common 12, HBW 18, Pensthorpe 17, Reepham c18, Whitwell Common c12 and Worthing 10.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce passage migrant.

A single record of one on King Street, Norwich on 20th Sept (JH).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer resident, passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor. Green listed.

One wintered at Bylaugh SW being recorded on 2nd & 28th Jan, then 2 on 11th, 15th & 19th Feb (A&CJ, C&FN *et al*). There was then one at Drayton on 26th Feb but what was perhaps the first spring bird 10th Mar Neatherd Moor, Dereham (BH) followed by 4 two days later.

Recorded from 39 localities but proof of breeding only received from Bittering GP (JH), Dereham (HB) and Guist Common (RG, LB, RN).

The last summering bird was at Reepham on 25th Oct (DG) while the one on HBW on 19th Nov (DK) could be considered a wintering bird.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common, but decreasing, summer resident and passage migrant. Amber listed.

The first spring arrival was at Pensthorpe on 29th Mar (RG, LB).

Records came from 19 localities with the maximum counts on 27th Apr when there were 5+ at Foxley Wood (LB) and 7 at Pensthorpe (BP, ID).

The last record of the year was as early as 10th Aug when there were 2 at Pensthorpe (LB, RG).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer resident, passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor. Green listed.

No birds were recorded in the first winter period. The first summer arrival was at Scarning on 11th Mar (IB).

Records came from 31 localities during the summer with proof of breeding from only Guist Common (RG, LB, RN) and Whitwell Common (DG).

The last summering bird was recorded from Dereham on 2nd Sept (BH).

A female was in a Lenwade garden eating *Pyracantha* berries on 6th Dec (RG).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. **Green listed.**

The first spring arrival was at Sparham on 24th Apr (CS). Recorded from 10 localities with a maximum count of 5 at Swanton Morley GP on 7th May. The last record of the year was as early as 7th July at Pensthorpe (BP, ID, RG).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant. **Green listed.**

The first spring arrival was at Sparham on 13th Apr (JH). Records of 1 or 2 came from 9 localities during the summer with the last on 4th July at Neatherd Moor, Dereham (BH).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Common summer resident. **Green listed.**

The first spring arrival was 2 on HBW on 15th Apr (DK). Records came from 17 localities with a maximum count of 8 at Scarning on 1st May (IB).

The last record was one on 8th Sept at Neatherd Moor, Dereham (BH).

Dartford Warbler

Sylvia undata

Very scarce resident and migrant. **Amber listed.**

A bird judged to be a juvenile male was on Marsham Heath from 10th to 12th Nov (SB, IB, JH).



Dartford Warbler, by Gil Brooking

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant. Green listed.

The first spring arrival was at Sparham on 12th Apr (CS). Records came from only 9 localities with a maximum count of 5 at Pensthorpe on 27th Apr (BP, ID). Proof of breeding came from Guist Common (RG, LB, RN) and Whitwell Common (DG). The last record was one on 10th Aug at Guist Common (RN, LB, RG).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant. Green listed.

The first spring arrival was at Pensthorpe on 27th Apr (BP, ID). Records came from only 9 localities with a maximum count of 11 at Pensthorpe on 2nd July. It was a poor breeding year with few birds having second broods.

Only 12 birds were ringed at Guist Common compared with 60 in 2016.

The last record was one on 22nd Sept at Pensthorpe (RN, RG).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor. In some years very scarce; in others fairly common. Green listed.

Eight records only with a maximum count of 16 present at Longwater Norwich on 23rd April. All other records were from the same general area.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common resident. Green listed.

Recorded at 16 sites throughout the year with maxima of 2 at any one time.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common resident. Green listed.

Records throughout the year from multiple sites with a maximum count of 5 at Pensthorpe on 7th July (BP, RG, IB,).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Common resident. **Green listed.**

There were sightings throughout the year with a maximum of 10 at Pensthorpe on 15th June (RG). Singing males recorded at seven sites during spring.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Common resident. **Red listed.**

Reported the length of the valley throughout the year with a high count of 150 at Stanfield on 8th Jan (IB) and 100 on 13th Mar (BP). Proof of breeding from Neatherd Moor, Dereham and Mattishall.

During the period 14th Oct to 11th Nov a total of 5203 birds were observed migrating through the Tud valley (AG).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus torquatus*
Very rare passage migrant. **Red listed.**

5 records during Apr from various sites with a maximum of 5 reported from Cawston Heath on 17th Apr (JH).

Four autumn records from 2 sites only namely Cawston and Marsham Heaths.



Ring Ouzel,
by Steve Cale

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Green listed.

Recorded at many sites in the valley during the year and with proof of breeding coming from Mill St. Elsing, Dereham, Pensthorpe, Reepham and Matishall.

Peak counts of 26 at Pensthorpe on 12th Jan and 50 on 31st Dec (DG). Between 30th and 11th Nov a total of 201 birds were counted migrating through the Tud valley (AG).

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed.

High counts of 300 at Daffy Green (IB) and 200 at Sparham (CS) on 20th Feb with the last record for the 1st winter period being on 19th April at Dereham.

The first report of returning birds was on the 18th Oct at Potters Fen (PA) with 300+ being recorded at Reepham on 6th Nov (DG).

During the period 24th Oct to 11th Nov a total of 1939 birds were observed migrating through the Tud valley (AG).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and passage migrant. Red listed.

Recorded at multiple sites throughout the year in single figure amounts with a high count of 6 at Hoe on 19th Feb (DK).

Proof of breeding came from Swanton Morley and Potters Fen and singing males were heard at Dereham, Gateley, New Costessey and Lyng Easthaugh.

Between 23rd Oct and 11th Nov a total of 59 were seen on migration through the Tud valley (AG).

Redwing *Turdus illiacus*

Common passage migrant and fairly common winter visitor. Red listed.

During the first winter period the most notable counts were of 40 at both Worthing (BP *et al*) and Lenwade (RG) during the 1st week of Jan together with 100 at Daffy Green on 20th Feb (IB). The last record for this period was from Themelthorpe on 2nd Apr (DG).

In the autumn the earliest records were of 166 at Cawston Heath (JH), 28 at Elsing Mill St (C&FN) and 20 at Sparham (CS) on 8th Oct. Also in this period between 8th Oct and 11th Nov 3616 birds migrated through the Tud valley (AG).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common resident. Red listed.

Mainly single figure counts from multiple sites however with two notable sightings of 25 at Sparham on 22nd Sept (CS) and 29 at Helhoughton on 24th Sept (P&CH).

Proof of breeding came from Mattishall only.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common but declining summer visitor. Red listed.

A pair was recorded at Sparham on 17th May (CS) and the last record of the year came from Neatherd Moor, Dereham on 2nd Sept (BH).

A family of four was at Sparham on 4th August but it is uncertain whether they bred there.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Very common resident. Numbers may be augmented by passage migrants in autumn. Green listed.

Records came from multiple sites throughout the valley with a high of 28 being recorded at Pensthorpe on 23rd Jan (LB, RN).

Proof of breeding noted at 8 sites.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rare declining summer visitor. **Red listed.**

One record only from Ringland on 2nd April (AB).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Very scarce passage migrant. **Red listed.**

A solitary record from Bintree Wood on 19th Aug (RD).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Very scarce passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

A female was present at Ringland on 6th May (MMcC).

Whinchat *Saxicola ruetra*

Very scarce passage migrant. **Red listed.**

One record only from Pensthorpe on 8th May (PA, BH).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce passage migrant. **Green listed.**

Recorded at 4 sites during the year with two birds being present at Marsham Heath on 19th Apr and 12th Nov.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Scarce passage migrant. **Green listed.**

Four birds at Bittering and 1 at Sparham on 13th Apr (JH); 2-5 at Sparham between 16th-18th Apr (CS).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Common sedentary resident. **Amber listed.**

Only single figure counts during the year apart from 12 being recorded at Sparham Hole on 18th Feb (DG).

Proof of breeding from Reepham only.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident. **Red listed.**

Thirty birds present at Ringland on 2nd Jan and flocks of c50 present at North Tuddenham from May to Oct (BP).

There was proof of breeding from 5 sites.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Rare passage migrant in valley. **Red listed.**

Two records only of solitary birds both from Bintree Mill on 6th and 9th Apr respectively (JH,SB).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Scarce resident. The valley is a stronghold in Norfolk for this species. **Red listed.**

Recorded at 21 sites and throughout the year. Proof of breeding at Lenwade Bridge, Scarning, Sparham and Worthing.

Pied Wagtail (White Wagtail) *Motacilla alba*

British form “*yarrellii*” (Pied Wagtail) common resident and passage migrant. Nominate continental form (White Wagtail) very scarce passage migrant. Both forms **Green listed.**

Recorded at multiple sites and throughout the year.

Proof of breeding from Bittering, Neatherd Moor and Worthing.

