

Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society



**Thirteenth Annual Report
2015**

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Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

2015 Annual Report

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Covering the Wensum Valley from Norwich to Fakenham and beyond

Founded in March 2003 our aims are to:-

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

Meeting venue Weston Longville Hall for All on the third Thursday of each month.

Committee 2015

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

Front cover: Little Owl, photographed by member Barry Pummell

Chairman's Report 2015

Another twelve months have passed with another successful year for Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society. The Society continues to flourish with enjoyable field trips and knowledgeable speakers. Unfortunately we did not have the influx of new members this year, but still ended the year with 122 members and 2 honorary members. Again I am going to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee on your behalf, and for the support they give me. I would also mention David Knight, who as President is not officially a member of the committee but continues to edit the newsletter, and to Selwyn and Kathy Jones who look after our library. And now a special thank you to those of you who give time supporting the Society in a myriad of ways, we could not function without you.

During 2015 the Society started its own Twitter account, continued helping with the Pensthorpe recording, monitored the Churchyard Nest Boxes and were represented at Wild About Wensum and Wild About Norfolk. We also managed to have 9 Indoor Meetings where our speakers covered topics ranging from the cold of Spitzbergen to the warmth of Sri Lanka and The Pantanal as well as local activities on The Wash, at Hickling, Pensthorpe and the River Wissey. We also had talks on Owls and Better Birding. On the field trip front we had a new venture this year. Instead of our traditional evening at Marsham Heath to see and hear Nightjars, we spent an afternoon birding around Cley, picked up fish and chips in Holt, took them to Kelling Heath to devour them, accompanied by Pimms and Strawberries. All prelude to looking and listening for Nightjars on the heath. We had a further twelve outings ranging from places of local interest like Holkham, Sculthorpe, and Bayfield to a boat trip at Hickling NWT, visits to Frampton Marsh and Minsmere. We ended the year at High Ash Farm where we had the opportunity to speak to Chris Skinner. In May a group of 12 had a long weekend in Dorset, discovering a new area with beautiful countryside and seeing well over 110 species.

Rounding off the year was our Christmas Social with those tantalising quizzes.

Now 2016 looms and we can look forward to another interesting, informative and, hopefully, exciting year ahead.



Buzzards, by Gil Brooking

WVBS 2015 programme of Meetings and Events

Sun 3rd January	The Annual Winter Bird Count. Coordinated by Lin Pateman.
Thurs 15th January	Better Birding – Speaker Nick Moran.
Sat 31st January	A Field Trip to The Hawk & Owl Trust and NOA Hempton Marsh. Coordinated by Alwyn Jackson.
Thurs 19th February	Wader Ringing in the Wash – Speaker Tim Turner.
Sat 28th February	A Field Trip to Holkham - Coordinated by Phil Borley.
Thurs 19th March	A Year at NWT Hickling Broad – Speaker John Blackburn.
Sun 29th March	The Hoe Bird Walk - Coordinated by David Knight.
Thurs 16th April	AGM followed by: The Bus Pass Boys in Sri Lanka – Speaker Allan Hale.
Sat 25th April	Wild About the Wensum.
Sun 26th April	The Bayfield Walk and the Glaven Valley - Coordinated by Mary Walker.
Thurs 7th – Mon 11th May	WVBS Member's Trip to Dorset.
Thurs 14th May	A Ringland Circuit – Coordinated by Steve Chapman.
Sun 17th May	A Field Trip for the Dawn Chorus – Coordinated by Glenn Collier.
Thurs 21st May	Pensthorpe, a Window on the Wensum - Speaker Bill Jordan.

Tues 26th May	An Evening Walk at Scarning Water Meadows – Coordinated by Trevor & Wendy Brown.
Sat 6th June	A Field Trip to Cley NWT followed by Nightjars at Kelling Heath - Coordinated by Phil Borley & Lin Pateman.
Sun 28th June	A Field Trip to Hickling Broad NWT - Coordinated by Mary Walker.
Thurs 16th July	A Cultural History of Owls - Speaker Mike Toms.
Sun 9th August	A Field Trip to RSPB Minsmere - Coordinated by Ray Gribble.
Thurs 20th August	Our Annual Summer Social Evening.
Sat 29th August	A Field Trip to RSPB Snettisham & Titchwell - Coordinated by Sue Gale.
Thurs 17th September	The Pantanal – Speaker David Pelling.
Sun 27th September	A Field Trip to Frampton Marsh - Coordinated by Phil Borley.
Thurs 15th October	The Wissey Wetland Project – Speaker Nick Carter.
Sun 25th October	A Field Trip to Kelling Quags & Salthouse Marshes – Coordinated by Sue Gale & Mary Walker.
Thurs 19th November	Spitzbergen, Kingdom of the Ice Bear – Speaker Julia Burton.
Sun 30th November	A Field Trip to High Ash Farm - Coordinated by Mary Walker & Steve Chapman.
Thurs 10th December	Annual Xmas Social.

