

**WENSUM VALLEY
BIRDWATCHING
SOCIETY**



**THIRD ANNUAL REPORT
2005**

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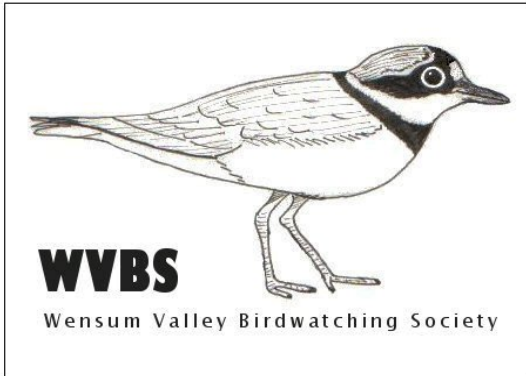
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Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

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Covering the Wensum Valley from Norwich to Fakenham and beyond.

Formed in March 2003, our aim is 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: Lenwade Village Hall, third Thursday of each month in 2005.

Committee April 2005 – March 2006

Officers:

Chairman

Alwyn Jackson

Recorder & Vice-chairman

Ray Gribble

Treasurer & Membership Secretary

John Horsman

Secretary

Rosemary Harvey

Newsletter Editor

Liz Waller

Publicity Officer

Colin Wright

Committee:

Margaret Shapcott

Josh Leeder

Bill Shepherd

Web Page: www.wybs.co.uk

Chairman's Report

It gives me great pleasure to present the third Annual Report of the Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society.

I am pleased to report that during 2005 the Society continued to grow in popularity, by November there were 106 members an increase of 10% over the year. It is always a great pleasure to welcome new members but also heartening to see so many who decided to renew their membership. Long may it remain so.

Our programme of indoor and outdoor meetings proved successful. We had a varied mix of topics for our talks from subjects further afield like the Harlequin Ducks in the Canadian Arctic to others nearer home like Holme Sweet Holme and Pensthorpe. The year was rounded off very enjoyably at our Christmas Social.

During the course of our outdoor meetings we visited a wide range of sites in Norfolk and ventured into Suffolk. The winter Bird Race was enjoyed by all those who took part but the summer event only attracted three teams of members. We enjoyed a rich variety of birds throughout the year and above all shared our interest together.

During the year the Society received an invitation from Jordan's Cereals (Chairman Bill Jordan owns Pensthorpe) to participate in the Company's 150th Anniversary Project to restore 150 acres of wetland habitat. We proposed to install a Common Tern raft on a pit at Sparham Hall Farm (owned by Charles Sayer) and purchase a boat in order to maintain the raft and monitor the terns. It is also planned to make the boat available to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to enable management work to be carried out on the islands on the Sparham Pools Reserve. Jordan's Cereals have donated £4000 in sponsorship to help us realise this idea and we hope to complete this work before the terns return in 2006. I would like to express our thanks to Jordan's Cereals for including the Society in their 150th Anniversary Project.

The Society also accepted an invitation from Jordan's Cereals to participate in their Wensum Valley Initiative. This aims to develop a closer liaison between the conservation groups with an interest in the valley. We

are very pleased to be part of this initiative and look forward to developing links with other groups.

I hope you find the 2005 Report of interest, I know Ray Gribble would welcome any constructive comments about the content and ideas for future editions.

I would like to thank all those people who contributed to making 2005 such a successful year in the life of the Society, the hard working Committee, our Leaders, the “caterers” and those of you who helped in any way.

Once again I look forward to sharing our interest in birdwatching together in the future.

Alwyn Jackson
Chairman

Programme of Events January to December 2005

Sunday January 9th

Bird Race. Start anywhere in the valley at 8am and finish at the Bridge Inn, Lenwade at 4pm.

Thursday January 20th

Indoor. "Harlequin Ducks & the Birds of the Canadian Arctic". Speaker. Prof. Fred Cooke.

Sunday February 6th

Field trip to Wildfowl & Wetland Trust Reserve at Welney. Leader Ray Gribble.

Thursday February 17th

Indoor. "What is happening to our woodland birds?" Speaker Dr Rob Fuller (BTO).

Saturday March 5th

Field trip to NW Norfolk. Leader Alwyn Jackson.

Thursday March 17th

Indoor. "Birds of the Mediterranean" Speaker Steve Cale (Bird artist & tour leader)

Sunday April 10th

Field trip to east Norfolk. Leader Ray Gribble. Joint trip with Nar Valley Ornithological Society.

Thursday April 21st

AGM. plus "Nature's Year in Norfolk" Speaker David Brooks.

Saturday April 23rd

Field trip to Cockthorpe Common & Stiffkey Fen. Leader Charles Neale.

Sunday May 8th

Dawn Chorus at Sparham Pools NR, starting at 4.15am. Leader Ray Gribble.

Thursday May 19th

Indoor. "Birds from around the world". Speaker Mike Linley.

Saturday May 21st

Field trip to Raptor Watchpoint near Great Ryburgh. Leader Charles Neale.

Saturday 4th June-Sunday 5th June

Bird Race starting anytime after 7pm Saturday & finishing by 7pm Sunday at the Bridge Inn, Lenwade.

Thursday June 16th

BBQ & Nightjars evening at Dersingham. BBQ at The Feathers Hotel, Dersingham. Leader Ray Gribble.

Sunday July 3rd

Field trip to RSPB Reserve at Minsmere. Leader David Pelling.

Thursday July 21st

Indoor. "Pensthorpe". Speaker Tim Nevard.

Saturday August 6th

Field trip to Pensthorpe. Leader Josh Leeder.

Thursday August 18th

Indoor. "The Gambia Experience". Speaker Charles Fox.

Saturday September 3rd

Field trip to Breydon Water. Leader Charles Neale.

Thursday September 15th

Indoor. "Holme Sweet Holme". Speaker Gary Hibberd.

Saturday October 1st

Field trip to N. Norfolk coast. Leader Ray Gribble.

Thursday October 20th

Indoor. "Birds of Wales". Speaker Peter Ransom.

Sunday November 6th

Field trip to N. Norfolk coast. Leader David Pelling.

Thursday November 17th

Indoor. "Birds and Animals of Namibia". Speaker Allan Hale.

Sunday December 4th

Field trip to Hawk & Owl Trust Community Reserve at Sculthorpe Moor & West Raynham. Leader Alwyn Jackson.

Thursday December 15th

Christmas Social.

All indoor meetings were held at Lenwade Village Hall starting at 7.30pm.

Summary of events in 2005

January - Despite a dismal January night more chairs than usual had to be wheeled out to seat over 60 people who turned up to our indoor meeting to hear Prof Fred Cook talk about birds of the Canadian Arctic and his study of Harlequin Ducks in British Columbia. Several non-members came along to make it an enjoyable evening.

Also in January, and in much kinder weather, our winter bird race in the Wensum Valley was very well attended. 30 people split into 10 teams of three with the aim of identifying as many different species of bird in the WVBS area as possible within the specified time limit. The race finished off at the Bridge Inn (it is after all a fun event!) where a winner was declared. The winning team managed to see 70 species out of a total 84 which were seen on the day. Virtually every team had an unexpected bird. The best was probably 5 Snow Buntings seen between Great Ryburgh and Colkirk and a Little Egret at Lenwade. Also seen were Willow Tit, Barn Owl, Little Owl, Sparrowhawk and Common Buzzard. From the atmosphere in The Bridge Inn afterwards it was obvious that everyone enjoyed the day.

February - The WVBS birdwatchers are generally a rugged lot, braving the elements in pursuit of their interests. February was the exception however when we visited the Wildfowl Reserve at Welney. Here, from the comfort of a heated, double glazed hide with comfy seats, we were able to watch as thousands of birds, mainly Swans and Pochards, flocked to the Reserve for their afternoon feed. It was interesting to see three different types of Swan, Mute, Bewick and Whooper all together. In the resulting mêlée the plucky Pochards fared better than expected, often 'seeing off' their larger cousins. Some members stayed on for the 6.30 pm floodlit evening feed. A remarkable spectacle and well worth the visit.

A good turnout again at Lenwade as Rob Fuller of the BTO, standing in for Moss Taylor, discussed the fate and fortune of woodland birds. Research so far seems to have generated more questions than answers. It appears that potential causes of decline in woodland birds are due to a combination of factors, one of which is the modification of habitat by the

increasing deer population. A full report on this subject can be found on www.bto.org.

March - A talk by Steve Cale on 'Birds of the Mediterranean' was well supported. Birdwatching 'hot-spots' were highlighted starting on the eastern coast of Spain and ending at the Greek island of Lesvos calling in at Majorca, Menorca and Crete along the way. Steve is a bird artist and samples of his work were available at the meeting. Being an artist Steve demonstrated an eye for detail that impressed even our most experienced birders.

April - On the 10th we visited east Norfolk with members of the Nar Valley Ornithological Society. We started in the Horsey area where we heard Cetti's Warbler singing near the car park, had good views of 8 Common Cranes in flight and others feeding on the Brograve Levels. We watched Marsh Harriers hunting over the reed beds nearby and most exciting of all had stunning views of a male Hen Harrier as it flew low over the grazing meadows. We moved on to Horsey Gap where we enjoyed viewing Stonechats as they perched prominently on the fence wires and posts. Sadly no early migrants were in evidence. The day ended with a walk round the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Hickling Broad Nature Reserve where a Red-crested Pochard was resplendent in all its glory. Naturally the weather was brilliant and a good time was had by all.

On April 23rd we assembled at Cockthorpe before walking towards the coast through Cockthorpe Common led by Charles Neale. By this time some of the summer migrants had arrived including Blackcap and Garden Warbler. As we approached Stiffkey Fen a Lesser Whitethroat was heard singing from nearby scrub and the highlights on the Fen were a Little Gull and a majestic Greenshank.

At our indoor meeting, we held the 2nd AGM and were delighted to recruit three new members to our hard working committee. This was followed by an exceptionally good presentation of 'Nature's Year in Norfolk' by David Brooks who took us month by month through a year in Norfolk in pictures.

May - At 4.30am on the 8th about 20 bleary-eyed members gathered at the NWT Sparham Pools Reserve to experience the dawn chorus. The best bird of the morning was a Black Tern spotted as it fed over one of the pools. At the end of the walk those present enjoyed bacon butties in the open air.

Our indoor meeting at Lenwade included a presentation 'Birds around the World'. This was an enthralling presentation by a larger than life Mike Linley. Mike was a photographer for the BBC series 'Life On Earth' and had also spent many years working on the Anglia 'Survival' series which became a benchmark in natural history documentaries. With a library of 40,000 slides and almost as many anecdotes from his world travels I am sure we will see him back at Lenwade at some future meeting.

On **May 21st** we spent the morning at the Raptor Watchpoint, near Great Ryburgh overlooking the Sennowe Park area under the guidance of Charles Neale. We were rewarded with sightings of Hobby, Common and Honey Buzzard (some interesting discussion was had identifying them), Sparrowhawk and Marsh Harrier. After about two and a half hours we moved on to the Norfolk Ornithologist's Association Reserve at Hempton Marsh. Here John Horsman, the voluntary warden for the site, led a comprehensive guided walk. A Marsh Harrier was spotted hunting over the riverside reedbeds but otherwise the reserve was quiet probably because of the time of day.

June - Taking advantage of our somewhat unpredictable summer we had two outdoor meetings in June. The first was a Bird Race, in which teams compete to identify as many species as possible in an allotted time. This was an excellent day with notable sightings of Woodlark, Honey Buzzard and Nightjar. The winning team managed to observe 82 species. Later in the month we had a Nightjar evening. Starting at Dersingham Bog (a small nature reserve within the Sandringham Royal Estate) we had excellent views of Tree Pipits but the Woodlarks proved elusive. Later we retired to the Feathers Hotel in Dersingham for some sustenance, returning to the Bog at dusk when we saw Woodcocks and later Nightjars in flight and sitting on overhead cables. A thoroughly enjoyable evening.

July - The bird books describe the Bittern as a shy and retiring creature (Heron family) which is more likely to be heard than seen. Being in the right place at the right time also helps. The time and place happened to be on our July field trip to Minsmere. While watching a display of Marsh Harriers circling over the Minsmere marshes one of our eagle eyed members called out (quietly as we were in a hide) 'Bittern in the reed bed', and we saw the unmistakable form of a Bittern striking the classic bill-up pose rising from the reeds spying out the surroundings before taking to the air. Moments later it flew across the hide. A 'first' for many of us and the icing on the cake to an excellent day at Minsmere which also included sight of a Wood Sandpiper and a Spotted Redshank.

At our indoor meeting guest speaker Tim Nevard gave a lively and enthusiastic presentation about the Pensthorpe Nature Reserve. He spoke about the development of Pensthorpe from the original gravel workings to the major attraction it has become. Tim spoke about the aim of the reserve of getting people nearer to nature, the captive breeding program and the plan to re-introduce the Corncrake and Common Crane to the Wensum Valley. The talk served as an appetiser for our visit to the reserve in August.

August - Our trip to Pensthorpe attracted thirty members and was the best attended outdoor meeting yet. There was a large range of exotic birds on display and it was interesting to see them at close range. The show stealers however were a pair of Kingfishers. Determined not to be overshadowed by their more exotic cousins, they put on a dazzling display of aerodynamics and fishing above the Pensthorpe lake. Some members opted to take the Wensum Vehicle Safari in the afternoon. This was a tour of backstage Pensthorpe which explored the history of the valley back to the Ice Age and included a description of Pensthorpe's modern day conservation grade farming methods. In all an excellent day was had by all.

At our indoor meeting guest speaker Charles Fox gave a presentation entitled 'The Gambia Experience'. It was interesting to see the lengths a dedicated birder will go to observe and photograph exotic birds. He

produced pictures of birds exotic names such as the Bee-eater, Ground Hornbill, Palm Nut Vulture, Waxbill and the Abyssinian Roller which Charles described as the 'Gem of the Gambia'. His portrayal of the conditions encountered in Gambia would not sit well in a tourist brochure but there must be something going for it, as Charles pointed out 'a hundred million mosquitoes can't be wrong'!

