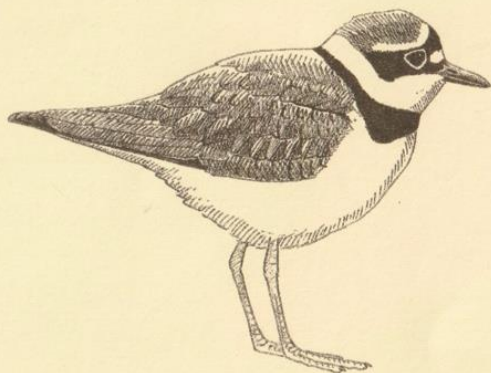


Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society



Seventh Annual Report
2009



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Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

2009 Annual Report

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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: Weston Longville Village Hall, third Thursday of each month.

Committee 2009

Officers:

Chairman	Alwyn Jackson
Secretary	Lin Pateman (Co-opted April)
Treasurer	Colin Fenn
Membership Secretary	Richard Norris
Publicity	Colin Wright
Newsletter Editor	David Knight
Recorder	Liz Waller
Programme Coordinator	Ray Gribble
Loan Library	Josh Leeder
Website Manager	Jacky Pett

Web Page: www.wvbs.co.uk

Chairman's Report

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

The year's programme of indoor and outdoor meetings once again proved to be a great success judging by the number of members who attended each event and the feedback received by the committee. You can enjoy it all again by reading Colin Wright's review of the year.

The second Member's Weekend spent in North Wales went very well. Everybody who attended enjoyed some good birdwatching in stunning surroundings. A little further afield eight members spent a memorable week birdwatching in Northern Cyprus in May. The highlights of each trip are included in the report.

Workshops for those members wishing to develop their bird identification skills proved to be very successful thanks to the expertise and enthusiasm of Steve Cale who led the sessions.

The Society participated in Conservation Fairs at Pensthorpe and Acle, a Meet & Greet Evening at Elsing and a Village Hall Fair at Great Witchingham. Each event allows us to talk to potential members as well as make contact with other groups in the County.

I'm pleased to report that the tern raft project had a more successful year than 2008 and you can read all about it in Ray Gribble's report.

I would like to conclude by expressing my thanks to all the members of our hard working committee as well as any non-committee members who have also made a contribution to the activities of the WVBS throughout the year.

I hope you will continue to enjoy your membership of the Society.

Alwyn Jackson

WVBS Programme 2009

- 11th Jan Outdoor meeting - Winter Bird Count
- 15th Jan Indoor meeting - Speaker Allan Hale - "The Colorado Chicken Run"
- 25th Jan Outdoor meeting - Holkham Park & Lady Anne's Drive - Leader Ray Gribble
- 19th Feb Indoor meeting - Speaker Jed Andrews - "14 Years as a Reserve Warden"
- 28th Feb Outdoor meeting - Hickling & Stubb's Mill raptor roost
Leader David Knight
- 19th Mar Indoor meeting - Speaker Chris Mills "Norfolk birds & wildlife through the seasons"
- 29th Mar Outdoor meeting - Felbrigg Hall Park Leader Jacky Pett
- 2nd & 4th Apr Bird ID Workshop - Warblers - Leader Steve Cale
- 16th Indoor meeting - AGM followed by Speaker David Osborn - "A Journey South - the wildlife of the Falklands"
- 22nd - 29th Apr Member's visit to Northern Cyprus - Leaders Colin Fenn & Alwyn Jackson
- 8th - 11th May Members' Weekend in North Wales - Leaders Ray Gribble & Alwyn Jackson
- 16th May Wild About the Wensum at Pensthorpe
- 31st May Outdoor meeting - Dawn Chorus & Bacon Butties at NWT Sparham Pools Reserve. Leader Alwyn Jackson
- 5th June Summer Bird Count
- 18th June Outdoor meeting Nightjar Evening - Leader Josh Leeder
- 28th June Outdoor meeting - Lakenheath Fen & Weeting Heath - Leader Colin Fenn

- 16th July Summer Social Evening
- 25th & 26th July Outdoor meeting Ringing Demonstration - Ray Gribble & Allan Hale
- 31st July Outdoor meeting - Wensum valley walk: Lenwade to Lyng - Leader Jacky Pett
- 9th Aug Outdoor meeting - RSPB Minsmere Reserve - Leader Bill Shepherd
- 20th Aug Indoor meeting - Speaker David Pelling "Brazil - The Atlantic Rainforest"
- 17th Sept Indoor meeting - Speaker Ian Robinson "Birds and Wildlife of the Broads RSPB reserves"
- 26th Sept Outdoor meeting - North Norfolk coast - Leader Colin Fenn
- 3rd Oct Wild About Norfolk at Acle High School
- 15th Oct Indoor meeting - Speaker Steve Cale "Birdwatching in Turkey"
- 25th Oct Wash Cruise from Boston, Lincs - Leader Alwyn Jackson
- 29th & 31th Oct Bird ID Workshop - Waders - Leader Steve Cale
- 19th Nov Indoor meeting Speaker Allan Hale "Boughton Fen through the year"
- 28th Nov Outdoor meeting - West Norfolk Leader Ray Gribble
- 10th Dec Christmas Social

Diary of Events for 2009

Sunday 11th Jan: Bird Count.

Twice a year we carry out a bird count with a competitive edge where members split into small teams and set off somewhere in the Wensum Valley ticking off the species. Founder member and ringer Ray Gribble's team came top with a total of 72 species.

Thursday 15th Jan: Talk - "The Colorado Chicken Run".

A full house for founder member Allan Hale's account of a trip to Colorado in search of the Prairie Chicken. Allan transported us through the Rocky Mountain National Park, the Loveland Pass and the Gunnison National Park, an area about the size of England. Excellent pictures of stunning scenery and lots of birds including the Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chickens and the elaborate display of the Sage-Grouse. Most striking pictures were the Gambel's Quail and the Mountain Bluebird. As always with Allan's talks, well worth turning out for on a cold winter's night.

Sunday 25th Jan: Outdoor trip - A visit to the Holkham area.

Holkham Hall is set in impressive grounds and is an excellent area for walking and birdwatching — normally. This day however was the exception, a dull overcast day with the wrong type of rain which found its way through what I thought were waterproof clothes. Birds were few and far between and even the deer were sheltering under a few trees that still retained their foliage. Fortunately our dogged leader refused to be discouraged and after lunch the group walked down Lady Ann's Drive to the nature reserve where, in improving weather, they were rewarded with lots of birds including Common Buzzard, Redwing, Marsh Harrier, Goldeneye. In all 72 species were recorded. So, a satisfactory ending to the day for those who stayed the course.

Thursday 19th Feb: Talk - "14 Years as a Reserve Warden".

NOA Warden Jed Andrews and assistant warden Sophie Barker, from the Holme Bird Observatory, were our guest speakers in a 'two for the price of one' night. First Sophie talked about trapping and recording moths. We learnt that there are over 3,000 species of moths in the UK and I was intrigued by the names. Burnished Brass, Hummingbird, Buff-tip, Pine Hawk-moth, Peach Blossom to name just a few. Many are becoming scarce such as the stunning Garden Tiger. We saw pictures demonstrating how both the moth and the caterpillar are masters of disguise, the Buff-tip, which looks like a twig and the Lunar Hornet Moth which looks more like a hornet than a moth.

After the break Jed Andrews spoke about his 14 years as a warden at the Holme Reserve with a talk that encompassed ringing birds of prey, whale watching, sea watching, orchids and fungi. His tips on the differences between poisonous and non-poisonous mushrooms were of interest. He recalled an amusing incident when a pair of Puffins, rescued after a storm, were released from a box in front of a flock of press photographers. Instead of making a dash for freedom we saw a picture of them walking toward the sea like two old gentlemen on an afternoon stroll. An agreeable night's entertainment.

Saturday 28th February: Hickling NR and Stubb Mill Raptor Roost.

Starting from the Hickling Broad Visitor Centre, 26 members set off along the Bittern Trail ably led by David Knight. Within minutes cries were going up from all directions - Redwing, Fieldfare, Linnet, Reed Bunting, Yellowhammer and Green Woodpecker. The reedbeds seemed quiet but scanning the wide expanse of sky to the distant horizon we saw Common Buzzard, displaying Marsh Harriers, a Kestrel perched in a bush, a skein of Pink-footed Geese, Cranes and a flock of Lapwing.

After a short break back at the centre we set off along the track to the Stubb Mill Raptor Watchpoint. A flock of Linnets and Siskins sat high in the nearby trees. On arriving at the mill we were immediately rewarded with a fine view of three Common Cranes flying towards Horsey Mere. Initially individuals or pairs of Marsh Harriers flew in and, as the afternoon

wore on, more and more arrived making a final count of over 20 birds. Some members had a fleeting glimpse of Merlin while others were entertained by a Barn Owl flying low quartering the marshes. A total of 51 species was recorded for the day.

Thursday 19th March: Talk - "Norfolk Birds & Wildlife through the Seasons".

The Norfolk nature photographer Chris Mills gave us a magnificent presentation of Norfolk Birds and Wildlife through the Seasons. His ability to be in the right place at the right time and capture amazing photos was impressive. He really opened our eyes to the wonderful way in which birds, plants and animals all interact and play a vital part in sustaining the natural environment.

We were also given tips on how to make the most of camera angle and available light, resulting in fantastic pictures of wader species standing in their own reflection in shallow water. Can you spot the difference between an otter and a mink? If you can't, it probably means you were unfortunate enough to miss Chris's talk. We were shown how to pay attention to detail in recognising species, and to realize that seasonal changes can be as profound as going from one country to another. Chris then explained the influence of climate on bird migration in terms of food availability and breeding grounds. A well filled hall gave the most appreciative round of applause. A superb evening.

Sunday 29th March: Felbrigg Hall Park.

30 members gathered at the car park of the extensive grounds of Felbrigg Hall for a walk and also to eavesdrop on the early spring birds. In the capable hands (and ears) of experienced members we were able to pick out around 30 species from their song, most of which we also saw. Then, one of those magic moments in birdwatching, a pair of Lesser Redpolls were spotted just above us, on a leafless tree, feeding on seed pods and enjoying the strengthening sun, oblivious of the gathering crowds beneath who for some, this was a first.

Thursday 2nd April & Saturday 4th April: Warbler Identification Workshop.

In another of our occasional workshops, bird artist Steven Cale explained the finer points of Warbler identification. The first surprise was how many different species there were, including 16 species that breed in the UK. Being fast and nimble, warblers can often only be identified by their distinctive calls so we were also given a lesson on warbler songs, which we put to the test when visited Swanton Morley gravel pits a couple of days later. Soon after arriving we heard a Cetti's Warbler followed by a Blackcap and a Chiffchaff. As we returned to the car park at the end of the visit, the Cetti's Warbler provided a splendid encore a fitting conclusion to a very interesting morning.

Thursday 16th April: Talk - "Wildlife of the Falklands".

Over 60 members turned up to hear Norfolk based, professional photographer David Osborn talk about one of his favourite wildlife locations. The remoteness of the Falklands, (mainly accessible by RAF aircraft) and the small number of visitors means the wildlife is very tame, showing little concern for the occasional photographer. Hence we were shown some remarkable close-up shots of Gentoo, Rockhopper, Magellanic, and King Penguins, seal, the majestic Albatross and other seabirds and wildlife. Difficult to do justice to David's pictures in this short report but his photos can be seen on www.davidosbornephotography.co.uk.

Wednesday 22nd - Wednesday 29th April: Member's Birdwatching Tour in Northern Cyprus

You can read Jacquie Fenn's report about this trip on pages 19-24.

Friday 8th - Monday 11th May: Member's Birdwatching Weekend in North Wales.

You can read Alwyn Jackson's report about this trip on pages 25-26.

Saturday 16th May: Wild About the Wensum at Pensthorpe.

It was great to see so many young visitors at our stand at the 'Wild about the Wensum' fair at Pensthorpe Nature Reserve. Deb Jordan, Pensthorpe's owner, said "It was a phenomenal success, attracting over 4,000 people. This is our third *Wild About The Wensum* and we are delighted that people took the trouble to come and experience the amazing natural world in the valley." To help stimulate young people's interest in nature the event was opened by the CBeebies' star Jelly. Money raised will go toward providing improved habitats for Barn Owls in the valley.

Sunday 31st May: Dawn Chorus at Sparham Pools NR.

Our annual Dawn Chorus outing must have struck a chord as several non-members rang and asked to attend. In fact over thirty people turned up to enjoy the birdsong and the stunning sunrise over mist cloaked lakes and meadows. It felt like we were intruding on nature as Sedge Warblers scolded us from reed stems and Reed Buntings kept an eye on us from branches overhanging the river. Several Cuckoos were heard and seen in flight also good views of a Barn Owl in the early morning light. Over 50 species were seen including Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, Sparrowhawk, Blackcap (the best song) and Cetti's Warbler. The event ended with a hot bacon bap, a chat and home before the world awakes.

Sunday 7th June: Summer Bird Count.

Thirteen members attended this event and recorded a surprising total of 88 species. The top team recorded 80 species. In conditions that were often wet and cold this was a very creditable total and a special mention for the solo effort of Ian Britain, who logged 69 species. The day was rounded off with a meal at the Fox and Hounds in Lyng.

Thursday 18th June: Nightjar Evening.

What better way to embark on a field trip than to start from the local hostelry. A large group of members and guests gathered at the Marsham Arms for a meal, a pint and a chat before setting off for Marsham Heath

in the gathering dusk. This is a birdwatch like no other as we stand in silence, listening for the unmistakable 'churring' sound indicating a Nightjar nearby. Then some fleeting glimpses of these elusive birds as they flew around us, some alighting on pine branches, their colouring and the failing light challenging the best of optics. Normally on a bird walk we notch up 50 or so species but on this night just 2 Nightjars and a lone Woodcock.

Sunday 28th June: Lakenheath Fen and Weeting Heath.

We arrived at Weeting early, almost before the warden and from the west hide Stone Curlews were spotted - a pretty good start. The day got better as we added Common Buzzard, Tree Pipit, Spotted Flycatcher and Blackcap at Weeting with Marsh Tit, Reed Bunting, Cuckoo, Marsh Harrier and Bittern at Lakenheath to our list. Finally, at Lakenheath, we spotted the spectacular yellow plumage of the male Golden Oriel among the poplars. In all 63 species seen, an excellent trip in excellent weather, expertly led by Colin Fenn.

Thursday 16th July: Summer Social.

Once again we are indebted to the 1st Taverham Scout Leaders who provided us with some excellent, traditionally cooked goodies (using good old red hot coals and lots of smoke!) at our summer barbeque at Weston Longville Village Hall. The evening started with a short presentation by Jacquie Fenn on the member's birding trip to Cyprus in April. We then threw caution to the wind and dined alfresco and the rain held off until we had wined, dined, raffled, waffled, washed up and headed for home.

Saturday 25th - Sunday 26th July: Bird Ringing Demonstration.

By Ray Gribble's standards (one of our esteemed ringers) the ringing week-end was not very successful. Nevertheless 49 new birds of 15 different species were ringed and 6 birds were re-trapped from previous years, including a Blue Tit and a Blackbird from 2006. Of particular interest were 2 Treecreepers and a pair of Bullfinches.

Friday 31st July: A Wensum Walk.

A new idea, an informal walk in the WVBS area on any day of the week, to enable members to get together and enjoy a bit of birding followed by a pub lunch. Our first walk was led by Jacky Pett along footpaths from Lenwade Common, through Walsis Farm, to Sparham Pools. Lots of species were seen including a Little Owl and, because we had an expert with us, several species of butterflies and dragonflies were identified.

Sunday 9th August: RSPB Minsmere NR.

Bill Shepherd led a group on our annual trip to Minsmere. The weather was perfect and all the target birds were seen, including Bittern, Hobby, Green Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper and Ruddy Duck. After Minsmere the group made for Dunwich Heath hoping to see the Dartford Warbler: they were not disappointed.

Thursday 20th August: Talk "The Atlantic Rainforest of Brazil".

Member David Pelling showed us excellent photographic proof that the Atlantic Rain Forest of Brazil is the place to see an exciting array of birds and other wildlife. David saw more than 350 different species and his excellent pictures recorded the dramatic plumage used in rival displays. Every colour combination possible darted at you from the screen - almost as good as being there.

Thursday 17th September: Talk "Birds and wildlife on the RSPB Broads Reserves".

Over 60 people managed to get a seat to hear Ian Robinson (RSPB) talk about the RSPB Broads reserves. In a wide ranging talk Ian spoke about the enormous amount of work that goes into the management of these reserves. Work includes restoring reedbeds for breeding Bitterns, removing scrub and invasive plants, the use of cattle grazing to create sward levels, the control of water levels, the management of wet grassland, woodland, ponds and ditches. Success is measured by the large numbers of breeding waders and a wide variety of wildlife including Otters and the Swallowtail butterfly.

Particular reference was made to Sutton Fen, RSPB's 200th reserve, acquired in 2006 and described by Ian 'as the most amazing reserve I have ever worked in'. Ian also paid tribute to the work of the many volunteers, an essential part of the RSPB, without whose help the work would be greatly diminished.

Saturday 26th September: The North Norfolk Coast.

Starting from the Cley car park a flock of 14 Bearded Tits were seen. We then headed for Bishop's Hide where a small crowd were watching a Spotted Crake. From the hide we ticked off lots of Ruff, Snipe, Teal, Wigeon and Black-tailed Godwits. A Marsh Harrier flew over the reeds. Next on the agenda was Dauke's Hide where we heard the explosive call of a Cetti's Warbler and many of us had great views of two birds with a possible third (juvenile). From Dauke's we also saw Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Dunlin, Spotted Redshanks, Shoveler, a skein of Pink-footed Geese and a Green Sandpiper on Pat's Pool. After lunch on to the beach where we counted half a dozen Gannets (adults and juveniles) flying through, Red-throated Divers and Brent Geese. We then walked towards Arnold's Marsh where we saw Meadow Pipits, Wheatears, Snow Buntings, Greenshanks, Curlew Sandpipers, Knot and Curlew. Looking out to sea a Manx Shearwater was spotted skimming east and a Great Skua flew overhead going west. Even by Norfolk standards this had been a great day's birding ending up with 60 "quality" species.

Thursday 15th October: Talk "Birdwatching in Turkey".

Steve Cale lives and works in North Norfolk. He is an artist, using watercolours and acrylics, specialising in wildlife. He is also a birdwatcher and leads birdwatching tours worldwide. He also runs our bird recognition workshops and he is a member of our Society. Small wonder then that there were few seats to be had for his talk entitled, 'Birdwatching in Turkey - Where East meets West'. We were taken on a trip which started in the area of lake Kulu, one of the best birding wetlands in Turkey, then on a comprehensive tour which visited Demirkazik, the Emli Valley, Birecik and the Goksu Delta. Altogether an excellent talk with

over 200 species seen, and made more interesting coming from the perspective of an artist.

Sunday 25th October: Wash Cruise from Boston, Lincs.

This was a boat trip on the Wash on the RSPB boat 'Boston Belle'. We boarded at Boston Sluice Bridge at 7.30 a.m. and proceeded down the River Haven. As we approached the Wash we saw Marsh Harriers put up great flocks of Knot, Golden Plover, Lapwings, Ringed Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Sanderlings. After a few miles on the Wash we turned into the River Welland where we saw several Common Seals basking on the mud. As we approached the edge of the Wash on our return, the Knot gave a flying display equal to anything seen on 'Autumn Watch', What a great day! Perfect weather and a great list of birds which included a Black Redstart. On the way home we called into Frampton Marsh Reserve which has recently had a major overhaul. Thanks to the South Lincs R.S.P.B. and Barry and Christine Hancock, who after many years organising this cruise on behalf of the R.S.P.B, are handing over to someone new.

Thursday 12th - Saturday 14th November: Wader Identification Workshop.

This workshop dealt with waders found more in brackish or saltwater environments and as in previous courses Steve Cale took us through the more common species in all plumages and a few less well known ones as well. The evening ended with a fairly light hearted quiz in which those of us that did not do so well probably felt the need for more revision before the practical part of the workshop at Titchwell.

A quick check of the reserve at Titchwell revealed most wader activity to be on the beach with the lagoons strangely quiet. On the beach despite a strengthening wind making viewing more than a little difficult we had the bonus of the light behind us giving us fine views of all the waders which included Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Knot, Oystercatcher, Turnstone and Dunlin. Our thanks once

again to Steve for his patience and another carefully thought out course which am sure everyone taking part thoroughly enjoyed.

Thursday 19th November: Talk "Boughton Fen throughout the seasons".

Founder member Allan Hale gave the last talk of 2009 about Boughton Fen. Host to a wide variety of flora and fauna Boughton Fen is situated between Downham Market and Oxborough. It is owned by Boughton Parish Council and has been an SSSI since the 1960s. Alan carries out a ringing programme there and maintains several bird feeders. After several exotic bird talks throughout the year it was a pleasant change to see pictures of more familiar birds including a slightly indignant Long-tailed Tit known as 8F2470 who is regularly caught in the mist nets and was originally ringed in 2003. An excellent presentation covering birds, insect life and a variety of plants and shrubs some of which, we were told, have therapeutic properties for the treatment of various maladies - the least uncomfortable of which was indigestion.

Saturday 28th November: West Norfolk.

Where do I start? 7.30 transport arrives, wet and gloomy; 9.00 bright and sunny but a cold wind at Sandringham; 10.30 Dersingham Bog; 12.00 a very cold north wind at Snettisham (never has a hide been more welcome!); 3.30 Roydon Common. Another action packed day with WVBS. What treats had Ray in store for us? He might even have surprised himself!

A Great Grey Shrike at Dersingham Bog! He must have known that so many of us had not seen this species before. How well he showed us his black eye-mask, his long tail, the black and white on his wings. I could have stayed all day watching him. Not to be, we had seen him, as well as a pair of Green Woodpeckers showing very well, and a pair of Stonechats. Did I mention the wonderful views of Mistle Thrush and a Redwing earlier at Sandringham?

Not much time for a leisurely lunch on this trip. A hasty few minutes at the layby on the A149 to down our sandwich and a drink, and then on

to Snettisham. I have been there when it has been windier, but never when the wind has been so cold.

Our day's birding list has been compiled elsewhere, but Pintail Duck, Goldeneye, a flock of Golden Plover, many Little Grebe and Grey Plover were amongst those species seen. But that northerly wind was cold and we were hastening back to the cars when, joy of joy, the Scaup which Alwyn had seen earlier on our way down was spotted again on one of the lagoons alongside the bungalows. A much better specimen than that I had previously seen. And I have forgotten to mention the Barn Owl seen on entering the reserve.

Last port of call - Roydon Common. The day was drawing a to a close and much less wind than at Snettisham. A great spot of a Buzzard sitting in a tree goodness knows how many hundreds of yards away. And then the highlight of the end of the day - one male and two female Hen Harriers flying back and forth before our eyes. How handsome the male is and thank goodness the females have a white ring on their tails so that we could spot them in the gathering gloom. The end of a wonderful day.

Thursday 10th December: Annual Christmas Party.

Following the same successful format as years gone by the event was enjoyed by all. Only difference this year was that the number of party goers beat all previous records and had committee members wondering whether we should be looking for a larger venue.

Compiled by Colin Wright with contributions from David Knight, Richard Norris, Derek Harvey, Alwyn Jackson, Liz Bridge, Jacky Pett and Rosemary and George Northall.

Northern Cyprus Trip Report - 22nd-29th April 2009

Wednesday 22nd April

Wymondham 7am, Stansted 8.30am, Istanbul 6pm (torrential rain), Ercan, N Cyprus 8.15pm, Oscars Hotel, Kyrenia 9.15pm. Our first views of Northern Cyprus were from the hotel terrace overlooking orange trees towards the flashing beam of a small lighthouse. We judged ourselves to be near to the sea though we were too tired to investigate further.

Thursday 23rd April

The following day we woke to our first blue sky and sunny morning. Quite soon a walk in the gardens provided Cyprus Wheatear, Common Sandpiper, Pallid Swifts, Eurasian Swallows and for some our first Bee-eaters. A few steps through the gardens did indeed bring us to the water's edge, vaguely glimpsed the previous night.

After a hearty breakfast we collected our cars and set out on the first exploration of a new country. It was windy as we headed towards the Korucam peninsular. Scrubby areas mixed with agricultural land set to a backdrop of turquoise sea. We watched Spanish and House Sparrows, Serin and Chaffinches drinking at a pool whilst enjoying a leisurely coffee. As we headed towards the extreme point of the peninsular we realised that the Mediterranean could be rough. Waves came crashing onto the rocky headland with just a couple of Yellow-legged Gulls the only avian interest.