High counts of 50 at Derheam SW on 18th Jan and 30 at Bylaugh SW on 28th Jan.

On 20th Oct 855 were recorded going to roost at Longwater Lane Costessey (JL).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Rare summer visitor and passage migrant. **Red listed.**

A single record from Cawston Heath on 20th Oct (JH).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Scarce resident and passage migrant. A fairly common winter visitor.

Amber listed.

Records from 14 sites during both winter periods with high counts of 100 at Beetley on 5th March and 44 at Cawston Heath on 19th Oct (JH).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

Green listed.

Most records are from the 1st winter period with the last being on 29th March. There were 40 present at New Costessey on Jan 8th. First record for the second winter period was on Sept 8th.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident. Green listed.

Recorded at multiple sites and in every month of the year. Highest counts were of 30 at North Tuddenham on 21st Oct (BP) and 50 at Sparham on 1st Dec (CS).

Proof of breeding from Dereham and Pensthorpe.

Hawfinch

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

Very scarce resident and passage migrant. Red listed.

Seven records all in the 2nd winter period. In Oct single at Brandiston on 13th (SBa) and higher count of 3 at Sparham on 27th (JH); in Nov 1 at Taverham on 1st & 2 on 5th, 1 at Attlebridge on 9th and 1 at New Costessey on 14th (RBA).

Hawfinch, by Gil Brooking



Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common resident. **Amber listed.**

Recorded at nearly 30 sites and throughout the year. Up to 9 birds seen on the Hoe Bird Walk in the 2nd winter period.

Proof of breeding came from Potters Fen, Dereham and Gt Ryburgh.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Recorded at multiple sites but apart from counts of 10 at New Costessey (Jan), Pensthorpe (Jan) and Worthing (Dec), flocks were all in single figures.

Proof of breeding reported only from Mattishall.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Fairly common resident. **Red listed.**

Notable flocks from several sites during the year.

During the first winter period 100 at Billingford, Gressenhall & Hoe and 200 at Sparham.

In Aug & second winter period 100 at North Tuddenham; 101 at Dereham Netherd Moor in Sept; 100 at Broom Green, Colkirk, Shereford & Sparham in Dec.

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Scarce and declining resident and fairly common winter visitor. **Red listed.**

In the 1st winter period there were records from 3 sites. In Jan 5 at Pensthorpe with a flock of 60 being seen at Hoe on 15th (DK). In Feb 1-3 at HOT Sculthorpe Moor Reserve.

Common Redpoll (Mealy) *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

A record of a single bird at Pensthorpe on 18th Dec (PH & BH).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Recorded at many sites and throughout the year. Counts of 30+ at Whitwell Common, Pensthorpe and Taverham (Marriotts Way).

Proof of breeding came from Costessey, Dereham Neatherd Moor, Reepham and Worthing.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Common or fairly common winter visitor. **Green listed.**

Records from both winter periods with a maximum of 70 at Pensthorpe on 23rd Jan and 40+ at Taverham Mill on 26th Feb.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Common but declining resident. **Red listed.**

Recorded throughout the valley with counts of 50-55 in Jan and 120 in Dec at Sparham Hall Farm feeding on birdfood strips during winter months (CS).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Fairly common resident. **Amber listed.**

Up to 100 birds counted in birdfood strips at Sparham Hall Farm during Jan and 140 in Dec (CS). Single figure counts also from several sites.

Proof of breeding came from Dereham SW and Pensthorpe.

Escapes

These species have been recorded in the area but are clearly not native and it is assumed that they have not reached Britain by their own effort.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Balkans east through C Asia, N Africa. Winters S to Nile valley, India & China.

One at Ringland on 26th Feb (DH).

Harris Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

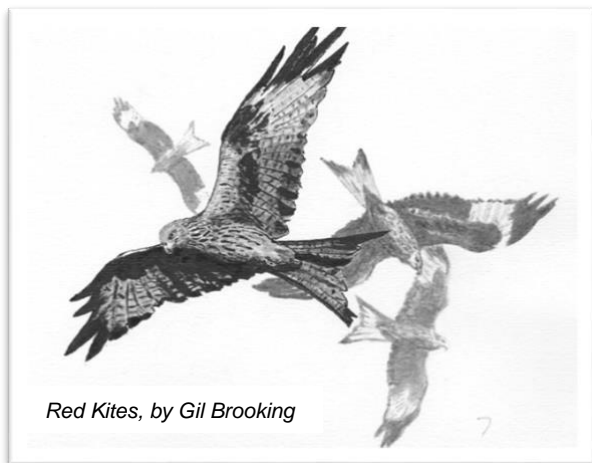
W Panama to Brazil & N Argentina.

One at Bintree on 18th June (RD)

Canary *Serinus canaria*

Canary Islands, Madeira, Azores.

One was seen at Potters Fen, Dereham on 18th Jun (PA).

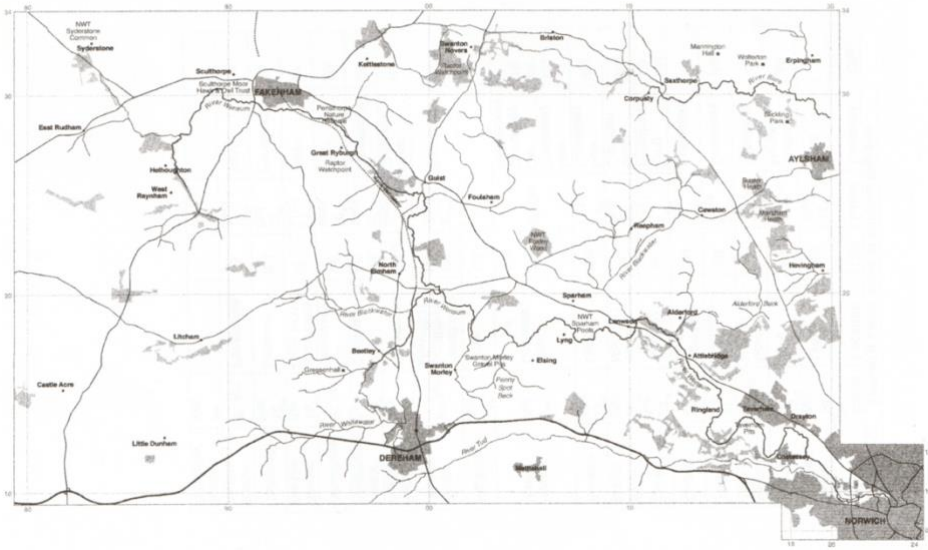


Red Kites, by Gil Brooking

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Wensum Valley Recording Area



Principal Sites and their Grid References

The grid references refer to the co-ordinates of the south-west corner of the 1km square where most of the site is located in, or where there is an access point (e.g. car park).

N.B. The provision of the grid reference does not give you the right to visit the site. Some of the sites listed are private, please respect landowners' wishes & follow the Birdwatchers' Code.

GP = gravel pits, SW = sewage works

Site	Grid ref.	Site	Grid ref.
Alderford/ Alderford Common	TG1218	Briston Common	TG0631
Attlebridge	TG1216	Broom Green	TF9823
Attlebridge, Hall Farm	TG1315	Bylaugh	TG0318
Bawdeswell Heath	TG0319	Bylaugh Hall	TG0418
Beetley, Roosting Hills GP	TF9818	Bylaugh Marshes	TG0318
Billingford	TG0120	Bylaugh Sewage Works	TG0318
Billingford Common	TG0119	Cawston, Eastgate	TG1423
Billingford Pits	TG0119	Colkirk	TF9226
Bintree Mill	TF9924	Costessey Marshes (tetrad)	TG1811
Bintree Wood	TG0021	Costessey Mill	TG1712
Bittering	TF9317	Costessey Pits	TG1610
Bittering GP	TF9217	Costessey, Gunton Lane,	TG1910
Brisley Common	TF9521	Costessey, Tud valley,	TG1910

Coxford Heath	TF8330	Foulsham	TG0324
Coxford/Coxford Abbey	TF8429	Foxley Wood NR	TG0522
Daffy Green	TF9610	Frans Green	TG0913
Dereham SW	TF9713	Fulmodeston	TF9930
Dereham, Badley Moor	TG0111	Gateley	TF9624
Drayton	TG1813	Great Ryburgh	TF9527
Dunton	TF8830	Great Witchingham Common	TG0917
East Barsham	TF9133	Great Witchingham, Eade's Mill	TG0921
East Dereham, Heathfield	TF9714	Great Witchingham, Manor Farm	TG1021
East Raynham	TF8825	Great Witchingham, Mill Farm	TG0921
East Rudham	TF8228	Gressenhall	TF9616
Easton College	TG1310	Gressenhall, Union Farm	TF9716
Elsing	TG0516	Guist/Guist Common	TF9925
Elsing Hall	TG0315	Guist, Sennowe Park	TF9825
Elsing Mill/Mill Street/Bridge	TG0517	Helhoughton	TF8726
Elsing, Fustyweed	TG0518	Hellesdon Mill	TG1910
Elsing, Harnser Wood	TG0416	Hempton Marsh NR	TF9130
Elsing, Three Bridges Farm	TG0518	Hindolveston	TG0329
Etling Green	TG0113	Hockering	TG0713
Fakenham Common	TF9329	Hockering Wood	TG0714
Felthorpe	TG1618	Hoe	TF9916