September - Not to be put off by last years drenching we had a good turn out for Charles and Fran Neale's trip to Breydon Water. In much better weather we saw a good selection of waders including the Common Sandpiper, Knot, Turnstone, Godwit, Golden Plover and lots of Avocets. The Marsh Harrier put in an appearance once again emphasising how widespread this bird is becoming. The day was rounded off by a collection (or should it be a band) of Goldfinch waiting for us as we returned to the car park.

At our indoor meeting at Lenwade Village Hall guest speaker Gary Hibberd, the Warden of the NWT Holme Nature Reserve, gave us a talk on 'Holme sweet Holme'. In addition to the birds to be seen on the reserve Gary talked about the effects of coastal erosion in the area and the high incidence of ground nest predations by Foxes.

October - Our October field trip was to the RSPB reserve at Titchwell. Always a good bet to see something interesting. There was a good turnout and an interesting day's birding was enjoyed by all those who attended. Main attractions were a Red-necked Phalarope, Little Egrets and Bearded Tit.

At our indoor meeting at Lenwade guest speaker Peter Ransom gave an illustrated talk on the Birds of Wales. Peter's enthusiasm came across in his talk which included pictures of Dippers, Wood Warblers, Wheatears, Goldcrests and, of course, the Red Kite. For many people, however, the best picture was a full frame of a Puffin, taken on Skomer Island, with a mouthful of sand-eels destined for its young.

November - At the last indoor meeting of 2005, member and ringer, Allan Hale transported us to sunnier climes with slides of birds and animals to be found in Namibia. We were introduced to birds with exotic names such as the Fork-tailed Drongo, the Chirping Cisticola and the Bare-cheeked Babbler. Most handsome bird on show however, was the Crimson-breasted Shrike. Over 600 species of birds can be found in Namibia which goes to show what a fascinating and diverse world we live in.

December - The 4th was a cloudy but surprisingly mild and dry December morning with a hardly perceptible breeze from the N.W. A group of 21 people, led by Alwyn, met at the Sculthorpe Moor car park and those who were early to arrive were rewarded with views of a Barn Owl in flight. We realised that they are well provided for in the reserve as we saw quite a number of specially designed boxes as we walked. The reserve provides a mixture of habitats; open grassland, mixed ancient woodland, marsh and reedbeds.

As we left the car park we scanned the fields for Thrushes and soon saw Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare and Redwing. We also spotted Sparrowhawk and Kestrel overhead. Walking along the boardwalks you gained a feeling of a primeval forest, with fallen trees and stumps surrounded by boggy swamp like ground. Wellingtons were definitely the order of the day!

At the woodland feeding station we watched Great, Blue, Marsh and Long-tailed Tits taking the seed as well as Chaffinches, Greenfinches and Goldfinches feeding on the alders accompanied by a flock of 60 Siskin. Treecreepers were harder to find but appeared after much searching as did the Goldcrests which darted in and out of the ivy clad trunks.

Much work still has to be carried out on the reserve involving the clearing of some woodland areas to provide nesting sites for ground nesting species such as Lapwing, Redshank and Snipe.

The group had been granted special permission to go 'off piste' to look over a small lake and reed bed which were surprisingly quiet, though one sure sighted group member spotted a Kingfisher fly off as the rest of the group arrived. As we waited, ever hopeful, a bird of prey circled in the distance which caused some discussion due to very pale under parts, but

as it perched in a far tree it was deemed to be a Common Buzzard after all. Altogether we saw 33 birds ending with a Green Woodpecker back at the car park which seemed to be taunting us with its laughter.

Looking back on 2005

Judging by the attendance at our indoor and outdoor meetings, and feedback from our monthly reports, I feel we became established as a society in 2005. Over the year we had ten excellent guest speakers covering many aspects of birdwatching, the environment and the possible effects of climate change for our region. We travelled the width and breadth of East Anglia in search of birds and were not disappointed, thanks to our field trip leaders who took great pains to ensure we got our money's worth. Not a bad return for an annual membership fee of £8. Most satisfying was the retention in membership which currently stands at around 90.

A bit about field trips: We have an outside meeting once a month. Beginners are most welcome and often make up the majority of a group. The location for an outing is picked by one of our more experienced club members who also acts as guide. The walks are not strenuous and it is not necessary to stay all day. There is plenty of expert advice on hand and binoculars are available if required. We are also fortunate to live in an area with a rich variety of habitats and it is not unusual to see (with expert help) more than 60 bird species in one trip. It's worth a try.

WVBS Systematic List 2005

Ray Gribble

Thankyou to all the members who have sent in their records and thus enable the compilation of this report. Thanks also to Louisa Lloyd who kindly produced the line drawings.

As in 2004 for this report the British Ornithological Union's (BOU) revised systematic order has been adopted. Formerly the list started with Divers then Grebes but it now starts with Swans and Geese. This reclassification is, I assume, due to evidence from DNA analysis, etc. The BOU has also made many changes to the common names of birds, mainly to put them in a worldwide context. For example Wigeon has become Eurasian Wigeon to clearly differentiate it from American and Chiloe Wigeons. To ease the transition where changes have been made the following sequence has been followed:

New Name (Old Name) *Scientific name*

e.g. **Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon)** *Anas penelope*

After the name is a general view of the species' status in the WVBS area. Where the species is of conservation concern it is noted i.e **Red** or **Amber listed**. This means the species is of major or significant conservation concern respectively.

More evidence of breeding success was received for 2005 but I would still urge all contributors to supply evidence of breeding where relevant. Such evidence is: Singing male, nest building, nest & eggs or young, adult carrying food, recently fledged young.

Dealing with escapes and feral birds is always tricky but for this report, unlike last year's, I have put the certain escapes in a separate section.

At the end is a report of birds recorded in the area during 2004 that were not included in the 2004 Report because the records were not sent to WVBS. These records have been extracted from the 2003 Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report.

Finally my apologies to anyone if a record has been missed from the report or not correctly acknowledged.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeding resident. Amber listed.

Seen in most areas throughout the valley. Highest count of the year was 40 at Wensum Valley Golf Club, Taverham on 21st Mar.

Tundra Swan (Bewick's Swan) *Cygnus colombianus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers. Amber listed.

Coming to winter from their Siberian breeding grounds. 9 west over Ringland on 27th Nov (NM) and 14 NW over Lenwade 27th Dec (RG) were the only records.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

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

All records were at the back end of the year with 4 east Foulsham 4th Nov (RBA), 4 Ringland 16th Nov and 9 Lyng on 4th Dec (NM). 7 "honking swans" over Sparham Pools on 19th Dec were thought to be Whooper (BB&JE).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

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

All records are fly overs. The only record at the beginning of the year was 2 skeins over Sparham Hall 23rd Jan (CS). The autumn immigration started with 200 west Ringland 22nd Oct (NM), 50 N Tuddenham 26th Oct (B&BP). These were followed by 50 Ringland 8th Dec (NM), 50 Sparham Pools 12th Dec (BB&JE) and 700 Sparham Hall on 14th Dec (CS).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common resident & passage migrant.

Common throughout the valley with long established & increasing feral population. Maximum count c.200 Hoe Bird Walk 18th Dec (DK). Elsewhere other maxima over 20 40 Swanton Morley GP 20th Mar, 35 Lenwade 4th Nov (NS), 30 Lyng 9th Oct (NS), 29 Gressenhall 16th Mar (LL), 25 Pensthorpe 26th Aug (RG), 24 Bittering GP (NarVOS).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common introduced resident

Seen at many sites within the valley. Only small numbers recorded in the first quarter – maximum 18 Costessey Pits 20th Mar (D&RH). Then 40 Lyng 11th June (NS), 90 Lenwade 25th Aug (JL) rising to 102 on 24th Oct (MS), 130 Bylaugh 13th Nov (NM).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Mainly feral but possibly a scarce winter visitor

Singles Sparham Pools 26th June & 3rd July (BB&JE) were surpassed by 12 on 28th Aug (RG) and 15 on 2nd Sept (BS).

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Introduced resident, locally common

The Wensum Valley has a long established resident and increasing feral population and it is becoming quite a stronghold. Maximum counts 56 Great Ryburgh on 23rd Aug, 20 at both Sparham Pools 27th July & Marriots Way, Lenwade 30th Sept, & 12 Hoe Bird Walk on 21st Aug. 13 flew S over Lenwade Common on 29th Dec. Single figure numbers were recorded from Bittering, Dereham SW, Windsor Park Dereham, Lyng, N Tuddenham, N Tuddenham Common, Pensthorpe, Scarning, Taverham.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A scarce visitor to the valley - increasing? **Amber listed.**

Maximum was 9 sitting on the roof of a barn at Mileham on 27th May. 6 at Bittering GP on 6th Mar, 4 at Swanton Morley GP on 13th Mar then 1 or 2 at Haveringland, Pensthorpe, Scarning (Bushy Common), Sculthorpe and Sparham Pools. The only winter record was 1 at Sparham Pools on 16th Dec. Proof of breeding from Mileham and Pensthorpe.

Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon) *Anas penelope*

A fairly common passage migrant & winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

Only reported from 5 sites with a maximum of c.50 from Sparham Pools on 30th Nov. There were 3 – 4 here earlier in the month and 2 on 27th Mar. Other sightings were 4 Bittering 6th Mar, 2 Pensthorpe 26th Aug, 5 Hoe Bird Walk 18th Sept, and 10 Lyng 24th Dec.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Resident, passage & migrant winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

Sparham Pools was the main site for this species with 40 16th Jan (CS), 2 – 6 during Feb and Mar then returning in the autumn with 10 on 20th Oct, 18 on 10th Nov, 60 19th Nov rising to 85 on 29th Dec (CS).

Elsewhere in Mar 16 Bittering GP on 6th & 8 Billingford Common on 20th. Then in latter part of year 4 Lyng 9th Oct and at Swanton Morley GP 38 on 4th and 24 on 25th Dec. The only summer records were from Pensthorpe – 16 + 1 female with 7 young on 12th June and 10 on 26th Aug.

Eurasian Teal (Teal) *Anas crecca*

Fairly common winter visitor, but rare breeder. **Amber listed.**

One HBW on 16th Jan, 2 Elsing Bridge on 6th Feb when 4 at Sweet Briar Marshes (first since 1985), Norwich, 10 Whitwell Common on 4th Mar and 40 (max count) at Bittering GP on 6th Mar. Summer records were a single male at Pensthorpe on 23rd June and 20 at the same site on 26th Aug although the latter could be early returned birds.

2 were at Sparham Pools on 16th Sept, a female at Lyng on 9th Oct, 1 HBW 20th Nov and 1 on 7th & 8 on 16th at Sparham Pools.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident & winter visitor.

So common that often numbers go unrecorded but 34 HBW 21st Aug, 70 on Pensthorpe scrape 26th Aug. 45 Ringland 6th Nov and 40 Sparham Pools on 19th Nov.

Northern Pintail (Pintail) *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Amber listed.

Single males at Sparham Pools on 28th Mar and 14th Nov were the only records received.

Northern Shoveler (Shoveler) *Anas clypeata*

A winter visitor, but rare breeder. Amber listed.

Other than 3 at Sennowe Park on 7th Nov all records were from Sparham Pools. 1 pair 14th – 19th Mar then 2 22nd & 24th Oct, 1 male 8th Nov, 2 12th Dec and 4 25th Dec.

Common Pochard (Pochard) *Aythya farina*

Common passage migrant & winter visitor, rare breeder. Amber listed.

Only proof of breeding was at Pensthorpe when 2 family parties, 2 & 3 young, were recorded in June.

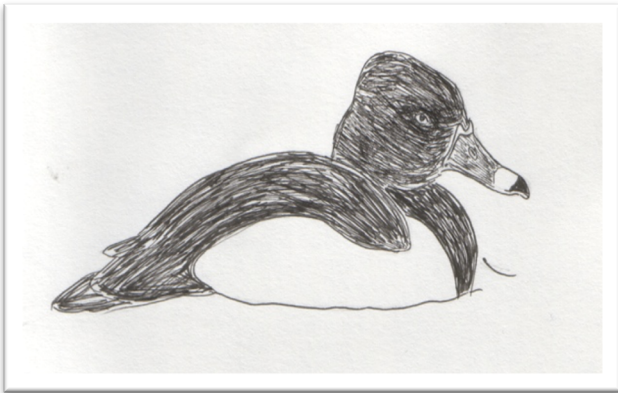
Highest count of the year was 60 at Sparham Pools on 27th Feb (CS). The only other Feb record was 1 male at Lenwade. 40 remained at Sparham Pools on 3rd Mar (BB&JE) but had dropped to 10 or 11 by 22nd. At Billingford and Swanton Morley GP 27 were present on 6th Mar dropping to 7 to 10 on 20th.

There were no further records (other than the breeders) until Oct when numbers varied from 4 on 2nd to 30 on 19th Nov – all at Sparham Pools.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Annual vagrant to Britain from North America. Possible escapee.

A drake of this very rare vagrant was found by CS on one of the new gravel pits at Sparham Pools on 28th Mar. It did not stay for more than the one day. I was delighted to be asked to help verify the record (RG).



Ring-necked Duck, by Louisa Lloyd

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Summer breeder also Common passage migrant & winter visitor.

During Jan to Mar Tufted Ducks were recorded at Billingford GP 45, Haverlingland 4, Lenwade, Ringland 10, Sparham Pools 65, Swanton Morley GP 25, Taverham 4.

Breeding was confirmed at Pensthorpe & Sparham Pools (3 broods at each), while birds were at Beetley GP 2, HBW 3 & Lyng 14 during the breeding period.

From Sept to the end of the year birds were recorded at Costessey Pits 2, Lenwade Common 50, Lyng 23, Sparham Pools 50 and Swanton Morley 93. All numbers are maxima for each site during the period.

Common Goldeneye (Goldeneye) *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. Amber listed.

At the beginning of the year 1 Sparham Pools 15th Jan (CS). 11 were at the same site on 17th Nov (BB&JE). 2 at Swanton Morley GP 4th Dec (IB) and probably the same 2 on 18th Dec (PR).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

A very scarce winter visitor & passage migrant inland though common on the coast.

A female was on the River Whitewater near Worthing Bridge on 1st Dec (DK).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Winter visitor & passage migrant.