Unfortunately westerlies were not what we had ordered and having decided that most birds had been blown inland we turned towards the reservoir at Gecitkoy. Here we watched two male Red-footed Falcons on the telegraph wires while Carol and Eunice hunted out the orchids, many of which had already gone past their best and proved difficult to identify. They hunted the illusive Black Tulips, and photographed Crown Daisies; beautiful delicate symmetrical flowers looking like pale Scabious. We marvelled at the spiders' nurseries which looked like weavers' nests in the pine trees and watched Cyprus Wheatears which were to become our 'blasé' bird; "Not another Cyprus Wheatear!" they muttered. In the

reed beds Eastern Olivaceous and Cetti's Warbler called as Snake-eyed Lizards basked in the sun and scuttled quickly from pointing lenses.

Friday 24th April

This was the day we turned east towards the Five Fingered Mountain so called because of its silhouette which resembles a clenched fist. Our first stop at an area of bare rocks and scrubby trees provided us with a mouth watering view of Wood Warbler, our first Cyprus Warbler and an impressive Starred Agama lizard basking in the sunshine.

At the Araphoy and Acapulco reservoirs we were serenaded by the wonderful music of the sheep's bells as they grazed the hillside and drank at the water's edge. Eunice chased across the landscape in pursuit of butterflies which proved very difficult to net. In the reservoir itself we saw Little Grebe, Little Bittern and terrapins. Although rain had fallen over the early spring levels were still comparatively low.

We decided a quick coffee break at restaurant would be appreciated and entered a building which could have been mistaken for a Swiss chalet with spectacular views down the valley and across to the hillside. The owner persuaded us that lunch would be a good idea and we willingly succumbed to the fresh orange juice, kebabs, salad and meze. Two of our party, (who shall be nameless!) were as impressed with the waiter as they were with the lunch and needed much persuasion to leave the restaurant and him behind. A sudden cry of 'Great Spotted Cuckoo' and all eyes had to leave the Cypriot idol and focus on the panoramic view outside to follow the Cuckoo up the hillside.

We left our lunch stop to head into the mountains to search for Bonelli's Eagle at its nest site on a rock face by the road. We managed to locate the nest and also saw two eagles fly past over the valley. Later we headed towards a chapel high in the hills where we spotted a Pied Flycatcher in the warm evening sun.

A day completed by a good meal in the local tavern which included, for some, the delicacy of fried ice cream!

Saturday 25th April

After sorting out some paperwork details with the Ornek reps and loading the cars with our bags it was off to our next hotel. We turned towards the mountains again cunningly avoiding the waiter, as we were sure that kidnapping would be a criminal offence in N. Cyprus. Once over the mountains we headed towards the plains which lay to the south. Agricultural land, quarries and pools provided us with a good mixture of habitats and birds including Crested Larks, Zitting Cisticolas calling as they flew over the grasses and 50+ Yellow Wagtails of mixed races in a large bush. At Demirhan pools we stopped to identify a group of waders and saw Spur-winged Plover, Little Stint and Wood Sandpiper. It was here we heard the immortal words from Lucy; "What does a Roller look like?" and turning to look at the bird she had found we saw the first one of the trip. It sat on an earthy bank in all its glory. A flock of Bee-eaters also gave the group a wonderful colour display. Further along the poolside we saw Little Crake, Little Bittern and Black-crowned Night Heron whilst a Collard Pratincole flew overhead.

We headed for Famagusta but due to a very heavy downpour we abandoned a visit to more wetlands and stopped at a patisserie to sample coffee and pastries.

As we made our way north the rain stopped and we visited the shallow pools at Tuzluca spotting Glossy Ibis, Squacco and Grey Herons and a Black Francolin singing on top of a wall in the distance, a song we were to become familiar with. Josh was the only one to see a Little Owl on one of the rocky hillocks nearby and we vowed to return to all get a good look at it. Our final stop a of the day was at Mehmetcik, a seasonal wetland which produced two Great Bitterns, Purple Heron, Spotted Crake and our only Northern Lapwing.

By 6.30 pm. we had reached the Malibu Beach Hotel which was to be our base for the second half of the trip. We looked out onto a peaceful bay and small fishing harbour. For the next three days we were going to be exploring the Karpaz Peninsular.

Sunday 26th April

We got up before breakfast in order to look around our new area and see what we could spot. Crested Larks abounded along with Cyprus Wheatears and we were pleased to note that the Black Francolin seemed to have followed us and was calling just outside the hotel from a mound in scrubby terrain.

We were keen to get out onto the Karpaz Peninsular and drove towards the headland with anticipation of new birds ahead. En route we were glad to see more European Rollers spaced out along the telegraph wires and glowing in the sunshine. Bee-eaters gave us more aerial displays and we were pleased to spot that glowing golden yellow that only Golden Orioles have. We managed to see males and females flying from one side of the valley to the wooded hills beyond.

As it was the weekend there were many more people out and about and we seemed to be of interest as there were not too many birders around. After a coffee stop at the beach café we continued along the peninsular and added Masked, Red-backed, Woodchat and Lesser Grey Shrikes to our growing list. In amongst short dense vegetation we saw Black-eared Wheatear, Common Redstart and Black-headed Bunting. Right at the end of the peninsular there were Audouin's Gulls and Mediterranean Gulls nesting on the small rocky island just off the headland. Here the terrain seemed very like volcanic rock with the look of pumice stone. On the way back to the hotel Marsh Harriers came drifting over the hillside and 12 Rollers perched by the roadside.

Monday 27th April

In the morning we were keen to go for our pre breakfast stroll and were more than pleased to come across a small bird not twenty steps away from the reception. It behaved very much like a busy robin seeking small insects between the gravel of a rough track. On closer inspection it turned out to be a Thrush Nightingale. Josh took photos to show Steve Cale who was at the same hotel with his group at the time. He was pleased!

After collecting our packed lunch we journeyed south towards Famagusta to a site recommended by Steve for Calandra Larks. The

area was a mixture of agricultural land, grassy meadows and housing developments. The larks were very obliging and we had really good views. At the wetlands at Famagusta we came across a large colony of Cattle Egrets, a Wood Warbler, Rollers and Bee-eaters. We then drove towards Kantara Castle high up in the mountains overlooking swathes of countryside and the sea. It was good to be able to look out over both the north and south coast at the same time. Unfortunately we did not see the Blue Rock Thrush but did watch House Martins nesting in the rock face and Alpine Swifts overhead. We then headed back down to the north coast at Kaplica and birded the headland for Ortolan Bunting and Isabelline Wheatear. On the way back we revisited Tuzluca to pick up the Little Owl that had been missed by most people the first time round and for Jan it was the bird of the trip; something she had always wanted to see. It sat looking at us from around the boulder with eyes far too big for its body, well worth the return.

Tuesday 28th April

As this was to be our last day with a very early start the next day to the airport [alarms set for 3am] we decided to keep the travelling to a sensible length and to return to the Karpaz Peninsular. Here in low shrubby vegetation similar to Sea Buckthorn, we had good views of Greater Short-toed Lark and an unexpected Stone Curlew which shot out of the bushes as we approached. Down towards the northern shoreline there were Bimaculated Larks.

We stopped at the monastery for a quick coffee and took the opportunity to compare European and Red-rumped Swallows as they sat side by side on the telegraph wires. Pallid Swifts darted over the buildings, which gave us the chance to compare them to Common Swift and we wondered how many would already have arrived in Norfolk to greet us. In the scrubby area around the monastery were Grey-headed Yellow Wagtails and a Lesser Grey Shrike as well as the wild donkeys which roam the area.

After a lunch break we went up to the point for the last time and in one area had views of all four shrikes in 360 degrees. We compared

Masked, Woodchat, Red-backed and Lesser Grey with great delight. We watched a Tawny Pipit in the short grasses along with Black-eared Wheatears and Whinchats.

Reluctantly we returned to the hotel for our last meal together, [delicious grilled Sea Bream], dutifully called the log and headed for our beds aiming to get a few precious hours of sleep before the alarm got us up again.

Wednesday 29th April

Even on the way to the airport we looked out for the Long-eared Hedgehogs that were in the area. We reached the airport by 5.30am, left by 8 and landed at Stansted at 12.30 local time. Barton Mills provided us with very welcome bacon butties as we reminisced on our experiences.

Many thanks to Alywn for the organisation of the trip, the booking and extensive use of his credit card! A big 'thank you' too to our drivers; Alywn, Lucy, Josh and Colin who kept us moving and safe throughout.

Also we very much appreciated all of the information collected by Steve Cale and presented in his book which proved to be invaluable, as well as his information passed on while our paths crossed at Malibu Beach.

Would we do it all again? You bet!

A total of 102 species of bird were seen.

Jacque Fenn

Member's Weekend in North Wales - 8th - 11th May

At 3pm on Friday 8th May twelve WVBS members met at Betws-y-Coed for the second annual Member's Birdwatching Weekend.

After watching an adult and juvenile Dipper on the river we set off to visit nearby Hafod Woods an ancient broadleaf woodland on the eastern side of the Conwy valley. Here we had good views of Pied Flycatcher as well as more common woodland birds including Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Wood Warbler and Redstart proved elusive so we decided to make a visit to Pont Croeser where a pair of Osprey were reportedly nesting in the Glaswyn valley. A forty minute scenic car journey brought us to the RSPB's viewing area. Here we enjoyed distant views of the nesting birds as well as life in the nest via the CCTV screen in the visitor's centre. Returning towards Betws-y-Coed our convoy drew to an abrupt halt as Colin Fenn spotted pair of Red-breasted Merganser and a pair of Goosander sharing the same stretch of river. This seemed slightly unusual. Interestingly at our approach the Merganser swam away downstream while the Goosander went upstream.

A return to the Hafod Woods next morning was rewarded with views of Redstart, then we visited South Stack at the north-western extremity of Anglesey. Chough were seen on the steep pastures. Unfortunately the weather deteriorated and it was impossible to view the seabird colony from the cliffs. We retreated from the gale force wind taking shelter in the RSPB visitor centre. Here we were able to view Guillemots, Razorbill, Fulmar, Kittiwakes & the occasional Puffin. Moving on to Fedw Fawr, three miles north of Beaumaris where we found Black Guillemot. This elegant auk species which breeds along this beautiful coastline was loafing about offshore. Gannet, Shag, Sandwich Tern, Oystercatcher and most notably a flock of nine Whimbrel were also present.

We returned to Betws-y-Coed via the glacial Ffrancon valley looking for Ring Ouzel & Twite. While the Twite posed on a fence giving us fine views, the Ring Ouzel remained elusive. However we did note Lesser Redpoll, another Northern Wheatear and Stonechat. Common Buzzards soared over the opposite hillside. Next a short visit to the RSPB Conwy

Reserve where a grey-morph Herring Gull on a wader pool made an unusual sighting. A Lesser Whitethroat showed well in the car park area before we left.

On to the area surrounding the Llyn Cowlyd Reservoir where the views of the Conwy Valley were stunning although only Wheatear, Stonechat, Meadow Pipit and Common Buzzard were recorded.

Our return journey home on Monday was via World's End, three miles north of Llangollen where we were rewarded with close views of Whinchat. A wonderful weekend drew to a close and our grateful thanks must go to Ray Gribble for leading and organising the weekend.

Alwyn Jackson

WVBS Systematic List 2009

Editor Ray Gribble

Thank you to Alwyn Jackson and David Knight who helped with the compilation of this report thus enabling its timely publication. This inevitably has led to slight differences in style but I hope this does not distract from the content.

Also a big thank you to all the members who have contributed their records without which there would be no report and to Steve Cale who produced the line drawings that greatly enhance it.

The British Ornithological Union's (BOU) revised systematic order has been retained but as the BOU name changes have not been universally adopted we have reverted to the well known common names which the membership have now been asked to use for the submission of records.

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.

I continue to urge all contributors to supply evidence of breeding where relevant. Such evidence is: singing male, nest building, nest & eggs or young, adult carrying food or faecal sac, recently fledged young.

Dealing with escapes and feral birds is always tricky but for this report the certain escapes have been put in a separate section.

Finally this is a summary of nearly 6,500 records received during 2009. My apologies to anyone if a record has been missed from the report or not correctly acknowledged.

The following abbreviations have been used:

GC	Golf Course
GP	Gravel Pit
HBW	Hoe Bird Walk
HOT	Hawk & Owl Trust
NarVOS	Nar Valley Ornithological Society
NBMR	Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report
RBA	Rare Bird Alert
SNRWP	Swanton Novers Raptor Watchpoint
WVRWP	Wensum Valley Raptor Watchpoint (Great Ryburgh)

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeding resident. Amber listed.

Highest winter counts all from Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge where present throughout the year; 40+ Jan, 44 Feb, 50+ Mar, 50 Apr, max 20 Nov with max 5+ June-Sept.

Breeding Sparham Pools max 2 ad 7 juvs, Guist Bridge 1ad + young, Lenwade Mill max 2ad 4 juvs and Beetley GP max 2ad 3 juvs including 1 "Polish" cygnet (i.e. born pure white) noted.

During the year recorded at Lyng 4 Jan, on HBW 1-4 Jan-Dec, Lenwade R Wensum 4 Feb, Walcis Farm 1-2 July & Sept, Swanton Novers RWP 3 Dec, Ringland-Attlebridge 18 Nov (JP), Bylaugh SW 2 Dec, Swanton Morley GP 4 Jan, 3 Mar, 1 May, 5 Dec & Lenwade Mill max 5 Jan, 4 Mar, 3 Apr, 8 Aug, 11 Sept, 4 Oct, 5 Dec; Pensthorpe 38 Feb

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus colombianus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers. Amber listed.

Scarning 10 on 22nd Jan & 14 on 1st Mar flying over (IB). New Costessey 4 on 7th Mar flying E over R Tud valley (AG). East Rudham 1 on 29th Nov flying S (NarVOS).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers.

Sparham Hall Farm 8 on 27th Nov (CS) & 26 on 1st Dec (BB&JE) when 5 at Sparham Pools on same day (BB&JE). Foulsham 4 on 14th Dec (NM) & at Drayton 29 on 24th Dec (NE).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

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

1st winter period Jan 450 Old Costessey (AB), 40 Hindolveston flying SE on 3rd (MN), 1 Hoe Lane on 11th (B&BP), 400 HBW on 18th (DK), 100 flying W New Costessey on 25th (AG). Feb 200 flying W over Lyng on 20th (NM), 8 flying S Taverham on 22nd (NS). Latest record Apr 9 flying W Lenwade on 23rd (NS)

Earliest 2nd winter period record on Oct 1st 55 Hindolveston flying N (MN), followed by 55 Sparham Hall Farm on 2nd (CS), 60 Lyng (NM) & 320 flying over Lenwade in 2-3 skeins on 17th (RG).

Nov 2 HBW (DK), 60 flying NW over Hockering on 15th (PR), 1 Lenwade on 19th (RG), 40 Lenwade Heath on 20th (JP), 30 flying over North Tuddenham on 24th (B&BP), and regular fly overs at Sparham Hall Farm during month with highest count 350 on 30th (CS).

In Dec several fly over flocks moving either S/SW/SE or NW/W.

Foulsham 350 on 4th, 250 on 10th (NM), 250 Hindolveston on 9th (MN), 200+ Swanton Morley GP, 200 Ringland, 120 North Tuddenham, 70 & 670 (in several skeins) Worthing (LB & DK), c.420 Pensthorpe (TS) & 120+ Sparham Pools (BB&JE) all on 11th, 2500 in 6 skeins Old Costessey on 12th (AB), 120 Lyng on 13th & 200 Bawdeswell on 17th (NM). Pensthorpe also had c.300 on 4th and c.100 on 15th fly over (TS).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common resident & passage migrant.

Common throughout the valley with long established & increasing feral population.

In first winter period highest counts *Jan* 150 at Elsing, 200+ at West Raynham; *Feb* 40 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, c80 Coxford Meadows, 40 Ringland Marshes; *Mar* 67 Sparham Pools.

One breeding record received of 3 ads with 5 juvs on 5th June at Swanton Morley GP. During breeding/post breeding period recorded at Lenwade Mill (max 18 Aug), HBW (max 45 Jun), Lenwade Common (max 14 May), Swanton Morley GP (max 8 Jun) and Beetley GP (max 30 July).

During second winter period highest counts *Sept* 110 Sparham Pools, 220 HBW, 34 Lenwade Mill; *Oct* 230 Sparham Pools; *Nov* 20 Lenwade Mill. Also 2 present at Lakeside, Lyng.

A hybrid Greylag/Canada Goose in Jan at Worthing (DA).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common introduced resident.

Less common than the larger Greylag and possibly declining at the expense of its gains.

First winter period highest counts *Jan* 200 Bylaugh, 15 Lenwade Mill, 30 Lyng Easthaugh; *Feb* 17 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, 14 HBW.

Also 2-8 at Hoe Lane, Sparham Pools, Lenwade & Coxford Meadows.

Breeding records in June at Sparham Pools of 2 family groups both of 2 ad 4 juvs and at Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes of 2ad 10 juvs.

During breeding/post breeding season also reported at Lenwade Mill (max 18 Sept), HBW (max 36 July), Beetley GP (max 18 July), Sparham Pools NR (max 30 Sept), Old Hall Lakes, Lenwade (27 Sept).

During second winter period highest counts *Oct* 5 HBW, 7 Sparham Pools NR; *Nov* 22 Lenwade Mill; *Dec* 42 Lakeside, Lyng, 50 Lyng, max 28 Lenwade Mill and 50+ Sparham Hall Farm.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Mainly feral but possibly a scarce winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

11th Jan 2 Hoe Lane (B&BP), 1 Worthing E of Beetley GP (GC,RN,BS,RG) and 2 Worthing with Greylags (DA) possibly the same birds.

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.

During first winter period at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (4 Jan/Feb), Dereham SW (6 Jan), Hoe Lane (4 Jan), Bittering GP (3 Jan), Swanton Morley GP (2 Jan), Great Witchingham (5 Jan), Sparham Pools (2 Jan-Mar), HBW (4 Jan, 2 Feb, 5 Mar), and Lenwade Mill (2 Jan, 1 Mar).

Highest counts Jan 18 Bittering and 12 Great Ryburgh.

Evidence of breeding at Hall Farm, Dereham 2 ad 10 juvs 27th Mar, Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge 4 ad 9 juvs 3rd Apr, Pensthorpe 2 ad 6 juvs 6th May & 10 on 7th Aug, Swanton Morley GP 1 ad 1 juv 5th Jun, Sparham Pools NR 2 ad 7 juvs 29th Jun.

Also during breeding/post breeding period 1-4 at Lenwade Mill, HBW and Macks Lane, Taverham. Larger numbers at Beetley GP 12 in Jun, Fustyweed, Elsing 9 in July (CJ) and Sparham Pools NR 12 in Sept.

During second winter period highest counts Nov 16 at Sparham Pools NR (JP), 34 at Lenwade (RG); Dec 22 at Lyng (NM). Smaller numbers 1-6 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, Lenwade Common, HBW, Lenwade Mill, Beetley GP, Costessey and Taverham (Macks Lane).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

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

Mainly a breeding visitor to the valley arriving early in the year but departing to moult in July.

Jan 1 Sparham Pools (BB&JE), 2 Pensthorpe (TS); Feb 2 HBW (DK), 2 flying over Scarning (IB), 2 Coxford Meadows (NarVOS), 2 pair displaying Pensthorpe on 16th. (continues)

Shelduck (continued)

Jun 1 West Raynham Lake (R&CG, LP, RN), 1 Dereham (IB), 2 adults with 4 juveniles Pensthorpe on 2nd (TS).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

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

Highest counts first winter period *Jan* 125 Pensthorpe, 28 Three Bridges Farm, Elsing, 30+ Bylaugh possibly same birds, 12 Coxford, 12 East Rudham. Smaller numbers present in *Jan* at Swanton Morley GP (1), Sparham Pools (max 7) and Great Ryburgh (3).

Feb 226 Pensthorpe (record recent count), 25 Ringland Marshes. *Mar* 116 still at Pensthorpe on 7th.

During breeding/post breeding period 1 HBW *Apr*, 1 pair West Raynham Lake *June*, 2 Pensthorpe *July*, 7 Sparham Pools *Sept*.

Second winter period 15 in *Sept*, 30 in *Oct*, 91 in *Nov* peaked at 144 in *Dec* at Pensthorpe, 40+ seen daily Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge in *Nov*, max 8 Sparham Pools *Oct*, 5 *Nov*, 4 *Dec*.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Resident, passage & migrant winter visitor. Amber listed.

Highest counts first winter period *Jan* 40 Sparham Pools NR and 40 Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes, 30 Pensthorpe, 28 Swanton Morley; *Feb* 35 Pensthorpe, 34 Sparham Pools, 10 Old Costessey; *Mar* 19 Sparham Pools. Recorded elsewhere in small numbers. *Jan* 2 Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering, 7 Beetley GP, 6 West Raynham, 6 East Rudham; *Mar* 2 HBW (DK).

No breeding records received. During breeding/post breeding period max 2 *Apr*/*Jun* Sparham Pools; *July* 2 HBW; *Sept* 42 Pensthorpe, 4 Sparham Pools NR.

Highest counts second winter period *Oct* 10 Sparham Pools NR; *Nov* max 25 Lakeside, Lyng, max 30+ Sparham Pools NR; *Dec* 80 Sparham Pools, 28 Beetley GP, 24 Pensthorpe, 6 Old Costessey Fish Farm, 12 Lakeside, Lyng.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Fairly scarce winter visitor, and rare breeder. Amber listed.

Highest counts first winter period *Jan* 20+ Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, c.21 Swanton Morley, 20 West Raynham, c.40 Great Witchingham, 12 Costessey, 10 Sparham Pools; *Feb* 20 Ringland & 10 Old Costessey Marshes; *Mar* 25 Sweet Briar Marsh, Norwich, 14 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge. Also recorded at Hindolveston (3 Jan), Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering (8 Jan), Beetley GP (2 Jan), Swanton Morley GP (8 Jan; 2 Mar), HBW (6 Jan, 4 Feb, 2 Mar) & Lenwade (1 Feb).

No breeding records but during breeding/post breeding period single recorded during HBW (May) and at West Raynham Lake (June). Also 2 Sparham Pools in Sept.

During second winter period highest counts *Oct* 30+ Sparham Pools (17 Dec); *Nov* 368 Pensthorpe on 23rd (a recent record); *Dec* 10 Swanton Morley GP, 8 Hindolveston.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident & winter visitor.

First winter period highest counts *Jan* 60+ Sparham Pools throughout month, 60 Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering, 31 Lenwade Common, 20+ Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge throughout month, 21 Kerdiston, 16 West Raynham, 14 Dereham SW, 10 Swanton Morley GP; *Feb* 50 Fustyweed, Elsing, 30+ Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, 26 Sparham Pools & 12 Kerdiston; *Mar* 10 Sparham Pools. Smaller counts of 2-9 at Lenwade/Lenwade Mill, HBW & North Tuddenham.

No breeding records received!

Throughout breeding/post breeding period recorded at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (max 20 July), HBW (max 8 Apr/Jun), Sparham Pools (max 40 Aug) and Lenwade Mill (max 8 Aug). Also recorded Felthorpe (2 Apr), Weston Longville (4 Apr), Swanton Morley GP (3 May), Kerdiston (2 Jun) and Lakeside, Lyng (1 Aug). Highest counts during second winter period *Oct* 20 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, 45 Sparham Pools NR, 16 HBW; *Nov* 32 Lenwade Common, 60 Sparham Pools, 25 Lenwade; *Dec* 63 Sparham Pools, 36 Beetley GP.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and migrant. Amber listed.

Single Sparham Pools 16th Jan (CS) and 3 at Old Costessey Fish Farm on 4th-5th Dec (AB).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A winter visitor, and rare breeder. Amber listed.

During first winter period Jan 2 Beetley GP on 9th, 2 males Sparham Pools NR, 2 males Sparham Hall Farm fishing lake on 10th, 1 Swanton Morley GP & 10 Sparham Pools on 11th & 3 on 13th, 3 Costessey on 16th 28 Pensthorpe on both 10th & 24th; Feb 8 Sparham Pools on 3rd, 4 (2pr) Old Costessey on 5th (6 on 10th), 72 Pensthorpe on 8th was highest recent count for site, 1 Coxford Meadows on 28th; Mar 49 Pensthorpe on 7th, 2 Sparham Pools on 9th.

Three records during breeding/post breeding period; 1 Coxford Meadows 5th June, 1 Beetley GP 5th Aug, 1 Pensthorpe 24th Aug.

Second winter period 1 Sparham Pools 29th Oct also 1 male/1 female on 12th & 17th Nov and 3 on 2nd Dec; 2 male/1 female Old Costessey Fish Farm on 5th Dec. At Pensthorpe 4 on 2nd, 6 on 4th & 8 on 15th Oct, 26 on 23rd Nov and 59 on 29th Dec.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

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

Recorded Jan-Mar and Oct-Dec from 5 sites.