Diary of Events in 2015

Sunday 3rd January - The Annual Winter Bird Count.

Coordinated by Lin Pateman.

As always the WVBS year got off to a flying start with our annual count and this year a record eight teams took part and in addition two “unofficial” teams as well. A total of 89 species were recorded for the day with the best sighting possibly being the Great White Egret at Sparham Pools.

The trophy was duly presented to the winning team of Alan Fordham, David Gibbons & Phil Borley and the day ended with tea and cakes back at Weston Longville Village Hall.

Thursday 15th January – Better Birding – Speaker Nick Moran.

Our speaker certainly gave us food for thought and showed how, by following a few simple rules we can all become better birders. He advised a logical approach starting perhaps with improving sound identification as visual sighting can be made easier when you know where to look. Among other points that were made was the importance of proper records from the same area so that different trends can be identified over a period of time.

Saturday 31st January - A Field Trip to The Hawk & Owl Trust and NOA Hempton Marsh - Coordinated by Alwyn Jackson.

Our day started at The Hawk & Owl Trust in freezing temperatures and we visited all the hides before moving back to the visitor centre for lunch, after recording all the usual species during our walk around the reserve.

Later we visited NOA Hempton Marsh which is a small reserve situated near Fakenham. This was a new venue for most of our members and created an interesting finale to our day.

Thursday 19th February – Wader Ringing in the Wash – Speaker Tim Turner.

The Wash ringing group has been thriving for 55 years and apart from having ringed over 292,000 birds during that time also provides training for overseas students and individual research projects at various levels.

Tim also provided an interesting insight into the more modern methods of recording although as these are still relatively expensive there is still a reliance on traditional methods.

This was a fascinating talk and it may well have prompted some of our members to get involved.

Saturday 28th February – A Field Trip to Holkham - Coordinated by Phil Borley.

Seventeen members enjoyed a very enjoyable time with 86 species recorded for the day. Among the most notable sightings were Rough-legged Buzzard, Grey Partridge and a Red Kite. Later on the beach Velvet Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser and a Red-throated Diver were seen. After lunch a visit to RSPB Titchwell produced among others Red-crested Pochard, Water Rail, Spotted Redshank and a Goldeneye before bad weather brought the day to a close.

Thursday 19th March – A Year at NWT Hickling Broad – Speaker John Blackburn.

Hickling Broad is one of Norfolk Wildlife Trust's flagship reserves and John has been Warden for 18 years. The highest point on the reserve is only 2 metres above sea level and the deepest water is under 2 metres deep. There are plans afoot to compensate for reed bed lost elsewhere notably on the Suffolk coast by modifying and protecting reed growth and dyke systems.

Hickling is an important site not only for birds such as Bitterns, Cranes and Spoonbills but also for Water Voles and other mammals. Also during the summer you can see a varied array of insects such as Swallowtail, Purple Hairstreak, Speckled Wood, Fen Mason Wasps and Norfolk and Southern Hawkers.

The evening was a fascinating insight into the management of such an important site.

Sunday 29th March - The Hoe Bird Walk - Coordinated by David Knight.

Once again David gave us an insight into the various schemes and surveys that are being conducted at this site including the eradication of bracken to rejuvenate heather growth and the use of ponies for grazing to improve the flora and fauna.

Despite it being a very wet and dark morning a total of 63 species was recorded.

Thursday 16th April - AGM followed by: The Bus Pass Boys in Sri Lanka – Speaker Allan Hale.

Our AGM being quickly dealt with we were entertained to an account by our speaker of a trip taken by him and some members to the Teardrop Island and included many stunning photographs of the fascinating wildlife to be found there. The talk was delivered with great humour as is usual with Allan's presentations.