Hoe Bird Walk	TF9917	Marsham Heath	TG1723
Hoe Rough/Common	TF9817	Mattishall Burgh	TG0511
Honingham	TG1011	Mattishall, Clippings Green	TG0412
Horningtoft	TF9323	Mileham	TF9119
Kettlestone	TF9631	Morton-on-the Hill	TG1216
Lenwade	TG0918	New Costessey	TG1710
Lenwade Bridge	TG1018	North Elmham	TF9820
Lenwade, Bridge Lake	TG1018	North Tuddenham Common	TG0314
Lenwade, Marriot's Way	TG1018	North Tuddenham, Elsing Lane	TG0214
Litcham	TF8817	North Tuddenham, Mill Farm	TG0413
Little Ryburgh	TF9628	North Tuddenham, Springfield Farm/Cottage	TG0414
Little Snoring	TF9532	Old Costessey	TG1611
Longham	TF9415	Pensthorpe	TF9428
Lyng	TG0617	Pockthorpe	TG0718
Lyng Easthaugh	TG0817	Pudding Norton	TF9128
Lyng Easthaugh, Walnut Tree Farm	TG0917	Reepham	TG1023
Lyng, Cadder's Hill	TG0617	Ringland	TG1314
Lyng, Collin Green	TG0816	Ringland Common	TG1314
Lyng, Kingfisher Lakes	TG0618	Scarning	TF9512
Lyng, Primrose Green	TG0616	Sculthorpe Airfield	TF8631
Mannington Hall	TG1432	Sculthorpe Mill	TF8930

Sculthorpe Moor NR	TF9030	Toftrees	TF8927
Shereford	TF8829	Twyford	TG0124
South Raynham	TF8723	Wendling	TF9313
Sparham Hall Farm/Fishing Lakes	TG0718	Wensum Valley Golf Club, Taverham.	TG1414
Sparham Hole	TG0519	West Raynham	TF8725
Sparham Pools NR	TG0717	Weston Green	TG1014
Swanton Morley	TG0116	Weston Longville	TG1115
Swanton Morley GP	TG0119	Whissonsett	TF9123
Swanton Morley, Park Farm	TG0216	Whitwell	TG0821
Swanton Morley, Waterfall Farm	TG0118	Whitwell Common	TG0820
Swanton Novers Raptor Watchpoint	TG0030	Wood Norton	TG0127
Taverham	TG1614	Worthing	TF9919
Taverham Fishery	TG1513	Worthing Church	TF9919
Taverham, Ghost Hill Wood	TG1713	Worthing, level crossing	TF9919
Themelthorpe	TG0524	Worthing, Swanton Road	TG0019
Thorpe Marriot	TG1614		

Earliest & Latest Reported Dates of Summer Migrants 2017

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Common Tern	9 th Apr	Sparham	CS	27 th July	Pensthorpe	MS,CH
Turtle Dove	17 th Apr	Marsham Heath	JH	8 th Sept	Brandiston	SB
Cuckoo	21 st Apr	Sparham Pools	CS,P A	11 th June	Guist Common	RG
Swift	29 th Apr	Lyng GP	CS	14 th Sept	Dereham Pensthorpe	BH AJ,RG
Hobby	13 th Apr	North Elmham	JH	4 th Oct	Sparham	CS
Sand Martin	7 th Apr	Pensthorpe	PA, MS	17 th Sept	HBW	DK
Swallow	29 th Mar	Pensthorpe	LB,R G	21 st Sept	Dereham	BH
House Martin	9 th Apr	Lyng Easthaugh	JH	3 rd Oct	Gt Ryburgh	LB
Chiffchaff	10 th Mar	Dereham	BH	25 th Oct	Reepham	DG
Willow Warbler	29 th Mar	Pensthorpe	LB, RG	10 th Aug	Pensthorpe	LB, RG
Blackcap	11 th Mar	Scarning	IB	2 nd Sept	Dereham	BH
Garden Warbler	24 th Apr	Sparham Pools	CS	7 th July	Pensthorpe	BP, ID
Lesser Whitethroat	13 th Apr	Sparham	JH	4 th July	Dereham	BH
Whitethroat	15 th Apr	HBW	DK	8 th Sept	Dereham	B

(continues)

Earliest & Latest dates of Summer Migrants 2017
(continued)

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Sedge Warbler	12 th Apr	Sparham Pools	CS	10 th Aug	Guist Common	RN, LB, RG
Reed Warbler	27 th Apr	Pensthorpe	BP, ID	22 nd Sept	Pensthorpe	RN, RG
Spotted Flycatcher	17 th May	Sparham	CS	2 nd Sept	Dereham	BH
Nightingale	2 nd Apr	Ringland	AB			

Latest & Earliest Reported Dates of Winter Visitors 2017

Species	Latest	Location	Obs.	Earliest	Location	Obs.
Goosander	14 th Apr	Sparham Pools	CS	25 th Nov	Haveringland Hall	JH
Golden Plover	19 th Feb	Lenwade	RG	26 th July	Bittering GP	BP, ID, JH
Fieldfare	19 th Apr	Dereham	MW	18 th Oct	Potter's Fen	PA
Redwing	2 nd Apr	Themelthorpe	DG	8 th Oct	Sparham Elsing Cawston Heath	CS C&FN JH
Brambling	29 th Mar	Pensthorpe	LB, RG	8 th Sept	Brandiston	SB

Reed Warbler, by Gil Brooking



WVBS 2017 Ringing Report

This report covers a mixture of longevity and distance movements. There are several exchanges with continental Europe – a Black-headed Gull to Holland and a Blackbird from Holland. A Reed Warbler to France. The Marsh Harrier that went to both Portugal and Belgium returned to breed in Lincolnshire.

My thanks to all the ringers that operated in the WVBS study area during 2017 for access to their records. For anyone wanting more interesting information gained from ringing I recommend going to:

www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports

Selected WVBS Recoveries Notified During 2017

Ringing details are shown on the first line whilst recovery information is on the second.

Sparrowhawk

1 st year male	04-Oct-2017	Little Barningham
Dead	19-Oct-2017	Melton Constable (3km W)

The mortality rate of birds is greatest in their first year.

Buzzard

2 nd year	15-July-2017	near North Tuddenham
Alive	10-Nov-2017	Sutton Coldfield
Alive	19-Nov-2017	Sutton Coldfield (186km W)

This is one the longest distance recovery within Britain reported in 2017. While the arrival of Buzzards into the area came from the West this wing-tagged bird is evidence that they also move in the opposite direction.

Marsh Harrier

Nesting Female	10-July-2011	Sculthorpe Moor, Fakenham
Alive	25-Dec-2012	Aerodromo de Leziria, Lisbon, Portugal(1720 SSW)

Alive	13-Apr-2013	Spurn Point (97km NNW)
Alive	16-Apr-2013	Anderby Creek, Lincs. (58km NW)
Alive	14-Nov-2015	Nr Ploegsteert, Hainaut, Belgium (277km SSE)
Alive breeding	05-Apr-2017	Langrick Bridge, Lincs (66km)
Nestling Female	04-July-2011	Breydon, Norfolk
Alive	18-Aug-2017	nr Sculthorpe Moor, Fakenham (61km)
Nestling Female	25-June-2016	Guist Common, Norfolk
Alive	10-Oct-2016	RSPB Strumpshaw (40km)
Alive	22-Dec-2016	Hickling (44km)
Alive	10-Apr-2017	RSPB Titchwell (32km)
Nestling Female	25-June-2016	Guist Common, Norfolk
Alive	14-Aug-2016	Boughton Fen (37km)
Alive	23-Sept-2016	Welney WWT (55km)
Alive	11-Jan-2017	RSPB Strumpshaw (40km)
Alive	06-Apr-2017	near Loddon, Norfolk (47km)

A wing-tagging project of nestling Marsh Harriers in Norfolk, primarily to see if they returned to their natal areas to breed, is producing interesting results. The first is one of the most nomadic birds recorded. The others are more typical with local wanderings.

Oystercatcher

Adult 3+ yrs	23-July-2005	Heacham, Norfolk
Dead	09-June-2017	Sparham, Norfolk (45km ESE)

This bird was 15+ years when it died but far short of the maximum age recorded of 40yrs 1 month and 2 days.

Black-headed Gull

First year	30-Dec-1996	Norwich
Alive	05-Dec-2017	Huizen, The Netherlands (271km E)

This bird was recorded in the winter within a few km of Huizen in 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017. The final sighting was a few days short of 21 years after initial capture, whilst the record stands at 29 years 5 months and 19 days.