Highest counts at each site; Sparham Pools 32 Jan, 60 Feb, 32 Mar, 6 Oct, 4 Nov, 10 Dec; Swanton Morley GP 12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Dec; Beetley GP 1 Jan; Lakeside, Lyng 6 Nov, 3 Dec; Kerdiston 1 Feb; Pensthorpe 7 Jan, 6 Feb.

Only records during breeding season: single at Beetley GP and 3 Pensthorpe in Jun.

Hybrid Pochard x Tufted Duck at Swanton Morley 4th Jan.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Summer breeder also Common passage migrant & winter visitor.

Records from 8 sites. Highest counts; Sparham Pools 60 Jan, 30 Feb, 16 Mar, 12 Apr, 20 Jun, 14 Sept, 12 Oct, 20 Nov, 70 Dec; Swanton Morley GP c.50 Jan, 29 Mar, 4 May, 40 Dec; Lenwade 7 Jan, 6 Feb, 23 Mar, 21 Nov; Beetley GP 3 Dec; HBW 2 Apr-July, 1 Aug/Sept, 2 Oct; Lakeside, Lyng 12 Nov, 15 Dec; Worthing 3 Dec.

No evidence of breeding received although records of 1 pair at Lenwade in May and Beetley GP and Coxford Meadows in June.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. Amber listed.

All records from Pensthorpe: 1 drake 16th & 29th Jan, 20th Dec and a female on 29th Dec.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Single male Sparham Hall Farm fishing lake 30th Dec (BB/JE).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Winter visitor & passage migrant.

Records from 5 sites in the middle of the valley that probably reflects the distribution of the observers. Do Goosanders use wetland sites between Attlebridge - Norwich and Sparham Pools - Fakenham?

Highest counts at Sparham Pools 15 Jan & Feb, 8 Mar. 4 on 9th Dec earliest second winter period record (BB/JE); Lenwade Mill 2 Jan and 2 on river at Lenwade 2nd Apr when lakes were frozen over (B&SG); Swanton Morley GP 5 Jan; Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge 1 Jan, 2 Mar; Worthing GP 2 Dec.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Common introduced resident.

Highest counts first winter period Jan 15 Billingford; Feb 13 East Rudham; Mar 10 Shereford. Smaller numbers 1-4 at Guist, Litcham, Taverham, North Tuddenham and Worthing. (continues)

Red-legged Partridge (continued)

Only evidence of breeding Mill Street, Elsing 1 ad 6 juvs. During breeding/post breeding period 10 Sculthorpe, 8 HBW (Apr) with 1-2 at North Tuddenham, Worthing village, Syderstone Common, Guist, Kerdiston, HBW (higher count of 7 May).

Highest Counts in Second winter period 13 North Tuddenham Sept & 10 in Nov; 12 Worthing Dec.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

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

First winter period *Jan* 14 Little Witchingham, 7 Kerdiston, 4 Daffy Green; *Feb* 2 North Tuddenham, max 4 Little Witchingham, 2 Booton, 2 HBW, 6 Great Witchingham; *Mar* 2 Daffy Green, 1 Mill Farm, North Tuddenham, 2 Horningtoft, 2 Springfield Cottage, North Tuddenham.

No breeding records received. During breeding/post breeding period present throughout at North Tuddenham with highest count 13 July. Also 2 Worthing (Apr), 2+ Daffy Green (May) and 1 Mileham (June).

During second winter period 4 Scarning (Oct), 11 Daffy Green (Nov) and max 13 Mill Farm, North Tuddenham (Dec).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Common introduced resident.

Game management in the valley is widespread and involves the release of thousands of pheasants in the late summer/early autumn.

Highest counts

8-10 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge Mar/Oct/Nov, 30 Weston Longville Apr. 9 Kerdiston Jun, 10 North Tuddenham, 12 Great Witchingham Sept, 13 HBW Nov.

Evidence of breeding North Tuddenham in Sept.

Smaller numbers 1-6 during year at Lenwade Mill, Dereham SW, Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools, Lakeside (Lyng), Ringland/Morton and Swanton Morley GP.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

Scarce and local introduced resident.

Two males Sculthorpe Moor in Jan/Feb (R&CG, C&JF, GC, RN, BS, BB&JE), single July (BB&JE) & Oct (LB).

Little Grebe *Trachybaptus ruficollis*

Mainly a winter visitor uncommon resident. Breeds in small numbers.

Highest counts first winter period in Jan 12 Swanton Morley GP, 6 Sparham Pools. Elsewhere Jan 2 Attlebridge (also Mar), 2 Bittering, 2 Beetley GP, 2 Elsing, single Worthing; Feb 1 Fustyweed (Elsing), 2 Sparham Pools; Mar 1 heard HBW.

Evidence of breeding: Beetley GP in Jun 2 ad 1 juv & July 1 pair with nest & eggs; Pensthorpe 4 juvs 29th May & 2ad 4juv 11th July; Sculthorpe Moor single juv in Aug. During the breeding/post breeding period 1 heard HBW (Apr, Jul, Aug), singles at West Raynham Lake (May) & Lenwade Mill (Sept) with 2 Sparham Pools (Sept).

Highest counts second winter period 10 Swanton Morley GP, 4 Lakeside, Lyng in Oct, up to 10 Sparham Pools in Nov/Dec, up to 10 Swanton Morley GP, 5 Beetley GP in Dec. Singles HBW in Oct and Attlebridge in Oct/Nov, East Bilney and between Hoe/Worthing in Dec.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

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

First winter period Jan up to 4 Swanton Morley GP, 1 Square Meadow Lake, up to 2 Lenwade Common with first returning bird on 16th; Feb up to 2 Sparham Pools (+ Mar), 10 Swanton Morley GP, 2 Lenwade, 2 Costessey Pits; Mar 1 HBW, 4 Swanton Morley GP.

Breeding recorded at Sparham Pools NR/Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes 3 pairs + max 4 juvs in total reported; Lyng Easthaugh 1 pair. During breeding/post breeding period up to 3 HBW, 2 Swanton Morley GP, 1 Lyng Lakeside.

Second winter period records from 4 sites - Sparham Pools NR (2-3), Swanton Morley GP (8-10), Lyng Lakeside (1), Lenwade Common (1).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common, increasing, non-breeding resident. **Amber listed.**

Reported as being present throughout the year except May at a total of 12 sites.

Highest counts; 12 Lenwade Old Hall Lakes, 9 HBW Jan; 39 Lyng flying W late pm to roost & 17 Great Ryburgh RWP Aug; 10 Swanton Morley GP & Sparham Pools Dec.

Elsewhere – Lenwade Jan up to 5 with 1 in July; Lenwade Common up to 6 Jan with 1 in Dec; Lenwade Mill 2 Jan, up to 4 Mar, 1 Oct, 2 Dec; Old Hall Farm Attlebridge 1-2 Jan-Apr, 5-6 July-Sept, up to 3 Nov; Dereham SW 1 Jan, 6 Apr, 1 Dec; Swanton Morley GP 3 Jan; HBW 9 Jan, 4 Feb, 6 Mar, 2 Apr/Jun, 3 July, 6 Sept/Oct; Sparham Pools 7 Jan, 4 Feb, 1 Mar, up to 3 Sept, up to 4 Nov; Beetley GP 3 Aug, 5 Dec; Belaugh SW 2 Dec.

Bittern *Botaurus Stellaris*

Scarce visitor. **Red listed.**

Singles Sculthorpe Moor 6th Feb & Sparham Hall Farm fishing lake 29th Dec (BB&JE) and Pensthorpe 21st Dec (TS).

Great White Egret *Ardea alba alba*

A very rare vagrant.

Two records of this rare visitor, one at Dereham SW on 29th Aug (IB) and the other flew over Sparham Pools on 24th Nov (BB).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common resident throughout the valley, present all year.

Most records from east/central area of valley. Ringland/ Morton Hall/ Attlebridge area throughout the year with max 6 in Jan; Lenwade/Mill/Common area up to 2 present Jan-Oct; Sparham Pools max 3 Jan-Feb, 3 June, up to 3 Sept-Nov; Elsing Mill 2 in Jan; Swanton Morley GP single Jan, up to 2 Dec; Worthing 2 in Dec; Beetley GP single Dec; HBW present Jan-Nov max 4 Apr & Sept; Guist Common 4 in Apr, singles May/June, up to 4 July; single at Hindolveston in Jan, East Rudham, Coxford Meadows and Dereham SW in June and Scarning Fen in Dec.

At Great Witchingham Farm Park (formerly GW Wildlife Park) heronry 34 active nests were counted. Other evidence of breeding 1 adult interacting with 1 juvenile at Lenwade Mill 11th Apr. Presumably these birds were from the Great Witchingham heronry.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce but increasing non-breeding resident. Amber listed.

Recorded at an increasing number of sites throughout the year. During the first winter period singles Old Costessey, Ringland Marshes, up to 3 Attlebridge and Lenwade/Lenwade Mill area, singles Lyng/Sparham Pools area, up to 2 Elsing Mill/Bylaugh/Swanton Morley GP/Park Farm area, up to 3 Dereham SW area, singles Hoe Rough, HBW, Worthing, up to 3 Bintree, singles Guist, Great Ryburgh, Hindolveston, up to 3 Sculthorpe Moor/Hempton area, up to 2 Coxford/East Rudham/Doughton area.

Recorded intermittently during breeding/post breeding period. Singles Ringland/Costessey Marshes, up to 3 Attlebridge and Pensthorpe, singles Sparham Pools/ Lyng/ Fustyweed (Elsing) area, single Dereham SW, up to 2 Beetley Meadows/Beetley GP area, singles Worthing, HBW, Hindolveston and Sculthorpe Moor.

(continues)

Little Egret (continued)

Second winter period singles in Alderford Common/Attlebridge area, up to 2 Lenwade Mill/Common area, singles Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP, Dereham SW area and Hindolveston.

2 or 3 in Sparham Hall Farm area for whole of year and getting more common (CS).

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

A very rare vagrant.

A single bird at Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes on 21st May (CS).



Purple Heron, by Steve Cale

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant. Amber listed.

First record Swanton Novers RWP on 16th May (RBA). Two at SNRWP on 23rd (IB) with male displaying on 31st (PR). During breeding period singles at Great Ryburgh RWP on 22nd June (DK), Lenwade Mill on 3rd July flying North being mobbed by corvids; during Aug 3 at Hindolveston on 11th (G&AJ), single HBW on 16th (first recorded since the walk started over 20 years ago) and 3 Great Ryburgh RWP on 22nd. Singles over Windsor Park, Dereham on 25th Sept (C&JF) and at Sculthorpe Moor on 2nd Oct (BB&JE) probable return migrants.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

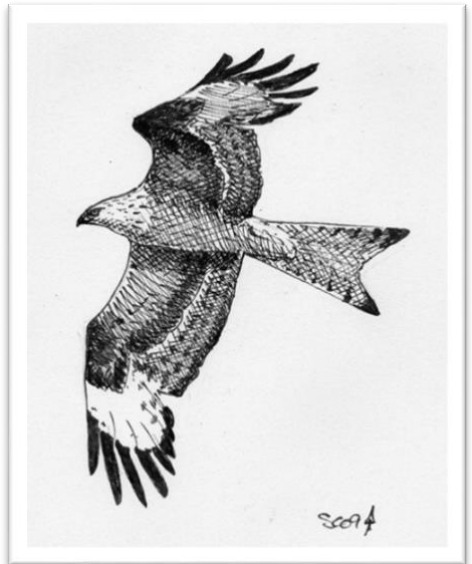
Increasing visitor mainly from reintroduction projects. Amber listed.

Single birds during first winter period at Great Ryburgh RWP on 21st Feb, Sparham Pools on 22nd Feb (NM) and Pensthorpe heading W on 25th Mar (TS). Possible spring migrants singles in Apr at Sculthorpe on 7th, Weasenham All Saints on 16th, Melton Constable on 21st and in May in Hindolveston/Stibbard area on 16th and Swanton Novers on 18th/22nd/23rd. (RBA).

Throughout breeding period 1-3 birds recorded at two sites in the valley.

One autumn record of single Hockering Wood 16th Aug (JY). No records during second winter period.

Red Kite, by Steve Cale



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

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

Possible local “wanderers” noted in Jan singles at Lyng on 5th (NM) and Hempton on 31st (SB).

Spring arrivals in late Mar single at Sculthorpe Moor on 20th (BB&JE) and 5 (2 males, 3 females) at Guist Bridge on 30th (NM). Early Apr single female over Sparham Pools on 4th (BB&JE) and single at Sculthorpe Moor on 5th (B&BP).

Other possible spring arrivals/passage birds in May singles at Pensthorpe male on 5th (TS), Lyng Easthaugh on 10th (NM), Guist on 16th (IB), Swanton Novers RWP on 23rd (IB), single at Lyng (NM) and 3 at Guist Bridge on 24th (B&BP).

Three pairs reported breeding at Sculthorpe Moor (HOT) and 1 pair with juvenile at Guist Common (IB et al).

Autumn dispersal evident in Aug with singles at Hindolveston on 6th (MN), Pensthorpe a juv on 16th, 27th, 30th & 31st (TS), Beetley GP (RG/AH) on 22nd with 3 at Great Ryburgh RWP also on 22nd. Single Dereham SW on 29th (IB) and single male with juvenile during month at Guist Common.

Singles in Sept at Lyng on 2nd & Foxley on 21st (NM) were also possibly birds dispersing. At Pensthorpe a juv 1st to 18th.

Latest birds in Oct with 2 at Sculthorpe on 2nd and single at Sparham Pools on 29th (BB&JE).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

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

In first winter period single at Sculthorpe on 11th Jan (MS/NS) and male at Great Ryburgh RWP on 21st Feb (NM). A late spring bird at Guist Bridge on 24th May (B&BP). Second winter period single ring-tail at Foulsham on 3rd Dec (NM).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor to valley.

An easily overlooked secretive species.

One record of a pair over Sculthorpe Moor on 4th Feb (BB&JE).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Widespread fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded throughout the year at Old Hall Farm (Attlebridge), HBW, Lenwade Mill, Pensthorpe, Scarning, Sculthorpe Moor, North Tuddenham (Springfield Cottage), Swanton Morley GP and Worthing.

Recorded during breeding/post breeding period at Guist, Hockering, Ringland, Salle and Sparham Pools.

First records during breeding/post breeding period and later during second winter period at Beetley GP, Dereham town centre (2 adults with 1 juvenile), Dereham SW where nest reported.

Recorded in second winter period at Alderford Common, Northall Green (Dereham), Hindolveston, Hoe Rough, Old Beetley, Elmham, Swanton Novers RWP and Taverham (recorded in a garden most days in Nov & Dec).

CS recorded up to 4 pairs all year and breeding in Sparham parish.

Surely under recorded.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Small but increasing breeding population in the valley.

Recorded throughout year at infrequent intervals during HBW, at Guist Common, Ringland/Ringland Hills area, Sculthorpe Moor/Mill/Hempton area and at Lyng/Sparham Hall/ Sparham Pools area. Breeding recorded at Sparham where 5 birds together during Aug and at Hackford where nest found (CS). Possible breeding Ringland where 5 birds including 3 juveniles recorded 19th July (IB).

Only recorded during first winter period at Booton, East Rudham, Kettlestone, Lenwade and Mileham. No subsequent records received.

(continues)

Common Buzzard (continued)

Recorded during first winter period and subsequently during breeding/post breeding period at Great Ryburgh/GRRWP area, Hindolveston where pair displaying during Apr, Dereham SW area, Pensthorpe and Swanton Novers RWP.

During breeding/post breeding season recorded at Attlebridge, Beetley GP, Daffy Green, Derham SW, Heydon Park, Kerdiston, Lexham, Lyng Easthaugh, Sennowe Park, and Worthing. No subsequent records received.

Also recorded during breeding/post breeding period and subsequently in second winter period at Hockering Wood/Elsing/Bylaugh area, North Tuddenham and Swanton Morley GP/Billingford Common area.

Only recorded in second winter period in Horningtoft/Whissonsett area.

Highest counts 6 at Little Snoring 7th Feb, 8 Great Ryburgh RWP on 21st Feb (NM), 6 at Sculthorpe on 5th Apr (B&BP), 7 at Swanton Novers RWP on 23rd May and 15+ at Great Ryburgh RWP on 22nd Aug (IB).

Osprey *Pandion halaetus*

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

Single birds at Great Ryburgh RWP on 28th Aug (RBA) with two sightings both in Sept at Sparham Pools on 2nd and 11th (CS).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder and passage. Amber listed.

Recorded intermittently throughout the year in Dereham SW area, during HBW and at Guist. Only recorded during first winter period at Sparham, Hindolveston, Bylaugh and Daffy Green. No subsequent records received.

Recorded during first winter period and subsequently in breeding/post breeding period at Worthing, Sculthorpe Moor/ Mill area, Sparham Pools, Attlebridge, Brisley and Taverham. (continues)

Kestrel (continued)

During breeding/post breeding period recorded at Dereham, Dereham SW, Mileham, Lyng Easthaugh, Great Ryburgh RWP, Kerdiston, Beetley GP, Salle, and Lenwade.

Recorded during breeding/post breeding/second winter periods at Swanton Morley GP, Swanton Novers RWP, North Tuddenham, North Elmham and Ringland/Ringland Hills area.

At Blickling only recorded during second winter period. Most records of 1-2 birds with 4 recorded during HBW 16th Aug.

Breeding in Sparham parish where 3 pairs (CS), Dereham where 1 female 2 juveniles on 27th July (IB), Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge where 1 adult with 2 juveniles on 28th July (WO) and Pensthorpe 5 young in nestbox (filmed by SpringWatch).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Single bird at Kettlestone on 13th Feb (NM).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*.

Scarce migratory breeder and passage migrant throughout the valley.

At Sparham Hall Farm first sighting 3rd May and regular there throughout the summer although fewer sightings than 2008 (CS).

Intermittent sightings at Lyng of up to 3 between 30th Apr – 20th Sept, Hindolveston 1-2 between 5th May – 6th Sept, Great Ryburgh RWP up to 3 between 16th May – 22nd Aug, HBW singles between 17th May – 20th Sept, Pensthorpe singles between 1st May – 2nd Oct (latest sighting), Swanton Novers up to 2 between 23rd May – 2nd Aug, Ringland up to 4 between 31st May – 14th Sept, singles North Tuddenham between 20th Aug – 12th Sept.

Also singles at Sparham Pools 29th Apr, New Costessey 8th May, Dereham SW 7th June, Attlebridge 17th June, Guist Common 18th June (& 19th Aug), Beetley GP 2nd July (& 28th attacking Sand Martins), Sculthorpe Moor 3rd July, Dereham 25th July and Lenwade 29th Aug & 15th Sept.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Pensthorpe 17th Oct & 30th Jan (TS) and a single bird perched on Norwich Cathedral on 13th July viewed from Natural England offices (PL).

Water Rail *Rallus aquatus*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor. Amber listed.

During first winter period single present Sculthorpe Moor & Lenwade in Jan, 1-2 at Swanton Morley GP end Jan – beginning Feb, single Old Costessey Feb and 2 Sculthorpe Fen 27th Mar.

No breeding records but 5 at Dereham SW on 27th Sept might suggest possible brood.

During second winter period intermittent sightings of singles at Pensthorpe 2nd Oct – 2nd Nov and at Sculthorpe Moor between 18th Oct – 27th Nov, 2 at Sparham Pools 29th Oct, 2 at Dereham SW 12th Dec and single Sparham Pools 20th Dec.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*.

Common resident. Widespread throughout valley supplemented by autumn immigrants.

Proof of breeding at Kerdiston where 1ad+3juvs on 15th June (JP), Lenwade Mill 2ads+3juvs on 17th June (JP) and Sparham Pools NR 1ad+2juvs on 25th July (AJ).

Through the year 2-6 at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge between 1st Feb – 30th Nov; 2+ Lenwade Mill highest count 8 on 29th Nov; Sparham Pools 2+ between 24th Feb – 11th Dec highest count 7 on 4th Sept; HBW 1+ 18th Jan – 15th Nov highest count 12 in Jan; Swanton Morley GP reported intermittently through year with highest count 6 on 22nd Mar; also recorded intermittently at Lenwade Common between Jan – Nov highest counts of 4 in Apr & Nov.

1-2 also recorded at Dereham SW (Jan), West Raynham (Jan), North Tuddenham (Apr), Beetley GP (June), Lenwade (July & Sept), Lyng Lakeside (Oct-Dec) and Kerdiston (1 in Jan with 8 in Feb).

Coot *Falica atra*.

Common resident and winter visitor.

Highest counts in first winter period at Beetley GP 15 on 9th Jan (R&CG); West Raynham 10 on 11th Jan (C&JF); Swanton Morley GP 20 on 11th Jan (C&JF) & 12 on 22nd Mar (B&BP); at Sparham Pools 13 on 29th Jan, 21 on 24th Feb, 16 on 20th Mar with 14 still present on 12th Apr (JP).

Proof of breeding at Beetley GP where 2 nests with sitting birds on 2nd June and later on 22nd June 2 pair with young recorded (RG); Swanton Morley GP on 5th June 1ad+3juvs (A&CJ), Sparham Pools on 25th June nest in middle of pool (JP).

During breeding/post breeding period 1-3 also recorded at Lenwade, Lenwade Mill and on HBW.

During second winter period highest counts at Sparham Pools NR of 22 on 27th Nov and 33 on 11th Dec (JP); Swanton Morley GP 15 on 12th Dec (B&BP).

Common Crane *Grus grus*.

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

Single record of 7 over Scarning on 20th Oct (IB/RBA).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

Earliest records singles Sparham Pools on 17th Feb (BB&JE) and Lyng on 19th Feb with 2 on 2nd Mar (NM). Two remained at Sparham Pools throughout Mar/Apr with 2ad+2juvs recorded there on 31st May and throughout June. At Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes 2ad+2juvs until 2nd July. Pensthorpe 2ad+2juvs 2nd June. Also present at Lenwade Mill between 2nd Mar – 2nd Aug with 3 in June but no records of juveniles. At Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge single in Apr and June with 2 in July.

(continues)

Oystercatcher (continued)

Records also from HBW 2-3 Mar/Apr, Worthing 1-2 in Mar/May/July, Fustyweed, Elsing 2-3 Apr, Daffy Green 2 in Apr, North Tuddenham Common single May, Beetley GP single June and Dereham SW 2 in June.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare summer visitor to WVBS area. **Amber listed.**

Two were at Pensthorpe on 1st Apr, then 1 between 3rd & 13th May and 2 again on 9th June (TS).

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus*

Scarce summer visitor. **Red listed.**

Two at Sculthorpe on 5th Apr (B&BP) could have been from the colony of 17 nests reported in the EDP (Apr) within 1500m of Tattersett Business Park or those that were “significantly more” within 2,500m.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadris dubius*

Passage migrant and breeding summer visitor in small numbers.

All records from Pensthorpe with 2 on 29th Mar rising to 2 pairs on 9th Apr and increasing to 3 pairs in June 2 of which nested. All young were predated by Kestrel (TS).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common passage migrant and increasing winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

The WVBS area remains a popular wintering area for this species. Counts during the first winter period were Jan 93 at Hockering on 8th, 3 Pensthorpe on 10th, single at Swanton Morley GP, 60 near Bittering, 30 at Lenwade Heath, up to 30 at Colkirk, 65 at Whitwell all on 11th, 20 at Salle on 12th, c.250 at Great Witchingham on 13th present for rest of month, 20 HBW on 18th, up to 30 over Taverham on 24th & c.16 at Hindolveston on 31st; Feb up to 300 at Great Witchingham present all month, c.1000 at North Tuddenham on 15th; Mar up to 544 at Marsham until 19th and 50 at Kettlestone on 23rd was latest record. (continues)

Golden Plover (continued)

First record for second winter period in Oct when 7 between Lenwade/Hockering on 4th followed by 200 at Collen's Green, Lyng on 18th and 500+ at Sparham Pools on 29th; During Nov max 200 at Hoe village on 9th and still 70 at Collen's Green, Lyng on 21st; Dec 32 at Mill Farm, North Tuddenham on 17th. Also during Nov/Dec c.50 at Sparham.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.

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

First winter period counts Jan 23 Hockering on 8th, 30 Swanton Morley on 11th, 300 Great Witchingham on 13th, 272 at Daffy Green, 100 Dereham SW on 20th, 150 at Lenwade, 49 at Sparham Pools on 29th; Feb max 250 Great Witchingham all month, 60 Sculthorpe Moor on 6th, 40 Ringland on 20th. Smaller numbers during this period at Hindolveston (up to 16), Bittering (10), Attlebridge (15), HBW (2), North Tuddenham (2), Kerdiston (2), Coxford (7), Sculthorpe Mill (10), Sculthorpe (12), Foxley Wood (2), Horningtoft (12), Dereham SW (2).