Most abundant in more severe winters. Sparham Pools are its mid-Norfolk stronghold. Maximum counts at Sparham of 10 in Jan (CS), 12 in Feb (AJ), when there was also 1 male at Lenwade, 8 in Mar (BB&JE). Last one seen 27th Mar. Also seen in Mar at Haveringland 15 on 1st (S&BG), Attlebridge 3 on 18th (WO).

The first returned birds reported were 2 males at Swanton Morley GP on 26th Oct (G&RN). In Nov there were 3 (2m) at Sparham Pools on 23rd (PR) and 1 redhead at Elsing Bridge & Three Bridges Farm on 25th (AJ). In Dec 1 redhead at Swanton Morley GP on 4th (IB) and 18th (PR) and at Sparham Pools 1 on 8th and 7 (4m,3f) on 11th (DK) and again on 14th (BB&JE).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

An introduced resident.

The only report throughout the valley is one male at Pensthorpe 12th June (Plog). Is the cull working?

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Common introduced resident.

Recorded at Bylaugh SW 2, Dereham 1, Haveringland 4, HBW 6, Lenwade 2, Sparham Hall Farm 27 pairs bred (CS), Swannington 11.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Resident breeder in small numbers, declining in recent years. Red listed.

Recorded at Colkirk 2 (LK), Great Ryburgh 1 (PR), HBW 4 (DK), Litcham 1 (BB&JE), Mileham 1ad, 1 young (RG), N Elmham 2 (BB&JE), N Tuddenham - Pound Lane 2 (DP), - Springfield Cottage 6 (B&BP), - Willow Farm 2 (B&BP), Scarning 3 (IB), Sculthorpe 2 (B&BP), Swanton Morley 2 (B&BP), Sparham Hall Farm 4 pairs bred (CS).

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor and breeder. Red listed.

Three records of calling birds. Litcham 5th June (BB&JE), Swanton Morley 17th July (RBA) and N Tuddenham 30th July (B&BP).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Common introduced resident.

Common throughout the valley. Hundreds, if not thousands, of pheasants are bred & released for the shooting fraternity with lots of game management in the county.

Little Grebe *Trachybaptus ruficollis*

Mainly a winter visitor uncommon resident. Breeds in small numbers

Recorded from Billingford Common 10 20th Mar (BB&JE), Beetley GP 1, HBW 2, Lenwade 3, Scarning 1, Sparham Pools 2, Swanton Morley GP 18 on 26th Oct (G&RN).

There were no confirmed breeding records!

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Breeding residents on most pits & lakes in the valley, often departing to the coast in winter months.

1 pair were displaying at Lenwade in a snow shower on 24th Feb.

Reports of nesting adults & adults with young from most lake & pit complexes during summer. A maximum of 17 Swanton Morley GP on 25th Dec.

Great Cormorant (Cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common non-breeding resident. Amber listed.

Present all year. The only double figure count was 27 at Sennowe Park on 7th Nov.

Great Bittern (Bittern) *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare winter visitor to the valley. Red listed.

3 records during 2005. The first at Guist Common on 25th Feb (LL) then at the end of the year 1 Sculthorpe Moor on 29th Nov (HOT) and 1 Swanton Morley GP on 18th Dec (NB).

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

All records believed to be feral birds from a colony at Gt. Witchingham Wildlife Centre.

The only record was one seen flying over Sparham Pools on 21st Dec (BB&JE) suggesting that the GWWC colony is in decline.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce but increasing non-breeding resident. Amber listed.

Sightings continue to increase. 1 Sculthorpe Moor 1st, 3rd, 17th Feb (LK), Elsing Hall (DP) & Rushmeadow, Dereham (CJ) on 6th Feb. Then 1-2 Clayhall Farm, Lenwade 28th Feb to 12th Mar (MS, S&BG, RG) with 1 at Lyng on 15th Mar (NM) probably involved the same 2 birds. 2 at Tatterford 13th and 1 Shereford 23rd Mar (both NarVOS). A single bird was reported from Pensthorpe 7th & 10th June (Plog). There were no further records until 24th & 26th Dec when 1 was recorded at Lyng & Lenwade resp. (BB&JE).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common resident throughout the valley, present all year

The colony at Gt. Witchingham Wildlife Centre had 41 definitely active nests and a further 10 nests that were potentially occupied (AJ / RG).

Others were reported throughout the year from Costessey Pits, Dereham SW, Union Farm, Gressenhall (7), Haveringland, HBW (3), Lenwade (3), Lyng, Sparham Pools (2), Swanton Morley GP (4).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Escapee or rare vagrant

A bird recorded at Welborne on 27th Aug (PR) could be a genuine vagrant but 3 flying SE over Clayhall Farm, Lenwade on 11th Nov (CG) were fairly certainly escapees from Gt. Witchingham Wildlife Centre.

European Honey Buzzard (Honey Buzzard) *Pernis apivorus*

Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant. Amber listed.

Great Ryburgh Watchpoint is the best place to observe this species. Up to 3 seen at GRWP most days in July. Also up to 2 seen from Swanton Novers Raptor Watchpoint.

Earliest record 22nd May at Great Ryburgh (PR), latest 26th Aug over Sennowe Park from Pensthorpe (RG).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Increasing visitor mainly from reintroduction projects. Amber listed.

All records are of singles and probably 1 or 2 individual birds account for all records. Reported Blickling 25th Mar & 5th Apr (RBA), Brisley 7th – 8th Apr (RBA), GRWP on several dates from 9th May to 1st July, Tattersett / Sculthorpe area 23rd May – 4th June (RBA), Mileham on 28th May (per RG), Lyng to S 5th June (NM), & Pensthorpe 10th June (Plog).

Eurasian Marsh Harrier (Marsh Harrier) *Circus aeruginosus*

Passage migrant and summer visitor to valley breeding in small numbers.

Records from 25th Mar to 14th Dec and from Sparham Hall to East Rudham. The Dec bird was the first winter record. Maximum 4 adult birds recorded at any one site. Breeding proved at at least 1 site.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

*Rare passage migrant and winter visitor to the valley. **Red listed.***

Single record one Shereford 23rd Mar (NarVOS).

Northern Goshawk (Goshawk) *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor to valley.

Two records: one at Ringland 17th Mar (NM) and one at SNRWP on 5th June (BB&JE).

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Sparrowhawk) *Accipiter nisus*

Widespread fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded from 30 sites throughout the year in the WVBS. Maximum 3 from GRWP on 13th Mar (PR) and HBW 20th Nov (DK). Regularly recorded hunting around garden feeding stations. A letter in the EDP claimed that a Sparrowhawk had taken all the bats as they left a farmhouse in Billingford during the summer.

No proof of breeding received.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Small but increasing breeding population in the valley.

Recorded at 16 sites in the WVBS area with most records from the NW but ranging from Syderstone Common in NW to Ringland in east throughout the year. Highest numbers recorded at Sennowe Park near Guist 5 27th Feb (NM) and Great Ryburgh 4 13th Mar (PR). No evidence of breeding received but birds were recorded throughout the area during the breeding season. Probably a genuine increase on 2004.

Osprey *Pandion halaetus*

Scarce passage migrant, increasing in frequency in recent years. Amber listed.

In the spring a single record of a bird at Sparham Pools on 5th May (CS).

In the autumn an Osprey was at the same site 19th to 29th Sept (CS, BB&JE). Probably the same bird was reported in Lenwade on 28th Sept being mobbed by 4 Carrion Crows as it flew East towards the Dinosaur Park.

Common Kestrel (Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder and passage. Amber listed.

Recorded at 22 locations throughout the WVBS area during the year. Proof of breeding from East Dereham (5 young) and Mileham (3 young).

Merlin *Falco columbarus*

Rather scarce passage migrant and winter visitor in the valley. Amber listed.

Only one record Fakenham 7th Feb (NM).

Eurasian Hobby (Hobby) *Falco subbuteo*.

Scarce but increasing migratory breeder and passage migrant throughout the valley.

Over 40 records received from our members over 18 locations. Earliest record was one at Lyng on 28th Apr (CS) and the latest 5th Oct Sparham Pools (BB/JE).

On the evening of 28th June 2 were feeding with 5 Common Kestrels on chafer at Mill Street, Elsing (AJ). Maximum count was 3 at Sennowe Park on 29th May (AB). The only evidence of breeding reported was an adult and juvenile at Sparham Pools on 18th Sept (BB/JE).

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

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

Reported from Lenwade Common on 21st Mar (S&BG). Also recorded from Sculthorpe on 10th Apr (B&BP).

Water Rail *Rallus aquatus*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

During first winter period single birds recorded at Sculthorpe Moor 17th Feb (LK) and Scarning Fen 27th Mar (IB). No breeding records received. One calling on Guist Common 26th Aug (AH/DP/RG). One or 2 Lenwade Common area from 5th Oct to end of year (RG) plus one on HBW on 12th Dec (DK).

Common Moorhen (Moorhen) *Gallinula chloropus*.

Common resident. Widespread throughout valley supplemented by autumn immigrants.

Maximum counts 25 Bittering GP on 6th Mar (NarVOS) and 18 HBW on 20th Nov (DK). Although a common breeder the only "proof of breeding" record was from Drayton (R&DH).

Common Coot (Coot) *Falica atra*.

Common resident and winter visitor.

Winter flocks recorded at Costessey Pits 14 11th Feb & 11 27th Nov (R&DK), Sparham Pools 25 17th Mar but maxima were both in Aug 65 Pensthorpe Scrape on 26th and 30 Sparham Pools on 7th (BB&JE).

Eurasian Oystercatcher (Oystercatcher) *Haematopus ostralegus*

Mainly a breeding visitor to the valley, absent in mid-winter. **Amber listed.**

Earliest recorded sighting two on 2nd Mar at Sparham Pools (BB&JE) with max of 4 on 19th Mar and 26th June.

Also recorded at Billingford GP 1, Lyng 2, Pensthorpe (bred) 8, Sculthorpe 8, Sculthorpe Moor 1, Swanton Morley GP 1

Latest recorded sighting 2 birds 27th June at Beetley GP. Surely some Oystercatchers are staying in WVBS area longer than this!

Pied Avocet (Avocet) *Recurvirostra avocetta*

Rare visitor but potential breeder to WVBS area. **Amber listed.**

Two Pensthorpe Scrape 12th June (Plog).

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Vagrant to the WVBS area but has bred in the very distant past. **Red listed.**

An interesting record of one heard calling Lyng 5th Aug (NM).

Little Plover (Little Ringed Plover) *Charadrius dubius*

Passage migrant and breeding summer visitor in small numbers.

Only recorded from Pensthorpe, Sennowe Park and Sparham Pools. Breeding was proved at Pensthorpe where a pair and 2 young were seen on 23rd June. First birds were seen on 26th Mar (CS) and last birds on 24th July both at Sparham Pools where max count was 8 birds on 2nd Apr (BB&JE) but no proof of breeding was received.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce visitor to WVBS area. **Amber listed.**

A single report of one at Pensthorpe on 10th June (Plog).

European Golden Plover (Golden Plover) *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common passage migrant and increasing winter visitor.

During Jan 30 Sparham Hall Farm 23rd (CS) with an impressive 1200 at N Tuddenham on 27th (PR). In Feb there were still 100 in N Tuddenham area on 20th (B&BP), 150 Scarning on 22nd (IB), 3 Colkirk (LS) & 30 Great Ryburgh (PR) on 28th.

Returning birds were recorded from 28th July when there were 11 ad + 1 juv at Worthing Church (DK). The build up was slow with only 6 at Lyng 18th Aug & 80 at Foulsham 20th Aug (NM). From mid-Sept the Hockering Lenwade area held a flock of 3-700 to end Nov. (JL, PR, BB&JE). During Oct the 200 at N Tuddenham on 6th, 400 on 21st and 1000 on 27th at Mattishall Burgh (B&BPS) could all be part of the same population.

(continues)

European Golden Plover (Golden Plover) (continued)

Other significant counts were 150 Bintree 8th (NM), 250 Swanton Morley 9th (B&BP), 300 Foxley 20th (BB&JE), 200 Gressenhall 21st (IB), 500 Whissonsett 30th Oct (DP, AJ, RG); 250 Daffy Green 1st (IB), 750 Bylaugh on 13th (NM), 200 Old Beetley 14th (JB), 800 Hoe 20th (NARVOS), 280 Mill Farm, Gt Witchingham 29th Nov (AJ); 300 & 800 on 6th & 8th Dec (PR). It would be interesting to estimate how many birds in total are wintering in the WVBS area. Is it the same flock moving around the area or are there 2 or more? Who knows but I would not be surprised if there are 2000+ birds at peak.

Northern Lapwing (Lapwing) *Vanellus vanellus*.

Passage migrant and winter visitor, declining breeder. Amber listed.

Maximum counts in the first winter period were 200 N Tuddenham 20th Feb (B&BP) and 150 Swannington on 24th (NS). The only breeding record was from Pensthorpe where 2 to 3 pairs had young on 12th June (Plog).

In the second winter period counts over 100 were received from Swanton Morley 120 (B&BP), Lenwade 200 (JL), Mattishall Burgh 100 (B&BP), Whissonsett 150 (DP,AJ), Cawston 200+ (GH), Mill Farm, Great Witchingham 130 (AJ), Sparham Pools 300 (BB&JE), Hockering 600 (PR).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce passage migrant to WVBS area. Amber listed.

1 reported at Pensthorpe 3rd June (Plog).

Common Snipe (Snipe) *Gallinago gallinago*.

Passage migrant, particularly in autumn, and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Recorded during first winter period at Sweet Briar Marshes 1 6th Feb (CR), Sculthorpe Moor 2 22nd Feb (LK), Shereford 30 2nd Mar (NARVOS), Whitwell Common 5 4th Mar (BB&JE), Dereham SW 5th Mar (IB).

During second winter period Pensthorpe 1 2nd Sep (BS), Fakenham 1 11th Sep (BB&JE), HBW 2 18th Sep (DK) and Sparham Pools 2 from 29th Oct to 16th Dec (BB&JE). No breeding records received. Surely an under-recorded species.

Eurasian Woodcock (Woodcock) *Scotopax rusticola*

Uncommon breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Recorded during first winter period at Hoe Common 3 on 7th Feb (LL), Sculthorpe Moor 1 on 10th, 2 on 17th and 2 Sculthorpe Mill on 22nd Feb (LK), Guist Common 1 on 25th Feb (LL) then singles Sweet Briar Marshes 10th (CR) and Sparham Pools 23rd Mar (BB&JE).