Nestling	09-June-2017	Sparham, Norfolk
Freshly Dead	18-July-2017	North Hykeham, Lincs (125km WNW)

Found dead after only 39 days from ringing this is a fairly rapid movement.

Nestling	09-June-2017	Sparham, Norfolk
Freshly Dead	11-Oct-2017	Hanningfield Reservoir, Essex (125km SSW)

Recoveries from the Sparham colony have been mainly from a predominately westerly direction.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Adult female	16-June-2013	Guernsey, Channel Islands
Alive	03-July-2016	Buxton, Norfolk (449km NE)

Colour rings were read in the field.

Tawny Owl

Nestling	14-May-2017	Sculthorpe Moor
Freshly dead	19-Dec-2017	Scarning, Norfolk (20km SSE)

This young bird came to a sad end, hit by car.

Barn Owl

Nestling Male	04-Sept-2016	Bradenham, Norfolk
Freshly dead	03-Apr-2017	Scarning, Norfolk

The body when found was emaciated. Barn Owls are quite a sedentary species and this is an above average movement for the species.

Coal Tit

First-year Female 16-Nov-2010 near Kettlestone, Norfolk
 Re-trapped 06-Mar-2017 near Kettlestone, Norfolk

This is one of the oldest Coal Tits recorded in 2017 at 6 years 3 months and 18 days but falls well short of the record of 9 years 2 months 25 days set in 2008.

Marsh Tit

First-year 17-Jan-2011 Sculthorpe Moor, Norfolk
 Re-trapped 15-Feb-2017 Sculthorpe Moor, Norfolk

This is one of the oldest Marsh Tits recorded in 2017 at 6 years and 29 days but falls well short of the record of 11 years 3 months set in 2015. Incidentally this bird was also re-trapped in 2012, 2014 and 2015 at the same site showing the sedentary nature of this species.

Great Tit

First-year Female 16-Mar-2016 Old Weston, Cambridgeshire
 Caught by ringer 31-Dec-2016 near Kettlestone, Norfolk
 (104km ENE)

One of very few Great Tits to travel more than 100km during the year

Sand Martin

Juvenile 31-July-2016 Flixton Pits, Suffolk
 Caught by ringer 13-June-2017 Lyng Easthaugh (40km NNW)

This bird had presumably been bred at Flixton Pits but was recaptured as a breeding female at Lyng.

Adult 06-Aug-2015 Lyng Easthaugh
 Caught by ringer 25-July-2017 Coxford GP, Norfolk (31km WNW)

An example of a lack of site fidelity

Swallow

Nestling 14-Aug-2017 Hillington, Norfolk
 Caught by ringer 28-Aug-2017 Guist (29km E)

Nestling	31-July-2017	Swanton Morley
Caught by ringer	01-Sept-2017	Thornham, Norfolk (38km NW)

Post fledging dispersal caught at a communal roosts.

Blackbird

Adult Female	25-Oct-2007	Wons, Makkum, The Netherlands
Ring only found	28-Sept-2017	Scarning (300km W)

Juvenile	16-Aug-2008	Litcham, Norfolk
Alive ring read	17-Jan- 2017	Litcham, Norfolk

The first is typical of a continental Blackbird moving SW from Northern and Central Europe into Britain to winter while the second is typical of a British bred Blackbird remaining in the same area throughout its life.

Reed Warbler

Juvenile	05-Aug-2016	Guist
Caught by ringer	26-Aug-2017	Biganos, Gironde, France (915km S)

This bird was on its way to Africa when caught in France.

Stonechat

Nestling	21-Apr-2017	Dersingham Bog, Norfolk
Alive	22-June-2017	Pensthorpe, Norfolk (30km E)

This bird was one in a nest of five nestlings colour ringed as part of a North Norfolk Ringing Group project to understand the dispersal and movements of Stonechats breeding in Norfolk. This is one of the most rapid movements post fledging at 30km after only 62 days from ringing (c55days from fledging). Bob Hunter and Paul Adams read the colour ring combination while monitoring Pensthorpe.

Goldfinch

First-year Male	17-Feb-2007	Ysgyryd-Fach, Abergavenny
Dead	28-Mar-2017	Fakenham, Norfolk (284km ENE)

This is both a significant movement and a good age at 10 years.

Report on Monitoring of Common Terns & Black-headed Gulls at Sparham Hall Farm Lakes & NWT Sparham Pools for 2017

The monitoring of Common Terns and Black-headed Gulls at Sparham in 2017 included the island, the 2 rafts at Sparham Hall Farm and the NWT island and small raft.

As well as the Tern Rafts being cleaned the island on the adjacent trout lake was cleared of vegetation for the arrival of the Common Terns. This strategy was adopted to attract any Common Terns usurped by Black-headed Gull from the NWT island.

A single visit was made to monitor the rafts and islands on 9th June.

New raft

32 Black-headed Gulls were ringed plus 4 were not ringed as too small and 4 dead chicks.

3 Common Terns were ringed plus 3 nests: 2 x 3 eggs and 1 x 2 eggs

Original raft

37 Black-headed Gulls were ringed plus 4 dead chicks and 2 nests of 3 eggs.

Zero Common Tern

Platform

1 Black-headed Gull nest with 3 eggs

Charles' Island

Not a single chick or evidence of breeding. Any nests that may have been on the island were completely covered by the undergrowth.

A dead Oystercatcher with a ring was found. It had been ringed as an adult at Ken Hill, Heacham, Norfolk on 23rd July 2005. This bird was at least 3 years old when ringed so lived to 12 years but still far short of the maximum recorded of just over 40 years!

NWT raft

1 Black-headed Gull nest with 3 eggs. Amount of guano on the raft indicted geese have been on it.

NWT Island

48 Black-headed Gulls ringed, 10 too small to ring, c10 “escapees”. Not counted but probably another 10 or so Black-headed Gull nests with eggs.

Grand Total ringed 117 Black-headed Gulls and 3 Common Terns.

Recoveries

Black-headed gull EY88929 ringed at Sparham on 3rd June 2016 was alive (ring read in field) on 29th Nov 2016 at Redes Mere, Cheshire.

Black-headed Gull EZ91024 ringed on 9th June 2017 was found freshly dead at North Hykeham, Lincoln, Lincolnshire on 18th July 2017.

Previous recoveries have also shown a W to WNW dispersal.

Plans for 2018 Season

It is intended to remove the rafts from the lake in Nov 2017 to clean and maintain them. At the same time Charles’ island will be cleared and the cut scrub piled up for burning in early 2018. This should allow the Black-headed Gulls to start nesting on this island before the Common Terns return. The rafts will be returned to the water when the first Common Tern are reported in the area. By doing this it should prevent the Black-headed Gulls getting a head start and allow the Common Tern to compete for nest sites. The NWT island and raft will again be monitored.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to NWT and Charles Sayer for their permission and support of this project and to my many helpers.

Ray Gribble

Common Tern, by Steve Cale



Hempton Marsh Report

As always, credit must go to the volunteers and visitors to the reserve who, once again enabled a comprehensive record to be collected of the birds, insects and mammals seen here during the year.

Birds

The first visit of the year produced typical winter fare on the 2nd **January**. Two male Bramblings were present with 15 Chaffinches and a single Siskin was noted. Marsh Tit, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay and Buzzard were seen and 3 Teal and a Kingfisher were of interest. Ten Siskins were seen on the 3rd and 20 Pink-footed Geese on the 4th. On the 10th birds visiting the feeders included 32 Blue Tits, 4 Marsh Tits, 8 Chaffinches, 3 Siskins, a Redpoll and 4 Bramblings. A Kingfisher was seen again on the 12th when a Little Grebe was heard on the river and a Woodcock was notable on the 15th. Nuthatches were recorded on 10 dates and Treecreepers on 3 whilst other interest included a Green Woodpecker heard on the 20th and a Little Owl seen on the 22nd.

Over 50 Brambling were seen at the start of **February** with 10 Chaffinches, Sparrowhawk and Little Grebe also noted on the 2nd. Two Teal were seen on the 9th and a Song Thrush was singing away on the 14th. On the 17th 5 Brambling and a lone Siskin were noted and Grey Heron and Little Egret were on the marsh.

A Woodcock, 2 Mistle Thrush, Grey Wagtail, 4 Siskin and 2 Little Egrets were seen on the 18th and a Red-legged Partridge was the first of the year on the 25th. Seven Stock Dove were feeding on the marsh on the 26th when a pair of Reed Buntings were showing well on the scrape and to round off the month on the 28th a Green Woodpecker was calling and a flock of 8 Redpolls were noted.