The only breeding record received was from Pensthorpe where 2 adults with 3 young in May. Elsewhere during June 1 pair at Bintree Mill, 2 at Gateley both on 5th, 2 at Dereham SW on 6th, 6 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge on 21st & 25th. High count of 21 at Kerdiston on 15th June. At Pensthorpe July 21 on 1st, c.50 on 15th; Aug c.50 on 5th & c.80 on 18th.

Second winter period counts Oct 23 beside Lenwade/Hockering road on 4th, c.50 Pensthorpe on 22nd; Nov 30 Collen's Green, Lyng on 21st, 100 at Hoe on 27th, Dec 16 flew over Taverham on 19th, single Worthing village on 22nd. During Nov/Dec c.300 at Sparham.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Three records during first winter period. Single at Scarning on 31st Jan (IB), 2 at Guist on 1st Feb (SB) and single on Ringland Marshes on 20th Feb (AB).



*Jack Snipe,
by Steve Cale*

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

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

First winter period highest counts *Jan* 8 at Scarning on 10th, 15 at Costessey Marshes on 19th, 10 Sparham Pools on 22nd; *Feb* 6 at Guist on 1st, 6 at Sparham Pools on 19th, 9 at Old Costessey Marshes on 20th. Elsewhere 3 in *Jan* at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge with 2 in *Feb* and up to 5 in *Mar*; Dereham SW 2 in *Jan*, 5 in *Feb*, 4 in *Mar*; Ringland Marshes 3 in *Feb*; Elsing Mill 2 in *Jan*; singles at Great Ryburgh, Kerdiston, Dereham SW in *Jan* and HBW in *Feb*. Singles at Hindolveston in *Jan*/*Feb* with 2 on 3rd *Apr* was latest date recorded.

Sadly no breeding records received. (*Editor's note; Shortly after I moved to Mill Street, Elsing in 1977 I can recall hearing drumming birds nearby over the grazing marshes. Unfortunately I did not record dates. Have the marshes along the valley now fallen silent?*).

Earliest second winter records 2 Pensthorpe on 5th *Sept* and a single bird at Hindolveston on 18th *Sept*. Highest counts 10 at Dereham SW on 29th *Nov*, 10 at Dereham SW on 8th *Dec*, 9 at Sparham Hall Farm on 18th *Dec*. Elsewhere in *Oct* 2 at Hindolveston 16/17th, singles Old Hall Farm on 15th (also 7th *Nov*), Sparham Pools on 17th (also 3 on 9th *Dec*), HBW, New Costessey on 18th; *Dec* 4 at Beetley GP on 8th.

Woodcock *Scotopax rusticola*

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

Mostly winter sightings from Feb to Mar and then again Nov and Dec. Mainly singles seen throughout the valley (IB,GB,DA,PR,A&GJ,MN, B&BP,JP,MS,AB) but 6 seen at Hindolveston on 14th Jan (J.A. Jones) and 3 at Daffy Green on 5th Nov (IB) and Lenwade Common on 26th Dec (R&CG).

There were pairs at Hempton-Shereford on 23rd Jan (DA) and Lenwade Common on 5th & 11th Jan (RG/RN/BS/GC).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce passage migrant to WVBS area. Mainly fly-overs. Amber listed.

Only one sighting reported on 7th Aug (BB/JE) at Sculthorpe Moor.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Scarce passage migrant to WVBS area. Mainly fly-overs. Amber listed.

1 on 14th Apr at Church House Farm, Hindolveston (MN) and 3 on 21st Aug at R Tud Valley, New Costessey (AG).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*.

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Only 2 records: one Pensthorpe 17th May (TS) and 3 on 10th Nov at Sparham Pools (BB/JE).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*.

Rare passage migrant.

Singles Pensthorpe 31st Aug, 6th, 8th, & 9th Sept (TS).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

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

Mainly singles reported widely throughout the year: New Costessey, Sweet Briar Marsh Norwich, Pensthorpe, Ringland and Sparham Pools but max 3 at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge from 8th Mar to 2nd Oct (WO). Also max 3 at Church House Farm, Hindolveston early and late months of the year (MN) and Beetley GP in July when most records were received.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage migrant, widespread.

Singles at Sparham Pools on 10th May & 9th Aug, Lyng on 15th May and Sculthorpe Moor on 7th Aug (NM,BB/JE) and a pair at Sweetbriar Marsh on 10th Aug (AG).

Mediterranean Gull

Larus melancephalus

Scarce visitor. Amber listed.

Only record of 1 on 15th May at Church House Farm, Hindolveston (MN).

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Passage migrant in varying numbers, usually in the spring.

A pair at Sparham Pools on 24th Apr (CS) and a single also at Sparham Pools on 25th Apr (BB/JR).

Little Gull, by Steve Cale



Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Widespread and abundant non-breeding resident. More common in winter. Amber listed.

Sightings throughout the valley in every month of the year. Flocks of up to 500 reported at Lenwade/Hockering on 4th Oct (RG) and Hoe Bird Walk on 15th Nov (DK).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

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

Reported widely in every month of the year with the exception of June and July with flocks up to a max 70 at Elsing, Three Bridges Farm on 28th Jan (AJ).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

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

Reports of mainly singles throughout the year but a flock of 22 on 24th Sept at Sparham Pools (BB/JE) was unusual but that was eclipsed with 115 seen at New Costessey on 8th Oct (AG).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

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

Reported every month with up to a max of 10 seen. Two exceptions were 44 on 23rd Aug at Lenwade Mill (JP) and 40 on 12th Nov (JP) at Ringland/Morton Hall.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Scarce but increasing late summer/autumn visitor.

One or 2 at Sparham in Oct/Nov (CS) was the only record.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

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

Up to 2 max seen in the early half of the year at Colkirk (GC/RN/BS/RG), Sparham Pools (JP) and Hoe Bird Walk (DK) with 6 on 11th Oct at Lenwade Mill (JP) and 5 on 12th Nov at Ringland/Morton Hall (JP).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce migrant in valley.

Only one recorded in the valley on 28th Aug at Ringland (NM).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant in valley.

Plentiful throughout the summer months with a max 30 at Sparham Pools on 9th July (BB/JE) with successful breeding again at Sparham Pools where 14+ young were counted on 29th June (RG).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

*Scarce passage migrant. **Amber listed.***

Just one report of a single bird at Lyng GP on 20th Apr (CS).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were 6 at Lyng Easthaugh on 13th May (PM) and 1 at Lyng GP on 1st June (CS).

Rock Dove(Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Feral resident, associated with human habitation.

Only five records reported with a flock of 17 on 12th Nov at Ringland/Morton Hall (JP) being the highest number.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident throughout valley. Amber listed.

Seen in every month of the year with up to 10 at Attlebridge June to Oct (WO) and Swanton Novers on 31st May (PR), a maximum of 12 recorded on Hoe Bird Walk 15th Nov (DK) and 25 Pensthorpe 12th June (TS).

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident throughout the valley

Significant numbers recorded with counts up to 100 at Bittering and Attlebridge on 11th Jan (C&JF)&(MS/NS) and in June & Oct at Attlebridge (WO) between 100 to 500 on 31st Jan at Collin Green Farm, Lyng (AJ), Lenwade on 30th Nov (RG), 586 on 12th Nov at Ringland/Morton Hall (JP), 1000+ at Attlebridge on 13th Nov (WO) and 1395 at Old Costessey between 25th Oct and 9th Nov (AG).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident, associated with human habitation

Some 67 reports covering every month of the year. Mainly singles or pairs reported in gardens but a sighting of 19 on 9th Dec at Old Beetley was unusual (RG on 1hr Atlas survey).

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Decreasing migratory breeder and passage migrant. Red listed.

Earliest report was 1st May at Sparham Pools (CS) and latest at North Tuddenham on 24th Sept (B&BP). Up to 3 birds took up residence in North Tuddenham from 20th July to 24th Sept (B&BP). Also reported from Alderford Common 12th May (LB), Beetley GP 2nd June – 2nd July (RG/AH), HBW 21st June & 19th July (DK), Kerdiston 15th July (JP), Kettlestone 25th May (NM), Porter's Lane Lenwade 3rd Aug (RG), Walnut Tree Farm Lyng Easthough 23rd June (RG), Primrose Green Lyng 24th May (NM), Pensthorpe 19th May & 9th Aug (TS), Ringland 10th & 26th June (NM,IB,PR), Scarning 16th Sept (IB), Syderstone Common 5th & 7th June (R&CG,LP,RN) and Worthing village 13th July & 1st Aug (DK).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Widely reported - all singles - with the first on 18th Apr at Sparham Pools (BB&JR) and the last on 4th July at Guist Common (RG/AH/AJ).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

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

Widely reported with some 160 sightings of mainly single birds in almost every month of the year. Pairs seen at Costessey on 21st Jan (AB), Sculthorpe Moor on 6th Feb (BB/JE), Scarning on 11th & 21st Feb (IB), Mileham on 28th Mar (JB), Scarning on 11th Apr (IB), Sparham Hall on 1st July (CS). Unusually 3 were seen on 28th Feb & 4th Mar at East Raynham (NarVOS) and Sculthorpe Moor (PAB). Nesting was confirmed with two adults observed at Worthing with 4 chicks ringed 1st Jul (RG/DK). Also 3 young at Riverside Farm, Scarning on 7th July (R&CG).

Little Owl *Athene noctue*

Introduced resident. Fairly common in WVBS area.

Recorded every month of the year and widely distributed throughout the valley from Attlebridge (2), Blickling (2), Bylaugh, Daffy Green (2), Dereham, N. Tuddenham (2), Gt.Ryburgh (2), Hindolveston, Lenwade Mill, Lyng, Pensthorpe, Pudding Norton (2), Scarning, Sparham, Taverham (2) and Worthing.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident.

More often heard than seen. A pair were seen at Hindolveston throughout the month of January (G&AJ) and 2/3 pairs at Sparham on 1st July (CS).

Single birds were reported at Bawdeswell, Beetley, Booton, Dereham, Drayton, Elsing, Foxley Woods, Gt.Ryburgh, Gt.Witchingham, Guist Common, Hindolveston, Horningtoft, Lenwade, Lyng, Old Costessey, Pensthorpe, Scarning, Swanton Morley, Taverham and Weston Longville.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Scarce migratory breeder. Red listed.

4 at Marsham Heath on 18th June (JP) and 25th June (PR).

Swift *Apus apus*

Common migratory breeder and passage migrant.

First birds seen on 24th Apr at Lyng (NM) with the last sighting on 7th Sept at Hindolveston (MN). Reports of 20 at Swanton Morley GP on 18th & 24th May (B&BP), 30 at Worthing on 6th June (DK) and 45 on 11th & 16th July at Lenwade Mill (JP).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Common resident in the valley. Amber listed.

Reported every month of the year at Attlebridge, Dereham (2), Drayton (2), Gunton Lane Park, Hindolveston, HoeBirdWalk, Lenwade, Lyng, Pensthorpe, Scarning(3), Sculthorpe, Swanton Morley GP (2), Walsis Hills and Worthing (2).

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Very rare passage
migrant.

Good sightings of single
bird at Gt.Ryburgh on
15th & 16th May (IB,DK,
RG,PR).

Hoopoe,
by Steve Cale



Green Woodpecker *Picis viridis*
Fairly common resident. **Amber listed.**

Seen every month of the year. Mainly single birds but 2 on 4th Jan at Lenwade Heath (CG), Sparham Pools on 6th Mar & 27th July (JP), N.Tuddenham on 2nd May (B&BP) and Beetley GP on 22nd Aug (RG,AH). 3 at Weston Longville on 10th Apr & 23rd May (JP), Sparham Pools on 25th June (JP), Hoe Bird Walk on 20th Sept (DK) and Ringland/Morton Hall on 12th Nov (JP). The maximum was 4 at Hoe Bird Walk on 19th Apr (DK). Proof of breeding came from Pensthorpe with an adult & juvenile on 3rd July (TS).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Common resident. Increasingly visiting garden feeders.

Recorded every month. Mainly single birds but several pairs seen with 3 at Swanton Morley on 4th Jan (DA), Sparham Pools on 8th Feb & 27th July (JP), Kerdiston on 26th Feb (JP), Felthorpe on 26th Jan (MAS), Elsing Mill on 21st June (A&CJ), Dereham on 7th June (IB), Hoe Bird Walk on 16th Aug (DK), North Tuddenham on 20th July (B&BP). Up to 4 were reported at Attlebridge in Feb & June (WO) and Hoe Bird Walk on 15th Mar (DK). Pensthorpe proof of breeding 1ad+1juv 9th June.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos minor.

Scarce resident.

Occasionally visiting garden

*feeders. **Red listed.***

Only two sightings of single birds; Sparham Pools on 7th Feb (KM) and Hoe Rough on 9th Feb (IB).

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, by Steve Cale

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

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

In the first winter period there were flocks of 20 near Worthing church on 11th Jan (DK), 30-50 at Gt. Witchingham & Booton (AB) on 22nd & 31st Jan and up to 60 at Old Costessey on 3rd Jan & 2nd Feb (AB). CS recorded 28 breeding pairs at Sparham Hall farm in July and there were 22 at Kerdiston on 15th June (JP). As autumn turned to winter 75 were at Sparham Hall farm (CS) and 22 Pensthorpe (TS) in Nov and 45 at Primrose Green on 4th Dec (RG/AJ).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

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

First of the summer birds seen at Lyng on 4th Apr (NM) and last sighting (2) was at Hoe Bird Walk on 20th Sept (DK). By far the biggest numbers were at Beetley GP where there was continual monitoring of the birds and nests in the sand stock-piles by RG. Over 200 birds were recorded and some 130 ringed in the period 2nd June to 2nd July.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

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

Large numbers throughout the valley. The first was seen 29th Mar at Old Costessey (AG) and the last on 11th Oct also at Old Costessey (AG) There was proof of breeding with 4 young seen at nest in stables at Worthing on 12th June (DK) and 5 nests at Scarning Dale on 7th July (R&CG). As family flocks and returning birds gathered larger numbers of 30 – 50 were recorded with a maximum of 200 at Guist Common on 19th Aug (RG) and 100 Pensthorpe 29th Aug (TS).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Common migratory breeder and passage migrant. Amber listed.

First arrival (2) at New Costessey on 4th Apr (AG) and the last at Lyng on 24th Oct (BB/JE). A count of 12 at Sparham Pools on 30th Apr (LB) and 15 on 1st June at Old Hall farm, Attlebridge (WO). As returning birds gathered the maximum flocks were 30 Lenwade on 21st Sept (RG) and Pensthorpe 56 on 9th and 60 on 23rd.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

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

Counts up to 8 were recorded at Beetley, Bylaugh (4), Worthing (2), Dereham (6), Old Costessey (8), Pensthorpe (8), Scarning (7), Sculthorpe(2) and Swanton(8) over most months of the year. There were double figure counts of 20 at Witchingham on 13th Jan (AB), 13 at Old Costessey Marshes on 20th Feb (AB), 10 at Hindolveston on 4th Apr (MN) and 16 at Scarning on 13th Oct (IB).

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.

Seen every month of the year in mainly ones and twos. There were sightings of up to 5 at Dereham SW on 3rd & 20th Jan (IB), Waterfall Farm, Swanton on 12th Jan (BM), Worthing village on 9th May (DK), Sculthorpe Moor on 24th May (IB), Dereham SW on 29th Aug (IB). There were 6 at Bylaugh SW 13th Sept (B&BP) and 5 at Dereham SW on 5th Nov (IB). There were a number of sightings of adults feeding young at Sculthorpe on 24th May, Worthing Bridge on 16th June, Dereham SW on 29th June & 29th Aug.

Pied Wagtail *Motecilla alba yarrellii*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Over 50 reports for every month of the year. Sewage works seem to be favoured with 40 on 3rd Jan at Dereham SW (IB); 40 on 11th Jan at Bylaugh SW (AJ) 40 also at Belaugh SW on 20th Dec (B&BP) and 20 at Dereham SW on 11th Jan (C&JF). Other worthy counts were 40 - 50 at Beetley GP on 22nd June, 2nd July and 22nd Aug (RG/AH), 18 at North Tuddenham on 4th Oct (B&BP), 50 at New Costessey over the period 8th Oct -9th Nov (AG). The highest number was a pre-roost gathering of 200 at Asda, Norwich on 20th Oct (AG).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor. Rare in valley.

1 at Foxley on 6th Jan (DA) and at New Costessey with 8 on 22nd Jan and 6 on 23rd Mar (AG).



Waxwing, by Steve Cale

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant, mainly sedentary resident.

Seen every month of the year throughout the valley including Attlebridge (max 2) (WO) HBW (max 4) (DK), Kerdiston (max 16) (JP), Lenwade (max 4) (JP), Ringland (max 14) (JP), Sparham (max 10) (JP), SwantonMorley (max 15) (LB), Weston Longville (max 10) (JP) and Whitwell Common (max 12) (AH/RG).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Common sedentary resident. Amber listed.

Seen every month of the year throughout all parts of the valley. Highlights being 4 at Lenwade on 2nd Jan (B&SG), 6 at Sparham Pools on 24th Feb (JP), 8 at Kerdiston on 26th Feb (JP), 6 at N.Tuddenham on 14th & 22nd Mar (B&BP), 6 at Dereham on 6th June (IB), 8 HBW on 19th July (DK) and 9 at Ringland/Morton Hall on 12th Nov (JP).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

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

Recorded every month of the year with sightings of up to 10 quite common. Highlight was 21 at Kerdiston, Thorney Farm on 21st Jan (JP) during a farm survey.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rare summer visitor to WVBS area. Amber listed.

A single bird at Ringland on 13th May (BS&AM) and 2 at Ringland Common on 15th May (B&BP).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce winter visitor to the valley. Amber listed.

Only four sightings in total. 1 on 1st Jan at Bylaugh (LW), 2 at Scarning on 3rd Jan (IB), 1 at Marriotts Way, Costessey on 7th Jan (AB) and 1 on 8th Feb at Old Costessey Marshes (AB).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Scarce passage migrant to the valley.

In spring singles on 22nd & 29th Apr and 1st May at Pensthorpe (TS) was followed by a female at Pump Farm Weston Longville on 10th May (B&BP). The only autumn record was one at Pensthorpe on 2nd Sept.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Abundant, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Widely recorded every month with over 120 sightings. No significant numbers but a max of 40 feeding with fieldfares on fallen apples in garden at Hindolveston on 1st Jan (JAJ).

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

First birds (7) seen 2nd Sept at Alderford Common (B&SG) and last reported on 22nd Apr at Lyng (NM). Flocks in excess of 100 were fairly common with 150 at Worthing church on 11th Jan (CG/RN/BS/RG), 800 on 30th Jan & 450 on 17th Feb at Gt. Witchingham (AB), 125 at Lenwade, Marriotts Way on 20th Nov (RG). 2483 were counted over the period 10th Oct to 9th Nov at New Costessey (AG) with the highest daily count of 733 on 27th Oct.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelus*

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

Recorded in every month except September; mainly singles and pairs but there were counts of up to 7 at Dereham SW on 9th Feb & 19th May (IB), Weston Longville on 23rd May (JP) & Sparham Pools on 25th June (JP) but the highest was 41 on 10th Oct River Tud valley, New Costessey (AG) where 206 were seen over three week period.

Redwing *Turdus illiacus*

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

First bird of the autumn was noted on 4th Oct at Church House farm, Hindolveston (MN) and the last sighting (3) on 7th Apr at New Costessey (AG). There were however some massive numbers moving W/SW between 6th Oct and 9th Nov along the R Tud valley at New Costessey with 1749 counted on 27th Oct (AG).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common resident and partial migrant. Amber listed.

Reported from 29 locations mainly as singles and pairs in every month except July and August. There were 5 at Ringland Hills on 8th June (PR), 4 at Kerdiston on 15th June (JP) and Old Beetley on 9th Dec (RG), 8 at Heydon Park on 1st Sept (RG), 14 at Pensthorpe 8th Sept (TS).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare resident expanding its range through valley.

Present between Sparham Pools and Lyng Easthaugh gravel pits from 31st May to 20th Nov (AJ, JP, CS, BB/JE) and at Swanton Morley GP from 15th Mar to 16th Oct (IB, NM, B&BP, BB/JE). In Norwich along Dolphin Drain by Mile Cross Recycling Centre from 14th Apr to at least 24th June (AG).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Scarce summer resident and passage migrant. Red listed.

Recorded singing at Dereham SW on 18th & 26th Apr (IB) and from Marriot's Way near the Blackwater on 25th Apr (NM). An adult and a juvenile were caught and ringed on Guist Common 5th & 21st July (RG, AH).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant.

Earliest record 6th Apr at Sparham Pools NR/Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes (BB/JE) followed by singles at both Lenwade & Lyng Easthaugh on 10th (NM). Sparham Hall Farm (3 or 4) from 11th Apr (CS), elsewhere mainly singles recorded from Dereham SW 18th (IB), Sweet Briar Marsh, Norwich 20th (AG), HBW 17th May (DK) and Swanton Morley GP 10 on 24th May (B&BP). Ringing resulted in 3 being caught at Whitwell Common on 25th/26th July and 76 at Guist Common between 26th June and 24th Aug (RG,AH). The latter was the last record for the year.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant.

Earliest record 21st Apr at Sparham Pools (CS) and joint earliest he has recorded there. Other records from this sight until 31st July with max 3 (IB, JP). Ringing resulted in 2 at Whitwell Common on 25th/26th July, 73 at Guist Common between 26th June and 24th Aug and 39 at Beetley GP between 2nd July & 30th Aug (RG,AH). Included in the Beetley birds was a Spanish ringed bird (see ringing report for details). Latest record 3 Pensthorpe 5th Sept.

*Lesser
Whitethroat,
by Steve Cale*



Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce summer resident and passage migrant.

Earliest record 18th Apr at Dereham SW (IB). This was followed the next day by singles at Sparham Hall Farm (CS his earliest to date) & Sparham Pools (NM) then again at Sparham Pools on 20th Apr (BB/JE). Quite likely the same bird on all 3 occasions. Also on 20th at Sweetbriar Marsh Norwich (AG) then on 21st Church House Farm, Hindolveston (MN).

After these initial arrivals reported from HBW 17th May (DK), Lenwade Heath 17th May (RG) and Sparham Pools NR 31st May (AJ). On the Bird Race 7th June Lenwade Heath (RG,CG,RN,LP), Dereham SW (IB) and Sparham Pools (BB/JE).

One was caught and ringed at Beetley GP on 5th Aug and final report was a late record Lenwade Mill 20th Sept (JP).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis**Very common summer resident.*

Earliest record 8th Apr at Sparham Pools NR/Sparham Hall Farm fishing lakes (BB/JE) was a particularly early date. Numbers increased from 19th Apr with 2 HBW (DK), then 1 Sparham Hall Farm on 20th (CS's earliest to date), 1 Pensthorpe on 21st (TS), 2 Mack's Lane, Taverham on 24th (NS) and on 30th New Costessey (AG) and again at Sparham Pools (LB). Other sites with maxima and proof of breeding (**B**): Guist Common 5 **B** (AH/RG), Hindolveston (MN), HBW 9 (DK), Kerdiston 3 **B** (JP), Ringland Hills (PR), Sculthorpe Mill **B** (R&CG), Swanton Morley GP (B&BP), Syderstone 2 (R&CG), Taverham Macks Lane 6 (LB), Whitwell Common 9 **B** (AH/RG) and Worthing (DK). Last, but surely not latest, record 26th July Whitwell Common (AH/RG).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin**Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant. Less common than Blackcap.*

Earliest records on 29th Apr (BB/JE) again next day (LB) at Sparham Pools. Also on 30th at New Costessey (AG). Also recorded Alderford Common 4 (LB), Beetley GP 4 (AH/RG), Dereham SW (IB), Guist Common (AH/RG), HBW 2 (DK), Kerdiston 3 (JP), Lenwade (RG), New Costessey (AG), Pensthorpe (TS), Sculthorpe Moor (BB/JE), Swanton Morley GP 6 (B&BP, DK), Weston Longville 2 (JP) and Worthing (DK). The only proof of breeding was a young bird caught and ringed on 5th July on Guist Common which was also the site of the last record on 24th Aug (AH/RG).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla**Common summer resident and passage migrant; winters in very small numbers.*

A wintering male in Lyng was recorded at 2 different members' bird tables on 8th Jan (JS, NM) and another male was in a member's garden on 6th & 7th Mar in Taverham (LW).

(continues)

Blackcap (continued)

Another, or possibly the Lyng bird, was in the Sparham Pools / Sparham Hall Farm area on 20th & 21st Mar (BB/JE, CS), hence the difficulty of recording the first spring arrival of this species from their wintering areas of southern Iberia and NW Africa, especially as one was back on NM's feeder in Lyng on 27th Mar! While the vast majority of British bred Blackcaps winter in N Africa most of those wintering in England appear to originate from central Europe.

