



WVBS  
Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

### Newsletter February 2007

#### Forthcoming Events

Our next indoor meeting is on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February** when our speaker will be Jon Clifton whose topic will be "**Shetland Wildlife**". The Shetland Isles offers some of the best wildlife in Scotland with over 1 million breeding seabirds, the highest density of Otters in Europe and regular sightings of Killer Whales. It is also famous as a place where you can enjoy some amazing rare birds so Jon's talk promises to be an evening to look forward to. Weston Longville Village Hall at 7.30pm as usual.

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February** outdoor meeting to **NWT Hickling NR and Stubb Mill** raptor roost. **Leader Alwyn Jackson.** We are meeting at 11.30am at Potter Heigham Church (TG419199). This is reached by turning left (if approaching from Stalham direction) off the A149 down Station Road (sign-posted Village Hall & Church). After 0.2 miles, turn right at the T junction (School Road and Church Road). The church is 0.4 miles on the left. We will have a short walk along the Weavers Way before returning to our cars and driving to Hickling NR for lunch at about 1.30pm. There are toilets at the visitor centre. We will then walk to Stubb Mill to hopefully see the Cranes coming to roost and should also see Barn Owl, Hen Harrier and a number of Marsh Harriers. Let Alwyn know if you will be attending by either adding your name to the trip list at the next indoor meeting or by contacting him on 01362-637752. Please try to car share as far as possible.

On **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March** we welcome Nicholas Crampton, a solicitor who will be telling us about "**Fighting Wildlife Crime**". This should prove to be a very interesting and informative talk. Weston Longville Village Hall at 7.30pm

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March** sees a change of venue to the original program when we will be visiting **Snettisham RSPB reserve**. Leader David Pelling. More details in the next newsletter.

### WVBS Area Records – January 2007

Thank you to everyone who sent in records. 27 members contributed 517 records of 86 different species this month.

**Each individual sighting received may not show on this summary, however, all records do contribute towards the annual report and our understanding of the birds of our study area.**

The weather in January remained very mild generally with above average temperatures, the warmest January since 1916. There was one colder interlude around the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. A predominantly south-westerly air stream brought cloud and rain throughout the month with a few drier spells. There were strong winds on the 18<sup>th</sup> but the end of the month became settled with high pressure bringing plenty of dry, but cloudy conditions.

It has been a relatively quiet month for birdwatchers locally. However there have been some interesting sightings reported.

Species	Location/Notes
<b>Greylag Goose</b>	West Raynham, Bittering GP, Lenwade & Sparham Pools where highest count was 350 on 25 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE).
<b>Canada Goose</b>	Lenwade, Felthorpe & Sparham Pools where highest count was 25 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (RG,CH&KF).
<b>Common Shelduck</b>	2 locations with max counts of 3 at Bittering GP on 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE) & 2 Sparham Pools between 1 <sup>st</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> (B7SG, et al) with just 1 present on 10 <sup>th</sup> (NS)
<b>Egyptian Goose</b>	Gateley, Ringland, Coxford Heath, Sparham Pools & West Raynham where the highest count was 20 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Mallard</b>	Bittering GP, Bridge Lake (Lenwade), Ringland, Sparham Pools, Coxford Heath & Taverham. Highest counts of 20 at Sparham Pools on 5 <sup>th</sup> (JP) & Bittering GP on 14 <sup>th</sup> (NS&MS)
<b>Gadwall</b>	West Raynham, Bittering, Swanton Morley GP, Coxford Heath & Sparham Pools where highest count of 25 on 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>	Max 6 at West Raynham on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 Coxford Heath on 1 <sup>st</sup> (BB&JE).
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>	Sparham Pools; 1 on 2 <sup>nd</sup> (BB&JE) & 4 on 10 <sup>th</sup> (NS)
<b>Common Teal</b>	Coxford Heath 7 on 1 <sup>st</sup> (BB&JE), 9 Old Costessey on 13 <sup>th</sup> & 3 New Costessey on 17 <sup>th</sup> (AB)
<b>Common Pochard</b>	Sparham Pools, Bridge Lake (Lenwade) & Creaking Gate Lake (Bittering) where highest count of 15 on 14 <sup>th</sup> (NS&MS)
<b>Tufted Duck</b>	Bittering GP, Hoe & Sparham Pools where highest count of 25 on 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Common Goldeneye</b>	2 females at Sparham Pools on 22 <sup>nd</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Goosander</b>	Bittering 1 on 1 <sup>st</sup> (IB) & Sparham Pools where highest count of 4 on 5 <sup>th</sup> (JP)
<b>Ruddy Duck</b>	1 Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering on 14 <sup>th</sup> (NS&MS)
<b>Red-legged Partridge</b>	Whissonsett, Sparham Hall Farm & Old Costessey where 12 on 13 <sup>th</sup> (AB)
<b>Grey Partridge</b>	Lyng, Costessey Mill, Old Costessey, Whissonsett, Horningtoft & Sparham Pools where highest count of 8 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (RG,CL&KF)
<b>Little Grebe</b>	Costessey Mill, Swanton Morley GP & Sparham Pools where highest count of 5 on 19 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Great crested Grebe</b>	Sparham Pools, Bridge Lake (Lenwade) & Swanton Morley GP where highest count of 12 on 10 <sup>th</sup> (B&BP)
<b>Great Cormorant</b>	Sparham Pools & Bridge Lake (Lenwade) where BB&JE counted 65 on 25 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Little Egret</b>	4 at Blackwater Lane, Lenwade on 1 <sup>st</sup> (JL, P&AB) & 1 Marriott's Way, Lenwade on 29 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE) 12 <sup>th</sup> RG.
<b>Grey Heron</b>	Lenwade & Old Costessey where 12 on 1 <sup>st</sup> (AB)