Great Spotted Woodpeckers were drumming on the 1st **March** and a Kingfisher was once again seen on the 2nd. On the 3rd 25 Bramblings remained with 18 Chaffinches, 3 Siskins and 8 Redpolls around and 13 Stock Doves were noted on the 7th when 32 Greylag Geese were on the marsh. The first Chiffchaff was recorded on the 9th and 12 Starling were

present on the 11th; 3 Chiffchaff were present by the 30th when the first Blackcap arrived and 2 Little Egrets were around the scrape on the 31st.

A Kingfisher was fishing along the dyke in front of the Marsh Hide on the 6th **April** and 2 Oystercatchers were seen on the same date. A Red Kite drifted over on the 8th and the first Willow Warbler was heard on the 11th. An Egyptian Goose was on the marsh on the 12th and the first Swallows were seen on the 22nd with 2 birds over the scrape. Three Blackcaps were singing by the 27th and 3 House Sparrows were lingering by the entrance on the 29th when a pair of Bullfinch were moving slowly along the river.

Chiffchaffs, Blackcaps and Willow Warblers were still singing away in to the start of **May** and the first Sedge Warblers and Whitethroat arrived on the 4th. A male Marsh Harrier was hunting on the 7th with a Red Kite also passing over whilst 2 Common Snipe, 4 Lapwings and 2 Oystercatchers were of interest. A Cuckoo was calling regularly on the 11th and 12th and a Cetti's Warbler was vocal on the 18th; 4 juvenile Moorhens were noted on the same date with 2 adults in attendance and the first Swifts were noted on the 20th. Two male Cuckoos were watched chasing and sparring over the marsh on the 23rd, a female Marsh Harrier passed through and a male Kingfisher was fishing along the drainage channel. A male Bullfinch was seen on the 27th.

The Cetti's Warbler was still singing at the beginning of **June** and the 3 House Sparrows were still present on the 1st. A lone Swallow was seen on the 3rd and Pied Wagtail, Cuckoo and Little Grebe were noted on the 6th. Five Swifts, 4 Swallows and 2 Garden Warblers were the best of the 15th with Garden Warbler heard singing again on the 17th.

The first Reed Warbler wasn't logged until the 18th when a Red Kite was circling over the woods. Three young Sedge Warblers were seen on the 22nd and 2 Oystercatchers flew east down the river. Sedge Warbler, 3 Chiffchaffs and 2 Blackcaps were singing again on the 29th and 2 Swallows passed through.

The first House Martin of the year was recorded on the 1st of **July** with 3 Swift hawking over the marsh, and a Red Kite was over on the 2nd. Two Red-legged Partridges were seen on the 5th and 4 young Chaffinches and

a Pied Wagtail were present. A female Marsh Harrier was hunting again on the 10th and 13th when 3 Swallows, 5 Swifts and a House Martin were feeding over the reserve and another Garden Warbler was noted on the 20th.

Twenty Starlings were feeding on the marsh on the 29th with 8 Swallows and 3 House Martins over and a Willow Warbler was singing again on the 30th. Six Grey Herons were counted flying west over the marsh on the 31st when 8 Chiffchaffs were noted and a Reed Warbler was singing.

August was typically quiet with 2 Grey Herons on the marsh on the 2nd, 6th and the 11th. A young Kestrel was seen on the 10th and 3 Red-legged Partridges were in the grass on the 19th. A pair of Marsh Harriers were interacting over the marsh on the 28th.

A pair of Coal Tits were seen on the 1st of **September** at the feeders, and Jays were recorded on every visit. Three Buzzards were soaring together on the 3rd and 8 Black-headed Gulls were feeding on the marsh on the 4th when 2 Pied Wagtails were present and a Little Grebe was heard again on the river. Hundreds of corvids were seen flying to roost on the 15th, mostly Rooks and 2 Kestrels were hunting on the 21st, a family party of Great Spotted Woodpeckers was also noted with 4 or 5 birds seen near the feeders.

The paucity of returning migrants seen on the coast was reflected at inland sites too and **October** was quiet in largely settled conditions. Grey Herons and Little Egrets were seen throughout the month on the marsh and a Pied Wagtail was noted on the 3rd. Green Woodpecker was heard again on the 4th and likewise a Little Grebe on the 12th, with 3 Stock Doves seen on the same date.

Two Kestrels were seen again on the 13th and the limited passage included singles of Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Redwing and 5 Siskins overhead on the 13th. Jays, Nuthatches, Treecreepers and Marsh Tits were noted on the feeders on most visits.

A Chiffchaff on the 2nd was the only **November** sighting and a Kingfisher was seen on the 5th with a smart male Sparrowhawk and 6 Teal also present. A Redwing was lingering near the river on the 9th and

3 passed over on the 17th. A male Bullfinch and 3 Siskins were around the feeders on the same date and a Green Woodpecker was still to be heard nearby. A Kingfisher was seen perched on the fence running across the marsh on the 24th.

A Little Egret was on the marsh on the 2nd of **December** with 2 Grey Herons, 6 Long-tailed Tits were feeding along the ditch in front of the hide and a Marsh Tit was vocal by the entrance. At least 10 male Blackbirds were present on the 4th whilst Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Jay and Great Spotted Woodpecker were noted on the 7th and 2 Mistle Thrushes were seen on the 14th.

A frosty start on the 9th produced 30 Goldfinches, 2 Siskins, male Bullfinch, a Grey Heron on the marsh, Goldcrest and a Woodcock. A female Sparrowhawk was seen with prey on the 22nd and on the grazing marsh on the 28th were 70 Black-headed Gulls, 2 Common Gulls and 25 Mallards.

Insects

Eight species of Odonata and fifteen species of butterfly were recorded his year. Numbers were typically low and some common species such as Brimstones (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) weren't seen at all.

The first species sighted in **March** was a Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) on the 10th, followed by Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) on the 25th and Peacock (*Inachis io*) on the 30th. A Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegaria*), was out on the 6th of **April** and Small White (*Pieris rapae*) on the 13th.

Large Red Damselflies (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) were in evidence by the 4th of **May** and Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*) and Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) were both firsts for the year on the 18th. Azure Damselflies (*Coenagrion puella*) were seen from the 27th onwards along with Banded Demoiselles (*Calopteryx splendens*).

A Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) was seen on the 9th of **June** and Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) was recorded from the 17th onwards. On the 18th Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), Comma

(*Polygona c-album*) and Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) were all firsts for the year.

Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) was recorded from the 1st of **July** and on the 2nd Meadow Browns (*Maniola jurtina*) were out. The first Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) and Large Skippers (*Ochlodes sylvanus*) were seen on the 5th. Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) and Broad-bodied Chasers (*Libellula depressa*) were seen on the 30th.

A successful catch for the annual Hempton Moth Day amounted to 446 moths of 100 species on the 22nd July, with highlights including Chevron (*Eulithis testata*), 3 Crescents (*Helotropha leucostigma*), 5 Garden Tigers (*Arctia caja*), 5 Poplar Hawkmoths (*Laothoe populi*) and 3 Antler Moths (*Cerapteryx graminis*). High counts included 113 Dingy Footman (*Eilema griseola*), 17 Clouded Borders (*Lomaspilis marginata*), 27 Mother of Pearls (*Pleuroptya ruralis*), 15 Small Rivulets (*Perizoma alchemillata*) and 11 Canary-shouldered Thorns (*Ennomos alniaria*).

Both Common Blue Damselfly and Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) were recorded on the 6th of **August** with Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) out by the 10th.

The last invertebrates to be recorded were Common Darter and Speckled Wood on the 12th of **October** and Red Admiral on the 13th.

Mammals

A quiet year for mammal records beyond Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*), which were seen on almost every visit, with up to 3 of each. Brown Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) were seen on several visits early in the year but Water Voles (*Arvicola amphibious*) were restricted to one sighting of 2 on the 2nd July and just one Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*) was seen on the 2nd of November. Interestingly a Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) was seen twice on the 22nd of January and the 31st of March.

Pensthorpe Natural Park 2016 Wildlife Report

Richard Spowage
Reserve Manager, Pensthorpe Natural Park

Having only recently joined Pensthorpe in November 2016, I am still learning so much about this very diverse site and therefore it isn't easy for me to provide a concise report for 2016.

We are fortunate to have very good relations with The Wensum Valley Bird watching Society and Gary Elton from The Norfolk Ornithologists Association and it is their intimate knowledge of the site and their sightings which make them the main contributor to this report using their bird records and providing a valuable spread of count information across the year.

Key Wildfowl species included:

Tufted Duck which are an all-round resident but peak in winter months with a max count of 165 in November.

Shoveler – generally in low numbers most of the year but again peaked in November with a maximum count of 45.

Wigeon – we recorded low wintering numbers with a peak in November of 20 birds.

Teal – an important winter species with high counts in November of 450 birds and again in of December 665, this could have been down to the lower than normal levels on the Wader Scrape for this time of year.

Gadwall – seen around the site all year but with increased numbers in the winter months. The highest count was in September with 62 birds recorded.