The autumn influx was recorded from 11th Nov with 1 or 2 birds being recorded between then and 4th Dec at Lenwade Common, Hockering, Cawston, Hoe, Ringland and Longham. Perhaps a better idea of the number of Woodcock present at this time was 20 at Sparham Hall Farm on 14th Nov presumably during a Pheasant shoot (CS).

Roding birds at Buxton and Marsham Heaths were the only evidence of breeding.

Eurasian Curlew (Curlew) *Numenius arquata*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor to WVBS area. Amber listed.

Only 2 fly-overs of single birds at Sparham Hall 13th Apr (CS) and Sparham Pools 20th Aug (BB&JE).

Common Redshank (Redshank) *Tringa totanus*.

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Singles Swanton Morley GP 13th Mar (B&BP), Shereford 26th Mar (NarVOS) and Sparham Pools 13th Apr (CS) then 1 – 2 Pensthorpe Scrape 3rd – 12th June (Plog).

No evidence of breeding in the valley.

Common Greenshank (Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce passage migrant.

1 Sparham Pools 26th Apr (CS) and 1 Lyng 3rd July (NM) were the only records.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Double passage migrant, regular but never numerous. Small numbers over winter. Amber listed.

1 – 3 birds recorded in every month except Apr & May. The maximum count of 6 was on a small pool in Heath Road Lenwade on 30th Sept (JL), never to be repeated as Angian Water have now mended the leak!

Also recorded from Attlebridge, Beetley GP 3, Billingford Common, Dereham SW, Great Ryburgh, Gressenhall, Pensthorpe 3, Ringland, Scarning, Sparham Pools and Swanton Morley GP.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage migrant, widespread.

Only recorded in ones and twos from Dereham SW 9th June, Sparham Pools 12 occasions between 24th Apr and 21st Aug and Swanton Morley GP 2 on 28th July.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce visitor. Amber listed.

A first for WVBS – a first year bird at Bintree on 28th Oct (NM).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Widespread and abundant resident. More common in winter. Amber listed.

Present throughout the year. Max count of 200 at Clayhall Farm Lenwade on 7th Mar. Certainly under recorded.

Mew Gull (Common Gull) *Larus canus*

Abundant and widespread passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Max count of 200 at Clayhall Farm Lenwade on 7th Mar. Again under recorded.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Passage migrant with some birds remaining throughout the year. Amber listed.

Maximum count of 140 Ringland 20th Aug (NM)

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Passage migrant with some birds remaining throughout the year. Amber listed.

Recorded in very small numbers with a maximum of only 8 at Lyng on 26th Oct (NS).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Present throughout the year with winter visitors widespread but in small numbers.

Only recorded from Sparham Pools 3 on 30th Mar and 6 on 16th Sep (BB&JE)

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant in valley. Small breeding colony at Sparham Pools.

First birds recorded and largest count was 23 Lyng 4th May (CS). 3 – 4 pairs bred at Sparham Pools with at least 3 young fledging. Also reported from Lenwade 3, Sennowe Park 10 and Swanton Morley GP 2.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Scarce passage migrant. Amber listed.

One record 3 Lyng GP 4th May (CS)

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Scarce passage migrant.

One at Sparham Pools on 8th & 15th May (CS)

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Feral resident, associated with human habitation.

Very few records, most on bird counts! At Fakenham & Great Ryburgh

Stock Pigeon (Stock Dove) *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident throughout valley. Amber listed.

Only recorded from Dereham, HBW, Lenwade and Sparham Hall Farm with a maximum of 50 at the former on 18th Nov (C&JF).

Common Wood Pigeon (Wood Pigeon) *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident throughout valley.

Maximum numbers recorded of 300 at both Billingford and Lenwade Commons in mid-Mar (BB/JE).

Eurasian Collared Dove (Collared Dove) *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident, associated with human habitation.

Reports from Dereham, HBW, Sculthorpe, Sparham Pools and Taverham with a maximum count of only 7 (at Taverham Nov). Surely grossly under recorded!

European Turtle Dove (Turtle Dove) *Streptopelia turtur*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant. Red listed.

First reported on 2nd May at Lyng (CS). Last record and max count was 6 at Bittering GP 18th Sept (NarVOS).

Other sites Beetley GP, Elsing Hall, Great Ryburgh, Lenwade, Litcham, N Tuddenham (breeding proved), Pensthorpe and Scarning.

Common Cuckoo (Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant. Amber listed.

First reported at Sparham Hall on 22nd Apr. Also reported from Guist Common where there were 4 on 27th May (B&BP), HBW and Lenwade. Last date 27th June Lenwade Common. Under recorded?

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Resident breeder. Particularly well represented in the valley. Amber listed.

This exciting species received more records 50+ than any other species.

Reported from – Beetley GP, Colkirk, Dereham SW, Dereham (2 sites), East Rudham, Easton College, Elsing, Etling Green, Fakenham, Gressenhall, Guist Common 2, Hempton Common, HBW, Lenwade 2, Litcham, Lyng, Mileham, Mill Street Elsing, N Tuddenham (2 – 3 sites), Pensthorpe, Scarning, Scarning Fen, Sculthorpe, Sparham Hall & Pools, Stanfield, Whissonsett, Whitwell Common.

Proof of breeding Elsing, Mileham, Sparham – Lyng Easthaugh (3 pairs).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Introduced resident. Fairly common in the WVBS area.

Reported throughout the year from Bylaugh, Dereham SW, East Dereham, Hoe, Longham, Lyng, N Tuddenham (3 sites), Ringland, Scarning, Sparham Hall and Swanton Morley GP. Confirmed breeding records from N Tuddenham, Scarning and Sparham.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident.

After a very poor set of records in 2004 a much better response from our members. Reported from Beetley GP, Bylaugh Hall, Colkirk, Dereham (3) 2 sites + SW, Easton College, Guist Common, Hockering Wood, HBW, Hoe, Lenwade (3), Mileham, N Tuddenham, Reephams, Scarning (2), Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley.

Long-eared Owl, by Louisa Lloyd

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Rare resident and winter visitor.

One heard HBW 16th Jan (DK) and one Scarning 20th Nov (IB). These are the first for WVBS.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Rare winter visitor. Amber listed.

A single record. One Sculthorpe 10th Apr (B&BP).



European Nightjar (Nightjar)

Caprimulgus europaeus

Scarce migratory breeder. Red listed.

One Buxton Heath on 4th June (BB/JE) when 3 Marsham Heath (AJ/RG).

Common Swift (Swift) *Apus apus*

Common migratory breeder and passage migrant.

First reported from Sparham Hall 26th Apr (CS) but no further record until 27th May when 6 at Guist Common. Last report 1 Great Ryburgh 6th Sept (JHop).

Maximum counts were 50 Swanton Morley GP 30th May and 50 N Tuddenham 28th July.

Common Kingfisher (Kingfisher) *Alcedo atthis*

Common resident in the valley. Amber listed.

A well reported species. Mainly singles, but up to 3, reported throughout the year from –Beetley GP, Billingford Common, Dereham SW, Great Witchingham, Lenwade Bridge(2) & Common(3), Lyng, Norwich, Scarning(2), Sparham Pools(2 pr), Swanton Morley Lakes, Taverham.

Breeding proved at Lenwade Bridge Lake and Sparham Pools.

An interesting observation on Lenwade Common during freezing weather on 29th Dec “1 flew up the dyke away from me. When I looked back where it had come from there was another almost dead in the water’s edge. Was this as a result of a territorial dispute in the snowy weather?” (RG).

Green Woodpecker *Picis viridis*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed.

Most records are of singles. Beetley GP, Costessey Pits, Dereham GC(4), Dereham SW(2), Windsor Park, Dereham, Etling Green, Gressenhall, Guist Common, HBW(2), Hoe Common(2), Honingham, Lenwade(3), Mill Street, Elsing, N Tuddenham, Reepham, Ringland, Scarning(2), Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools, Taverham(2).

No breeding records

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident. Increasingly visiting garden feeders.

One to 3 recorded throughout the year from 20 locations.

No breeding records.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce resident. Occasionally visiting garden feeders. Red listed.

A good set of reports for this elusive species.

From 1st Jan to 2nd Feb one lucky observer had one or two feeding on peanuts in their garden in Swannington (TF).

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Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (continued)

One at Sculthorpe Moor on 17th & 26th Feb (LK), Dereham GC on 26th Feb (AJ) and again on 19th Mar (IB), N Tuddenham Common 13th & 18th Mar (B&BP), Lyng 24th Mar (NM), Sparham Pools 12th Apr (BS).

A juvenile at Scarning on 4th Aug was the only recorded proof of breeding (IB).

No further sightings until Hoe Rough on 28th Oct (IB), 4th & 8th Dec N Tuddenham (DP).

Woodlark *Alauda arborea*

*Rare common resident breeder, increasing? **Red listed.***

Two June records Syderstone Common on 5th (BB/JE) and Ringland 9th (NM).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

*Fairly common resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. **Red listed.***

There were no significant counts recorded in the early winter. CS recorded c. 30 pairs breeding on Sparham Hall Farm. In the second winter period there were 40 in Old Costessey (AB) 10th Oct, 30 Worthing Church (DK) 26th Nov and 29 Mill Farm, Gt Witchingham (AJ) 29th Nov.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

*Migratory breeder in sand quarries, preferring fresh faces. Also passage migrant. **Amber listed.***

First report was of 1 at Sparham Pools 28th Mar (CS) quickly increasing to 8 the next day (B&BP). Breeding was recorded at Lyng Easthaugh where c. 30 pair nested and at Beetley GP where c.75 pairs nested. 36 new birds were ringed at Lyng Easthaugh and 115 at Beetley (RG). See ringing report for recoveries / controls.

Elsewhere 30 were recorded from Costessey Park GC on 28th June (AB). Latest record was 10 HBW 18th Sept (DK).

Barn Swallow (Swallow) *Hirundo rustica*

Common migratory breeder and passage migrant. Decreasing. Amber listed.

Two birds at Hall Farm, Attlebridge 4th Apr (WO) were the first report of the year. Small numbers were then reported through Apr from Sparham Hall, N Tuddenham, Fustyweed and Gressenhall until 100+ were recorded at Sparham Pools on 4th May (CS).

Guist Common had a small roost of 150 on 4th Aug, 70 on 15th, 50 on 21st but 40 on 25th did not go into roost. Other double figure counts were 50 Gt Ryburgh 6th Sept (JHop), 55 N Tuddenham 8th and 30 N Tuddenham 19th. Latest record was 6 Lenwade 20th Sept (BB/JE).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Common migratory breeder and passage migrant. Amber listed.

The first (and only!) spring record was one at Sparham Hall Farm 18th Apr (CS).

Significant counts after that were 50 Sparham Pools 16th July (BB/JE), 250 (max for year) Sparham Hall Farm 20th Aug (CS), 50 Lenwade 27th Aug, 60 Worthing 31st Aug (DK) then 40 Pensthorpe 2nd Sept (BS), 50 Gt Ryburgh 6th (JHop), 30 Lyng 20th & 60 Lenwade 21st (BB/JE). Last reports in Oct 1 Lyng 2nd (NM), 2 Old Costessey 4th (AB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Scarce breeder and passage migrant with highest numbers in the winter. Amber listed.

Highest count was 65 birds at Sparham Hall Farm in Mar. Other double figure counts were 20 East Rudham Mar, 20 Sculthorpe Apr, 20 Sparham Pools Oct and 10 at the same site mid- Dec. No breeding records received.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Rare summer migrant to the valley. Amber listed.

Again no records received. Are there none in the whole WVBS area?

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

The valley is a stronghold in Norfolk for this lover of fast streams. Local breeder mainly at mills but more widespread outside the breeding season.

Amber listed.

A well recorded species throughout the year.

Reported from Attlebridge (Hall Farm), Beetley GP, Bylaugh SW, Costessey Weir, Dereham SW, Gt Witchingham (Mill Farm), Lenwade, Lyng Mill, N Tuddenham Common, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP, Sweat Briar Marshes and Taverham.

Evidence of breeding from sightings of juveniles during June & July – Beetley GP, Bylaugh SW, Dereham SW, Lenwade, Sparham Pools (Lyng Mill birds?).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

60 at Dereham SW on 5th Mar (IB) was the max count for the year. Other gatherings included 15 Beetley GP 29th July (AH/RG), 10 going to roost Guist Common 25th Aug (AH/DP/RG), 25 Lyng 8th Dec (BB/JE) and 16 Bylaugh 26th Dec (PR).

Bohemian Waxwing (Waxwing) *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor. Rare in valley.

Two records - 7 Scarning 24th Mar (RBA), 1 Ringland 14th Nov (NM).

Winter Wren (Wren) *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant, mainly sedentary resident.

This bird must be too common for our members to report as very few records. 19 HBW 16th Oct (DK) was only significant record.

Hedge Accentor (Dunnock) *Prunella modularis*

Common sedentary resident. Amber listed.

No significant records. There was no evidence of any numbers in the wildbird food on Sparham Hall Farm this year.

European Robin (Robin) *Erithacus rubecula*

Common resident. Numbers may be augmented by passage migrants, especially in autumn.

No record of particular significance was received for this ubiquitous species.

Common Nightingale (Nightingale) *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rare summer visitor to WVBS area. Amber listed.

A singing male was reported Lenwade Common 5th June (BB/JE). Anglers on the site claimed up to 3 were keeping them awake during the night.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce winter visitor to the valley. Amber listed.

Only one record of 2 at Sculthorpe Moor on 22nd & 26th Feb (LK).

Northern Wheatear (Wheatear) *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Scarce passage migrant to the valley.

Three records in both spring and autumn. Sparham Hall Farm 2 7th & 1 23rd Apr (CS), 1 Sculthorpe 10th Apr (B&BP). 1 N Tuddenham (B&BP), 1 Ringland (NM) both 12th Sept and 1 Hockering on the rather late date 20th Oct (PR).