<b>Eurasian Sparrowhawk</b>	15 locations including one eating Collared Dove in a Reepham garden (GH) on 1 <sup>st</sup> .
<b>Hen Harrier</b>	1 male Kettlestone on 7 <sup>th</sup> during Bird Count (BP,DK&ID).
<b>Common Buzzard</b>	Singles at Colkirk & Great Ryburgh on 1 <sup>st</sup> (S&BG; IB); 2 at West Raynham (B&BP) & 3 from Bittering (BB&JE) on 7 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Common Kestrel</b>	Reported from 16 locations.
<b>Water Rail</b>	No records received.
<b>European Golden Plover</b>	16 Bittering GP, 32 Lenwade and c250 N Tuddenham on 1 <sup>st</sup> ; 250+ Mattishall & 300 Hoe on 7 <sup>th</sup> ; numbers gradually increased through month at N Tuddenham with 750 on 13 <sup>th</sup> & 1000 on 20 <sup>th</sup> (B&BP)
<b>Northern Lapwing</b>	Records from 7 locations with highest count of 500 at Dereham Sewage Works (IB&PR) on 1st
<b>Common Snipe</b>	20 at Dereham Sewage Works on 1 <sup>st</sup> (IB), Old Costessey throughout the month with max of 25 recorded on 13 <sup>th</sup> (AB) and single at Scarning on 27 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Woodcock</b>	Singles at Daffy Green on 3 <sup>rd</sup> (IB), Costessey Mill on 9 <sup>th</sup> (AB) & Old Costessey on 12 <sup>th</sup> (AB)
<b>Green Sandpiper</b>	Single at Sparham Pools on 19 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Black-headed Gull</b>	100 at Dereham Sewage Works on 1 <sup>st</sup> (IB), 50 at Felthorpe on 7 <sup>th</sup> (MS) and a max of 8 at Sparham Pools on 12 <sup>th</sup> (JP).
<b>Mew (Common) Gull</b>	Only one record received of 6 at West Raynham on 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE).
<b>Herring Gull</b>	One record of 2 at Sparham Pools on 12 <sup>th</sup> (JP)
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>	On 7 <sup>th</sup> 13 at Felthorpe (MS) & 1 at Whissonsett (RG,CH&KC)
<b>Great Black-backed Gull</b>	1 Syderstone Common on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE); 2 at Felthorpe on 7 <sup>th</sup> (MS); 2 Pensthorpe on 13 <sup>th</sup> (RG).
<b>Common Woodpigeon</b>	No large flocks reported! Records from Old Costessey, Taverham, Thorpe Marriot and Sparham Pools where highest count was 40 on 19 <sup>th</sup> (JP).
<b>Barn Owl</b>	A high profile bird, reported throughout the month at 23 locations between Old Costessey and Sculthorpe Moor by 15 members.
<b>Little Owl</b>	2 at Daffy Green on 4 <sup>th</sup> & single present up to 29 <sup>th</sup> (IB); singles at Bylaugh on 7 <sup>th</sup> (A&CJ, JH) Bittering on 14 <sup>th</sup> (NS&MS) & Scarning on 25 <sup>th</sup> (IB).
<b>Tawny Owl</b>	3 at Old Costessey actively calling in the evenings' (AB), singles at Guist Bridge on 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE) and Lyng on 10 <sup>th</sup> (AJ).
<b>Common Kingfisher</b>	Single at Sparham Pools reported on 7 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup> . (RG,CH&KC; JP; BB&JE); also single at Bridge Lake, Lenwade on 30 <sup>th</sup> (NS).
<b>Green Woodpecker</b>	Singles at Pensthorpe on 13 <sup>th</sup> (RG) & Sparham Pools on 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE).
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	Singles at Hoe Common (NS&MS) & Fustyweed, Elsing (BS) on 14 <sup>th</sup> ; 2 at Bridge Lake, Lenwade on 30 <sup>th</sup> (NS)
<b>Skylark</b>	Up to 15 daily Old Costessey throughout month (AB); 13 Lyng (MS) & 20 at Sparham Pools (RG,CH&KC), 1 at Sparham Hall Farm on 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE) & 13 at Drayton on 15 <sup>th</sup> (NS)
<b>Meadow Pipit</b>	Bylaugh 20 on 6 <sup>th</sup> (AJ), Swanton Morley GP 4 (B&BP) & 2 Mattishall (BB&JE) on 7 <sup>th</sup> , Costessey Mill max 6 on 10 <sup>th</sup> (AB), Old Costessey max 10 on 13 <sup>th</sup> (AB) & Sparham Pools 24 on 29 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Pied Wagtail</b>	Singles at Old Costessey occasionally during month (AB) & Sparham Pools on 19 <sup>th</sup> (JP). Bylaugh 26 on 6 <sup>th</sup> (AJ) & Bylaugh Sewage Works 20 on 31 <sup>st</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Grey Wagtail</b>	Lyng Bridge 2 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (A&CJ, JH), singles at Worthing Mill on 13 <sup>th</sup> (RG) & Scarning on 14 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> (IB)
<b>Common Blackbird</b>	5 locations with highest count 101 at Sculthorpe on 1 <sup>st</sup> (S&BG).
<b>Fieldfare</b>	12 locations with highest counts at Lenwade 40 on 1 <sup>st</sup> (NS), Sparham Pools 30 (RG,CH&KC) & Whissonsett 50 on 7 <sup>th</sup> , Great Witchingham c50 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> (AJ) & Cawston 32 on 28 <sup>th</sup> (MS)
<b>Song Thrush</b>	6 locations with at least 6 singing from territories in Old Costessey from 16 <sup>th</sup> (AB)