Saturday 25th April - Wild About the Wensum.

This is a regular event in our calendar and as usual we provided a supply of volunteers to man the hides and help a steady stream of visitors to see the birds feeding on the scrapes. In the marquee we had our Society display erected and also organized a colouring competition for the Brownies.

Sunday 26th April – The Bayfield Walk and the Glaven Valley - Coordinated by Mary Walker.

The Bayfield Estate is carefully maintained for wildlife and is always a favourite venue to visit. This year was no exception with members enjoying a fine spring day and recording a total of 68 species during the day.

Thursday 7th – Monday 11th May – WVBS Member's Trip to Dorset.

This year's very successful and enjoyable trip by eleven society member's included visits to the Portland area, RSPB Arne and Durlston Country Park. The trip was blessed throughout with fine weather and a good selection of species was recorded.

Thursday 14th May – A Ringland Circuit – Coordinated by Steve Chapman.

This was another new venue for the club and was a chance to see another facet of the Norfolk countryside. 16 members attended and on a cold and rain threatened evening 39 species were recorded although unfortunately the nightingales decided not to sing.

Sunday 17th May – A Field Trip for the Dawn Chorus – Coordinated by Glenn Collier.

This is always one of our most eagerly awaited events as by permission we are allowed on parts of the reserve not normally accessible and before dawn had broken 14 members assembled in the car park and listened for the first birds to start calling. Later in the morning a little cattle herding was necessary to allow members safe passage back to the public areas of the reserve. A total of 56 species was recorded for the morning.

Thursday 21st May – Pensthorpe, a Window on the Wensum - Speaker Bill Jordan.

After thanking the Society for its help during the year Bill began by giving a brief history of the site and then proceeded to outline how Pensthorpe, over the years has become a forerunner in conservation projects for birds such as Turtle Dove, Corncrake and the Crane.

We also heard how the farm has been made up to conservation grade and the Wensum flowing through it has been improved by increasing the flow and so providing better habitats for a range of wildlife along its banks.

Tuesday 26th May – An Evening Walk at Scarning Water Meadows – Coordinated by Trevor & Wendy Brown.

Scarning Water Meadows are maintained by volunteers in conjunction with the Parish Council. Work is undertaken to encourage natural plants to flourish. Our members also saw evidence of more major works such as fresh scrapes to create new habitat for a range of creatures both large and small.

Saturday 6th June – A Field Trip to Cley NWT followed by Nightjars at Kelling Heath - Coordinated by Phil Borley & Lin Pateman.

This year's event was a departure from our usual trip to Marsham Heath for nightjars and started with a visit to NWT Cley. After completing the circuit Members moved to Holt to pick up fish and chips and travelled on to Kelling Heath for the evening. Where, a glass of Pimm's fruit cup was enjoyed with the food and then as darkness started to gather we moved deeper into the heath to listen and watch for the elusive nightjar. Unfortunately birds were few and far between this year although they were known to be present and had been seen the night before.

Sunday 28th June - A Field Trip to Hickling Broad NWT - Coordinated by Mary Walker.

This was a new venture for the Society and was eagerly awaited for the opportunity to see Hickling Broad from a boat. Apart from being able to observe the birds from a new aspect and visiting new hides we were given an insight into the various methods of conserving the reed bed edges from marauding geese.

Later we visited Stubbs Mill and were given a comprehensive history by Hazel Nudd going back to 1795.

A total of 79 species were recorded for the day

Thursday 16th July – A Cultural History of Owls - Speaker Mike Toms.

Mike started his talk by investigating the history of our relationship with owls and how various cultures have such different views about them.

The second part of the talk concentrated on two species of non-native species and whether they should be conserved or left for nature to take its course.

This was a thought provoking talk that asked some searching questions as well as providing answers.

Sunday 9th August - A Field Trip to RSPB Minsmere - Coordinated by Ray Gribble.

This is always a popular event in our calendar and this year was no exception and the party was split into two. The weather was fine and bright and a good range of species was seen by both parties with a total of 74 being recorded for the day.

Thursday 20th August - Our Annual Summer Social Evening.

Our annual barbecue and social was held in fine weather and members were able to sit outside and enjoy good food and conversation. During the evening a light hearted quiz was held but there remains some doubt as to the validity of the final winner.

Saturday 29th August – A Field Trip to RSPB Snettisham & Titchwell - Coordinated by Sue Gale.