Common Blackbird (Blackbird) *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Only double figure records were 12 Lenwade 24th Feb, 28 Pound Lane, N Tuddenham 16th Nov, 11 HBW 20th Nov and 20+ N Tuddenham Common 4th Dec.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

During the early winter period 450 at Cadders Hill, Lyng (PR) was the highest count. Then 150 N Tuddenham 28th Mar (B&BP) and 100 Sparham Hall Farm on 30th Mar was part of the pre- emigration build up. Last spring record 30 N Tuddenham 9th Apr (B&BP).

The first recorded returning bird was one Lyng 9th Oct (NS). 60 flew W over Lenwade on 24th Oct and 20 went over Reepham next day (GH). Numbers built rapidly in mid-Nov with 74 N Tuddenham (DP), 500 Ringland (NM), 130 Worthing Church (DK) all on 16th. Good numbers continued into early Dec with 100 Dunton 1st and 250 Whissonsett 6th (both AJ). 50+ were feeding in Fustyweed on 28th where BS had 23 feeding on crab apples in his garden.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Fairly common resident and passage migrant. Showing signs of recovery?

Red listed.

Many records of 1 or 2 from 17 locations except for 5 at Rushmeadow 6th Feb (CJ), 4 Lenwade 24th Feb and 4 Mill Farm, Gt Witchingham 29th Nov (AJ). No specific breeding records were received.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Common passage migrant with smaller numbers in winter. Amber listed.

The return passage started with 20 Gressenhall 24th Feb (LL) then 10 here on 16th Mar when 250 flew east over Ringland (NM). 50 Sparham Hall Farm 24th Mar (AJ).

The second winter period started with 50 to South over Windsor Park, Dereham (C&JF) and 6 Ringland (NM) on 4th Oct. There were many reports then until end Nov after which the numbers had dropped to single figure records. 71 HBW 16th Oct, 50 Sparham Pools 19th Oct, 40 Marriott's Way, Lenwade 21st Oct. 100 at both Ringland (NM) & N Tuddenham (DP) on 16th Nov, 40 Clayhall Farm, Lenwade 29th Nov (LW).

A Redwing at Reepham mobbed by 2 Common Blackbirds flew into a window and broke its neck on 18th Nov (GH).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed.

Union Farm, Gressenhall and Lenwade Common were the only breeding season records. 15 Old Costessey 9th Nov was the only post breeding flock (AB).

Also recorded from Beetley GP, HBW, Lyng, N Tuddenham & Sparham Pools.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare resident expanding its range through valley.

Recorded from 5 locations within the valley from 19th Mar to 16th Nov. No proof of breeding but present at 2 sites during the breeding season.

Common Grasshopper Warbler (Grasshopper Warbler) *Locustella naevia*

Scarce summer resident and passage migrant. Red listed.

One present in the Dereham area 27th – 30th June (IB). Also juveniles trapped and ringed Whitwell Common 9th July and 10th Aug must have been bred in the locality.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant.

Earliest record 14th Apr at Lyng GP (CS). Also recorded from East Dereham, Guist Common, Pensthorpe (6 singing males), Swanton Morley GP and Whitwell Common (bred). No late records.

Eurasian Reed Warbler (Reed Warbler) *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant.

Earliest record 29th Apr Lyng GP (CS). Last date recorded 26th Aug when 2 – 3 family parties at Pensthorpe. Also recorded from Guist Common, Pensthorpe (17 singing males), Swanton Morley GP, Sparham Pools and Whitwell Common.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce summer resident and passage migrant.

First recorded 21st Apr Sparham Hall Farm (CS) where 3 pairs bred. Heath Road, Lenwade & GRRWP on 5th June, Swanton Morley GP 28th June, Pound Lane, N Tuddenham 19th July to 13th Aug (latest date), East Dereham 6th Aug and Whitwell Common (2 juvs caught & ringed 9th Aug).

Common Whitethroat (Whitethroat) *Sylvia communis*

Very common summer resident.

Under-recorded. First bird 25th Apr Sparham Hall Farm where 5 pairs bred. 6 adults and 10 juvs caught & ringed. Latest record received 17th Aug N Tuddenham.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant. Less common than Blackcap.

Recorded from only 4 sites Lenwade, Pensthorpe (2 singing males), Sparham Pools & Whitwell Common (a juv). Earliest record single bird Sparham Hall Farm 27th Apr. No late sightings received.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer resident and passage migrant; winters in very small numbers.

There were no wintering records for either end of the year.

The first record was Sporle on 31st Mar (NarVOS) followed by one at Sparham Pools 2nd Apr (BB/JE). The latest record was Worthing 19th Oct (DK).

There were 7 singing males Pensthorpe 12th June (Plog). 4 adults and 13 juvs were trapped and ringed Whitwell Common in July / Aug.

Common Chiffchaff (Chiffchaff) *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer resident, passage migrant and increasing winter visitor.

No reports of over-wintering birds in the early months.

A major influx started 18th Mar (Sparham Hall Farm) to the end of the month. The last record was 2 Hoe on 20th Nov (NarVOS) but no evidence that they wintered. Recorded also from Bylaugh, Drayton, Elsing, Gressenhall (Union Farm), HBW, Lenwade, Lyng, N Tuddenham, Norwich (Train Wood), Pensthorpe, Taverham, Scarning, Shereford and Sparham Pools.

Interestingly the changing fortunes of Common Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler are reflected in our records. Whilst Willow Warbler used to be by far the commoner bird WVBS got nearly twice as many Common Chiffchaff records as Willow Warbler. Similarly 20 Common Chiffchaff were caught to 8 Willow Warbler at Whitwell Common.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common summer resident and passage migrant, declining. Amber listed.

Earliest record Sparham Pools 28th Mar (B&BP).

Records only received from Guist, HBW, N Tuddenham, Pensthorpe (5 singing males), Sparham Pools (2+ singing males) and Whitwell Common. No late records.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

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

First winter period records of 1 or 2 from Elsing Hall, N Tuddenham & Sculthorpe during Feb, then Lenwade Common & Sparham Pools in Mar. The only proof of breeding was 2 juvs caught Whitwell Common 9th / 10th Aug. From Oct to the end of the year there were far more records. Most were 1 to 3 except for "numerous" at Sparham Pools and a "small flock" at Lenwade (Marriott's Way).

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*
Rare passage migrant, winter visitor
and potential breeder. **Amber
listed.**

The first two records for the area
since WVBS has been going. One
Bawdeswell Heath 26th Mar (NB)
and one Hoe Rough 25th Oct (IB).

Firecrest, by Louisa Lloyd



Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Uncommon and declining summer
resident. **Red listed.**

Reported far better in 2005 than
the previous year. Breeding proven
at Elsing (Mill Street), Gressenhall,
Hoe Common, Lenwade, Lyng,
Sparham Hall Farm, Swanton
Morley, West Raynham. Also
reported from Dereham SW,
GRRWP, Helhoughton Church,
Hoe (Worthing Rd), Reepham,
Sennowe Park, Weston Park GC
and Worthing.

Spotted Flycatcher, by Louisa Lloyd

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident.

Recorded from 19 localities with double figure records from Lenwade 19th Jan (RG), Attlebridge 30th July (WO), Whitwell Common 9th Aug (RG), Sparham Pools 25th Aug (C&JF), Taverham 7th Oct (R&DH), Lenwade (Bridge Lake) 13th Nov (NS), HBW 18th Dec and Elsing (Mill St.) 20th Dec (AJ).

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Uncommon resident. Red listed.

Due to the difficulty in separating this and the next species the potential for confusion must be recognised. Recorded from Dereham (Windsor Park), HBW, Hoe Rough, Lenwade Common, Heath & Bridge Lake, Pensthorpe (bred), Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools and Swannington.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Uncommon declining resident. Red listed.

Only recorded from HBW 21st Aug (DK), Sculthorpe Moor 3rd & 5th Feb (LK), 18th Dec (IB) and Sparham Pools 12th Feb (AJ).

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident.

Recorded only from Dereham (Windsor Park), HBW, Lenwade (bred), N Tuddenham Common & Pound Lane and Sculthorpe Moor. Under recorded.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Common resident.

Common throughout the area. Proof of breeding from Lenwade, Sparham Hall Farm, Taverham & Whitwell Common.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident.

Common throughout the area.

Wood Nuthatch (Nuthatch) *Sitta europaea*

Uncommon resident

Recorded at Bylaugh, Ghost Hill, Taverham, Lenwade Common (4) & SE end of village, Old Costessey, Ringland, Scarning, Sparham Pools.

No breeding records received.

Eurasian Treecreeper (Treecreeper) *Certhia familiaris*

Uncommon resident

Ones & twos recorded at Dereham SW, HBW, Lenwade, N Tuddenham Common, Old Costessey, Pensthorpe, Scarning, Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools and Whitwell Common (bred).

Eurasian Jay (Jay) *Garrulus monedula*

Common resident and winter visitor

Mainly 1-2 birds but 3 Drayton, Ghost Hill, Taverham & Gt Ryburgh, 4 HBW & Taverham whilst 8 at Lenwade Heath 28th Oct (J&BP) was exceptional.

Black-billed Magpie (Magpie) *Pica pica*

Common resident.

Two double figure records – 10 Union Farm, Gressenhall 15th Mar (LL) and 10 Old Hall Lane, N Tuddenham 6th Oct (B&BP).

Eurasian Jackdaw (Jackdaw) *Corvus monedula*

Common resident.

The only significant count reported was 250 Colkirk 13th Feb (LK) apart from a mixed flock of “thousands” of this species and Rook going to roost N Tuddenham Common 1st Dec (DP).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident.

Rookery at Great Witchingham Wildlife Park but no count. Significant gatherings 600 Taverham 10th Jan then 500 23rd Nov flying East to West (R&DH), 200 Bittering 6th Mar (NarVOS), 200 Ringland 16th Sept (R&DH) and see above for N Tuddenham 1st Dec.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident.

Under recorded. Dereham (Windsor Park), HBW (6 max), Lenwade Common (2) and Sculthorpe (4). No breeding records received.

Common Starling (Starling) *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident. Red listed.

In first winter period 400 Norwich Rd Dereham 8th Feb (DP), 300 Willow Farm N Tuddenham 20th Feb (B&BP), 110 Clayhall Farm Lenwade 7th Mar (RG). An early autumn build up started with 500 Ringland 16th Sept (R&DH) then 200 Lenwade 6th Oct building to 500 on 12th (RG). 100 Mattishall Burgh 27th Oct (B&BP).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident. Red listed.

This is a species that is often ignored by those who have them locally. The only double figure record received was 12 Taverham 25th Feb. Otherwise only reported from Colkirk.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (Tree Sparrow) *Passer montanus*

Uncommon declining resident. Red listed.

In first winter period 6 Colkirk 1st Feb, 2 Mill Street Elsing 7th – 12th Feb (AJ) where 2 26th then 4 27th Feb (C&FN). 60 Heath Road Lyng 4th Feb (RG) were presumably the same flock that had been feeding in a conservation headland developed as part of a Countryside Stewardship Scheme on Sparham Hall Farm in Nov / Dec 2004. This had reduced to 10 27th Mar (NM). 2 again Mill Street Elsing 29th Mar (C&FN).

There were no more records until 3 breeding season records 1 Fulmodeston (B&BP) and 1 Litcham (BB/JE) both on 5th June then 2 Lyng 1st July (NM). Two were again at the latter site on 19th Nov and finally 4 Elsing 4th Dec (NM). All records detailed.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant widespread resident and winter visitor.

It would seem that there are no large flocks wintering in the WVBS area. 22 Costessey Pits (R&DH) and 25 Willow Farm N Tuddenham (B&BP) on 20th Feb, 16 Felthorpe 3rd Mar (MS), 16 Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham 19th Mar (B&BP) and 14 N Tuddenham Common 4th Dec (DP) are the largest flocks reported. Surely under recorded!

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

Most are first winter period records of 1-2 birds coming to garden feeding stations.

3 (1m, 2f) Church Lane Swannington 31st Jan and 2nd Feb with the male visiting until 16th Feb (TF). In Lenwade 15 visited S&BG's garden from 5th Feb and still had between 5 and 20 all Mar. Elsewhere 20 Fustyweed 12th Feb (BS), 2 – 5 Sculthorpe Moor 16th – 26th Feb (LK/ IB), 20 Kettlestone 12th Mar (RBA), 1 male Felthorpe 21st Mar (MS) then 3 Mill Street Elsing 29th Mar (C&FN) being final spring record.

Only 2 autumn reports – 5 Ringland 13th Oct (NM) and 9 N Tuddenham 24th Oct (B&BP).

European Greenfinch (Greenfinch) *Carduelis chloris*

Common resident.

Feb records were 20 Colkirk, 12 Sculthorpe Moor, 30 Drayton. In Mar 12 N Tuddenham then no double figure count until 50 23rd Aug and 60 21st Oct at the same site. Significant numbers then built up in the Lyng Sparham area with 20 Lyng 26th Oct, 60 Lenwade 1st Nov, 300 Sparham Hall Farm 2nd Nov (NS), 80 nearby 6th, 60 Bylaugh 13th, 50 going to roost Pound Lane N Tuddenham 16th Nov then 50 Sparham Hall Farm 3rd Dec and 32 N Tuddenham Common 4th Dec.

European Goldfinch (Goldfinch) *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident.

Small numbers recorded throughout the year with a maximum of 26 HBW 21st Aug (DK). Other double figure counts 11 Sculthorpe Moor Feb, 10 Lenwade Common Mar, 14 Lenwade Heath Sept, 15 same site Nov and 10 HBW Dec.

Eurasian Siskin (Siskin) *Carduelis spinus*

Winter visitor in varying numbers.

In the first winter period numbers were low with 50 Swannington 16th Feb (TF), 2 Lenwade 5th Mar and 2 Felthorpe 7th Mar being the only records.

One Lyng 10th July suggests possible breeding in the area.

Somewhat surprisingly the second winter period saw far more records. A flock of c.10 was at Sparham Pools from 18th Sept through Oct peaking at 40 on 19th Nov dropping back to 25 on 25th Dec. Dereham had 18 25th Sept and 10 were at the sewage works 28th Dec. In Lenwade 4 21st Sept, 40 21st Oct, 15 13th Nov, 10 6th Dec and 25 28th Dec. Elsewhere 14+ Scarning 16th Oct, 6 Old Costessey 14th Nov, 4 Ringland 22nd Nov, 30 at both Sculthorpe Moor and Swanton Morley GP on 18th Dec.