<b>Redwing</b>	10 locations. Highest count 60 Lenwade on 1 <sup>st</sup> (NS) & 7 <sup>th</sup> (NS&MS) & frequent groups of up to 50 in Old Costessey area during month (AB)
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	Worthing Church 2 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (RG,CH&KC) & Sparham Pools 4 on 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE). AB reports 1 or 2 daily in Old Costessey area during month.
<b>Goldcrest</b>	Singles at Guist, Sculthorpe & Syderstone Common; 2 at Sparham Pools & Sculthorpe Moor.
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	6 locations with flocks of 12 at Sculthorpe Moor (BB&JE) on 1 <sup>st</sup> & Sparham Pools (BB&JE) on 14 <sup>th</sup> ; 10 at Sparham Pools (RG,CH&KC) on 7 <sup>th</sup> , Marriot's Way, Lenwade (BB&JE) on 20 <sup>th</sup> & Thorpe Marriot (JP) on 27 <sup>th</sup> . AB reports groups of up to 12 daily in his Old Costessey garden.
<b>Willow Tit</b>	Singles Sculthorpe Moor & Hempton Marsh (S&BG, BB&JE, B&BP, IB). MS & NS recorded 2 at Sculthorpe Moor on 7 <sup>th</sup> during the Bird Count.
<b>Marsh Tit</b>	7 locations with RG,CH&KC recording 4 at Sculthorpe Moor on 7 <sup>th</sup> & P&AB also recording 4 at same site on 21 <sup>st</sup> . Two members report this species in their gardens; BS saw 2 on 14 <sup>th</sup> in his garden at Fustyweed, Elsing & AB indicates that this species has been an occasional visitor to his garden in Old Costessey throughout the month.
<b>Wood Nuthatch</b>	Singles at Sparham Pools on 12 <sup>th</sup> (JP), Elsing Heath on 17 <sup>th</sup> (A&CJ) & Windsor Park, Dereham on 23 <sup>rd</sup> (C&JF)
<b>Eurasian Treecreeper</b>	Singles at Bawdeswell Heath, Sparham Pools, Sculthorpe Moor, Syderstone Common, Old Costessey & Windsor Park, Dereham.
<b>Eurasian Jay</b>	Taverham(1-2), Thorpe Marriot(2), Bridge Lake, Lenwade(2), Drayton(3) & Sparham Pools(1).
<b>Black-billed Magpie</b>	Syderstone Common(1), Taverham(1), Old Costessey(1), Bridge Lake, Lenwade(3). Highest count of 11 at Felthorpe on 7 <sup>th</sup> (MS&NS)
<b>Common Starling</b>	7 locations. AB reporting regular sizeable flocks in Old Costessey with max 140 on 3 <sup>rd</sup> . Also flocks of c100 at Bittering on 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE) & N Tuddenham on 20 <sup>th</sup> (B&BP).