Early Apr arrivals were 5th Lenwade (NM), 8th Hindolveston (MN), 10th Swanton Morley GP 2 (LB) & Weston Longville (JP).

Thereafter recorded from Beetley GP, 16 caught in Aug, (AH/RG), Dereham SW (IB), Guist Common, 21 caught in July, (AH/RG), Hindolveston (MN), HBW, max 6, (DK), Kerdiston (JP), Lenwade, 4 sites, (JP,NM,RG), N Tuddenham (B&BP), Taverham (NS), Whitwell Common (AH/RG).

Autumn records 8th Oct Lyng (NM), a female Sparham Pools NR on 20th Nov (JP) and finally a male in AG's New Costessey garden on 23rd Dec.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer resident, passage migrant and increasing winter visitor.

Recorded from 11th Mar at Foxley Wood (B&BP) then on 14th at Sparham Pools (BB/JE), 15th HBW (DK), 18th Hellesdon GC (JP), Sparham Hall Farm (CS) & Mack's Lane, Taverham (NS). Birds were then recorded every month to Dec from 28 localities. Max counts were 17 ringed Beetley GP 22nd Aug with 8 still 30th Aug (RG/AH), 11 Thorney Farm, Kerdiston 15th June (JP), 8 Sparham Pools both 20th Mar & 1st Apr (JP) and HBW 17th May (DK).

From Oct lingering singles were reported thus: 1st Oct Worthing (DK), 22nd Oct Sparham /Lyng (JP), 29th Nov in DK's bird bath in Worthing, 30th Nov Sparham Pools (BB/JE) and 12th Dec Swanton Morley GP (B&BP).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

First records 5th Apr Blackwater, Gt Witchingham (NM) and Sparham Pools (BB/JE) followed by a steady influx from 8th when 2 Worthing (DK) and singles New Costessey (AG), Pensthorpe (TS) & Sparham Hall Farm (CS), by 10th the number at Sparham Pools had risen to 4 (LB), 5 Swanton Morley GP (LB) and 2 Weston Longville (JP), on 12th 1 Fustyweed, Elsing and an incredible 20 at Sparham Pools (JP).

In total recorded from 19 localities; Beetley GP (RG/AH), Blackwater, Gt Witchingham (NM), Fustyweed, Elsing (BS/AM), Mill Street, Elsing (A&CJ), Guist Bridge (B&BP), Guist Common (RG/AH), HBW (DK), Thorney Farm, Kerdiston (JP), Lenwade Common (RG), Lenwade Mill (JP), Lenwade to Attlebridge 4 males (RG), Walsis Hill, Lenwade (JP), New Costessey (AG), N Tuddenham (B&BP), Ringland Common (B&BP), Sparham Hall Farm (CS), Sparham Pools (BB/JE, IB, JP, LB), Swanton Morley GP (LB, DK, B&BP), Syderstone Common (R&CG), Weston Longville (JP), Worthing level crossing (DK).

The final few records of the year were 11th Sept Walsis Hill, Lenwade & Sparham Pools and 12th Sept Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham (B&BP).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

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

Recorded in small numbers every month, except Aug. Recorded at Bawdeswell Heath, Beetley GP, Bylaugh, Bylaugh SW, Costessey Mill, East Rudham, Felthorpe, Helhoughton, Hellesdon GC, Hindolveston, HBW, Thorney Farm, Kerdiston, Lenwade Common, Lenwade Mill, Gunton Lane Park, New Costessey, Shallowbrook, Old Costessey, Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP & Weston Longville.

No proof of breeding was received.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Rare passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

A single record – one Podmores, Scarning 24th Oct (IB).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

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

Earliest record 1 male at Church House Farm, Hindolveston 23rd May (MN) with the female joining him next day. Also on 24th Sculthorpe Mill (IB).

The Hindolveston pair started nest building 31st May but had an unsuccessful first attempt. The second attempt fledged on 4th Aug with adult & 3 young present until 13th. Last adult seen 18th Sept which was also latest record of the year (NM).

Other proof of breeding – Wood Norton a pair with young in nest 10th Aug (D&TS), Worthing pair nest building from 29th May, sitting on nest 3rd June, feeding young 16th June & last seen 30th July (DK), 1pr with 2 nestlings Swallow Falls, Swanton Morley.

Also recorded from Guist Common – 2 juvs ringed on 19th Aug, Helhoughton 7th June (R&CG,LP,RN), Lyng 25th Aug (NM), Primrose Green, Lyng 9th Aug (NM), Pensthorpe 3rd July & 6th Aug (TS), Sculthorpe Moor 12th June & 10th July (BB/JE), Sparham 9th June (CS only record!), 3 Sparham Pools 27th July (JP).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare visitor to valley. **Amber listed.**

Pensthorpe one 15th and 2 19th Oct (TS).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus**Common resident.*

Records were received from 29 localities with maxima, if 10 or above, and date thus: Old Hall Farm Attlebridge (WO), Beetley GP 25 22nd Aug (RG/AH), Dereham SW (IB), East Rudham (NarVOS), Fulmodeston (C&JF), Guist Common 12 5th July (RG/AH), Hellesdon GC (JP), Hempton NOA (C&JF), Hindolveston 12 Jan (G&AJ), HBW 30 15th Nov (DK), Kerdiston 12 27th Jan (JP), Lenwade Common 24 29th Nov (JP), Lenwade Mill 28 31st July, Walsis Hill Lenwade 25 31st July (JP), N Tuddenham Common & Springfield Cottage (B&BP), Ringland / Morton Hall (JP), Scarning (IB), Sparham Pools 20 (JP), Swanton Morley GP (B&BP) and Waterfall Farm 10 12th Jan (BM), Ghost Hill Wood Taverham 20 28th Dec (LB) & The Street Taverham 10 13th Jan (R&DH), Weston Longville (JP), Whitwell Common (RG), Worthing 10 1st July & 8th Oct (DK).

Regular counts at three sites made through the year give some indication of population changes (DK & JP).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hoe Bird Walk			10	4	8	5	4		5	29	30	
Sparham Pools	20	16	8	3					12	20		12
Lenwade Mill	6		2	2		14	28	24	14	15	16	

Breeding evidence from N Tuddenham Common where 6 recently fledged young on 10th May (B&BP) and Lenwade Marriott's Way where there were 2 family parties on 25th May (RG).

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Uncommon and declining resident. Red listed.

Recorded from 20 localities mainly in singles but up to 6 at once and in every month except Aug.

Alderford Common (PW), Dereham SW 4 (IB), Felthorpe 3 (MS), Hempton Marsh NOA 2 (C&JF), Hindolveston (G&AJ), HBW 2 (DK), Norwich Road Lenwade 2 (B&SG), Lenwade Common (R&CG), Lenwade Mill (JP), Walsis Hill Lenwade 4 (JP), Lyng 2 (NM), Old Beetley 3 (RG), Gunton Lane Park Old Costessey (AB), Pensthorpe (TS), Poplar Farm Scarning 2 (IB), Sculthorpe Moor 6 (BB/JE), Sparham Pools 3 (BB/JE), Swanton Morley GP 2 (DK) & Waterfall Farm Swanton Morley 4 (BM) and Whitwell Common (RG).

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Uncommon declining resident. Red listed.

A much rarer, and more rapidly declining species than Marsh Tit. Due to the difficulty in separating this from the Marsh Tit the potential for confusion must be recognised.

Singles were reported at Sculthorpe Moor on 11th Jan (C&JF), 17th Jan (DA) and on 13th Feb (BB/JE). On 20th Jan a pair was reported at Felthorpe (AB). In Mar 1 was reported from Foxley Wood on 11th (B&BP,DK). There were no reports then until one was retrapped at Kettlestone in Nov (NarVOS) and again one was reported at Sculthorpe Moor on 6th Nov (BB/JE).

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident.

Recorded in mainly 1's and 2's with a max of 4 from 21 localities. Many records are of birds coming to garden feeders.

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Coal Tit (continued)

Recorded from Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, Billingford, Bylaugh, Felthorpe (3 in Jan & Dec), Hellesdon GC, Hempton Marsh NOA, Hindolveston, HBW (3 in Feb), Kerdiston, Lenwade Norwich Road (4 in Jan) & Mill (3 in July), N Tuddenham Common & Springfield Cottage, Pensthorpe (bred), Ringland/Morton Hall (4 in Nov), Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP & Waterfall Farm, West Raynham, Weston Longville, Whitwell Common and Worthing.

Whilst no more than 3 or 4 individuals were seen at any one time in a Lenwade garden 31 different birds were captured during the year as part of an ongoing ringing study (RG).

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Common resident.

Regular counts at Lenwade Mill, Sparham Pools (JP) and NWT Hoe Bird Walk (DK) and Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (WO) give an indication of how numbers vary through the year due to the presence of post breeding and winter flocks.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	3	-	3	2	-	7	8	22	8	4	6	6
Sparham Pools	14	14	6	14	-	8	11	-	6	6	6	6
Hoe Bird Walk	4	2	9	8	8	5	5	4	10	3	8	-
Old Hall Farm	10+	10+	6	6+	-	10+	8 to 10	10+	6	4 to 6	6+	-

Other sites where 10 or more birds were recorded include Hellesdon GC 10, Weston Longville 13, Ringland/Morton Hall 14 (JP). On 2nd May B&BP recorded 100 eggs & young in 9 nestboxes on N Tuddenham Common.

193 different birds were captured in a Lenwade garden during the year as part of an ongoing ringing study (RG).

Great Tit *Parus major**Common resident.*

Regular counts at Lenwade Mill, Sparham Pools (JP) and NWT Hoe Bird Walk (DK) and Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (WO) give an indication of how numbers vary through the year due to the presence of post breeding and winter flocks.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	3	-	3	3	-	7	4	8	10	4	8	6
Sparham Pools	16	16	12	10	-	3	13	-	12	6	6	6
Hoe Bird Walk	1	3	6	8	4	2	4	-	7	3	10	-
Old Hall Farm	8+	10+	6	6+	-	4+	6 to 10	4+	6	4	8	-

Reported from 25 localities with proof of breeding only from Lenwade Mill when 3 adults and 4 young were at feeder on 9th June. Localities are: Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, Bylaugh SW, Dereham, Mill St. Elsing, Felthorpe, Fulmodeston, Hellesdon GC, Hempton Marsh NOA, Hindolveston, HBW, Kerdiston, Lenwade (4 sites), N Tuddenham Common & Springfield Cottage, Ringland/Morton Hall, Sculthorpe Moor, Shereford, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP & Waterfall Farm, West Raynham and Weston Longville. Whilst no more than 4 or 5 individuals were ever seen at one time 88 different birds were captured in a Lenwade garden during the year as part of an ongoing ringing study (RG).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea**Uncommon resident.*

1 to 3 recorded in all months with birds coming to feeders in Jan Lenwade (B&SG, RG) Old Costessey (AB) and Swanton Morley (BM), July & Aug (RG). Recorded from Fustyweed Elsing, Heydon Park, HBW, Lenwade (4 sites), Lyng, Old Costessey, Pensthorpe, Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP & Waterfall Farm, Ghost Hill Wood Taverham and West Raynham. The only proof of breeding was one with food for young on 1st May Lenwade Common (RG).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris**Unobtrusive resident.*

Mainly 1s and 2s but 3 Walsis Hill Lenwade 31st July & Lenwade Common 29th Nov (JP), Sparham Pools 13th Jan (LB) & 1st Mar (BB/JE), HBW 15th Nov & 4 15th Mar (DK).

Elsewhere Beetley GP, Billingford Bridge, Blickling, Bylaugh, Dereham SW, East Rudham, Felthorpe, Hellesdon, Hindolveston, Dynosaur Park Lenwade, Lyng Bridge, Old Costessey, Pensthorpe, Ghost Hill Wood Taverham, N Tuddenham Common & Springfield Cottage, Sculthorpe Mill & Moor, Waterfall Farm Swanton Morley, Whitwell Common (2 young caught 26th July = proof of breeding).

Jay *Garrulus monedula**Common resident and winter visitor.*

Usually recorded in ones or twos but a remarkable 16 recorded 18th Oct on the HBW may have included eruptive migrants of Northern and Central European populations.

The regular counts made at Lenwade Mill (JP), Old Hall Farm Attlebridge (WO) and during NWT Hoe Bird Walk (DK) are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hoe Bird Walk	3	1	3	5	4	1	1	4	5	16	1	-
Lenwade Mill	2	-	-	3	-	3	2	2	2	1	2	1
Old Hall Farm	2	2	2	2	-	2	4+	3+	2	2+	2	-

Elsewhere Bawdeswell Common, Dereham SW, East Rudham, Fustyweed & Mill St Elsing, Guist Bridge, Hellesdon GC, Lenwade, Lyng, N Tuddenham Common, Ringland/Morton Hall, Sparham Pools, Syderstone Common, Taverham, Weston Longville and Worthing.

Magpie *Pica pica**Common resident.*

The only proof of breeding was 2 adults and 2 young Mill St. Elsing 14th June. Monthly maxima from HBW (DK) and Old Hall Farm Attlebridge (WO) are below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hoe Bird Walk	5	1	6	4	4	2	2	1	3	5	4	-
Old Hall Farm	3	4	3	3	-	2+	6+	3+	4	4	2	-

Records of largest flocks of 7 were both in Mar, 11th Taverham (NS) and 18th Hellesdon GC (JP). Flocks of 6: 11th Jan (MS,NS), 15th Mar HBW (DK) and 12th Apr Sparham Pools (JP). Also recorded at Dereham SW, Kerdistone, Lenwade, Ringland/Morton Hall, Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham, Taverham and Weston Longville.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula**Common resident.*

Regular counts at Lenwade Mill (JP), Sparham Pools (JP) during NWT Hoe Bird Walk (DK) and Old Hall Farm Attlebridge (WO) give some indication of dispersal during breeding season and flocking during post breeding period and winter.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	6	-	16	4	-	4	-	3	5	6	15	18
Sparham Pools	21	35	22	15	-	1	-	-	3	6	40	36
Hoe Bird Walk	2	-	2	5	2	2	-	-	8	3	3	-
Old Hall Farm	20	10	10	15	-	10+	20	15	12	20	15+	-

(continues)

Jackdaw (continued)

Counts over 50, in chronological order: 500 Lyng Heath 8th Jan (AJ), 150 Bylaugh 13th Jan (AJ), c.70 N Elham 31st Jan (JAJ), 110 "Around 1 Lime Tree which has a huge "witches broom" in the middle where they nest" Sparham Hall Farm 2nd Apr (CS), 202 Ringland/Morton Hall 12th Nov (JP) during a 2hr "Timed Tetrad Survey" for the BTO Atlas, 56 Dynosaur Park Lenwade 27th Nov and 80 Hindolveston church ruins 28th Dec (G&AJ).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident.

Records from Old Hall Farm Attlebridge of Rooks mainly gathering or going to roost through the year give an indication of seasonal flocking habits (WO) while the HBW records (DK) show a more random pattern.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Old Hall Farm	500+	1000+	-	50+	-	50+	200	100+	100+	500	1000	-
Hoe Bird Walk	1	22	6	8	18	1	0	80	50	6	5	-

Other flocks in the first winter period: 100 Fulmodeston 5th Jan (G&AJ), 30 Lyng Heath 8th Jan, 100 Bylaugh 13th Jan (both AJ), 64 Sparham Pools 8th Feb (JP). Then no count greater than 50 until 147 Kerdiston 15th June, 630 over Lenwade Mill 6th Sept and moving into the second winter period 360 Ringland/Morton Hall during a 2hr Timed Tetrad Survey 12th Nov and 330 flying SE to roost Lenwade Mill 20th Dec (all JP).

The Rooks passing over Attlebridge / Lenwade to roost in the winter months do so on a very wide front and the numbers recorded above are inevitably an under estimate of the total involved.

Unfortunately no rookery counts were reported.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone**Common resident.*

Regular counts made at Lenwade Mill, Sparham Pools (JP) and HBW (DK) are shown below.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	5	-	4	3	-	4	3	3	-	1	4	2
Sparham Pools	6	4	4	8	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	3
Hoe Bird Walk	2	1	10	3	2	1	3	2	6	4	4	

High counts were received thus: 42 Ringland / Morton Hall on 12th Nov during a 2hr Timed Tetrad Survey (JP), 21 Weston Longville 10th Apr where 19 on 23rd May (JP), 12 Dereham SW 11th Jan (C&JF), 10 Sculthorpe 5th Apr (B&BP), 7 Kerdiston 26th Feb and 6 on 15th June (JP).

Other localities where recorded are: Bylaugh, Dereham, Guist Bridge, Walsis Hill & Weston Park Lenwade, Swanton Morley GP, West Raynham Lake.

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

Numbers were very low with only one count above 100 (excluding AG's autumn watch) showing how this once numerous and ubiquitous species has declined drastically. All double figure records are noted:

In Jan 30 Dereham SW (C&JF) and 50 Felthorpe (MS,NS) on 11th, 25+ the next day Ghost Hill Wood Taverham (NS). Up to 100 were present all Feb Great Witchingham (AB). 40 HBW 15th Mar then only single figures until Oct when the main immigration started from the Continent when 50 HBW (DK) 18th Oct and 15+ Old Hall Farm Attlebridge 22nd Oct. In Nov 70 Clayhall Farm Gt Witchingham on 9th (RG) and 40 Lenwade Mill on 15th (JP). Dec saw 30 Station Road, N Elmham on 4th (DK).

(continues)

Starling (continued)

During AG's autumn passage watch over N Costessey he recorded 2015 between 8th Oct and 9th Nov mainly heading W/NW with a highest daily count of 950 on 15th Oct.

Details of daily counts above 10:

8 th Oct	10 th Oct	13 th Oct	14 th Oct	15 th Oct	17 th Oct	18 th Oct	24 th Oct	28 th Oct	29 th Oct	31 st Oct	9 th Nov
50	72	81	305	950	56	265	20	74	45	25	65

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident. Red listed.

This incredibly sedentary species, once considered a pest, continues to decline.

All locations are listed with the maxima and month it occurred during the year. Not surprising where there is enough data the maxima recorded are post breeding.

Old Hall Farm Attlebridge 6+ throughout year (WO), Mill St Elsing 20 Jan & Feb (A&CJ), Fulmodeston 2 Jan (C&JF), Hindolveston "small flocks" Feb (G&AJ), Kerdiston 15 June (JP), Heath Road Lenwade 2 Jan (EW, LP, JP), Lenwade Mill 4 July (JP), Lyng Easthaugh 3 Jan (MS,NS), Old Beetley 16 Jan during 1hr Atlas Survey (RG), N Tuddenham 20 Aug, Sept, Oct (B&BP), Ringland / Morton Hall 24 2hr Atlas Survey (JP), Waterfall Farm Swanton Morley 6 Jan (BM), Taverham 7 May (NS), Weston Longville 12 May (JP) and Worthing 14 Jan (DK, RG).

Despite being red listed this species remains under recorded and justifies more attention.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Uncommon declining resident. Red listed.

Only recorded from 5 sites:

Fulmodeston only 1 pr bred. A major reduction (per RG), Fustyweed Elsing 4 feeding on peanuts 28th Jan (BS), Gt Ryburgh 1 11th Jan (GC,RN,BS,RG), Kerdiston 2 26th Feb (JP) and Poplar Farm Scarning where 32 31st Jan, 20 1st Feb, 22 9th Feb and 15+ 9th Mar (IB).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

In first winter period Old Hall Farm Attlebridge a pair from beginning of year to 8th Mar with up to 4 in Feb (WO), Billingford 12 on 4th Jan (DA) and 20 on 11th Jan (B&BP), Lodge Farm Bittering 2 on 9th Jan (R&CG), Fustyweed Elsing 1 male + 2 female 31st Jan / 2nd Feb then 1 male next day (BS), Mill St Elsing 1 female 5th Jan irregularly to 28th Mar (A&CJ) the same as the Fustyweed bird?, Felthorpe 1 from 6th Jan rising to males & 1 female 25th Mar and a female remaining to feed on peanuts until 19th Apr (MS), Hempton – Shereford 6 on 17th Jan (DA), Hindolveston 1 in Jan & 2 all Feb (G&AJ), Kerdiston 2 on 6th Feb (JP), Kettlestone 1 on 13th Jan (NM), Lenwade 1 or 2 to 2nd Apr (B&SG, JP), 1 Little Snoring 23rd Apr (NM), Old Costessey 2 on 13th Feb (AB), Pensthorpe 3 on 10th Jan, 2 on 16th Feb, 4 on 25th Mar, 3 on 2nd and 2 on 8th & 18th Apr (TS), Sculthorpe Moor 30 in Jan, 20 in Feb, 25 in Mar rising to 50 on 17th Apr (EW,JP,LP,MS,NS,R&CG,DA,LB,BB/JE).

Numbers were much lower in second winter period. Sculthorpe Moor 1 on 13th Oct (LB) and 5 on 18th Oct (NarVOS), also 1 Scarning 18th Oct (IB), 1 over Church House Farm Hindolveston 21st Nov (MN), 1 Pensthorpe 27th Nov and over New Costessey in Oct 1 on 9th, 8 on 13th, 3 on 15th, 1 on 15th & 16th and 2 on both 27th & 28th (AG).



Brambling, by Steve Cale

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris**Common resident.*

It would appear that the ravages of the *trichomoniasis* parasite have taken their toll on the local population with a maximum flock of only 40 birds recorded at Attlebridge on 11th Jan (MS,NS). At the back end of the year numbers were even lower with a max of 19 over New Costessey on 19th Oct (AG). While the WVBS area is not a stronghold for large flocks of Greenfinches previous yearly maxima are:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
300 Nov	250 Oct	60 Dec	100 Nov /Dec	40 Jan

The monthly maxima of regular counts made at Lenwade Mill (JP) and Old Hall Farm Attlebridge (WO) are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	9	-	12	6	-	8	6	16	6	2	4	3
Old Hall Farm	6	8+	8+	8+	-	10+	6+	10	6+	10+	10+	-

Similar numbers were recorded in a Lenwade garden but 87 different Greenfinches were caught as part of a long term ringing study (RG).

Other localities and the maxima recorded are: Bittering 5 Jan (C&JF), Mill Street Elsing 20 Jan & Feb (A&CJ), Felthorpe 37 Oct (MS), Hellesdon GC 5 Mar (JP), Hindolveston 12 Jan (G&AJ), Kerdiston 17 Feb (JP), Norwich Rd Lenwade 10 (B&SG), Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham 6 Apr (B&BP), Ringland / Morton Hall 8 Nov (JP), Sculthorpe Moor 3 Jan (C&JF), Sparham Pools 9 Feb (JP), Swanton Morley GP 2 Mar (B&BP), Taverham 7 Jan (NS), Weston Longville 5 May (JP), Worthing 12 Nov (DK).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis**Common resident.*

Goldfinches are increasingly coming to *nyjer* seed in garden feeders. The monthly maxima of regular counts made at Lenwade Mill (JP) and Old Hall Farm Attlebridge (WO) where the birds are coming feeding stations and HBW (DK) are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	16	-	6	5	-	2	4	6	6	-	6	5
Old Hall Farm	3	4	5	4	-	6	5+	-	4	6+	6	10
Hoe Bird Walk	20	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	2	15	4	-

During the first winter period the largest flock was 100+ going into a small garden in Morse Close Lenwade where the owner feeds considerable quantities of *nyjer* seed, while 57 were ringed in a nearby garden as part of a long term study (RG). This indicates that far more individuals were in the area as certainly 1 in 2 birds were not captured.

Other records for Jan: 5 Fustyweed Elsing (BS), 20 Hempton Marsh NOA (C&JF), 7 max Hindolveston (G&AJ), 4 Kerdiston (JP), 2 - 3 Taverham (LW,NS) and 2 Sparham Pools (JP).

In Feb: 10max Hindolveston (G&AJ), 27 Kerdiston (JP), 2 Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham (B&BP), 24 Poplar Farm Scarning (IB), 4 Sparham Pools (JP) and 30 max Worthing (DK).

In Mar: 12 Heath Lane Fakenham (PAB), 15 max Worthing (DK), 8 Hellesdon GC (JP) and 4 Taverham (NS).

Only single figure records were made until Aug when 40 Church House Farm Hindolveston (MN) on 6th and 60 Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham on 30th (B&BP) where 12 on 12th Sept was only double figure count for Sept.

In Oct 32 were at Dereham SW on 3rd (IB), c60 Pensthorpe 20th Nov (TS) then only small numbers until Dec when 12 Old Beetley on 9th during Atlas Survey (RG), 10 Worthing on 13th (DK) and 40 were back on *niger* feeders in Morse Close Lenwade by 23rd (per RG).

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Winter visitor in varying numbers.

There were fairly good numbers in the first few months of the year but only low numbers in the second winter period.

Two instances of indication / proof of breeding in the area were a pair collecting dog hairs in Felthorpe on 25th Mar (MS) and a family party coming to *nyjer* seed Morse Close Lenwade on 28th May (per RG).