Common Linnet (Linnet) *Carduelis cannabina*

Declining resident. Red listed.

A sizeable flock during first winter period - 150 Scarning 5th Mar (IB). 8 Swanton Morley 13th Mar. 12 pairs bred Sparham Hall Farm. 60 Sparham Pools 18th Sept was the first autumn flock recorded. 25 Old Costessey 10th, 40 Lyng & 15 Taverham 30th Oct, 200 Worthing Church 16th Nov (DK) was largest flock of year, 40 HBW 20th, 20 Mill Farm Gt Witchingham 29th Nov. In Dec 100 Blind Lane Elsing 4th then 14 Badley Moor Dereham on 29th.

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis flammea*

Scarce and declining resident and winter visitor. Amber listed.

It is assumed that all the Redpoll reports are "Lesser Redpoll".

1 Lenwade Heath 5th – 7th Mar (RG). 4 Swanton Morley GP 23rd Oct (IB) & 1 on 12th Nov. 1 HBW 20th Nov, 2 Marriott's Way Lenwade – Whitwell 29th Nov (LW). 5 Swanton Morley GP 4th Dec & 3 Dereham SW 28th Dec (IB).

Common Crossbill (Crossbill)

Loxia curvirostra

Very rare resident breeder following eruptions.

A small influx in the summer gave rise to the first WVBS records. 15 flew N GRRWP 30th June (IB) then at Ringland 2 5th and 3 22nd July (NM).

Crossbill, by Louisa Lloyd



Common Bullfinch (Bullfinch) *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Declining resident. Red listed.

Recorded most of the year but, somewhat surprisingly, with no reports during Apr to July. Recorded from the following locations with maximum for each in brackets. Dereham SW (7), Elsing (2), Fustyweed (1), HBW (9), Lenwade (3), N Tuddenham (2), Scarning (4), Sparham Pools (2), Swanton Morley (5), Weston Green (3) and Whitwell Common (5).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Declining common resident. Red listed.

In first winter period significant flocks of 40 and 50 at Willow Farm N Tuddenham 12th & 20th Feb resp (B&BP). 15 Worthing Church 2nd Apr. 10 pairs bred Sparham Hall Farm. 12 Old Costessey 9th Nov. Other records Badley Moor Dereham (6), Drayton (2), Union Farm Gressenhall (2), HBW (2), Weston Green (1).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon resident. Red listed.

No significant wintering flocks noted at either end of the year.

Hall Farm Attlebridge (1), Bylaugh SW (2), Dereham (2), Guist Common (6 – bred), Scarning (3), Shereford (2), Sparham Pools (5), and Worthing Church (3).

Escapes

These are species that have been recorded in the area but are clearly not native and have not reached Britain by their own efforts.

Blue-winged Goose *Cyanochen cyanoptera*

Endemic to the Ethiopian Highlands.

One was recorded at Swanton Morley GP between 30th May and 28th July (B&BP)

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Eastern Europe, Asia & N Africa.

One Great Ryburgh 23rd Aug (Jhop).

Reeve's Pheasant *Syrmaticus reevesii*

Mountains of Central China.

One was reported from Taverham in Oct (CR).

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Southern Europe is closest breeding area.

An eascape from Pensthorpe was at Hall Farm Attlebridge for a few days from 22nd July (WO).

Eurasian Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

Widespread across Europe & Asia but not Britain.

The escapee from Walcis Farm, Lenwade was still in the area mid-Oct to Xmas Day at least (RG)

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*

East & SE Australia.

One Hoe Rough for a few weeks during Oct (NarVOS)

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

J Baker	Hawk & Owl Trust	W Oram
N Betts	G Hemmings	D&D Pelling
B Bradley	J Hopkins (JHop)	Pensthorpe Log Book
I Brittain	J Horsman	B&B Pummell
A Brown	A&C Jackson	Rare Bird Alert
J Evans	C Jarrett	P Riley
C&J Fenn	L Kindleysides	C Robson
T Forster	D Knight	C Sayer
A Gardiner	J Leeder	B&M Shapcott
S&B Gibney	L Lloyd	B Shepherd
R&C Gribble	N Mears	M Spriggs
D&J Gurney	Nar Valley Ornithological Society	T Stoney
A Hale	C&F Neale	N Street
R&D Harvey	G&R Northall	L Wilkinson

Thanks to all the above for submitting their records.

Addenda to Annual Report 2004

Colin Fenn

Additional records obtained from the Norfolk Bird and Mammal Report 2004

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

130 Hellesdon Feb 11th, 75 Hellesdon Nov 28th.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

300 Great Ryburgh and 200 Fustyweed Jan. 700 Swanton Morley GP Aug.

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)

70 Sennowe Park June.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Breeding records – Sennowe Park and Tattersett.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Breeding record – Sparham.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

1 Sennowe Park Apr 19th.

Smew (*Mergellus albellus*)

1 Sparham Pools and 1 Swanton Morley GP Jan 2nd, possibly the same bird.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

27 Tatterford Sept.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Breeding record – 8 pairs Sparham (5 bred)

Great Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

1 New Costessey Jan.

Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)

1 Fakenham June 6th.

Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*)

1 female Guist Apr 22nd-23rd, 1 Sculthorpe Moor Apr 24th, 1 male Great Ryburgh May 26th, 1 female Sculthorpe Airfield Aug 5th and 1 male Aug 12th.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

1 Sparham Jan 23rd.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

1 Great Ryburgh May 18th.

Pied Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

1 Great Ryburgh Apr 29th.

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Breeding record – Great Ryburgh

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

1 Great Ryburgh Mar 17th.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

3 Hoe Common Oct 17th.

Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)

1 Hellesdon June 16th.

Eurasian Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

1 Hellesdon Sept 16th.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

2 north over Thorpe Marriott Oct 4th.

Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*)

1 Swanton Morley GP Mar 28th.

Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)

Singing at Hellesdon and Ringland Apr to early June. Last record Ringland June 6th.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

2 Guist, 1 Hempton Marsh no dates

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

1 Hempton and Fakenham during May

Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

9 west over Sennowe Park June 30th.

EARLIEST & LATEST REPORTED DATES OF SUMMER MIGRANTS

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs'ver	Latest	Location	Obs'ver
European Honey Buzzard	22-May	Great Ryburgh	PR	26-Aug	Pensthorpe	RG
Eurasian Marsh Harrier	25-Mar	Wensum Valley	BB/JE	14-Dec	Sparham Pools	CS
Eurasian Hobby	28-Apr	Lyng	CS	5-Oct	Sparham Pools	BB/JE
Little Ringed Plover	26-Mar	Sparham Pools	CS	24-July	Sparham Pools	BB/JE
Common Tern	4-May	Lyng	CS	25-Aug	Sparham Pools	C&JF
Turtle Dove	2-May	Lyng	CS	18-Sept	Bintree GP	NarVOS
Cuckoo	22-Apr	Sparham Pools	CS	27-June	Lenwade	NS
Swift	26-Apr	Sparham Hall	CS	6-Sep	Costessey	JHop
Sand Martin	28-Mar	Sparham Pools	CS	20-Sept	HBW	DK
Barn Swallow	4-Apr	Attlebridge	WO	20-Sept	Lenwade	BB/JE
House Martin	18-Apr	Sparham Hall	CS	4-Oct	Old Costessey	AB
Sedge Warbler	14-Apr	Lyng GP	CS	NR		
Reed Warbler	29-Apr	Lyng GP	CS	26-Aug	Pensthorpe	RG
Lesser Whitethroat	21-Apr	Sparham Hall	CS	13-Aug	N Tuddenham	DP
Common Whitethroat	25-Apr	Sparham Hall	CS	17-Aug	N Tuddenham	DP
(continues)						

EARLIEST & LATEST REPORTED DATES OF SUMMER MIGRANTS (continued)						
Species	Earliest	Location	Obs'ver	Latest	Location	Obs'ver
Garden Warbler	27-Apr	Sparham Hall	CS	NR		
Blackcap	31-Mar	Sporle	NarVOS	19-Oct	Worthing	DK
Chiffchaff	18-Mar	Sparham Hall	CS	20-Nov	Hoe	NarVOS
Willow Warbler	28-Mar	Sparham Pools	B&BP	NR		
Spotted Flycatcher	29-May	Sennowe Park	AB	25-Aug	Lenwade Common	RG

NR = No relevant record

LATEST AND EARLIEST REPORTED DATES OF WINTER VISITORS

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs'ver	Latest	Location	Obs'ver
Eurasian Wigeon	27-Mar	Sparham Pools	BB/JE	26-Aug	Pensthorpe	RG
Common Goldeneye	NR			17-Nov	Sparham Pools	BB/JE
Goosander	19-Mar	Sparham Pools	B&BP	26-Oct	Swanton Morley GP	G&RN
European Golden Plover	28-Feb	Gt Ryburgh	PR	28-July	Worthing	DK
Fieldfare	9-Apr	N Tuddenham	B&BP	9-Oct	Lyng	NS
Redwing	25-Mar	Sparham Hall	AJ	5-Oct	Dereham	C&JF
Brambling	29-Mar	Mill St, Elsing	C&FN	13-Oct	Ringland	NM

NR = No relevant record

Locations and Grid References

The grid references refer to the co-ordinates of the bottom left hand corner of the 2km tetrad the site is located in.

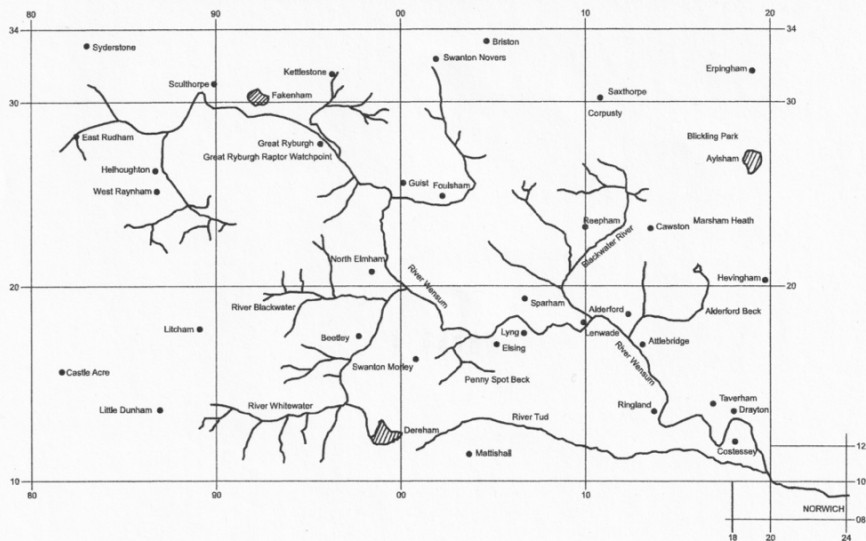
N.B. The provision of the grid reference does not give you the right to visit the site. Some of the sites listed are private, please respect landowners' wishes & follow the Birdwatchers' Code.

Alderford Common (1218)	Elsing Mill (0416)
Attlebridge (1216)	Etling Green (0012)
Badley Moor, Dereham (0010)	Fakenham (9228)
Bawdeswell (0420)	Felthorpe (1618)
Bawdeswell Heath (0218)	Foulsham (0224)
Beetley GP (9818)	Foxley (0220)
Billingford (0020)	Fustyweed, Elsing (0418)
Billingford Common (0018)	Gateley (9624)
Billingford Pits (0018)	Ghost Hill, Taverham (1612)
Bintree Mill (9824)	Great Ryburgh (9426)
Bittering GP/Bittering (9216)	Great Ryburgh Watchpoint (9624)
Blickling (1628)	Great Witchingham (Mill Farm) (0820)
Blind Lane, Elsing (0614)	Great Witchingham Wildlife Centre (0818)
Brisley (9420)	Gressenhall (9616)
Broom Green (9824)	Guist (9824)
Bridge Lake, Lenwade (1018)	Guist Common (9824)
Briston (0632)	Haveringland (1420)
Buxton Heath (1620)	Hempton Marsh & Common (9028)
Bylaugh (0218)	Hockering (0612)
Bylaugh Sewage Works (0218)	Hockering Wood (0614)
Cadders Hill, Lyng (0616)	Hoe (9816)
Cawston (1222)	Hoe Common & Rough (9816)
Colkirk (9226 & 9026)	Kettlestone (9630)
Costessey (1610)	Lenwade (0818)
Costessey Pits (1612)	Lenwade Bridge (1018)
Dereham SW (9612)	Lenwade Common (0818)
Drayton (1812)	Lenwade Heath (0818)
Dunton (8830)	Lenwade Station (1018)
Easton College (1210)	Litcham (8816)
East Rudham (8228)	Little Ryburgh (9628)
Elsing (0416)	Longham (9414)
Elsing Hall (0216)	Lyng (0616)

<p> Lyng Easthaugh (0818) Marriott's Way, Lenwade (1018) Mattishall Burgh (0410) Mileham (9018) Mill Street, Elsing (0416) Morton-on-the-Hill (1612) New Costessey (1810) North Elmham (9820) North Tuddenham & Common (0214) Old Beetley (9618) Old Costessey (1610) Pensthorpe (9428) Pockthorpe (0618) Pudding Norton (2692) Reepham (1022 & 0822) Ringland (1412) Roosting Hills, Beetley (9816) Rush Meadow, Dereham (9612) Sennowe Park near Guist (9824) Scarning (9412) Sculthorpe Airfield (8630) Sculthorpe Fen (9828 & 9830) Sculthorpe Mill (8830) Sculthorpe Moor (9030) Shereford (8828) South Raynham (8624) Sparham Hall Farm (0618) Sparham Holes (0418) </p>	<p> Sparham Pools (0616) Sporle (8410) Stanfield (9220) Swannington (1218) Swanton Morley (0016) Swanton Morley GP (0018) Swanton Novers Raptor Watchpoint (0030) Sweet Briar Marsh, Norwich (2008) Syderstone Common (8230) Tatterford (8628) Tattersett (8428) Taverham (1614) Three Bridges Farm, Elsing (0418) Twyford (0024) Union Farm, Gressenhall (9616) Walnut Tree Farm, Lyng Easthaugh (0816) West Raynham (8624) Weston Green (1014) Weston Longville (1016) Whissonsett (9022) Whitwell/Whitwell Common (0820) Windsor Park, Dereham (9612) Worthing (9818) Worthing Bridge (9820) Worthing GP (9818) </p>
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Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society Recording Area

Refer to Landranger OS Sheets 132/133 North West/ East Norfolk
& 134 Norwich & the Broads for more detail.