Additional wildfowl recorded included; a juvenile male Long-tailed Duck on the 9th December after strong winds. There were also recordings of Pintail in November and December

Key waders

Lapwing – an important species both as breeding birds and wintering flocks. During June, approximately 12 birds were present on site but no information is available as to breeding numbers or success rate. However, post breeding and wintering numbers steadily built from July onwards to peak at over 200 birds in December.

Other wader information is limited to however; unfortunately the summer breeding season was very disappointing due to summer flooding.

Other birds of note have included occasional wintering records of Bittern and a report of successful breeding of Hobby on site.

Our Constant effort ringing site saw a large number of bird species ringed. Reed Warblers were in abundance with a total of 112 ringed; 73 of which were new birds. In comparison, 43 Sedge Warblers were ringed; 21 of which were new birds. Reed Bunting was in much lower numbers with 12 ringed; 6 of which were new birds.

Other wildlife

Dragonflies continued to have good numbers this year with the regular species being joined by sightings of Norfolk Hawker and Willow Emerald, a rare species difficult to distinguish from the Emerald Damselfly.

Butterflies also have a good assemblage but due to the weather, numbers were low during 2016.

A good range of mammals were found on site including Otter, Water Vole and Brown Hare.

Pensthorpe Constant Effort Site

For the Twelfth year running the NOA carried out ringing for the Constant Effort Site (CES) study at Pensthorpe.

During the breeding season between May and August, standardized data collected from Pensthorpe and the other CES sites throughout the country (approximately 140 in total) provides an accurate measure of changes in bird abundance. Recaptures of birds ringed in previous years also allow survival rates to be calculated. The ratio of juvenile to adult birds caught on CESs provides a second measure of breeding success that also takes into account the number of successful breeding attempts made per adult (as many species attempt to rear more than one brood per season) and the survival of young birds immediately after fledging. CES covers 24 woodland, scrub and reedbed species. As would be expected the weather plays a major part in the survival and breeding success of our birds and hence the CES results.

Winter 2016/17 was generally dry and mild, and relatively benign, until the second half of February when conditions turned stormy. All parts of the UK experienced drier than average conditions at some point over the winter. March and early April were warmer than average, but there were numerous late frosts in the second half of April. April was also drier than average for most areas, whilst May was generally warm and wetter than average especially in the southeast. Throughout the summer (June to August), rainfall totals were above average for the UK as a whole in every month and mean temperatures were at or above average throughout the summer.

The number of new birds caught this year (298) was an increase on 2016 (243) but still down considerably against 2014 (348). When comparing captures of new and retrapped birds collectively though as opposed to just new birds, the figures are virtually identical at 376 for 2017 against 380 in 2016. Catching conditions were again generally very good and a maximum number of standard ringing visits were achieved.

Comparing some of our catches at Pensthorpe over the last three years using new bird totals, showed an encouraging increase in species such as Willow Warbler (13 v 9 v 5), Chiffchaff (47 v 20 v 20), Greenfinch (9 v 4 v 2), and Blue Tit (53 v 29 v 32), whereas several species seemingly returned to a level in 2017 similar to 2015 such as Reed Warbler (57 v 73 v 49) and Wren (8 v 5 v 11) or showed little change such as Garden Warbler (6 v 7 v 5). Blackcap levels were also seemingly similar to 2016 (20 v 21 v 34) and Long-tailed Tits whilst showing a slight increase were still down on 2015 (16 v 6 v 34).

As commented earlier it is difficult to draw too many conclusions on the status of these key species at Pensthorpe. This is due to the small sample size collected; its principal value is being part of the national CES scheme. Also, species such as Long-tailed Tits form roaming flocks after breeding / fledging and often 'drag' other species with them which can account on occasion for large catches of a mixture of species.

At the time of writing not all of the CES data collected in 2017 has been received or analyzed with the conclusions below drawn against a series of sites holding sufficient data to analyze. Results from this year's CES survey show that there were significantly higher numbers of adult Chiffchaffs and Reed Warblers at the start of the season compared to the five year mean (2012–16). Numbers of Chiffchaffs were high in all regions except the west, while Reed Warbler numbers were particularly high in the north. For the second year running, more Chiffchaffs were recorded than in any year since the survey began in 1983. Survival rates for Chiffchaff and Reed Warbler were low in 2017, although only significantly so for Reed Warbler, suggesting overwinter survival of adult birds was not the driver of these increases. Although productivity for both species was significantly reduced in 2016, one possible cause of the increase is high overwinter survival of those juveniles that did manage to fledge last season.

Blackcap and Garden Warbler were the only migrants to exhibit a significant decrease in abundance compared to the five-year mean (particularly driven by results in the east and west of the country), with fewer Garden Warblers recorded in 2017 than in any previous year. Both

species also exhibited low survival rates in 2017, although the reduction was only significant for Blackcap. Productivity was significantly reduced in 2016 for both species, suggesting the reduction in numbers could have been caused by a combination of poor adult overwinter survival and poor recruitment.

Despite poor productivity in 2016 for most residents, three species (Trecreeper, Robin, Bullfinch), recorded significant increases in abundance in 2017 compared to the five-year mean. Adult survival rates were low for all three species (significantly so for Robin) and the proportionally low numbers of adults seen suggests that the mild weather over the winter of 2016–17 enabled the juveniles that did fledged last year to survive in good numbers.

Three resident species exhibited a significant decrease in numbers in 2017, with Chaffinch (-46%) and Greenfinch (-54%) recording particularly large decreases; although still significant, the decrease in Blue Tits (-13%) was less extreme. Both Chaffinch and Greenfinch were recorded in lower numbers than in any previous year. These species are mentioned here for completeness, with only Blue Tit caught in any number during the CES season at Pensthorpe and the above-mentioned increase in numbers at odds with the national trend.

Cetti's Warbler again featured in this year's CES totals, with two young birds caught and presumably reared at the site. Only one pair was seemingly present this year, with the male (one of last year's young) caught on three occasions and the female caught once, she being ringed as a breeding adult bird in 2016.

As with previous years extra nets were erected when time and man power allowed, adjacent to the CES site. This resulted in a further 193 birds being ringed with this total including twenty-two Reed Warblers and the same number of Blackcaps, twenty Chiffchaffs, and four each for Garden Warbler and Bullfinch. An impressive six Kingfishers were caught and ringed bringing the joint total number caught at the site this year to ten, with only one adult, a male, implying a good breeding season locally. On the downside only one Willow Warbler was caught, the lowest total of any

year we have operated the extra netting in the area and thought possibly to be related to the habitat maturing and becoming less suitable for breeding birds. Nestling ringing included a total of 81 Great Tit and Blue Tit pulli, and two young Oystercatchers.

Gary Elton
Assistant Warden



Goldfinch, by Gil Brooking

Environmental Stewardship at Sparham Hall Farm 1987 – 2017

Charles Sayer

30 years of success and failure.

A brief summary of some of the environmental options adopted is listed below:

1 Birdfood strips. This is one of the most obvious of all the options with very visible benefits for seed-eating birds in winter. I usually grow a millet/fodder radish mix. In the second year, the brassica has much insect life during the summer, as well as good winter seed. It is favoured by Linnets, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Brambling, Yellowhammers and Reed Buntings. Also used by Song Thrush, Dunnock, Tits and hunting Sparrowhawks. Tree Sparrows appear occasionally.

2 Over-wintered stubbles. These are used by seed-eating birds, and as a 'loafing area' for Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. Arable flora benefits too. Regrettably the prescriptions of the new scheme have made this useful option impossible for me to use after 2017.

3 Cultivated blocks. This is basically a summer fallow for arable flora but is helpful for breeding Skylarks. It could also attract Turtle doves, if there were any, or breeding Lapwing.

4 Pollen and nectar strips. Although primarily designed for insects, these are good for birds too – especially Linnets and Yellowhammers. Grey Partridge would also benefit – but there are none here now. They hum with life in the summer: but there is a fixation with growing legume species which enhance the already nectar-rich mid-summer season. It is really important to provide this nectar in early and late season.

5 Taking hillsides out of production to prevent run-off into water-courses. This has been used extensively at Sparham Hall. The main objective, of preventing pollution into the Wensum has been achieved, together with the creation of diverse flora for invertebrates. Birds that benefit the most are Skylarks [up to 15 pairs nest on these hills] and Meadow Pipits: also good for hunting raptors.

6 Field margins. I have about 25 hectares of these. They are good for diversity of flora and therefore important for invertebrates. Hunting Barn Owls have done well as a result. They are also good foraging areas for Yellowhammers. The key is keeping them as low in nutrients as possible – so FEWER nettles, docks, thistles and competitive grasses and MORE diverse flora. Spraying liquid fertilizer rather than spreading granular nitrogen is more accurate: and as a result less unwanted nutrient gets onto the margins.

7 Hedgerow management. Useful nesting opportunities, and good for wintering Thrushes. Important for invertebrates. I have 30 kilometres of hedges which I try to keep in differing growth stages. Some are cut annually. Some have been left untouched for over 25 years.