The day had started earlier for some members at Titchwell but eventually everyone met in the Snettisham RSPB car park for the walk out to the reserve to wait for the afternoon high tide.

As usual a fine list of species was assembled with the highlight being large flocks of Knot turning and twisting in the sparkling light and the beat of their wings being clearly audible to everyone.

Thursday 17th September - The Pantanal – Speaker David Pelling.

This was the account of a trip taken by David to Brazil's great wetlands to photograph Jaguars and all manner of wildlife. As with all David's talks this one was illustrated by stunning photographs throughout.

Sunday 27th September - A Field Trip to Frampton Marsh - Coordinated by Phil Borley.

This was our first visit to this reserve for a while and it was interesting to see how it had developed since we were here last.

The nine members that undertook the rather long trek to get there were well rewarded by a brilliant day with the reserve proper being searched in the morning and after lunch a walk to the river mouth where we were rewarded with the sight of a Ruddy Shelduck. The day ended with 66 species recorded for the day.

Thursday 15th October - The Wissey Wetland Project – Speaker Nick Carter.

The project forms part of the NWT plans to create Living Landscapes around the countryside and part of the plan is to create reed bed (60000 plugs planted already) to compensate for habitat that will be lost on the coast due to erosion and sea level rise. Water levels are controlled by a system of sluices and a close watch is kept to stop invasive species taking a hold anywhere on the site.

Sunday 25th October – A Field Trip to Kelling Quags & Salthouse Marshes – Coordinated by Sue Gale & Mary Walker.

The day started in fine weather with a slow walk down the track to the Quags. There was plenty of movement and soon it became apparent that there would be a good list by the end of the day. After lunch we made for Salthouse marsh where possibly the bird of the day, a Short-eared Owl was flushed from almost under our feet followed shortly by another. A total of 78 species was recorded for the day.

Thursday 19th November – Spitzbergen, Kingdom of the Ice Bear – Speaker Julia Burton.

As always Julia gave us a talk filled with interesting information and beautiful photography. Spitzbergen is the largest island in the Svalbard archipelago and for a few short months part of the island blooms with flowers and mosses. 38 species of bird regularly breed and another 12 intermittently. The sea around abounds with life such as seals, walrus and several species of whale. Polar Bears are present and have to have a close watch kept on them.

Sunday 30th November -A Field Trip to High Ash Farm - Coordinated by Mary Walker & Steve Chapman.

A very damp and windy morning for our trip but things improved as we walked the tracks around the farm which is planted extensively with seed crops and so attracts vast numbers of hungry birds in the winter. A total of 42 species had been recorded by the close.

Thursday 10th December - Annual Xmas Social.

A record number of members attended the Social this year and as usual the evening was enlivened with glasses of punch and several thought provoking quizzes. The evening was a fitting end to another successful year for the Society.

This diary has been compiled from contributions to the Newsletter by David Knight, Liz Bridge, Lucy Topsom, Keith Walker, Lin Pateman, Sue Gale, Martin Spriggs, David Gibbons, Philip Howard, Alwyn Jackson, Sonia Mant, Catherine Brown, Lynda Vincent, Keith Jones, Eric Jarvis, Jeni Willis, Jacky Pett, and Joe Harkness. Our thanks go to them for their contributions.

The Systematic List

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

Records have been entered into the Society's spreadsheet by David Gibbons. The species texts have been drafted by;

Steve Chapman (Mute Swan-Red Kite),
 Alwyn Jackson (White-tailed Eagle-Lesser Black-backed Gull),
 David Gibbons (Herring Gull-Long-tailed Tit),
 Ray Gribble (Chiffchaff-House Sparrow) and
 Joe Harkness (Tree Sparrow-Reed Bunting & Escapes).

The Systematic List has then been compiled by Alwyn Jackson. Our thanks go to Gil Brooking who produced the line drawings that enhance the report.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeding resident. Green listed.

Records throughout the year from numerous sites in the recording area. High counts of 10+ birds at Pensthorpe (10-14 birds throughout the year), 13 on the Hoe Bird Walk on 18th Jan, 18 at Ringland Common on 1st Feb, 13 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr and 16 at Costessey Pits on 1st May.

Breeding confirmed at Pensthorpe and Sparham Pools.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus colombianus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers. Amber listed.