2005 WVBS RINGING REPORT - Allan Hale

Why do we ring birds? Well, in the early days of the Bird Ringing Scheme, it was simply to find out where birds went, and this was achieved by attaching a small, uniquely numbered metal ring to a bird's leg, thus enabling it to be identified as an individual. We have learnt much from such ringing. We know for instance, that our Swallows winter in Southern Africa, and that many of our Starlings move out in spring to breed in Northern and Eastern Europe.

After nearly a hundred years of ringing there is still more to learn about migration routes and wintering areas, information which is often vital for conservation. However, a major purpose of the Ringing Scheme today is to monitor bird populations. Ringing allows us to study how many young birds leave the nest and survive to become adults each year, as well as how many adults survive the stress of breeding, migration and severe weather. Changes in these birth and death rates are important as they may provide an early warning that a particular species is starting to decline. Ringing allowed us to identify a decline in the survival rate of Sedge Warblers and to link this to the rainfall index in their wintering area in the Sahel desert in Africa. Ringing also lets us work out the stage in birds' lives which is being affected, and has demonstrated that the recent dramatic decline in the numbers of Song Thrushes has been caused by a reduction in the survival of young birds in their first two months of life.

Ringing is an essential tool in the conservation of birds and British bird ringers are at the forefront of the research necessary to establish the facts that are so vital for effective conservation work. The British Trust for Ornithology administers the ringing scheme which marks around 800,000 birds a year. Of these, some 12,000 will be recovered but the rate varies enormously from 1 in 4 for Mute Swan to less than 1 in 400 for Willow Warbler.

A total of 2,325 birds of 51 species were ringed in the WVBS area during 2005. The most-ringed species were Blue Tit and Great Tit, each with 428 birds ringed, third was Sand Martin with 188 and fourth Blackcap with 121. Other totals of interest were 3 Kingfisher, 2 Common Grasshopper Warbler, 52 Marsh Tit (mostly in Swanton Great Wood), 3 Willow Tit, and most encouragingly, no less than 11 Spotted Flycatcher.

There was much of interest amongst the recoveries received during the year. The highlights were a Sand Martin from France to Beetley and a Chiffchaff from Shereford to Belgium. The other movements shown below are less dramatic, but do give us some sort of understanding regarding the travels of our local birds.

Finally, thanks to all the ringers that operated in the WVBS study area during 2005 for access to their records.

Ray Gribble is conducting a long-term study of the birds of Whitwell Common using ringing as the major tool. The majority of this work is done between mid June and early August. If any WVBS member is interested in learning about bird ringing and would like to observe birds "in the hand" Ray would make them welcome. Please remember that these activities are very much weather dependent so final decisions about ringing on The Common are often made at the last minute.

WVBS Ringing Totals for 2005

Greater Canada Goose	1	Common Whitethroat	30
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	3	Common Chiffchaff	74
Common Kestrel	3	Willow Warbler	38
Black-headed Gull	12	Goldcrest	34
Mew (Common) Gull	1	Spotted Flycatcher	11
Common Wood Pigeon	6	Long-tailed Tit	79
Eurasian Collared Dove	1	Marsh Tit	52
Barn Owl	1	Willow Tit	3
Common Kingfisher	3	Coal Tit	63
Green Woodpecker	1	Blue Tit	428
Great Spotted Woodpecker	7	Great Tit	428
Sand Martin	188	Wood Nuthatch	6
Barn Swallow	55	Eurasian Treecreeper	16
House Martin	4	Eurasian Jay	6
White (Pied) Wagtail	1	Black-billed Magpie	1
Winter Wren	92	Eurasian Jackdaw	1
Hedge Accentor	75	Common Starling	3
European Robin	93	House Sparrow	3
Common Blackbird	64	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	1
Song Thrush	13	Chaffinch	85
Comm. Grasshopper Warbler	2	Brambling	7
Sedge Warbler	4	European Greenfinch	88
Eurasian Reed Warbler	13	Lesser Redpoll	1
Blackcap	121	Common Bullfinch	49
Garden Warbler	31	Yellowhammer	12
Lesser Whitethroat	2	Reed Bunting	10

Grand Total - 2,327 birds of 61 species

Selected WVBS Recoveries Notified During 2005

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

Age when ringed (first line)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Pullus (= nestling)</i> |
| 2 | <i>Fully grown, year of hatching unknown</i> |
| 3 | <i>Hatched during calendar year of ringling</i> |
| 4 | <i>Hatched before calendar year of ringling, but exact year unknown</i> |
| 5 | <i>Hatched during previous calendar year</i> |
| 6 | <i>Hatched before previous calendar year but exact year unknown</i> |
| 7 | <i>Hatched two calendar years before ringling</i> |
| 8 | <i>Hatched more than two calendar years before ringling</i> |

M = male

F = female

Condition at Recovery (second line)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| <i>X</i> | <i>Found dead</i> |
| <i>XF</i> | <i>Found freshly dead or dying</i> |
| <i>XL</i> | <i>Found long dead</i> |
| <i>+</i> | <i>Shot or intentionally killed by man</i> |
| <i>R</i> | <i>Caught and released by ringer</i> |
| <i>RR</i> | <i>Ring or colour marks read in the field</i> |

Barn Owl

- 1 21.07.04 Gateley, Fakenham
 X 12.09.04 Little Snoring, Fakenham (21km WNW)

- 1 06.08.03 Cawston College
 X 11.02.05 Wells-next-the-Sea (20km NNW)

Two of several hundred nestling Barn Owl ringed in Norfolk every year, these were both found freshly dead.

Sand Martin

- 4F 21.07.02 *Aylsham*
 R 26.06.05 *Lyng Easthaugh (15km WSW)*
- 3 13.09.03 *Belton Marshes, Great Yarmouth*
 R 27.06.05 *Beetley, Dereham (52km WNW)*
- 3 17.08.02 Icklesham, Sussex
 R 27.06.05 Beetley, Dereham (203km N)
- 3 05.09.04 Citerne Sud, Charente Maritime, France
 R 29.07.05 Beetley, Dereham

Sand Martins often interchange locally between colonies, sometimes even during the same season. Icklesham is a major ringing site in Sussex and is on the southern migration route for British Sand Martins.

The French bird was originally caught at a communal roost on its way southward to Africa, later returning to breed at Beetley. Additionally, a Spanish-ringed Sand Martin was caught at Beetley during 2005. Ringing details are still awaited.

Barn Swallow

- 1 04.06.05 Mundford
- R 07.08.05 Guist Common (32km NW)

One of many nestling Swallows ringed in The Brecklands, this one chose to join a communal roost in the reeds at Guist Common.

Common Chiffchaff

- 3 19.06.03 Shereford, Fakenham
- R 27.07.03 Shereford, Fakenham
- R 10.04.04 Sint Laureins, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium (257km SE)

This conforms with the habits of British Chiffchaffs which tend to cross The Channel to and from the Low Countries.

European Greenfinch

- 3M 28.11.02 Roydon, King's Lynn
- R 18.03.04 Lenwade (40km E)

- 3F 21.09.02 Shimpling, Diss
- R 23.03.04 Lenwade (36km N)

Two local movements, typical of winter Greenfinches. It is uncommon (but not unknown) for our winter Greenfinches to originate abroad.

Eurasian Siskin

- 3M 14.02.04 Garboldisham, Diss
- R 22.03.04 Lenwade (39km NE)

This bird was most likely hatched well north of the WVBS area. Many of our winter Siskin come from Scotland, with fewer numbers from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

2005 MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY

Josh Leeder

JANUARY

A very mild month across the whole of the U.K. The mean temperature for the U.K. as a whole was the warmest since 1990, only Northern Ireland & Scotland had a slightly warmer January in 2002. Rainfall was above average over most of Scotland & parts of Cumbria & N. Wales, but most of England & Wales were well below average rainfall. Average sunshine levels were high over S.E. England. It got colder towards the end of the month, with some snow in the last week. East Anglia had the highest average sunshine & least rainfall.

On 11th&12th over N.W. Scotland a stormy spell saw winds gust up to 106mph, in the highlands of Kinlochewe 142mm of rain fell in 24hrs. Boulmer (Northumberland) recorded 13.5°C on 31st.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	8.1°C	2.5°C	5.3°C	47.7 hrs	127.2 mm
E. Anglia	8.9°C	2.7°C	5.7°C	74.9 hrs	28.8 mm
E. Anglia Average 1961-1990	6.2°C	0.7°C	3.4°C	52.5 hrs	51.3 mm

FEBRUARY

Continuing mild for the first half of the month, but then turning cold with snow in the second half, when the wind went from S.W. to a Northerly or easterly direction. Away from eastern areas rainfall fell below average with some places in the south getting only a quarter of their normal rainfall. For some areas this was the fourth consecutive month of below average rainfall.

50cm of snow laid in Boltshope park (Durham) & 23cm in Carterhouse (Scottish borders) both on 25th. Redhill (Surrey) recorded -9.5°C overnight 27th/28th, the days were cold too with only 1.2°C at Wattersham (Suffolk) & 0.2°C at Sunnybridge (Powys).

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	6.4°C	1.1°C	3.7°C	69.2 hrs	70.1 mm
E. Anglia	6.8°C	1.3°C	4.1°C	62.8 hrs	40.5 mm
1961-90	6.5°C	0.6°C	3.5°C	67.9 hrs	37.2 mm

MARCH

A very cold & wintry start with some snow & sharp frosts nighttimes, but despite that the mean temperature was again well above average. Turning milder with some heavy rain in second half of the month. Generally sunshine & rainfall were below average across the U.K. Mist & fog, inland as well as around the coasts, became a feature later in the month.

Snow drifts up to 30 cm over the downs (S.E. England) causing traffic disruptions & school closures in Kent & Surrey who saw their snowiest March spell for 10 yrs. Boltshope Park (Durham) reported 40 cm of lying snow on 3rd.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	9.6°C	3.3°C	6.4°C	81.9 hrs	73.0 mm
E. Anglia	10.4°C	3.5°C	6.9°C	70.2 hrs	31.7 mm
1961-90	9.3°C	1.9°C	5.6°C	107.0 hrs	45.9 mm

APRIL

A typical April with showers & longer periods of rain, also changeable at times, with more settled periods. A brief cold spell brought snow & sleet around 7th & 8th, more snow on the northern hills on the 18th. Generally it got warmer, particularly towards the end of the month. Mean temperatures were above average across the U.K. Rainfall was quite varied with some areas double their normal & most areas above average.

Newcastle recorded 73.8 mm in 48 hrs on 15th/16th & Exmouth (Devon) 40.7 mm 22nd/23rd.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	11.9°C	4.0°C	7.9°C	147.5 hrs	90.9 mm
E. Anglia	13.9°C	4.8°C	9.4°C	146.4 hrs	38.7 mm
1961-90	12.0°C	3.7°C	7.8°C	143.6 hrs	45.7 mm

MAY

Mean temperatures close to average across most parts of the U.K, making it the coldest May since 1996 for many areas. Rainfall totals below average across majority of England & Wales.

Tulloch bridge recorded a temperature of -6.3°C on the 18th, the lowest temperature so late in the season since 1956. Central London recorded 31.9°C on the 27th, the highest May temperature since 1947.

May	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	14.4°C	5.7°C	10.0°C	204.9 hrs	72.7 mm
E. Anglia	16.6°C	7.2°C	11.9°C	218.4 hrs	39.0 mm
1961-90	15.9°C	6.6°C	11.2°C	194.5 hrs	47.0 mm

JUNE

A typical summer month, characterised by some very warm or hot weather interspersed with some very wet & thundery weather. Mean temperatures over a degree above average across the U.K. Rainfall was quite variable across the country with well below average across the S.E. For some areas it was the 7th month out of the last 8 to have below average rainfall.

Central London recorded a temperature of 33.1°C on the 19th. On the same day at Hawnby (N. Yorkshire), a recording of 60 mm of rain fell in 1 hour.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	18.5°C	9.9°C	14.1°C	169.1 hrs	71.8 mm
E. Anglia	21.1°C	10.6°C	15.8°C	193.1 hrs	45.7 mm
1961-90	19.1°C	9.4°C	14.2°C	195.2 hrs	51.2 mm

JULY

An unsettled start & end to the month but a warm, dry & sunny middle two weeks. Mean temperatures above average across most of the U.K., but significant variations in rainfall, with Scotland & Northern Ireland well below average, whilst England & Wales saw only their second above average rainfall month since November 2004.

Gravesend-Broadness (Kent) recorded 31.7°C on 14th. A tornado hit Kings Heath area of Birmingham on the 28th causing considerable damage & injury.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	19.4°C	11.3°C	15.3°C	163.8 hrs	59.5 mm
E. Anglia	21.5°C	12.7°C	17.1°C	161.2 hrs	52.2 mm
1961-90	21.1 °c	11.4°C	16.4°C	189.2 hrs	50.6 mm

AUGUST

Started with showers then fine & warm for a few days. The second week onwards was unsettled for most of the month, closing the last couple of days very hot in the south, south-east & central England. Rainfall was again below average with 8 of the last 10 months now experiencing below average for England & Wales. However East Anglia and many western and northern areas of Scotland were above average rainfall for the month.

Gusts of 78 mph recorded on Lerwick on 29th as a deep depression moved east to the north of Scotland. Central London recorded a temperature of 32.2°C on 31st.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	19.3°C	10.4°C	14.9°C	184.2 hrs	85.2 mm
E. Anglia	21.7°C	11.3°C	16.5°C	198.0 hrs	54.5 mm
1961-90	21.1°C	11.4°C	16.2°C	183.4 hrs	53.0 mm

SEPTEMBER

East Anglia & Northern Scotland still getting above average rainfall. Mean temperatures across the country generally 1.5°C above average, giving the warmest September since 1999. The month did start warm but turned more autumnal later in the month with several thundery showers about.