<b>House Sparrow</b>	Only small flocks reported from a few sites. 8 at Old Costessey (AB), 5 in Lyng on 7 <sup>th</sup> (MS&NS), 2 in Ringland on 19 <sup>th</sup> (R&DH) & 8 in Thorpe Marriot on 27 <sup>th</sup> (JP).
<b>Eurasian Tree Sparrow</b>	Fulmodeston 6 on 1 <sup>st</sup> (IB&PR), Fustyweed, Elsing 7 on 14 <sup>th</sup> (BS) & Thorpe Marriot 2 on 27 <sup>th</sup> (JP).
<b>Chaffinch</b>	5 locations with highest count of 111 at Church Lane, Felthorpe on 7 <sup>th</sup> (P&AS)
<b>Brambling</b>	Singles at Sculthorpe Moor (BB&JE) & Worthing (B&BP) on 7 <sup>th</sup> & at Fustyweed, Elsing (BS) on 14 <sup>th</sup> ; 3 at Lyng Easthough on 20 <sup>th</sup> (NM) & Sculthorpe Moor on 28 <sup>th</sup> (IB)
<b>European Greenfinch</b>	4 locations with max counts of 15 at Felthorpe on 7 <sup>th</sup> (MS&NS) & Sculthorpe Moor on 21 <sup>st</sup> (P&AB)
<b>European Goldfinch</b>	6 locations with max counts of 50 at Hempton Marsh on 7 <sup>th</sup> , 17 at Church Lane, Felthorpe on 7 <sup>th</sup> (P&AS), 20 at Pensthorpe on 13 <sup>th</sup> (RG).
<b>Eurasian Siskin</b>	Just one record of 5 at Pensthorpe on 13 <sup>th</sup> (RG)
<b>Common Linnet</b>	Sculthorpe 11 on 1 <sup>st</sup> (S&BG), Sparham Hall Farm 100 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (RG,CH&KC) & 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE), Worthing 30 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (B&BP), Bittering 6 on 7 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)
<b>Common Redpoll</b>	7 Sparham Pools on 5 <sup>th</sup> (JP); 20 Sparham Hall Farm on 7 <sup>th</sup> (S&BG); 7 Pensthorpe on 13 <sup>th</sup> (RG); 2 Meally Redpoll in Old Costessey garden on 5 <sup>th</sup> (AB)
<b>Common Bullfinch</b>	11 locations mostly 1-2 with max counts of 3 at Lenwade Heath on 8 <sup>th</sup> (RG) & Bawdeswell Heath on 31 <sup>st</sup> (BB&JE) & 4 at Swanton Morley on 1 <sup>st</sup> (NM) & Sparham Pools on 12 <sup>th</sup> (JP)
<b>Yellowhammer</b>	4 locations, no large flocks reported with max count of 12 at Scarning on 1 <sup>st</sup> (IB)
<b>Reed Bunting</b>	5 locations with max count of 5 at Sparham Hall Farm on 7 <sup>th</sup> (RG,CH&KC) and 14 <sup>th</sup> (BB&JE)