In Jan 100 Lenwade Common on 16th (RG), 70 Lyng on 9th (NM), 50+ Gunton Lane Park, Costessey all month and 60 – 80 Costessey Mill on 31st (AB), c.20 Swanton Morley GP on 4th (DA) then during the Bird Count on 11th up to 40 Sculthorpe Moor (C&JF, GC,RN,BS,RG), 8 Billingford Bridge (B&BP) and 3 Hempton Marsh NOA (C&JF). 12 were coming to feeders at Waterfall Farm Swanton Morley on 12th (BM) while there were also 12 at Dereham SW on 12th (AB) and at East Rudham on 26th (NarVOS). 20 at Sparham Pools on 29th (JP) while small numbers were also recorded from Felthorpe 1 or 2 going to feeders (MS), 6 Whitwell Common (RG) and 3 Mill Street Elsing (A&CJ).

Feb opened with 50+ Sparham Pools (DA, BB/JE) and 6 Hindolveston (G&AJ) on 1st and 40 Lyng on 2nd (NM) then 70 max on 3rd were present all month at Old Costessey (AB), 50+ at Sculthorpe Moor 6th (BB/JE), 20 were still near Dereham SW on 9th (IB), 10 HBW on 15th (DK), 7 Sparham Pools NR 23rd (AJ) and 45 Kerdiston 26th (JP).

By Mar numbers were declining with 10 coming to feeder Heath Lane, Fakenham all month (PAB), 12 Sculthorpe Moor on 5th (BB), c.10 Sparham Pools on 8th (LB), 11 HBW on 15th (DK), 12 Hellesdon GC on 18th (JP) and 15 Morse Close Lenwade on 28th (RG) were the only double figure counts. Lesser numbers from Felthorpe 1 – 3 all month (MS), 1 – 2 Mill Street Elsing 8th to 28th (A&CJ), 2 – 4 Lenwade Mill 10th to 29th (JP), 3+ Church House Farm Hindolveston 19th to 24th (MN) and 3 Mack's Lane Taverham on 31st (NS).

Few birds remained into Apr when 1-3 Lenwade Mill to 15th (JP), 1 Old Hall Farm Attlebridge on 4th & 2 on 8th (WO), "sev" 10th – 12th Church House Farm Hindolveston 19th to 24th (MN), 3 (1m, 2f) Fustyweed Elsing on 14th (BS/AM). (continues)

Siskin (continued)

In May only 1 recorded at Little Snoring on 6th (NM) in addition to above breeding record.

No further records until 2nd Oct when 2 coming to garden feeder in Lenwade (B&SG) and 10 Sculthorpe Moor (BB/JE) where 12 on 18th (NarVOS), 21 Lyng on 13th while AG during his autumn passage watch in New Costessey recorded singles on 8th, 11th, 27th & 28th and 4 on 18th. With no further records to year end a poor autumn / second winter period.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Declining resident. Red listed.

Jan & Feb saw some fairly large flocks recorded but there were none of any significant size for the rest of the year. About 100 were at Furze Lane Booton on 6th Jan and this increased to 150+ on 22nd Jan (AB). A flock was on Sparham Hall Farm all Jan, peaking at 70 on 10th (BB/JE, R&CG, GC, RN, BS, EW, JP, LP) while 50 at Lodge Farm Bittering on 9th (R&CG), 70 Pensthorpe 10th (TS), 40 Billingford 11th (B&BP), 60 max Old Costessey on 15th (AB), 12 Kerdiston 27th (JP) and 4 HBW 18th (DK). In Feb only 2 records 25 Poplar Farm Scarning on 9th and 150+ Great Witchingham 14th (AB).

During Mar to June only single figure counts were recorded from Beetley GP (RG), Dereham SW (IB), HBW (DK), Church Farm Hindolveston (MN), Kerdiston (JP), Pensthorpe (TS), Sparham Pools (LB), Mack's Lane Taverham (LB), Weston Longville (JP), Worthing (DK).

In July CS reported 17 pr in Sparham, a flock of 30 at Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham on 20th (B&BP), 2 HBW on 19th (DK) and 6 including a juvenile, proving breeding, at Beetley GP on 2nd (RG,AH).

20 remained at Springfield Cottage to end Aug (B&BP) and 4 were at Lenwade Mill on 2nd (JP). These dropped to 15 and 2 respectively in Sept.

Between 6th Oct and 6th Nov AG recorded a total of 31 over New Costessey with maxima of 6 on both 13th & 29th Oct. No records after this date.

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Scarce and declining resident and winter visitor. Amber listed.

In North America the Common Redpoll is a regular visitor to garden birdfeeders. With the feeding of nyjer seed to attract Goldfinches to our gardens there have been 2 records of Lesser Redpoll coming to gardens in our area. Hopefully this will be the start of a long-term trend!

A single on 17th & 19th Feb, then 4 on 20th Felthorpe (MS) was followed by 2 Morse Close Lenwade 22nd & 23rd Mar (per RG).

Other first winter period / spring records along the valley: 5 Sparham Pools NR 7th Feb (AJ,PL,BB/JE), 6 Dereham SW 9th Feb (IB), 8 Sculthorpe Moor 27th Feb (BB/JE), 3 HBW 15th Mar (DK), 5 Sparham Pools 16th Mar (BB/JE), 1 Porter's Lane Lenwade 21st Mar (NM), 3 Lenwade Common 28th Mar (RG), 2 Weston Longville 10th Apr (JP) and 3 Sculthorpe Moor 17th Apr (BB/JE).

During second winter period even fewer records: 2 on 17th & 3 on 22nd Oct, 1 on 2nd Nov & 20 29th Dec Pensthorpe (TS), 2 Sparham pools 22nd Oct (JP), 4 Ringland / Morton Hall 12th Nov (JP) and 1 Swanton Morley GP 12th Dec (NM).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Very rare resident breeder following eruptions.

6 flew south over Church Farm Hindolveston on 20th July (MN) and 10 flew over Pensthorpe 2 days later on 22nd (TS).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Declining resident. Red listed.

This sedentary species was recorded from the following locations: Alderford Common, Elsing Lane Bawdeswell, Beetley GP, Billingford, Bintree, Bittering GP, Blickling, Shallowbrook & Costessey SSSI, R Tud Valley New Costessey, Dereham, Dereham SW, East Rudham, Elsing Mill, Fustyweed & Mill Street Elsing, Great Ryburgh, Gt Witchingham, Guestwick, Guist Common, Hellesdon GC, Church House Farm Hindolveston, HBW, Kerdiston, Lenwade, Lt Witchingham, Lyng, N Tuddenham Common, Pensthorpe, Poplar Farm Scarning, Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham Hall Farm & Pools, Swanton Morley Falls & GP, Themelthorpe, Weston Longville, Whitwell Common and Worthing.

Proof of breeding came from Beetley where 4 young were ringed in Aug.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare resident. Red listed.

A single record 1 Pensthorpe 10th Jan (TS)

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Very rare winter visitor. Amber listed.

The bird first seen on Sparham Hall Farm on 23rd Dec 2008 remained until beginning Feb (CS).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Declining common resident. Red listed.

A few amazing counts in the first 2 months: 100 Billingford 4th Jan (DA), 50 there on 11th (B&BP) and 400+ Rougham on stubble 1st Feb (NarVOS).

Other than 14 at Kerdiston on 15th June, 9 pairs Sparham Hall Farm during July and 18 Worthing Church 8th Dec (DK) all other records were single figure sightings.

Recorded from the following locations: Alderford Common, Old Hall Attlebridge, Bittering, Marriott's Way Costessey, Dereham SW, East Rudham, HBW, Lt Witchingham, Springfield Cottage N Tuddenham, Old Costessey, Poplar Farm Scarning, Sculthorpe Mill, Sparham Hall Farm & Pools, Swanton Morley GP, Syderstone Common, Mack's Lane Taverham, Weston Longville, Worthing.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon resident. Red listed.

Other than up to 20 during Nov & Dec in wildbird food strips on Sparham Hall Farm and 17 being ringed at Guist Common June to Aug all other records were of less than 10 birds.

Records were received from: Old Hall Farm Attlebridge, Beetley GP, Dereham, Dereham SW, Guist Common, Church House Farm Hindolveston, Lenwade Heath & Mill, Old Costessey, Scarning, Sculthorpe Fen, Sparham Hall Farm & Pools, Swanton Morley GP and Whitwell Common.

Proof of breeding was received from Beetley GP, Guist and Whitwell Commons.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Rare resident. Red listed.

A report of 2 birds on 31st Jan at Sparham Hall Farm (LB) was unfortunately uncorroborated by any other observers.

Escapes

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

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Asia.

One was in the Sparham Pools area with a flock of Canada Geese from 9th to end Aug (BB/JE, AJ).

Greater Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens atlanticus*

Eastern North America.

One Pensthorpe 27th Nov (TS)

Silver Pheasant *Lophura nycthemera*

S & SE Asia.

An adult male walked across MN's lawn on 30th Oct

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

Central Southern China.

Two males and possibly 2 females of questionable origin caused considerable interest at Sculthorpe Moor HOT through the year (BB/JE, LB,C&JF,R&CG,RN,BS)

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

South and Middle America.

One occupied the Guist Common / Sennowe area most of the year (RG,AH,AJ).

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

India.

One recorded in Weston Longville during Apr & May (JP).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

SE Europe, Asia and N Africa.

Two flew to NE over Church House Farm Hindolveston on 24th Feb (MN).

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

SE Russia, NE China and Japan. A small feral population in Norfolk.

All records from Guist are probably the same birds: 2 on 1st Feb (NarVOS), 1 on 14th Apr (IB), 1 on 5th June (R&CG), 2 on 7th June – a male and a female (IB).

Weaver sp. *Ploceus sp*

Africa

A bird in non-breeding plumage visited feeding stations in Morse Close Lenwade from 4th Oct to the end of month (JL,R&CG). As it was not in breeding plumage it was impossible to identify the actual species.

Locations and their Grid References

Site	Grid ref.	Site	Grid ref.
Alderford Common	TG1218	Eting Green	TG0012
Attlebridge	TG1216	Fakenham	TF9228
Badley Moor, Dereham	TG0212	Felthorpe	TG1618
Bawdeswell	TG0402	Foxley	TG0220
Beetley GP	TG9818	Fustyweed, Elsing	TG0418
Billingford	TG0020	Gateley	TF9624
Billingford Common	TG0018	Great Ryburgh	TF9426
Billingford Pits	TG0018	Great Ryburgh Raptor Watchpoint	TF9624
Bintree Mill	TF9824	Great Witchingham Wildlife Centre	TG0818
Bintree Wood	TG0020	Gressenhall	TF9616
Bittering	TF9216	Guist	TF9824
Broom Green	TF9824	Guist Common	TF9824
Bridge Lake, Lenwade	TG1018	Hindelveston	TG0228
Briston	TG0632	Hempton Marsh	TF9028
Bylaugh	TG0218	Hockering	TG0612
Bylaugh Hall	TG0218	Hall Farm, Attlebridge	TG1214
Bylaugh Marshes	TG0218	Hoe	TF9816
Bylaugh Sewage Works	TG0218	Hoe Common	TF9816
Cadders Hill, Lyng	TG0616	Horningtoft	TF9222
Clippings Green, Mattishall	TG0412	Kettlestone	TF9630
Costessey	TG1610	Lenwade Common	TG0818
Costessey Mill	TG1612	Lenwade	TG0818
Costessey Pits	TG1612	Lenwade Bridge	TG1018
Coxford	TF8428	Little Ryburgh	TF9628
Coxford Heath	TF8230	Little Snoring	TF3294
Drayton	TG1812	Longham	TF9414
Dunton	TF8830	Lyng	TG0616
East Barsham	TF3234	Lyng Easthaugh	TG0818
Eastgate, Cawston	TG1422	Manor Farm, Great Witchingham	TG1020
Easton College	TG1210	Marsham Heath	TG1622
East Rudham	TF8226	Marriot's Way, Lenwade	TG1018
Elsing	TG0416	Mattishall Burgh	TG0410
Elsing Mill	TG0416	Mileham	TF9018

Site	Grid ref.	Site	Grid ref.
Mill Street, Elsing	TG0416	Swanton Morley	TG0016
Mill Farm, Great Witchingham	TG0820	Swanton Morley GP	TG0018
Morton-on-the Hill	TG1612	Santon Novers Raptor Watchpoint	TG0030
New Costessey	TG1810	Taverham	TG1614
North Elmham	TF9820	Themelthorpe	TG0422
North Tuddenham	TG0214	Thorpe Marriot	TG1614
Old Costessey	TG1610	Three Bridges Farm, Elsing	TG0418
Pensthorpe	TF9428	Twyford	TG0024
Pockthorpe	TG0618	Union Farm, Gressenhall	TF9616
Pudding Norton	TF2692	Walnut Tree Farm, Lyng Easthaugh	TG0816
Ringland	TG1412	Wendling	TF9212
Ringland Common	TG1212	Wensum Valley Golf Club	TG1412
Roosting Hills, Beetley	TF9816	West Raynham	TF8624
Sennowe Park, Guist	TF9824	Weston Green	TG1014
Sculthorpe Airfield	TF8630	Weston Longville	TG1016
Sculthorpe Fen	TF9828/ 30	Whissonsett	TF9422
Sculthorpe Mill	TF8830	Whitwell	TG0820
South Raynham	TF8624	Whitwell Common	TG0820
Sparham Hall Farm	TG0618	Worthing	TF9818
Sparham Holes	TG0418	Worthing Church	TF9818
Sparham Pools NR	TG0616	Worthing GP	TF9818

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Earliest & Latest Reported Dates of Summer Migrants

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Honey Buzzard	23 rd May	SNRWP	IB	2 nd Oct	Sculthorpe Moor	BB
Hobby	29 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB/ JE	2 nd Oct	Pensthorpe	TS
Common Tern	11 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB/ JE	5 th Aug	Lenwade Mill	JP
Turtle Dove	1 st May	Sparham Pools	CS	24 th Sept	N Tuddenham	B&BP
Cuckoo	18 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB/ JE	4 th July	Guist Common	RG, AH, AJ
Swift	24 th Apr	Lyng	NM	7 th Sept	Hindolveston	MN
Sand Martin	4 th Apr	Lyng	NM	20 th Sept	HBW	DK
Swallow	27 th Mar	Swanton Morley GP	LB	11 th Oct	New Costessey	AG
House Martin	4 th Apr	New Costessey	AG	24 th Oct	Lyng	BB/ JE
Nightingale	12 th May	Ringland	BS/ AM			
Sedge Warbler	6 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB/ JE	24 th Aug	Guist Common	RG
Reed Warbler	21 st Apr	Sparham Pools	CS	5 th Sept	Pensthorpe	TS
Lesser Whitethroat	18 th Apr	Dereham SW	IB	20 th Sept	Lenwade Mill	JP
Common Whitethroat	8 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB/ JE	16 th Aug	HBW	DK
Garden Warbler	29 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB/ JE	24 th Aug	Guist Common	RG

(continues)

Earliest & Latest dates of Summer Migrants (continued)

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Chiffchaff	11 th Mar	Foxley Wood	B& BP	12 th Dec	Swanton Morley	B&BP
Willow Warbler	5 th Apr	Gt Witchingham Sparham Pools	NM BB/ JE	12 th Sept	N Tuddenham	B&BP
Spotted Flycatcher	23 rd May	Hindolveston	MN	18 th Sept	Hindolveston	MN

Latest & Earliest Reported Dates of Winter Visitors

Species	Latest	Location	Obs.	Earliest	Location	Obs.
Goosander	2 nd Apr	Lenwade	B&SG	9 th Dec	Sparham Pools	BB/JE
Golden Plover	23 rd Mar	Kettlestone	NM	4 th Oct	Hockering	RG
Fieldfare	22 nd Apr	Lyng	NM	2 nd Sept	Alderford Common	B&SG
Redwing	7 th Apr	New Costessey	AG	4 th Oct	Hindolvest on	MN
Brambling	23 rd Apr	Little Snoring	NM	13 th Oct	Sculthorpe Moor	LB
Siskin	6 th May	Little Snoring	NM	2 nd Oct	Lenwade Sculthorpe Moor	B&SG BB/JE

WVBS Ringing Report for 2009 - Allan Hale

Why 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 ninety years of ringing there is still more to learn about migration routes and wintering areas, information which is often vital for conservation. However, the main 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 often 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 2,105 birds of 46 species were ringed in the WVBS study area during 2009. The most ringed species was Blue Tit with 305, followed by Sand Martin 249, and Great Tit with 183. At the other end of the scale,

not a single Willow Tit was ringed in the WVBS study area, reflecting the dramatic national decline of this species.

Highlights amongst the recoveries were many, with a Teal from Germany, Barn Owl from The Netherlands, Sand Martin from France, Reed Warbler to Spain, Blackcap to Morocco and Tufted Duck to Russia. Finally, thanks to the ringers that operated in the WVBS study area during 2009 for access to their records.

Selected WVBS Recoveries Notified During 2009

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

Mute Swan

First year	19.07.06	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Fresh dead	16.04.09	Worthing, Fakenham (10km SSE)

A local movement, typical of young Mute Swans.

Greylag Goose

Full-grown	10.12.08	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire
Fresh dead	24.04.09	near Sculthorpe, Fakenham (250km ENE)

A considerable movement by (feral) Greylag standards.

Teal

Adult	25.09.05	Langenwerder, Rostock, Germany
Fresh dead (shot)	05.12.08	Weasenham, Fakenham (728km W)

Of 77 foreign-ringed Teal found in Norfolk, this was the tenth from Germany.

Tufted Duck

First-year male	31.08.92	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Fresh dead (shot)	15.05.04	Ust-Tsilma, Komi Assr, Russia (3,217km ENE)

Perhaps surprisingly, this is the 20th Norfolk-ringed Tufted Duck to be recovered in Russia.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Nestling	06.07.07	Bath, Avon
Dead (hit wires)	15.07.08	Castle Acre (255km NE)

A roof-nesting bird from Bath that had still not reached breeding age.

Barn Owl

Nestling	31-05-07	Oostelbeers, Noord-Brabant, The Netherlands
Fresh dead	20-03-09	Great Ryburgh, Fakenham (333km WNW)

A remarkable recovery of a bird of the “dark-breasted” race, which represents only the 4th foreign-ringed Barn Owl to be found in Norfolk. They all came from The Netherlands.

Sand Martin

Juvenile	05.08.09	Beetley, Dereham
Caught by ringer	19.08.09	Icklesham, Sussex (203km S)
First year female	22.08.06	Icklesham, Sussex
Caught by ringer	11.07.09	near Easthaugh, Lenwade (205km N)
First year	09.09.07	Icklesham, Sussex
Caught by ringer	11.07.09	near Easthaugh, Lenwade (205km N)
First year	09.08.07	Tancarville, Seine-Maritime, France
Caught by ringer	15.06.08	near Easthaugh, Lenwade (363km N)
Caught by ringer	23.06.09	near Easthaugh, Lenwade (363km N)

Every year many thousands of Sand Martins are caught at Icklesham, which is clearly on the preferred route southward to Africa from Norfolk. An amazing amount of information keeps coming out of the modestly sized Sand Martin colony at Eastaugh, including the last shown which represents the 18th French-ringed Sand Martin to be found in Norfolk (out of 33 foreign-ringed birds in total). Additionally there were several birds that interchanged between various Norfolk sand or gravel pits.

Swallow

Nestling	02.06.09	Homersfield, Suffolk
Caught by ringer	31.07.09	Guist, Dereham (49km NE)

A nestling, ringed in Suffolk and caught again at the communal reedbed roost at Guist. These roosts, that form prior to the autumn migration, consist mainly of juvenile birds.

House Martin

Adult female	01.06.06	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Long dead	16.03.09	Thursford Green, Fakenham (6km NNE)

Only a local movement, but very few ringed House Martins are ever recovered.

Sedge Warbler

Juvenile	16.07.09	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	08.08.09	Rye Meads, Hertfordshire (132km SSW)

First year male	08.09.08	Icklesham, Sussex
Caught by ringer	05.07.09	Shereford, Fakenham (214km N)

Rye Meads and (especially) Icklesham are migration stop-over locations.

Reed Warbler

First year	22.08.02	Icklesham, Sussex
Caught by ringer	26.06.09	Guist, Dereham (211km N)
Caught by ringer	24.08.09	Guist, Dereham
Juvenile	07.07.09	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	29.07.09	Sewage Treatment Works, Swindon (233km SW)
Juvenile	23.07.08	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	27.08.08	Pastriz, Zaragoza, Spain (1,251km S)

Reed Warblers tend to be particularly long-lived birds. At almost seven years old, the first shown was not yet close to the national longevity record of almost 13 years. Icklesham is an intensive ringing station on a major migration route out of Britain, and there have been several interchanges of both Reed and Sedge Warblers between there and the WVBS study area over the years. The last shown was the eighth Norfolk-ringed Reed Warbler to be recovered in Spain.

Blackcap

First year	29.06.06	Shereford, Fakenham
Alive (trapped)	08.03.09	Meknes, Morocco (2,164km SSW)

Only the fifth Norfolk-ringed Blackcap to be found in Morocco

Garden Warbler

Adult	27.05.09	Pensthorpe, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	22.08.09	Icklesham, Sussex (214km S)

Yet another bird to the migration “hot-spot” at Icklesham.

Chiffchaff

Juvenile	01.07.09	Kettlestone, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	11.08.09	Guist, Dereham (6km SSE)
First year	30.08.09	Beetely, Dereham
Caught by ringer	11.09.09	Little Downham, Ely, Cambridgeshire (56km ESE)
Juvenile	01.07.09	Kettlestone, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	22.08.09	Beetley, Dereham (14km S)

Three examples of post juvenile dispersal movements

Willow Warbler

First year	29.06.09	Shereford, Fakenham
Caught by ringer	20.07.09	Guist, Dereham (12km ESE)

Another example of post-juvenile dispersal. This bird was almost certainly hatched close to the original ringing point.

Great Tit

Nestling	04.05.03	Hempton, Fakenham
Fresh dead	09.06.09	Fakenham (3km)

Ringed as a nestling, this Great Tit met its end at the hands (or should it be paws?) of a cat.

Greenfinch

First year female	29.10.08	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd, Wales
Fresh dead	30.05.09	Dereham (388km E)

The longest movement of the year by far.

WVBS ringing totals for 2009

Sparrowhawk	1	Chiffchaff	120
Common Tern	16	Willow Warbler	25
Stock Dove	2	Goldcrest	5
Woodpigeon	1	Spotted Flycatcher	6
Collared Dove	2	Long-tailed Tit	81
Barn Owl	11	Coal Tit	26
Kingfishers	6	Marsh Tit	19
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3	Blue Tit	305
Sand Martin	249	Great Tit	183
Swallow	147	Nuthatch	2
House Martin	3	Treecreeper	14
Pied Wagtail	23	Jay	1
Wren	71	Starling	1
Dunnock	54	House Sparrow	3
Robin	42	Chaffinch	50
Blackbird	45	Brambling	1
Song Thrush	4	Greenfinch	113
Grasshopper Warbler	2	Goldfinch	94
Sedge Warbler	81	Siskin	2
Reed Warbler	107	Linnet	2
Lesser Whitethroat	1	Bullfinch	32
Whitethroat	17	Reed Bunting	34
Garden Warbler	15		
Blackcap	83	Total	2,105

Common Terns at Sparham Pools 2009

Background

Common Terns have bred on an island at NWT Sparham Pools reserve for many years. Their success on this island has varied markedly due to the varied level of vegetation on the island - despite the considerable efforts to keep it clear by the voluntary warden, Alwyn Jackson, with a band of helpers. Common Terns need a clean shingle "beach" to nest on.

In 2005 Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society (WWBS) were delighted to be offered up to £4,000 sponsorship, as part of Jordans Cereals 150th Anniversary, for a "wetland project" in the mid- lower Wensum Valley. This came at a time when the terns at Sparham had experienced 2 years of breeding failure so it was decided to purchase a tern raft and a boat to service the raft and use for other essential conservation work in the Valley ready for the 2006 breeding season.

The raft was positioned on a nearby lake and was an instant success with 5 pairs nesting in 2006 but this was followed by disaster in 2007 when the raft was flooded and sank during heavy rain.

During the winter 2007/8 Alwyn Jackson & his team cleared the island, laid down a membrane in the centre to prevent weeds penetrating it, then covering it with shingle. This area was then roped off in an attempt to prevent geese fouling it.

In the summer of 2008 with permission and encouragement from the site owner Charles Sayer and NWT the two Common Tern "colonies" were monitored and the young ringed. The island at Sparham Pools had 10 nests with 10 young fledging while the raft had 10 young fledging from just 6 nests. The island colony had suffered heavy predation, presumed to be Otters.