A temperature of 29.7°C was recorded at Northolt (London) on the 14th. Altnaharra (Highlands) recorded a temperature of -3.5°C on 9th. Wisley (Surrey) recorded 42 mm on the 10th with local reports in excess of 75 mm over w. Berkshire

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	17.8°C	9.9°C	13.8°C	132.0 hrs	92.7 mm
E. Anglia	20.6°C	11.4°C	16.0°C	157.5 hrs	62.0 mm
1961-90	18.5°C	9.6°C	14.1°C	144.0 hrs	51.2 mm

OCTOBER

With a flow of weather predominantly south to south-westerly throughout the month, it gave us generally warm weather both day and night. The later part of the month was exceptionally warm and one of the warmest since 1914 (not as warm as 2001 though.) Sunshine levels exceptionally below average across N.E. England & S.E. Scotland. Rainfall generally above average with some areas receiving over double the 61-90 average.

Carlisle (Cumbria) recording 109.2 mm in 24 hrs over 11th/12th. Dullest October on record at Eskdalemuir with 36.5 hrs, with records going back to 1929.

October	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	14.6°C	8.8°C	11.7°C	73.3 hrs	142.5 mm
E. Anglia	17.1°C	10.5°C	13.8°C	108.8 hrs	186.6 mm
1961-90	14.6°C	7.7°C	11.2°C	107.8 hrs	52.8 mm

NOVEMBER

Overall mean temperatures were close to average across the U.K. The first half of the month being warm, was cancelled out by a cold second half. Sunshine levels were well above average with some areas setting new records. Rainfall generally above average for most areas, but again below average in central, south & S.E. areas of England.

15 cm of lying snow at Aviemore on the 18th. A temperature of -9°C was recorded at Braemer & Tulloch Bridge on 18th.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	9.0°C	2.2°C	5.6°C	78.5 hrs	116.5 mm
E. Anglia	10.0°C	2.8°C	6.4°C	96.0 hrs	39.7 mm
1961-90	9.5°C	3.4°C	6.5°C	66.8 hrs	59.4 mm

DECEMBER

Unsettled and mild at first, mid month got briefly colder with wintry showers in the east. It then got much colder later in the month with a good bit of snow in eastern England on 27th, to the 30th. Overall temperatures were below average across southern England, to above average for Northern Ireland & Scotland. Rainfall mostly below average across U.K. while sunshine was above average across England & Wales.

Aviemore recorded a temperature of -12.8°C on the 29th. Boltshope Park (Durham) recorded 13cm of snow on the 28th.

	Max. temp	Min. temp	Mean temp	Sunshine	Rainfall
U.K.	7.1°C	1.3°C	4.2°C	47.0 hrs	80.8 mm
E. Anglia	7.3°C	1.1°C	4.1°C	65.9 hrs	31.6 mm
1961-90	7.1°C	1.6°C	4.4°C	47.4 hrs	55.8 mm

NORTH TUDDENHAM COMMON

Barry Pummell

These 24 acres of land have been isolated from the surrounding, intensively farmed adjoining land.

In recent years it has increasingly become a rich and varied habitat for flora and fauna. There are many footpaths that criss-cross the common.

There is a rich diverse flora, including Honeysuckle, Bramble, Heather, Gorse, Bedstraw, Hop, Hazel, Hawthorne and many more.

Trees include Oak, Silver Birch, Wild Cherry, Hornbeam, Holly, Crab Apple and Field Maple.

You may be able to find the Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*) basking in the sunshine.

THE BUTTERFLIES

There have been 24 species recorded on the site over the years. An exceptional number for the size the common. This includes Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown; Small, Large and Green Veined Whites, Small and Large Skippers, Speckled Wood, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Comma, Common and Holly Blues.

Less common species include Brown Argos, Essex Skipper, Small Copper, Green Hairstreak and Purple Hairstreak.

There is also a large and varied Moth population.

THE DRAGONFLIES

The pond on the common is perhaps the most important habitat there is. There have been 17 species recorded, truly remarkable for such a small piece of water, which is fed by rainwater alone.

Common Blue, Large Red, Four Spotted Chaser, Common Darter, The Emperor, Brown Hawker, Southern and Migrant Hawker. The Black Tailed Skimmer is an occasional visitor. The Yellow-winged Darter (a rare visitor to Britain) was seen in 1995. The Hairy Dragonfly was seen in 2003.

There are also many other aquatic creatures that live in the clear waters.

THE BIRDS

All 3 species of Woodpecker can be found, also Little Owl and most of the summer warblers, including Garden Warbler. Linnets usually breed and there are 10+ pairs of Blue Tits using the nest boxes provided.

LOCATION

The Common is at Pound Lane, North Tuddenham (TG033143). Please park in lane opposite beet pad, then walk down footpath to the Common.

Please take your litter home.

A Year on Our Patch by Bob Bradley and Jenny Evans

Being a stones throw from our home in Lyng, Sparham Pools and the adjacent pits with the River Wensum and Sparham Hall Farm form our local patch, affectionately known as tetrads 06 16/18. As Bob is a fishery bailiff for the Norfolk Angling and Conservation Association, who manage most of the fishing on the estate, he generally wears two hats while visiting the area and when fishing he always has his 'bins' and one eye to the sky. We visit there several times a week and are always fascinated to see the fauna and flora changing as the seasons progress.

For those of you who have never visited this site, you might like to know that Sparham Pools were formed during gravel extraction between 1952 and 1968 to provide material for local airfields. Formerly the site was an enclosed common overseen by Sparham Fuel Allotment to help provide fuel for the poor of the parish. The site is owned by the Sayer family and is managed as a nature reserve by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Sparham Council and the Wensum Valley Project. The pools are surrounded by birch and willow scrub, mature trees such as oak and alder with gorse around much of the site. Within recent years more gravel extraction has left us with extra pits that are becoming increasingly interesting.

A typical year would provide a large variety of birds. At [New Year](#) we hope to find Goosander, Goldeneye, numbers of Gadwall and Pochard on the lakes, with Snipe, Jacksnipe, Green Sandpiper, Water Rail and Teal on the marshes. Up to three Barn Owls may be seen with Little Owl near the barn and Tawny Owl in the woods. We usually look for the mixed tit flock around the woodland fringes and listen out for Willow Tit, Bullfinch, Nuthatch and all three species of Woodpecker.

Nearer to the farm, flocks of finches and larks frequent the hedgerows; Tree Sparrows may also be present for a few weeks along with Reed Buntings. Numbers of winter thrushes with Red-legged and Grey Partridges may be seen in the fields and roe deer and brown hares are also regular.

Spring welcomes the return of the warblers and hirundines and the winter visitors depart. Great Crested Grebes, Oystercatchers and Shelduck also return and nest in small numbers as do the Common Terns. At this time, the area resounds with bird song and a dawn visit would be well rewarded.

The pools are a 'stonking' place for butterflies with Green and Purple Hairstreak recorded annually and Clouded Yellow and White Admiral being occasional visitors. Dragonflies are also common with several hawk species including Emperor present. Damselflies are also represented with Banded Demoiselles by the river and the scarcer Red-eyed Damselfly seen on the lily pads. Usually by mid-May, a Hobby can be seen hawking for dragonflies over the lakes.

High summer sees numbers of Mallard in eclipse and Great Crested Grebes and Mute Swans busily feeding their broods. Likely passage birds will include Common and Green Sandpipers, Green and Redshank and Little Ringed Plover.

Moving into the **autumn**, Bob's standard phrase is 'keep your eyes on the sky' as we know the chance of a visiting Osprey is high, with one present for about three weeks from mid-September to October. The chance of any passing raptor is also good with Marsh and Hen Harrier, Honey and Common Buzzard and Goshawk all being recorded. On the exotic side, Black-crowned Night Heron and Little Egrets are regular visitors.

The annual loop is completed when the **winter** thrushes arrive with Siskins and possibly a few Redpolls. The wild fowl numbers increase and we look forward to the return of the Goosander.

When I say that in 2005 we recorded 107 different bird species on this site, you will see that Sparham Pools are always worth a visit, not just to see the resident birds, but you never know what might drop in at any time.

THE HOE BIRD WALK

By David Knight

More than 22 years ago in February 1984 the Mid Norfolk group of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust started the Hoe Bird Walk. A committee member at the time named Peter Cawley had run a similar walk in Harpenden before moving to Norfolk and suggested a repeat of a winning formula. The area chosen was well known to him as he had bird-watched it over a number of years. The area lying between Hoe and Worthing is a small pocket of Mid Norfolk which happens to have an incredibly mixed habitat which we believe is an extra- ordinary area for birds and nature in general.

The Walk lies in a 10km square of the National Grid, reference TF 91. The habitat along *The Walk* is remarkably varied with the Whitewater River running throughout and joining the Blackwater River just beyond the level crossing. The old Midland and Great Northern railway line runs parallel to the Hoe / Worthing road going south to north. Either side there are water meadows, fields, wooded belts and lots of ponds from the sand and gravel works. At the northeast corner is the old Swanton Morley airfield, which is on relatively high ground being some 15 metres above the general road level.

Although managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, *The Walk* has, almost from its inception, been strongly linked with NarVOS (The Nar Valley Ornithological Society) which was established in 1976, as many of the early supporters of *The Walk* were also members of NarVOS and that is still true today. The NarVOS Study Area covers an area of West and Mid Norfolk from TF 60-100 easting and TF 00-30 northing, some 30km x 40km, which includes area TF91.

So there was an obvious exchange of birding information and, for many years now, we have formally submitted *The Hoe Bird Walk* sightings to NarVOS each month. They in turn forward any notable records to Norfolk and Norwich naturalists Trust for inclusion in their annual Norfolk Bird and Mammal Report.

The Walk commences (8 am every third Sunday of the month) at grid reference TF 989173 on the minor back road between Hoe and Worthing where there is a small parking area. A footpath runs from here along the northern edge of Hoe Common to the B1110. Follow this path and on entering Hoe Common follow the circular path clockwise around the common which covers 5 hectares. It has been managed over the last 10 years by the Hoe and Worthing Parish Meeting to re-establish some of the heather belts that once covered this rare heathland habitat.

The circular path brings you back onto the footpath near the main road (B1110) and you return east along this footpath on your way back to the starting point. This first portion of *The Walk* of just over a kilometre generally takes 1¼ hours.

Back on the minor road turn down the hill towards Worthing with the defunct Midland and Great Northern Railway on your right, the river Whitewater on your left and meadows and hedges between. Further along the road, (grid TF 99721805) the first of many ponds is seen and marks the start of Barker Bros Gravel Works, known as Roosting Hills Pits. Walking to the next ridge opens up a view right up the valley with another larger pond on the left, Roosting Hills and Barker Bros crossing in front and beyond and water meadows stretching north as far as the Gravel Lake (Roosting Hills Trout Fishery). Another rise in the road brings you near the Gravel Lake and a little further up the road is the level crossing. A short walk up the railway line will take you to the bridge over the Blackwater and the end of the walk, with views towards Elmham, Worthing and the old Swanton Morley airfield.

This second stretch from the car park to the bridge is about 2 km and can take up to 3 hours to walk depending on the birds. The return walk to the cars is usually at a faster pace.

Over the twenty two years we have seen **55,000** birds of **127** different species on **262** walks. The Blue Tit is the only species seen on every walk. The average species count in a month is **45** with the all time high being **62** recorded in May 1987. The largest total of any single species was **10,550** Golden Plover.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) recently published the results of their survey entitled *The Population Status of Birds in the U.K.- Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007*.

Quoting briefly from that report:-

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the U.K. have reviewed the population status of the birds that are regularly found here.

*A total of **247** species has been assessed and each has been placed onto one of three lists,- red, amber or green.*

***40** species are red listed, **121** are amber listed and **86** are green listed.*

If we allocate our **127** Hoe Bird Walk sightings to these lists we can see that there are **16** species on the red list, **49** on the amber list and **62** on the green list.

Another very important BTO / JNCC / RSPB survey is *The Breeding Birds Survey (BBS) 1994-2003*.

Quoting one paragraph from the summary:-

Sixteen widespread species monitored by the BBS have been red listed on the basis of long term population trends (see Gregory et al 2002) and of these, nine species declined significantly on BBS squares between 1994 and 2003 (Grey Partridge, Turtle Dove, Skylark, Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Tit, Bullfinch, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting) and three species increased significantly (Song Thrush, Tree Sparrow and Reed Bunting).

These sixteen widespread species, which have been red listed, tie in almost exactly with the **16** red listed species recorded on *The Walk*, which is also surveyed over an area equivalent to approximately 1km square.

While the Hoe Bird Walk is not a scientific study the records clearly show that it is a very important area for birds.

Sources.

- 1 See full *British Trust for Ornithology* reports at www.bto.org
- 2 See *Twenty Years of the Hoe Bird Walk* by David Knight for fuller details of above.
- 3 See *Hoe Bird Walk Celebrates Ten Years* by Julie Masson (Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin March 1994)



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bad weather...just the
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2021 PDF of the WVBS Third Annual Report_20051st October 2021

Text changes

Format changes

Where	Original text	PDF text
Contents	Hole Bird Walk	Hoe Bird Walk
Systematic list		
Introduction	(Wigeon) <i>Anus Penelope</i>	(Wigeon) <i>Anas penelope</i>
Canada Goose	<i>Branta Canadensis</i>	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Wigeon	<i>Anus Penelope</i>	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail & Shoveler	<i>Anus</i>	<i>Anas</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentus</i>	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto Alba</i>	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Robin	Only record of particular significance was received at Reepham was mobbed sewerage works	No record of particular significance was received at Reepham mobbed sewerage works
Redwing		
Siskin		
Whitethroat & Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvis</i>	<i>Sylvia</i>
Escape: Cattle Egret	eascape	escape
EARLIEST & LATEST REPORTED DATES OF SUMMER MIGRANTS	Little Plover L. Whitethroat C. Whitethroat	Little Ringed Plover Lesser Whitethroat Common Whitethroat
WVBS Recording Area		Originally a centrefold, the map now follows the Gazetteer
2005 WVBS Ringing Report		The last paragraph (italic) was moved to the introduction page
Monthly Weather Summary		
February	the forth consecutive	the fourth consecutive