Records also received for Mute Swan, Common Pheasant, Common Moorhen, Common Coot, Winter Wren, Dunnock(Hedge Accentor), European Robin, Great Tit, Coal Tit,, Blue Tit, Eurasian Jackdaw & Rook.

### January Contributors

**Peter & Alma Banson, Bob Bradley & Jenny Evans, Andrew Brown, Ian Brittain, Keith Chinn, Ray & Chris Gribble, Sue & Bill Gibney, Derek & Rosemary Harvey, Geoff Hemmings, Clare Hill, John Horsman, Alwyn & Carole Jackson, David Knight, Josh Leeder, Nigel Mears, Charles & Fran Neale, Jacky Pett, Barry & Bridget Pummell, Paul Riley, Bill Shepherd, Peter & Anne Smith, Martin Spriggs, Nick Street.**

WVBS NEEDS YOUR RECORDS!

Send your records to:

#### Hard Copy

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### Birds to look out for in the next month – March/April

1. Winter Thrushes – should be getting return passage birds
  - Redwing, Fieldfare. **Record all last sightings.**
2. Finches
  - Brambling & Siskin – should be coming into gardens now
  - Redpoll **Record all sightings.**
  - Linnet - **note flock size**
3. Warblers
  - Chiffchaff – Expect to hear first birds before next indoor meeting
  - Blackcap & Sedge Warbler
4. Wagtails
  - Yellow Wagtail - mainly from mid / end-April
  - Grey Wagtails – now setting up breeding territories. **All records please**
5. Hirundines
  - Sand Martin – first birds are being recorded in UK. **Record first sighting.**
  - Swallow – mainly from mid / end-April. **Record first sighting**
  - House Martin - mainly from mid / end-April **Record first sighting**
6. Ducks and Geese
  - Shelduck – now moving back inland to breed
  - Goosander – moving back to breeding areas soon, **record last sightings.**
  - Wigeon, Teal, Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck
  - Goldeneye - returning to breeding areas soon, **record last sightings**
  - Pintail - returning to breeding areas soon, **record last sightings**
  - Pink-footed Geese - returning to breeding areas, **record last sightings**

7. Waders
  - Oystercatcher - now moving back inland to breed
  - Golden Plover- returning to breeding areas, **record last sightings**
  - Lapwing – **Note any breeding records**
  - Green Sandpiper – passage birds should be present from now on
  - Common Sandpiper - passage birds should be present from mid-April
  - Redshank - **Note any breeding records**
  - Snipe - **Note any breeding records**
8. Gulls
  - **Record flock sizes and species**
9. Woodpeckers
  - Great Spotted and Lesser Spotted Wdprks are far easier to find during March before the leaves come on the trees. **Record all sightings of Lesser Spotted**
10. Raptors
  - Sparrowhawk – Display during March
  - Goshawk – Display during March
  - Buzzard. **Record all sightings**
  - Hen Harrier **Record all sightings**
  - Marsh Harrier – returning to breeding sites. **Record all sightings.**

**Rare Bird Alert! Attlebridge 11.52am Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February**

Acting on a tip-off I grabbed my bins & scope and raced to join the reported twitchers at Attlebridge...

Phew, they were there, all eyes focused.

Barely stopping to lock the car I raced to join the gathered throng.

Jostling for position I said to my immediate neighbour, "Hey mate, what you got?"

"Not showing at the moment, bit elusive" came the reply.

Impatience got the better of me – "Well, what is it?"

"We're looking for the Lesser Spotted Bernard Matthews".

"So you're not twitchers then?"

"No mate, we're the press waiting for Bernard Matthews to leave Great Witchingham Hall!"  
Another wasted journey. Not for the first time!

Alwyn Jackson. (This is a true story)

**Articles/letters etc. to reach Margaret by Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007 – thank you**

By email at [mandbshapcott@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mandbshapcott@yahoo.co.uk)

Or post to Margaret Shapcott, 8 Cedar Rise, Mattishall, Dereham, NR20 3NN