2009

In March before the Common Terns returned from their wintering area all the gravel on the raft was thoroughly washed to remove the guano that had accumulated over the winter.

Not the most pleasant of tasks but ably done by a small team of volunteers.

Monitoring the breeding success of the Common Terns at NWT Sparham Pools and the tern raft nearby continued in 2009. The unavailability of a vehicle with a tow-bar was a restriction but thanks to WVBS members Barry Shapcott and Bernie Marsham we were able to tow the boat and make 2 visits to the tern raft and the island on NWT Sparham Pools during 2009.

NWT Sparham Pools Island

Visit 11th June 2009

At this time the island had **13 nests**:

3 with 0 eggs - 6 young had vacated nests

2 with 1 egg

3 with 3 eggs

1 with 4 eggs

1 with 1 egg + 1 young

1 with egg + 2 young

1 with 2 eggs + 1 young

1 with 1 young

Total 19 eggs and 11 young = 30 potential new birds

8 of the young were ringed

By this time the vegetation surrounding the area of shingle on the membrane was c.0.5 metres high and interestingly 2 nests were actually in the vegetation. Presumably they had started nesting before the plants had grown to any extent. The other 11 nests were where one would expect, on the (fairly) clean gravel. Geese had managed to knock some of the fencing down over the winter and fouled the gravel.

Visit 29th June 2009.

The island was not approached as 6 young were on the wing and at least 8 young were ready to fledge.

Conclusion on island: An increase in nests to 13 and a total of at least 14 young, fledged or close to fledging (out of a potential 30), is an encouraging improvement on 2008 when the site was heavily predated. Average birds fledged per nest 1.08.

Normally Common Tern seek a barren gravel area to nest and the presence of tall vegetation would seem detrimental but it seems that at this site the vegetation could assist by providing cover for the young against avian predators and Otters.

The difficulty of assessing total fledging is exacerbated by the close proximity of the two "colonies" as once fledged the birds can move readily from lake to lake to be fed by their parents.

Future Actions: Repair the fence around the gravel area to stop the geese getting on it and clean the guano off the gravel, if possible.

Remove dead vegetation from island during winter 2009-10 and restrict growth by use of a membrane and trimming at appropriate stage in spring/summer 2010.

Tern Raft

Visit 11" June 2009

There were 6 nests on the raft

3 with 3 eggs

1 with 1 young

1 with 3 large young

1 with 4 young

In addition there was 1 addled egg randomly abandoned.

Total 9 eggs 8 and 8 young = 17 potential new birds

Average clutch size = 2.8

7 of the young were ringed

Visit 29th June 2009

There were 8 young on the raft and 2 fledged young on a nearby platform

Conclusion on raft: The number of nests remained the same at 6 and 8 to 10 birds fledged i.e. 1.33 to 1.67 per nest.

Future Actions: One of the flotation tanks has a leak and is in need of repair. It has not been possible to remove it from the submerged island while the water level has been too low to enable it to be floated to the shore. Hopefully this can be achieved during autumn 2009 when the raft can be returned to the manufacturer for repair and then reinstated. This is a major operation as all the gravel will have to be removed prior to bringing the raft ashore and then reloaded once the raft is returned.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to:

NWT and Charles Sayer for their permission and encouragement in this long-term project; Alwyn Jackson, the voluntary warden of NWT Sparham Pools Reserve, and Allan Hale for direct help with the ringing; Barry Shapcott and Bernie Marsham for towing the boat to the site and the many helpers who helped with maintenance of both the island & the raft

Ray Gribble



An unexpected encounter!

Robin (not the feathered kind) has been servicing our central heating for many years. One November, we wished him a "Merry Christmas" and he went on to his final customer for that day. Over the years we have learned about Robin's interests and discovered that we have a mutual interest in birds.

We carried on with our normal evening routine and had just finished our evening meal when someone rang our doorbell. To our considerable surprise, there stood Robin with a bundle in his arms. We invited him in and, apologising profusely, he explained that he had been on his way home, passing close to the Reepham Fisheries, when his headlights had picked up a strange bird walking down the middle of the road. He managed to capture it in his coat and found himself with a dilemma. He had promised his small grandson that he would take him to a firework display that evening, so, what to do with the bird? "Ah Ha!", said he, "the Palmers!" Gently peeling back the coat revealed a large beak which proceeded to try to stab us. In the light of our hallway we recognised the bird as a Night Heron - a very odd visitor to have in your hallway.

Robin took off, still apologising profusely. We found a large cardboard box into which we placed the Heron for its safety, and ours!. We then 'phoned the RSPCA, who were somewhat reluctant to offer much assistance until we revealed that the bird was a Night Heron. Later that evening the RSPCA's rep arrived and the bird was duly taken off to the Animal Hospital near King's Lynn.

In due course, we sent them a cheque and requested that they keep us informed regarding the bird's progress, which they did. It transpired that the bird was an escapee, probably from the Wildlife Park at Great Witchingham. It was quite emaciated and unable to catch its own food due to the fact that it was dependent on being fed.

The story had a happy ending in that the bird was gradually helped to fend for itself and, when it was the right weight, it was released in an area where other escapee Night Herons had formed a colony - a bit like Australia really!!
Brenda and John Palmer

(Editor's Note. As Brenda and John state Night Herons appearing in the Wensum valley area were considered to originate from the former Great Witchingham Wildlife Park where a feral colony nested among breeding Grey Herons until 2003. There have been a few records since then;

in 2005 Lyng Jan 10th, Sparham Pools Jan 16th, flying over A1067 at Sparham June 16th, Sparham Pools 21st Dec;

in 2006 no reported sightings;

in 2007 1 or 2 free flying birds in the valley between 21st Feb - 26th May and no reported sightings since.

This suggests the birds are no longer breeding in the area.

Night Herons breed sporadically throughout Southern Europe with colonies thinly scattered from the Mediterranean and Black Sea north to the Netherlands and Slovakia. Juveniles disperse from the breeding colonies in July and August. The majority winter in tropical Africa, but others remain in the Mediterranean region. Returning migrants in spring are prone to overshooting and occur as vagrants in the British Isles and Northern Europe. It could be assumed therefore that any further sightings in the area particularly in spring could be vagrants.

Night Heron is considered to be a Category A species that are species that have been recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1st January 1950.

Sources:

"The Birds of Norfolk" by M Taylor, M Seago, P Allard & D Dorling. Norfolk Bird & Mammal Reports 2003-08 Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society.)

Three years birdwatching at Sparham Pools

I first discovered Sparham Pools in September 2006, and have made frequent but irregular visits ever since. Recording my observations of the BTO Birdtrack system allows me to make a preliminary set of comments on the birds seen and their behaviour.

Firstly, the number of species seen in each season does seem to present a pattern: although the data is uncorrected for time of day and for weather conditions, there appears to be a dip in the range of birds present (or detected by activity or voice) in high summer (Q3) after the breeding season and as the summer visitors migrate. In the winter (Qs 4 and 1) the numbers are variable, but there are plenty of waterbirds and thrushes that over-winter. The mean species count is not much lower than the summer, however, despite the post-breeding season dip.

Visits 09/06 to 04/10	Number of visits	Most species seen	Least species seen	Average species seen
Q1	30	41	19	30.1
Q2	19	46	13	33.7
Q3	15	32	18	25.7
Q4	28	37	6	26.3

It might be thought that the breeding season (Q2) species count is higher due to a higher number of visits, increasing the chances of seeing a wider range of birds. This is not the case as shown in the table. Far more visits are made during the winter season. Likely explanations are other outdoor activity in Q2 & Q3; other survey work in spring (Q2) such as the BTO Breeding Bird Survey, and more limited opportunity for outdoor activity in winter making short, end of day visits to Sparham Pools more attractive in winter.

That the number of species holds up quite well in winter suggests that the more you look, the more you see. It is, of course, also much easier to see the birds when the trees are bare.

98 species have been seen during 92 visits in this period.

Species seen more than 90% of the time are: Blackbird, Blue Tit, Chaffinch, Great Tit, Mallard, Mute Swan, Robin, Woodpigeon, Wren. Mallard were present on all but one occasion (04.11.2008).

Species seen on three or fewer occasions (in three years) are: Barn Owl (although known to be resident and breeding, records reflect time of visits), Brambling, Common Buzzard, Cetti's Warbler, Continental Cormorant, Goldeneye (06.01.2008, a WVBS Bird Count), Great Black-backed Gull (possibly under-recorded), Hobby (04.09.2009), Lapwing, Lesser Redpoll (possibly also recorded as Common/Lesser), Lesser Whitethroat, Little Egret, Nightingale (01.06.2008), Pink-footed Goose (flying over), Shelduck, Spotted Flycatcher (27.07.2009), Stonechat (06.01.2008), Turtle Dove, Willow Tit, Woodcock.

The table below shows the common migrants (winter or summer) and the dates first and last seen. It includes the maximum number seen or heard on one visit and the highest level of breeding evidence (using BTO codes) recorded. Data for spring 2010 may be included in this table for winter visitors.

<i>Species</i>	<i>First seen</i>	<i>Last seen</i>	<i>Max. Number</i>	<i>Breeding?</i>
Summer visitors				
Blackcap	27/04/2007	17/07/2007	2	
	29/03/2008	21/07/2008	2	Pair
	12/04/2009	20/11/2009	2	Singing
Chiffchaff	17/03/2007	21/09/2007	10	Food carrying
	24/03/2008	02/10/2008	10	Food carrying
	20/03/2009	22/10/2009	8	
Common Tern	27/04/2007	04/08/2007	10	Fledgling
	02/05/2008	21/07/2008	18	Ditto
	17/05/2009	25/06/2009	26	Ditto
Cuckoo	27/04/2007	14/05/2007	1	
	02/05/2008		1	
	26/05/2009	25/06/2009	1	
Garden warbler	06/05/2007	04/08/2007	4	
	10/06/2008	16/08/2008	3	Food carrying
	17/05/2009	25/06/2009	3	
House Martin	14/05/2007	30/08/2007	12	
		06/09/2008	40	
	17/05/2009		6	
Oystercatcher	21/02/2007	18/07/2007	2	On nest
	17/02/2008	21/07/2008	5	Fledglings
	06/03/2009	31/07/2009	7	Fledglings
Reed Warbler	01/07/2007		2	
	02/05/2008	10/06/2008	2	Singing
	17/05/2009	31/07/2009	3	
Swallow	27/04/2007	11/09/2007	40	
	02/05/2008	16/08/2008	8	
	26/05/2009	04/09/2009	8	
Swift	06/05/2007	01/07/2007	16	
	10/06/2008	16/08/2008	8	
	17/05/2009	27/07/2009	22	
Willow Warbler	12/04/2007	21/09/2007	10	Fledgling
	06/04/2008	06/09/2008	10	Food carrying
	12/04/2009	11/09/2009	18	

<i>Species</i>	<i>First seen</i>	<i>Last seen</i>	<i>Max. Number</i>	<i>Breeding?</i>
Winter visitors				
Fieldfare	29/12/2006		20	
		17/02/2008	2	
		24/02/2009	6	
	05/12/2009		1	
Goosander	26/11/2006	17/03/2007	12	
	27/11/2007	16/03/2008	10	
	18/12/2008	20/03/2009	9	
Pochard	26/11/2006	27/04/2007	16	
	27/11/2007	06/04/2008	4	
	25/11/2008	06/03/2009	44	
	22/10/2009	11/02/2010	42	
Redwing	29/12/2006	04/03/2007	10	
	14/10/2007	24/03/2008	12	
	09/11/2008	29/01/2009	5	
	22/10/2009	03/01/2010	12	
Siskin	27/11/2007	17/02/2008	25	
	02/10/2008	29/01/2009	40	

Even despite the ad hoc nature of my visits, there are some remarkably consistent arrival and departure dates shown in this table. Either Pochard or I have very consistent patterns of arrival in November. Goosanders were remarked on as being late arriving in 2009 but appear to be regular in their departure to their breeding grounds in the spring. Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff seem to be consistent in their arrival times but not compared with each other; a later arrival for Chiffchaff in 2008 coincided with an earlier arrival for Willow Warbler but more data are required to draw any conclusions here. Swifts and Swallows do not appear to make Sparham Pools a priority site as they are generally seen in Great Witchingham earlier than these dates, although the departure dates seem consistent with other records I have. Other members in the

area may have more extensive records and more detailed information on arrival and departure, and more sightings of the less common birds. I'd be pleased to gather further data to prepare a more detailed report on Sparham Pools if anyone is interested.

My Species list to date:

Barn Owl, Blackbird, Blackcap, Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Brambling, Bullfinch, Common Buzzard, Canada Goose, Carrion Crow, Cetti's Warbler, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Common Gull, Common Tern, Coot, Cormorant, Cormorant (Continental), Cuckoo, Dunnock, Egyptian Goose, Feral Pigeon, Fieldfare, Gadwall, Garden Warbler, Goldcrest, Goldeneye, Goldfinch, Goosander, Great Black-backed Gull, Great Crested Grebe, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Green Woodpecker, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Herring Gull, Hobby, House Martin, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Lesser Redpoll, Lesser Whitethroat, Linnet, Little Egret, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Marsh Tit, Mistle Thrush, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nightingale, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail (*yarrellii*), Pink-footed Goose, Pochard, Redpoll (Common/Lesser), Redwing, Reed Bunting, Reed Warbler, Robin, Rook, Sedge Warbler, Shelduck, Shoveler, Siskin, Skylark, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Flycatcher, Stock Dove, Stonechat, Swallow, Swift, Tawny Owl, Teal, Treecreeper, Tufted Duck, Turtle Dove, Whitethroat, Wigeon, Willow Tit, Willow Warbler, Woodcock, Woodpigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer (98 species)

Jacky Pett

Pensthorpe Annual Report for 2009

The year started with some of the lakes frozen over but, despite this, over 100 Wigeon were seen at the Wader Scrape on 4th **January** with smaller numbers of Shoveler, Gadwall and Teal also present at this great site for wildfowl. The extensive woodland areas held Woodcock, Green Woodpecker and bullfinch while the Woodland Hide had Marsh, Coal and Long-tailed Tits, Nuthatch and two Treecreepers at the feeders.

Saturday 10th **January** was a red-letter day: my first Hawfinch at Pensthorpe, feeding quietly along a woodland edge before flying up into a tall Oak tree where it allowed excellent views. It then dropped into an old hedge when I was able to take what turned out to be possibly the worst-ever photographs of this species! On the same day Sparrowhawk was seen in the woods along with two Buzzards and a record six Bullfinch were also noted. Winter thrushes and Brambling were recorded too as well as flock of 70 Linnets, while three Golden Plover flying over was an uncommon occurrence.

On 16th, 125 Wigeon, 30 Gadwall and a duck Goldeneye were counted; A Water Rail was also heard. A few signs of spring being imminent were noted in late January with Stock Dove and Chaffinch beginning to sing; two Shelduck reappeared and a Buzzard was up calling too. Seven Pochard on 29th was a good number for the site; a drake Goldeneye was seen that day too.

The Wader Scrape demonstrated the value of this area with a record counts for the winter of 72 Shoveler on 8th **February** and on 12th, 226 Wigeon. In the woods both Wood Pigeon and Siskin were heard singing. Brambling continued to be seen regularly at the Woodland Hide along with commoner species, all making use of the feeders. By mid-month Skylarks were in song on the 'brec' habitat out on the farm and returning Shelducks were displaying already.

In early **March**, Treecreeper was seen while Reed Bunting and Skylark were heard singing; in the fields Lapwing were displaying. By the middle

of the month Oystercatcher pairs were established in the fields near the Wader Scrape with two Song Thrushes singing nearby. Two Bullfinches were also seen, near the hide. In the woods Barn Owl, Siskin and Marsh Tit were seen while Chiffchaff were heard singing. On 25th March a Red Kite flew high over the Wave Garden, heading west. On 29th the first Little Ringed Plovers were recorded for the year at the Wader Scrape.

On 1st **April** two Avocets appeared and after that new birds for the year came thick and fast: Sand Martin on 5th; Swallow and House Martin on 7th; Willow Warbler on 8th; Green Sandpiper on 9th, seen at the Wader Scrape along with two pairs of Little Ringed Plovers; Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat on 21st; Wheatear on 22nd; then Swift, Common Tern and Cuckoo on 28th.

On 3rd **May** Skylark were seen on the 'brec' habitat where there were also Lapwing with young. Reed Warbler and Hobby were first noted in early May, when Tawny Owl and Sparrowhawk were seen regularly in the woods. On 5th a Marsh Harrier, the first since September '08, was seen at the Wader Scrape and a single Avocet was still present. Wildfowl numbers had by then dropped away but the odd Shoveler and Teal continued to be seen. New birds for the year on 19th were Turtle Dove and Garden Warbler. Birds regularly seen included Cuckoo, Little Ringed Plover, Common Tern, Hobby and the commoner warblers. Juvenile Mistle Thrush were noted from 24th, young Shelduck from 26th and four juvenile Little Grebes were seen on 29th, when on the Wader Scrape two adult Mute Swans were seen with four young.

SpringWatch were with us again for their second year. Among other things, they filmed Kestrels at the nest in one of our boxes and five young were closely observed from the moment that they hatched. Little Ringed Plover was another target species for SpringWatch: three pairs were present of which two nested, but the young from both were predated by.....the male Kestrel! As usual, our colony of House Sparrows in the Courtyard produced young, while Swallows bred close by and were

featured on SpringWatch too. Sparrowhawk and Buzzard were recorded regularly, the latter breeding again with us for the second year.

June saw Oystercatchers with two young and Shelduck with four young at the Wader Scrape. A Whitethroat nest was located nearby, two Turtle Doves were seen in the area and a Hobby was present. Green Woodpecker was regularly seen, often out on open fields. Two Avocets were seen again at the Wader Scrape on 9th and young male Marsh Harrier was also present. Up to six Skylarks were on the farmland and nearby an adult Great-spotted Woodpecker was seen with a juvenile, while a Garden Warbler was seen and heard singing by the River Wensum. A Nuthatch was noted at the Woodland Hide. Turtle Doves were regularly heard singing throughout the month; by 10th juvenile Swallows were seen, with five on the roof of the Five Cottages on 16th. Stock Doves numbers on the farm built up to 33 on 17th, the highest count for the year to date. Kingfisher was recorded on 18th, the first since late '08.

Butterflies and dragonflies were well-represented at Pensthorpe this year: by the end of the season 21 of the former and 18 of the latter had been recorded, including Small Red-eyed Damselfly, new for the site this year. The Wildflower Meadows are an excellent area for both groups, being relatively sheltered and with a wide range of wild plants. Ringlet, Meadow Brown and Common Blue Damselfly were particularly numerous.

July was heralded by the presence of 21 Lapwing at the wader Scrape on 1st, when a Hobby was also seen: it continued to be seen throughout the month. On 3rd a Spotted Flycatcher was noted by the Drive. An adult Little Grebe, with four juveniles, was recorded from 11th, when three Little Egrets were seen at the Wader Scrape: usually only singles are seen. During the month two Green Woodpeckers were frequently seen near there. A Roe doe with three fawns, from 14th, was an unusual sight.

A Spotted Flycatcher was seen out on the farm on 6th **August** while Turtle Dove was heard on 9th. At the Wader Scrape a juvenile Marsh Harrier was noted on 16th, 27th, 30th and 31st; on 17th a small flock of six to eight Meadow Pipits flew off the hill, the largest numbers this year. Eight Mistle Thrushes were seen on the same date, their numbers beginning to increase again, while on 18th about 80 Lapwing flushed off the Wader Scrape. The first Shoveler since the spring was seen there on 24th. The month ended with a single Hobby on 30th and a Greenshank.

September began well with the juvenile Marsh Harrier being recorded on 1st, as was the Hobby, and again on 2nd, 5th, 9th, 10th and 18th. The first Wheatear of the autumn was seen on 2nd and as wildfowl numbers began to build up, 42 Gadwall were recorded at the Wader Scrape. A single Swift, 15 House Martins and a Green Sandpiper were also seen there, with two Snipe, the first since 9th June, on 5th. Teal were up to 11 on 6th, the highest number since spring, and a Greenshank was seen then and on 8th, when 14 Mistle Thrushes were noted; On 9th the Greenshank was seen again as was the Hobby, with a single Green Sandpiper; 56 House Martins were recorded too. On 16th a Treecreeper was noted in the woods while three Buzzards were seen on 18th, when about 90 Lapwing dropped in. By 20th, Teal were up to 20 and to 65 on 21st; three Shoveler were also seen, a hint of things to come later in the year; on 20th a Water Rail was heard, the first since spring time. A Grey Wagtail from 21st was the first since earlier in the year. A total of 75 House Martins were over the Courtyard on 23rd, when a single Meadow Pipit and a single Bullfinch were also seen. Numbers of Wigeon had increased by then to 15 and Shoveler to eight, while Mistle Thrushes were seen in a flock of 20. Teal had increased to 69 on 28th when the adult Mute Swans were still present with their four large cygnets. Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen fairly regularly throughout. The month closed with the Grey Wagtail being recorded again on 30th, but better still was a Kingfisher seen by the River Wensum.

October saw Grey Wagtail featuring again all month; on 2nd, the Wader Scrape held 61 Teal, 20 Wigeon, four Shoveler and a Snipe, while Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Buzzard were all seen too. A Water Rail was noted as well, but more surprising was the Hobby, seen well on the woodland edge. A Marsh Harrier was seen on 8th and seven Stock Doves flew by, high numbers for the time of year. Redwing announced the arrival of autumn proper on the morning of 11th, although on that date an adult Little Grebe was seen taking a little fish to a large juvenile. A Kingfisher was recorded again on 12th while on 15th a Meadow Pipit flew over the Courtyard; another was at the Wader Scrape where a single Bearded Tit, 30 Wigeon and eight Shoveler were present. Our first Fieldfare of the autumn was recorded on 17th but much more significant was a Peregrine at the Wader Scrape, where there were also two juvenile Grey Wagtails and a Kingfisher. The first Woodcock for the autumn, two Bullfinches, four Siskins and two Redpoll rounded off an excellent day. 19th saw eight Meadow Pipits and nine Red-legged Partridges out on the farm, while at the Wader Scrape a pair of Bearded Tits was seen. A Water Rail was seen on 22nd, as were two Bullfinches and three Redpoll. Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and the Peregrine were all recorded as well; two Great-spotted Woodpeckers, a Kingfisher and a Treecreeper finished off another splendid day. Considering the date, records of Small Copper, Brown Argus and Migrant Hawker were interesting.

November began with further Grey Wagtail records; a Kingfisher was seen on 2nd, when Marsh Tit, Bullfinch, Tawny Owl, Water Rail and a single Redpoll were also recorded. A late Common Darter was also seen. By 20th, 100 Teal were present at the Wader Scrape and about 60 Goldfinch were seen on the edge of the woodland. On 23rd the Kingfisher was again seen as was a Woodcock; four Bullfinches, good numbers for the site, were seen on the old railway line. Best of all, a recent Pensthorpe record of 368 Teal were counted that day, while 91 Wigeon and 26 Shoveler were seen too. To cap it all, 22 Skylark were recorded out on the farm, the highest count in recent times. The first Brambling of the autumn was seen on 27th, when a Mistle Thrush was heard singing.

A Marsh Harrier was present at the Wader Scrape also and two male Bullfinches were noted. Among feral Greylag was a Greater Snow Goose.

Early **December** saw a Tawny Owl in the woods on several occasions; on 4th about 300 Pinkfeet flew down the valley in two groups. The Woodland Hide feeders played host to a Treecreeper, Marsh Tit and Siskin. An Otter was seen on 7th, alarming the wildfowl on one of the lakes and the Greater Snow Goose was seen again. Two Kingfishers showed well by the Millennium Garden during the second week of December; Redwing, Fieldfare and Redpoll continued to be seen regularly. About 420 Pinkfeet were recorded on 11th, flying up the valley. Snow fell on 17th when around 140 finches were seen on the farmland and this began a sustained period of sub-zero temperatures. A drake Goldeneye on 20th was the first for the autumn, a Bittern was seen at the Fishing Hut on 21st and a Little Owl was seen on 24th. On 29th the highest count of Gadwall for the winter was made, with 24 birds; a duck Goldeneye was also seen, again the first for the autumn; 144 Wigeon and 59 Shoveler were recorded, the highest counts for both species this winter. 20 Redpolls, seen well and confirmed as Lessers, were present too. An exciting year drew to a close with another sighting of the Peregrine at the Wader Scrape and, in the woods, of the Tawny Owl. What would 2010 bring?

Ed Bramham-Jones
Warden

NOA Hempton Marsh Report 2009

Following the explosion of interest and help at the reserve prompted by the Hempton Lottery Project last year the Association was keen to continue with the events and monitoring at Hempton in 2009. This was possible due entirely to the hard work of the many volunteers who take care of the reserve and monitor its wildlife on a daily basis.