8 Woodland management. For me this involves trying to achieve varied structures. I want 'dappled sunlight' and sunny glades for insects. The ethos is: "Keep on planting, keep on felling, and retain standing dead wood". Never worry about using the chain saw as a management tool.

9 Nil fertilizer grassland. This should allow a more diverse sward and an increase in flowers. It should also reduce nutrients in water-courses.

The difference in targeted bird numbers in the 30 years is summarised below. In many cases these follow national trends, but the options that have been put in place really have made a difference to some species. The comments are very much my own and should be treated as such.

Barn Owl: one of the real winners. In the early 1970's there were between 1 and 0 pairs here. The provision of nesting boxes and the grass margins has increased numbers to 3 to 4 pairs.

Verdict: Big success.

Kestrel: Either stable or a slow decline. 2 pairs now.

Verdict: Qualified success.

Grey Partridge: Many of the options were meant to help Grey Partridge. But numbers have declined from 8 pairs to 0 - 1 pairs. They appear only to really thrive in areas that are kept.

Verdict: Total failure here.

Turtle Dove: I have got hedges of the right structure, weedy margins, ponds and cultivated blocks – pretty much everything they require – but no Turtle Doves. At the most there would only have been 3 or 4 pairs here in the late 1970's. I saw an autumn flock of 42 in 1990. I have seen 1 bird here in the last 2 years. In spite of a massive effort, achieving a revival in Turtle Dove numbers seems like pushing water uphill.

Verdict: Sad failure.

Lapwing: Never bred very often, but lucky to see any displaying birds at all now. The habitat is here, but they face similar problems of predation to all ground nesting birds.

Verdict: Failure.

Song Thrush: A sharp decline in the 1970's, which has now tailed-off. They use the bird food strips where they feed among the brassicas.

Verdict: Stable/Slow decline.

Skylark: A slow decline. 45 pairs in 1980. 35 pairs in 2017. Good breeding habitat on the grassy hills. Vulnerable to predation.

Verdict: Qualified success. [at least they are still here]

Greenfinch: Can get up to 100 in wintering flocks – especially on sunflowers. The ups and downs of Greenfinch are well documented and numbers in 2017/18 have been very low. If there was more birdfood grown in the field, and fewer garden feeders, Greenfinches might benefit from less trichomonosis. That's a thought.

Verdict: Qualified success.

Linnet: Good wintering flocks of up to 200 use the bird food strips. About 10 breeding pairs.

Verdict: Success.

Tree Sparrow: sometimes visits bird food strips with flocks of 70 noted in 1990's. Now more likely to see just a handful – if at all.

Verdict: Initial success has given way to disappointment.

Yellowhammer: Good wintering flocks of up to 100 and a stable breeding population of about 10 pairs.

Verdict: Success.

Reed Bunting; Good wintering flocks of up to 100. Breeds regularly in the 'valley bottom'.

Verdict: Success.

Woodland birds:

So much has been written about intensive agriculture and its effect on farmland birds. But it does not explain the decline of so many woodland species. During the length of my stewardship schemes Redpoll, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Marsh Tit and Willow Tit have all either crashed or disappeared. This suggests to me that there is more going on in farmland birds than just intensive agriculture – which points to the impacts of climate change.

Discussion:

Growing seed for birds is easy. Arable farmers grow wheat and barley very successfully. Growing millet, sunflowers, or fodder radish for birds is therefore not a problem. It just requires encouragement. So it should be possible to crack the winter food supply problem. In the past there have been some disgraceful examples of bird food plots. If the same effort is put in as it would be for a wheat crop, there could be an abundance of food for birds.

Reversing declines in invertebrates is more of an issue. Invertebrates are key to a healthy environment and they need space.

Environmental stewardship really can deliver results – especially where it is operated with enthusiasm. The challenge is getting more people enthusiastic and to treat the options as a crop rather than just a source of income. Uptake of the new schemes has been terrible due to their over-prescriptive nature. Landowners are simply not prepared to risk being fined during rigorous inspections. Sadly the schemes are now about administration rather than environmental gain.

Finally, and controversially, there needs to be an adult conversation about the effects of predation. Some species require predators to be removed in order to thrive – for instance spending large amounts of public money on schemes for ground-nesting birds, and not exercising some predator control is often a complete waste of time and money: and like it or not, it will soon be impossible to get a woodland management agreement without a deer management plan. How far to go and where to draw the line is an exciting topic for another day!



Tree Sparrow, by Steve Cale

The Weather Report for 2017

January

Although the month was colder and quieter than average Norfolk was spared the much harsher conditions that prevailed on the near continent. Daytime temperatures remained close to normal (although always failing to reach 10c). But nights were cold with 17 air frosts and 21 ground frosts. The lowest temperature of the year on the 22nd was a relatively mild -5c and on the 26th the maximum of 0.8c was the year's coldest.

Although snow fell on 5 days it only lay thinly on the 13th whilst fog shrouded 6 mornings during the month. Rainfall at Costessey totalled 45.8mms and this was 89% of average. The monthly mean temperature was 3.1c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	1	3	5	0	1	4	6	11

February

An unexceptional month, which was also the mildest since 2014 with total rainfall of 45.9mm, this was 107% of average. Although winds between North East and South East dominated the first half of the month they only imported cold air over our region from the 8th to the 12th when slight snow fell daily and lay thinly on the 12th.

Most unusually the month escaped a single air frost with the mercury falling to a mere -0.1c on the 11th. A brief but violent gale on the 23rd produced damaging gusts over the whole county. The monthly mean temperature was 6.4c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	4	6	4	1	10	1	1	1

March

The month was warmer than an average April with consequent early spring growth due to high soil temperatures. Over most of Norfolk it was the warmest March since 1938. There were not any air frosts and on the 30th the maximum of 21.3 was the highest March reading locally since 1990.

The Costessey rainfall total was 39.6mm which was 85% of average. The monthly mean temperature totalled 9.3c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	3	4	2	3	6	11	2	0

April

Notably dry with no measurable rainfall until the 14th and the monthly rainfall total was barely half the long time average. It was also a mild spring month with high day maxima although ground frosts were frequent.

There was a huge range of temperatures on the 9th when an early morning minimum of 2.0c was recorded and this was followed by an afternoon maximum of 23.2c. On the 25th there was a final brief skirmish with winter with an early morning snowfall.

Rainfall total for the month was 24.4mm (50% of average) and the mean temperature was identical to March at 9.3c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	3	2	1	0	3	1	9	12	0

May

May was dry and exceptionally warm with a mean temperature that was 3c above average and was an early summer rather than a late spring month. There were eight days recorded during the month with a maxima in excess of 23c. In recent years only May 2011 is comparable, with the last warmer May being recorded in 1947. The initial 15 days were arid and with marked evaporation and a mere 1.2mm of rainfall. Thereafter 38.2mm of rainfall was measured, precipitating a surge in plant growth.

A significant air frost on the 10th caused some damage particularly in rural localities.

The rainfall total came to 39.4mm which was 87% of average and the monthly mean temperature was 14.0c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	3	4	2	4	7	4	4	1	2

June

Locally this was the hottest June since 1976 (which heralded the epic summer of that year). Although there were 15 consecutive days devoid of rainfall the monthly rainfall total was nearly double the average. This excess was largely due to an exceptional inundation on the 27th of 76.5mm. This figure alone be well in excess of the average monthly total and in the Norwich area it was the wettest June day since at least the end of the 19th century. There were some localities that recorded even higher totals for the day, notably Santon Downham at 90mm.

There were two days with recorded maxima of 31c which were the hottest days of the year and also on the 22nd a night minimum of 18.6c was notable.

The Costessey rainfall total was 109.2mm and this was 194% of average. The monthly mean temperature was 17.5c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	2	2	1	3	5	16	0	1

July

July was slightly warmer than average although a wet month largely due to thunder on 5 days and measurable rain on 17 days enabling lush plant growth. Daily maxima exceeded 21c on 26 days although the monthly maximum of 27.4c was relatively modest. With the exception of the 13th when the minimum fell to 6.9c the nights were uniformly mild.

Rainfall totals came to 75.7mm which was 134% of average and the mean temperature was 17.7c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	1	0	0	2	5	7	8	7	1

August

Unlike many other localities in the UK Norfolk an August of normal temperatures but however most of the county was wet with Costessey measuring rainfall of 29.0mm on the 9th. There were 22 days when the recorded maxima was in excess of 21c. But there was no excessive heat with the maximum of 26.1c on the 29th being quickly followed on the 30th where the maximum was only 15.2c. This was an interesting example of late summer warmth being followed by early autumn cooling literally clashing within 24 hours.

The rainfall at Costessey totalled 66.2mm which was 129% of average and the mean temperature came to 16.9c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	4	0	2	2	4	6	11	0	2

September

Instead of being an extension of summer as is so often the case September this year was a prelude to autumn and although the mean temperature was not far below normal it was a remarkable 3.6c below that for September 2016. Only two days achieved a maximum of 21c but the predominance of cloudy nights saved the county from frost.