Their efforts produced a total of 15,157 records of birds, insects, mammals, and amphibians during the year, and a total of five events took place during the summer for members of the public and the NOA alike. A big thankyou to everyone who has contributed, through manning the reserve, recording sightings and taking part in the events. We hope that this level of interest in the reserve will continue with the same vigour in coming years.

With the HLF project completed in 2008, the focus this year was on securing grazing on the reserve. This is a vital part of the habitat management which makes conditions for the rarer plants including Southern Marsh Orchid far more favourable and also encourages species of ground nesting birds.

In order to find a new grazier for the reserve it was necessary to put a proper stock fence around the whole perimeter of the grazing marsh and this was done in March and April. The labouring was done largely by our warden Jed Andrews with the help of volunteer warden Robin Parker, and the quad bike purchased as part of the Hempton Lottery Grant was a vital piece of equipment, both for transporting materials and tools around the marsh, and for getting correct tension on the wire during the erection of the fences themselves.

The work was completed in mid April and our new grazier Glynn Thomas duly brought his cattle as soon as the work was completed. These 15 animals can't have had any idea how they were contributing to the diversity of the reserve, but it's true to say that Hempton has never looked better than it did this summer. We hope that with this return to a regular grazing regime we will continue to see the return of Hempton's

special plants and animals which at one stage had almost been choked out by the overgrown conditions.

Birds at Hempton 2009

This year 14,645 bird records were made in the hide logs by our volunteers and visitors. Compared with our coastal reserves it is not surprising that there is relatively little variation in the numbers seen in any given month, although April and November were both months with over one thousand records. This reflects the fairly high proportions of resident birds using the reserve.

Winter species such as Water Rail were recorded on 30th January and 5th December, and a Woodcock on the 21st March was of note, previous data from the reserve suggest that these could be present all through the year with roding birds heard during the summer of 2008. Following the 2008 irruption, Siskins were still present in good numbers with 65 recorded during January 2009. A further 93 were recorded in February and 10 in March, after which the species was not seen again all year. Redpolls were far less numerous still, with 4 recorded in January and 2 in March.

A Grey Wagtail on 15th January was of note and another individual was seen on the 12th April and 5th December. These birds are likely to be attracted by the potential feeding areas along the river Wensum although the infrequency of the records suggests birds seen at Hempton are passing through on their way elsewhere.

Little Egret was a notable species on the reserve again this year, with records throughout the first half of the year, and a single sighting in November. The presence of Little Egret at Hempton between January and June 2009 and their absence from July onwards is rather puzzling, but not dissimilar to the pattern seen in 2008. It does however seem likely that birds on the site are not breeding during that year either because they are not of breeding age or perhaps because there are no suitable colonies nearby. Common Buzzard was a species noted during 2008 and its presence continued this year particularly in summer with 5 records in May, July and August. Conditions for this species seem to be favouring

the spread of Buzzards throughout Norfolk and the Wensum valley is no exception.

Bullfinches were present in Spring, Autumn and Winter but absent between May and August, suggesting breeding elsewhere. The highest number of Bullfinch sightings was in November, a month when they can typically be found on migration at the coast. One species which was unusual for the reserve was a House Sparrow seen near the entrance on the 9th May.

Summer visitors had a better year across much of the country this year but overall numbers at Hempton were similar to that of 2008. A total of 39 Chiffchaff records in April together with 2 Cuckoos were of particular interest. The highest number of records for Blackcap at the site was 21 in both May and July. A single Reed Warbler was recorded in June. A Spotted Flycatcher was seen on July 15th and a further 2 on August 6th. They were not thought to have bred on the reserve. A single Garden Warbler was recorded on the 6th August. Cuckoos were seen during the early summer with 5 seen in May and 11 in June. We hope that Hempton will continue to be a stronghold for this increasingly threatened species.

Insects

A total of 300 casual insect observations were recorded at Hempton in 2009. As in 2008 the majority of insect sightings were from volunteers and visitors, however the moth trapping on July 25th and the insect walk on August 8th did however add further information. The moth day was in contrast with that in 2008 where over 600 moths were caught, with a cool and wet night's weather yielding less than 100 specimens for moth enthusiasts to study, and with no new species to add to last year's impressive list.

The insect walk was rather more successful, however, the big surprise being the group of 12 Clouded Yellows (*Colias croceus*) feeding all over the marsh. The walk around the marsh produced a few moths including a Riband Wave (*Idaea aversata*), Straw Dot (*Rivula sericealis*), Mother of Pearl (*Pleuroptya ruralis*) and Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*), together with the grass moth *Agriphila straminella*. In addition to the

Clouded Yellows, other butterflies included 3 Small Skippers (*Thymelicus sylvestris*), 4 Painted Ladies (*Cynthia cardui*), 2 Speckled Woods (*Parage aegeria*), 2 Peacocks (*Anachis io*), a Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), a single Small White (*Artogeia rapae*), 5 Meadow Browns, a Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*), a Green-veined White (*Artogeia napi*), 5 Small Tortoiseshells (*Aglais urticae*), 2 Small Coppers (*Lycaena phlaeus*), and 2 Common Blues (*Polymmatius icarus*). Dragonflies included Brown, Southern and Migrant Hawkers (*Aeshna grandis*, *cyanea* and *mixta*), Common and Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum* and *sanguineum*), Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*), Common Blue Damselfly and Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum* and *Ischnura elegans*). Two Dark Bush Crickets (*Pholidoptera griseoptera*) on the main boardwalk were also of considerable interest.

The Clouded Yellow records were especially unusual. These butterflies remained there for several days and up to 30 were counted by Adrian Riley the following weekend. The log books recorded a single individual on the 6th and 5 on the 25th August. There were none recorded after this date and their behaviour on the marsh, where they were feeding rather than moving through, was something of a surprise to observers. Adrian Riley also noted on his visit that all the Clouded Yellows appeared to be males.

Events aside, butterfly records got off to a better start than in 2008, beginning on 3rd March with a Small Tortoiseshell. A total of 5 butterflies; 2 Commas (*Polygonia c-album*) and 3 Small Tortoiseshells, were seen during the month. Butterfly numbers in April were relatively low with no records between the 5th and 20th but this is not surprising in view of the very cold conditions persisting at the time. Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) was noted on the 1st, and Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) and Speckled Wood were seen on the 21st and the 30th. In May Orange Tip and Speckled Wood were the most frequently recorded species with 9 and 7 records respectively. Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*), Common Blue Damselfly and Broad Bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*) also emerged during May.

Perhaps surprising this year was the lack of Painted Lady records with no more than 3 recorded in any given month during the summer on the reserve. This is probably due to the migratory nature of the movements made by those coming into Norfolk, principally in the last week of May. In June a total of 24 butterfly records were made, with Red Admiral being recorded on five dates.

As in 2008, July was the best month for dragon and damselflies, with 23 records during the month, however records of this group were fewer than in the previous year. Butterfly records continued until the 30th of October when 3 Large Whites and a Red Admiral were seen. The last dragonfly record was a Common Darter on the 13th October, over a month earlier than the last dragonfly recorded in 2008.

The significant improvement and both moth and butterfly numbers seen at Holme is not evident from the Hempton data, however this is principally to do with the informal nature of recording and the irregularity of activities such as moth trapping. It is especially unfortunate that there was only one moth day held at the reserve in 2009 and that the weather on that day was so unfavourable.

Mammals

With the resumption of grazing on the reserve in 2009 the reduction in the amount of vegetation on the marsh probably affected mammals in particular, especially species of deer on Hempton, because of the reduction in the amount of thick cover. Nevertheless a total of 218 mammal records were reported in the log books during 2009. Of these, Muntjac was overwhelmingly the most recorded mammal with 110 records during the year, the highest number of sightings being recorded in late winter and spring. The only other deer recorded in 2009 were a single Roe Deer in February and two records of Chinese Water Deer in early May.

Spring and autumn records of Water Vole were encouraging with one recorded on three dates in September. This species is known to occur at Hempton but is in long-term decline nationally, and information on their local distribution at sites such as Hempton will be increasingly important

in the long term, especially in establishing the impact of predators such as Mink which have also been recorded at the site, thankfully not in recent years.

Of interest this year were a high proportion of Stoat sightings on the reserve during April and May, with 8 and 5 sightings respectively. Sadly this year there were no confirmed sightings of Otter at the reserve.

Jed Andrews & Sophie Barker
NOA Warden & Assistant Warden.

Sculthorpe Moor Community Nature Reserve

Sculthorpe Moor is a 50 acre reserve that is part of the beautiful Wensum Valley. The reserve contains a remnant of valley fen and reed bed that is very important for breeding marsh harriers and other reed bed species. The Hawk and Owl Trust established the site as a nature reserve in 2001.

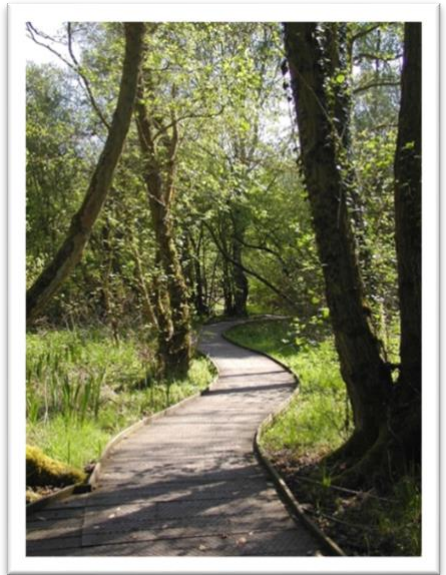
Nigel Middleton, warden of the reserve and conservation officer for the Hawk and Owl Trust, had been watching the harriers nesting year on year from the old railway line that runs along the river and year on year he had also watched scrubby willow, alder and birch march across the reed bed until the harriers had only a tiny patch of reed left to nest in. Nigel tracked down the owners of the land in order to talk to them about management. The land has been held by the Francis Beckham Trust for the village of Sculthorpe since the Enclosures act in the mid 1800's when villagers were allowed to cut fuel and graze animals on the land. In more recent years it was used as a rough shoot, and at the end of 2001 when Nigel approached the trustees the shooting rights had just become available for rent. Nigel suggested that the Hawk and Owl Trust rent the land but manage it as a nature reserve and Sculthorpe Moor Community Nature Reserve was born.

The Hawk and Owl Trust began management of the land at the start of 2002 and a small Local Heritage Initiative grant provided the capital for a portacabin to act as an office, a half mile loop of boardwalk and a small hide. At that



point in time there was no proper entrance off the road and no car park so the reserve was a secret gem that very few people knew about. Because the reserve had been left alone for the best part of 60 years with little human involvement it was a haven for many species of plants, birds and animals. As well as the magnificent Marsh Harrier, Willow Tit were still breeding on the site and the secretive Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Many sensitive fen plants were also present but rapidly being overcome by the natural succession of the site to woodland. Villagers who played on the moor in the 1940's tell of an open landscape with just a few alder stands but by the time Nigel began work much of the site was covered in willow, alder and birch scrub.

Nigel and a band of volunteers, many from the Fakenham Area Conservation Team, started work to clear the encroaching scrub from some of the reserve, opening up the reed bed and fen to the light again. Nigel wanted the boardwalk to follow natural curving lines through the trees much to the delight of the volunteers who not only had to learn how to construct boardwalk but how to make it go round corners! A new pond fed by crystal clear spring water provided additional open water for dragonflies and other water invertebrates.



After several years hard work the reed bed and fen were looking much healthier and the SSSI part of the site was recognised by Natural England as having been restored to good condition. The variety of dragonflies recorded on the reserve had increased to an impressive 19 species and several rare water beetles were also found.



Encouraged by the recognition of their hard work and inspired by the special nature of the site Nigel embarked on an ambitious bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Union to secure funding that would increase public access on

the site and provide education services. Right from the beginning we were determined that the reserve should be a place that involved people and promoted education about the natural environment to the widest possible audience. Two years later the money had been secured and the project began.

Another half a mile of boardwalk allowed visitors to see the newly restored fen and reach the bank of the Wensum. An impressive elevated hide gave spectacular views over the reed bed and the Marsh Harriers displaying during the breeding season. A new centre with a car park provided facilities for visiting schools and other groups, information about the reserve and an office. In addition, a wildlife camera system was hard wired across the reserve. Volunteers helped to roll out 100s of metres of cabling, bury it and fix it along the boardwalks. The effort paid off when, with the help of wildlife camera man Martin Hayward Smith, the public were able to see live images from a Marsh Harrier nest for the first time. A tiny camera about the size of a tube of polos was hidden in a log, the log was placed next to the nest once we were sure that the chicks had hatched and the female left the nest to hunt. The female raised three chicks that year with not much help from an almost absent male, torrential

rain and violent thunder storms made watching the progress of the chicks painful at times but they all survived. Since then the same female has gone from strength to strength and this year 6 chicks fledged from her nest.



Their progress was watched by many people via a live webcam on our website. The Marsh Harriers leave the site in the autumn and we do not know at present where they go to, do they still migrate or only go as far as the coast or the broads? We would like to find out and are trying to raise the money needed to tag some of the young harriers either with wing tags or ideally, but more expensively, with radio tags.



Since the creation of the visitor and education centre we have been busy providing a wide range of educational events and activities. Schools regularly visit the reserve to learn about its habitats and wildlife, a

whole series of guided walks from night time owl prowls and glowworm walks to the early morning dawn chorus encourage people of all ages to enjoy the reserve and, as awareness about the reserve increases, more people are visiting each year.



Management work continues apace, more scrub is cleared each year and parts of the re-established reed bed cut on a long rotation cycle.

Drains have been opened out and reprofiled with the addition of sluices to help control the water levels. More pools have been created and a third hide overlooking a shallow pool which attracts regular visits from the Kingfishers. The Hawk and Owl Trust helps to manage the land belonging to our neighbours on either side of the reserve, this land is not accessible to the public and provides a buffer for the wildlife on the reserve. Sculthorpe Moor is a thriving haven for wildlife but don't take my word for it, pay a visit and decide for yourself.



Leanne Thomas,
Education Manager.

Weather Report 2009

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

January

With a mean temperature of 2.8°C the month was more than 4°C colder than the abnormally warm January of 2008. It was the coldest January since 1997 and the highest maximum of 9.3°C was exceeded on 20 days in January 2008. Only 5 nights escaped ground frost and snow was observed on the 4th - 5th with the ground briefly covered on the 5th.

Total Rainfall: 45.4mm (78% of average)

Air Frosts: 11

Monthly mean Temp: 2.8°C (1.2°C below average)

Ground Frosts: 26

Wind direction summary

N	1	SE	3	W	4
NE	4	S	4	NW	0
E	1	SW	5	Calm	9

February

This was a month of two halves, cold until mid-month and then for the rest of the month much milder and frost free. An important feature was a rise in soil temperature at a depth of 10cm from 1.5°C at the beginning to a mean of 5.5°C which was sufficient to allow spring growth to resume without interruption from the 17th. Sleet or snow fell on nine days and lay thinly on four. On the 21st there was a display of the dramatic cloud formation Altocumulus rarely observed from the flatlands of East Anglia.

Total Rainfall: 52.1mm (122% of average)

Air Frosts: 11

Monthly mean Temp: 4.3°C (0.5°C above average)

Ground Frosts: 16

Wind direction summary

N	1	SE	2	W	0
NE	0	S	1	NW	15
E	2	SW	1	Calm	6

March

An almost complete lack of winds between north and east allowed the average temperature of the month to be above normal due to high day maxima. Frequent clear nights allowed ground frost to develop with above average frequency. Sleet was observed on the 24th and 28th and on the 21st the temperature rose from a minimum of -3°C at around 0400 hrs to a balmy 15°C in the early afternoon.

Total Rainfall: 46.9 mm (97% of average)

Air Frosts: 7

Monthly mean Temp: 6.8°C (0.9°C above normal)

Ground Frosts: 19

Wind direction summary

N	2	SE	1	W	7
NE	0	S	2	NW	11
E	2	SW	4	Calm	2

April

Unusually mild but not as warm as April 2007 and the month almost escaped air frost with the lowest minimum - 0.1°C on the 1st. It was a dry month with over half the rainfall total falling on the 11th when 15.6mm was measured.

Total Rainfall: 23.6 mm (52% of average)

Air Frosts: 1

Monthly mean Temp: 10.8°C (3.2°C above normal)

Ground Frosts: 6

Wind direction summary

N	3	SE	5	W	2
NE	3	S	4	NW	2
E	4	SW	2	Calm	5

May

Warm with marginally below average rainfall and unusually for May it was often quite windy, but seldom from the north easterly quarter. The combination of strong spring sunshine and drying winds caused the countryside to become parched by the month's end.

Total Rainfall: 39.9 mm (88% of average) Ground Frosts: 1

Monthly mean Temp: 13.1°C (1.8°C above average)

Wind direction summary

N	0	SE	3	W	6
NE	2	S	2	NW	2
E	5	SW	9	Calm	2

June

Heavy thundery rain on the 15th and 28th boosted the monthly rainfall total to 131% of the average. A very violent hailstorm battered parts of central Norfolk on the 15th. Carbrooke near Watton bore the brunt of the storm with very large hailstones accumulating in places to a depth of over 6". Drifts of ice were still visible late on the 16th in spite of the warm weather. Rainfall at Carbrooke was 104mm, Watton 33mm. Morley St Botolph 33mm and Old Costessey 24.6mm. Along the track of the storm there was considerable damage to crops with the kernels of malting barley being literally stripped from their stalks by the force of the hail.

Total Rainfall: 70.3 mm (131% of average)

Monthly mean Temp: 15.2°C (0.8°C above average)

Wind direction summary

N	4	SE	4	W	4
NE	2	S	1	NW	2
E	4	SW	3	Calm	6

July

Rain fell on 21 days yielding a monthly rainfall total of 50% in excess of the average and the lush growth and green countryside was sure testimony to a damp summer month. Although thunder was heard on seven days all the storms were slight and transitory.

Total Rainfall: 85.0 mm (151% of average)

Monthly mean Temp: 17.3% (0.8°C above average)

Wind direction summary

N	1	SE	3	W	9
NE	0	S	1	NW	2
E	0	SW	13	Calm	0

August

The warmest August since 2003 and notably dry with even trees showing by the close of the month. Day temperatures remained well above normal throughout the month with only three failing to exceed 21°C and thirteen reaching or exceeding 25°C.

Total Rainfall: 15mm (29% of average)

Monthly mean Temp: 18.5% (2.1° above average)

Wind direction summary

N	0	SE	0	W	9
NE	0	S	8	NW	3
E	0	SW	8	Calm	3

September

The month was exceptionally dry with rainfall barely a quarter of the long term average. Most of the month's rainfall fell on the and when 12.1mm was measured and the balance of a mere 3.3mm for the remainder of the month caused the countryside to assume an almost Spanish degree of aridity.

Total Rainfall: 15.4 mm (28% of average)

Monthly mean Temp: 15.3°C (1.0°C above normal)

Wind direction summary (September)

N	0	SE	0	W	13
NE	9	S	0	NW	2
E	1	SW	4	Calm	1

October

This was a quiet and benign month devoid of gales and air frost with less sunshine than usual. Two funnel clouds were observed on the 1st to the east and north east of Calthorpe.

Total Rainfall: 56.5mm (97% of average) Ground frosts: 3

Monthly mean Temp: 11.5°C (0.5°C above average)

Wind direction summary

N	3	SE	4	W	0
NE	3	S	1	NW	8
E	1	SW	6	Calm	5

November

The rainfall deficit of 74mm during August and September was significantly reduced by the rainfall excess of 45mm during November which was the wettest since 1994. Rain was recorded on twenty three days during this dismal and sodden month which had an average temperature 2.1°C above normal making it the mildest November since 1994. The month passed devoid of a single air frost with the lengthy period of April 2nd to November 30th escaping a single instance of the air temperature falling below freezing.

Total Rainfall: 115.1 mm (164% of average) Ground frosts: 5

Monthly mean Temp: 8.8°C (2.1°C above normal)

Wind direction summary (November)

N	1	SE	1	W	0
NE	0	S	1	NW	2
E	1	SW	18	Calm	6

December

With a mean temperature of 3.4°C the contrast with the preceding month was dramatic. The normal decrease in temperature between November and December is 1.9°C but in this month it was 5.4°C. It was a wet month with snow falling on eight days and lying from the 18th-25th inclusive with a cumulative depth of 11cms. On the 29th glazed ice formed when 1mm of rain fell on frozen surfaces immediately creating skating rink conditions.

Total Rainfall: 95.3 mm (156% of average) Ground frosts: 20

Monthly mean Temp: 3.4°C (1.4°C below normal) Air frosts: 17

Wind direction summary

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

Annual Summary 2009

Total rainfall	660.5mm (102% of average)	Mean cloud cover at 0900hrs	65%
Days with rain recorded	177	Wettest day	15 th June (24.6mm)
Highest max.	28.9°C (19th Aug)	Days with sleet or snow	21
Lowest max.	0.4°C (20 th & 22 nd Dec)	Days with snow lying	13
Highest min.	17°C (28 th June)	Air frosts	47
Lowest min.	-7°C (6 th Jan)	Ground frosts	96
Lowest grass min.	-9.6°C (6 th Jan)	Days with gales	1 (18 th Nov)
Days with hail	6	Days with thunder	15
Longest period without measurable rainfall	14 (15 th -29 th Sept)	Days with fog (0900hrs)	7

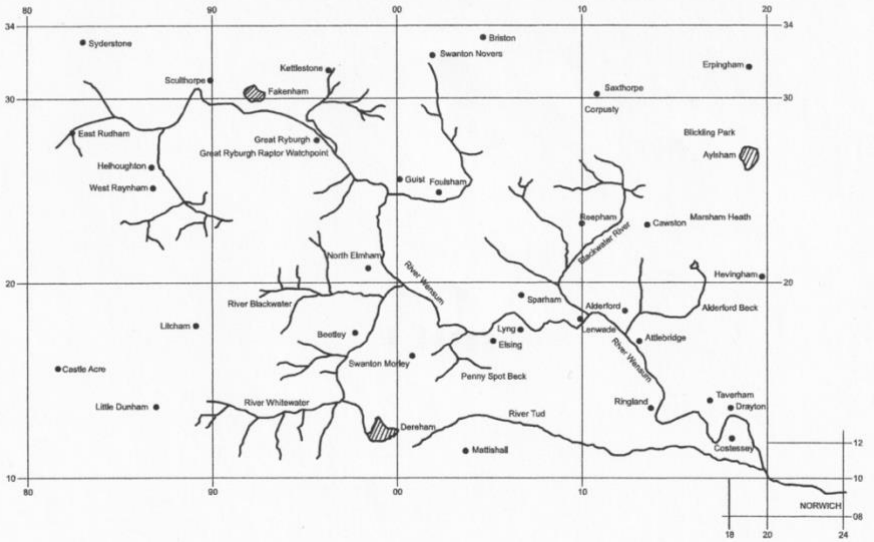
Annual mean maximum: 14.8°C - Annual mean minimum: 6.5°C - Annual mean: 10.7°C

Wind direction summary at 0900hrs.

N	19	SE	28	W	61
NE	29	S	27	NW	52
E	21	SW	79	Calm	51

Norman Brooks (Fellow the Royal Meteorological Society)

Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society Recording Area





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€T.B. Approved.

2021 PDF of the WVBS Seventh Annual Report_20094th October 2021

Text changes

Where	Original text	PDF text
Diary of 2009 Events		
April 16 th	favorite	favourite
April 22 nd to 29 th	pages 10-12	pages 19-24 (1)
May 8 th to 11 th	page 13	pages 25-26 (1)
Bird Ringing demonstration	25 th -27 th	25 th -26 th (2)
Systematic List		
Wigeon	<i>Anus Penelope</i>	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail & Shoveler	<i>Anus</i>	<i>Anas</i>
Sparrowhawk	3 pair	3 pairs
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i> on every month	<i>Larus ridibundus</i> in every month
Common Gull	on every month	in every month
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentus</i>	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Mistle Thrush	<i>Amber list</i>	<i>Amber listed</i>
Whitethroat, Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvis</i>	<i>Sylvia</i>
Chiffchaff	1 th (3)	
Blue Tit & Great Tit	how numbers the through	how numbers vary through
Goldfinch, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll	niger	nyjer
Siskin	May only 1 recorded	In May only 1 recorded
Snow Bunting	The bird on first seen	The bird first seen
Tern Raft	layed down abl done but it that at this site	laid down ably done but it seems that at this site A personal phone number and email were removed
Pensthorpe Annual Report	Pinkfeet	Pink-footed Geese
Sculthorpe Moor NR	visiting	visiting

(1) The PDF page numbers

(2) 25-26 are the dates in the Programme

(3) 8 Sparham Pools both 20th Mar & 1th Apr. Unclear what the Apr date should be. Left unchanged.**Note: Prog/Diary** Oct/Nov: The dates of the Wader ID workshop differ between Programme and Diary. Unclear which is correct.