The rainfall total of 68.0mm was 125% of average and the mean temperature was 13.9c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	4	1	2	4	1	3	9	6	0

October

This was the mildest October since 2014 and despite a preponderance of westerly winds the driest since 1995. Ex hurricane Ophelia on the 16th caused not only unusual effects due to pollution but a high mid October maximum of 22.7c. There was massive pollution imported to our shores on a vigorous southerly airstream. Dust whipped up by high winds over the Sahara and together with smoke from massive forest fires in Portugal and western Spain caused a very unusual cloud sheet to slowly spread from the south and turn the sun into a dull red orb as if it was sunset. Later the sky assumed a Yellow Ochre hue casting an eerie light that created the illusion that the countryside was being viewed through a yellow filter.

The monthly rainfall total was 19.9mm and this was 34% of average. The mean temperature was 12.7c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	0	0	1	3	9	8	6	2

November

A typical November although there was a total absence of significant fog and it was a very “westerly” month with only four days failing to experience winds from a westerly quarter. A plunge of air originating in the arctic brought a foretaste of winter on the 30th with a bitter wind and a temperature close to freezing all accompanied by snow showers that dusted the county with a slight cover even in central areas.

Rainfall totals in Costessey totalled 66.6mm (95% of average) and the mean temperature was 6.7c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	0	0	1	3	9	8	6	2

December

An unusually drab month and it shared with 2012 the distinction of being the coldest since 2010. Also it was the wettest since 1979 causing minor flooding at the month’s end. Although generally slight in nature calm conditions during the late November to mid December period allowed ground frosts to be particularly prevalent. From the 24th November to the 20th December only four nights escaped ground frost with twelve air frosts being recorded in the same period. Slight snow fell on six days but only provided a thin transitory cover on the 12th.

Recorded rainfall totalled 110.6mm (181% of average) and the mean temperature was 4.7c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	3	1	2	0	0	5	6	8	6

Monthly Summaries for 2017

Month	Total Rain-fall mms	Percentage of average rainfall	Days with Air Frost	Days with Ground Frost	Monthly Mean Temp.	Deviation from average	Mean soil temp. at 10cms depth
January	45.8	89	17	21	3.1	-0.9	2.7
February	45.9	107	1	12	6.4	+2.6	5.5
March	39.6	85	0	9	9.3	+3.4	7.1
April	24.4	50	3	13	9.3	+1.7	8.4
May	39.4	87	1	2	14.0	+2.7	12.7
June	109.2	194	0	0	17.5	+3.2	16.3
July	75.7	134	0	0	17.7	+1.2	16.1
August	66.2	129	0	0	16.9	+0.5	15.8
September	68.0	125	0	0	13.9	-0.3	12.9
October	19.9	34	0	0	12.7	+1.7	11.8
November	66.6	95	4	11	6.7	-0.0	5.6
December	11.6	181	12	20	4.7	-0.1	4.9

Annual Summary 2017

Total Rainfall	711.3 mm		
Days with rain recorded	182	Days with thunder	17
Lowest maximum	0.8c (26 th January)	Lowest minimum	- 5.0c (22 nd January)
Lowest grass minimum	-7.0c (22 nd January)		
Air frosts	37	Ground frosts	88
Days with sleet or snow	18	Days with snow lying	3
Days with hail	4	Mean cloud cover at 0900hrs	65%
Highest Maximum	31.1 ^o c (19 th June)	Highest minimum	18.6c (22 nd June)
Days with gales	1	Days with fog	10

Longest periods without any measurable rainfall: 30th March – 13th April inclusive and 10th June – 24th June inclusive.

Annual mean maximum: 15c

Annual mean minimum: 7c

Annual mean: 11c

Wind Direction Summary at 0900hrs.

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	21	17	24	25	31	61	102	56	28

Observations made with approved Meteorological Office instrumentation and in accordance with standard Met Office practice at Old Costessey, Norwich

Norman Brooks (Fellow Royal Meteorological Society)

Membership subscriptions

The WVBS membership year runs from 1st April to 31st March. During this time members will be able to participate in a programme of indoor and outdoor meetings, receive copies of the Society's monthly newsletter and a copy of the Society's Annual Report.

Membership renewals are due on **1st April each year** and should be sent to the Membership Secretary.

New memberships should also be sent to the Membership Secretary. For details see the Join Us page at www.wvbs.co.uk

Current rates are £11.50 for individual and £17.50 for a couple.

*Cheques payable to: **Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society.***

Notes for Contributors

Submission of Records for 2018 Report.

All observers are requested to **submit records on a monthly basis** as this helps considerably with managing the workload and speeding up production of the Report. If it is not possible to submit records until the end of the year, this should be done **by the 31st January 2017**. Late records cause considerable problems in drafting the Systematic List and their inclusion cannot be guaranteed if received after this deadline. Where possible, observers are also asked to **submit records by email using the Society's records sheet**. This will enable records to be imported straight into the main spreadsheet thus reducing the work load.

If this is not possible then records should be submitted by hard copy using the Society's Record Sheets which are available at indoor meetings or can be downloaded from the Society's website www.wvbs.co.uk which also has submission details.

National and County Rarities

National rarities are dealt with by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee (BBRC). A full list of species and forms considered by BBRC as well as full details of requirements, procedures and a downloadable reporting form are available on the BBRC website www.bbrc.org.uk.

Species and forms considered rare at county level are dealt with by the County Records Committee. A full list of species or forms requiring descriptions and the details of requirements and procedures can be found on the CBC website <http://norfolkbirds.weebly.com>

All records of rarities should be submitted as soon as possible after the sighting.

National rarities accepted by the BBRC and county rarities accepted by the CRC will be published in the Report together with the initials of the finder / identifier.

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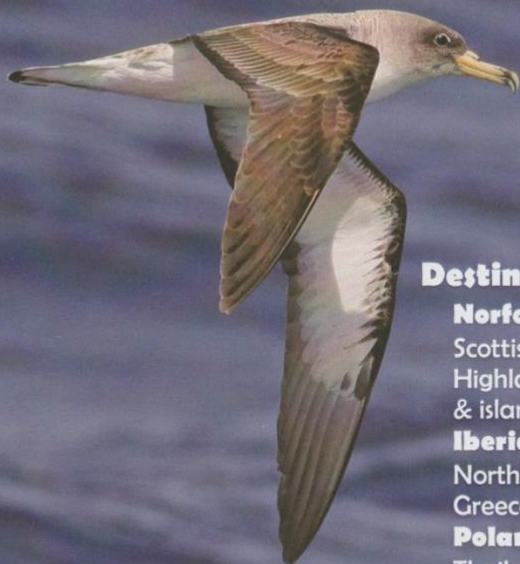
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2021 PDF of the WVBS Fifteenth Annual Report_201711th October 2021

Text changes

Format changes

Where	Original text	PDF text
Diary of Events Sunday 16th February Sunday 23 rd April Thursday 18 th May Thursday 21 st	Ring-tailed Harriers A total . . . were in which has how at that time how rare birds	Hen Harriers (ring-tailed) A total . . . was in which he has how at that time rare birds
Systematic List Greylag Goose Canada Goose Wigeon Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail & Shoveler Great White Egret Red Kite Corncrake Black-headed Gull Mediterranean Gull Herring Gull Turtle Dove Woodlark Chiffchaff Whitethroat Redstart Song Thrush	<i>naturakised</i> <i>Branta Canadensis</i> <i>Anus Penelope</i> <i>Anus</i> <i>Ardea alba alba</i> poss of single bird <i>Larus fuscus</i> <i>Larus melancephalus</i> <i>Larus argentus</i> <i>Streptopelia turtur turtur</i> <i>Lallula arborea arborea</i> reeived <i>Sylvia communis</i> <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> <i>phoenicurus</i> betweeen	<i>naturalised</i> <i>Branta canadensis</i> <i>Anas penelope</i> <i>Anas</i> <i>Ardea alba</i> possibly of a single bird <i>Larus ridibundus</i> <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> <i>Larus argentatus</i> <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> <i>Lallula arborea</i> received <i>Sylvia communis</i> <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> between
Earliest and Latest Summer Migrants	dates	Reported Dates
WVBS 2017 Ringing Report Barn Owl	Tawny Owls are quite a sedentary	Barn Owls are quite a sedentary
Hempton Marsh Report	Common Blue and Ruddy Darter	Common Blue Damselfly and Ruddy Darter Illustration of Goldfinch moved to the end of the Pensthorpe CES report
Environmental Stewardship at Sparham Hall Farm	and it's effect	and its effect
Weather Monthly Summaries Annual Summary	2016 2016 inc.	2017 2017 inclusive
Notes for Contributors	for 2016 Report	for 2018 Report