Two records: 20 in Sparham Pools area flying over on 18th Feb (CS) and 1 at Costessey Marshes on 12th Mar (AB).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers. Amber listed.

Records for both winter periods from 5 locations; 2 at Great Ryburgh on 18th Feb flying over, 3 at Costessey on 2nd Nov flying SW, 20 at N Tuddenham on 16th Nov and 7 in Sparham Pools area on 7th Dec heading upriver.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

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

Recorded at 12 locations over both winter periods, including 6 reports of birds flying over. Counts of 100+: 200 over Great Ryburgh on 2nd Jan, 100+ at Marsham Heath on 9th Feb, 300+ flying NE over Ringland 24th Oct and c100 at Drayton 1st Nov.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common naturalised resident and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Over 100 records from throughout the recording area. Highest counts of 300+ from Pensthorpe, which has a large resident breeding population, 230 at West Raynham 15th Feb and 150 at Bittering 4th Dec.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common naturalised resident. Green listed.

Present throughout the year mainly on or near lakes and gravel pits. Highest counts were 30 in Sparham Pools area in Feb, 40 at Pensthorpe in June and over 90 at Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering between Oct – Dec.

Breeding confirmed at Pensthorpe and probable in Sparham Pools area.



Canada Geese, by Gil Brooking

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

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

Most records from Pensthorpe which hosts a feral population of up to 160 with highest counts in June and lowest in late autumn. Two other records: 1 bird at Bowthorpe Marsh on 16th Feb and 5 at Great Ryburgh on 19th Apr.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Naturalised resident, locally common.

Widespread throughout the recording area with nearly 90 records from 14 sites. Highest counts were from Pensthorpe with a peak of 64 in Sept.

Proof of breeding at Penshorpe, Ringland and Sparham Pools area.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A scarce visitor to the valley. Amber listed.

Records all year round from Pensthorpe, suggesting a feral population, with a peak of 25 birds in early Apr. Records from 4 other sites were from the winter period only. These could be birds dispersed from the Pensthorpe flock or genuine winter visitors.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Very scarce naturalised resident.

Regular sightings of up to 3 birds at Pensthorpe from Apr onwards although the origin of these is not clear. One other record of a single bird at Taverham Mill on 5th Oct (DH).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

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

Recorded from seven sites of both wintering and passage migrants. Highest counts were 20 Pensthorpe and 12 Sparham Pools area during both winter periods, whilst Great Ryburgh and Pensthorpe both had peaks of 40 during spring migration and 50 Pensthorpe during autumn migration.

No evidence of breeding in the recording area.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Present year-round at 8 sites, with peak counts in winter and migration periods and numbers dropping off in summer months. Haverlingland Hall identified as a wintering stronghold with up to 80 birds on 17th Jan, alongside 38 at Sparham Pools on 14th Feb and 45 at Pensthorpe on 19th Dec. During the autumn migration period Pensthorpe had a peak count of 85.

No evidence of breeding.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Fairly scarce winter visitor and rare breeder. Amber listed.

In the first winter period recorded at 11 sites in the valley, with counts of 25 at Bittering and 23 at Gt Ryburgh on 4th Jan, 132 at Pensthorpe on 8th Jan, 10 at Costessey on 22nd Mar.

Single figure counts from only Pensthorpe in the summer months, increasing steadily during autumn and second winter periods to a peak count of 500+ on 9th Nov.

Only one other record in this period of 3 birds in Sparham Pools area on 16th Nov.

No breeding evidence recorded.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

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

Recorded throughout the year along the valley, mainly at lakes, gravel pits and wetlands. Highest counts consistently at Pensthorpe, with a peak of 150 in Dec and 63 at Neatherd Moor, Dereham on 31st Dec.

Breeding confirmed at Great Ryburgh, Pensthorpe, and Sparham Pools area.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Most records from Pensthorpe with no records between June and Oct and highest count of 8 on 9th Nov. Also single bird at Hell Gate, Bittering on 6th Dec and at Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering on 19th Dec.

Garganey *Anas strepera*

Scarce passage migrant. Amber listed.

Single record of a pair at Great Ryburgh on 14th Apr (SMc).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A winter visitor and rare breeder. Amber listed.

Recorded at 5 sites. Good counts at Pensthorpe throughout both winter periods with peaks of 27 on 23rd Mar and 23 on 19th Dec with numbers dropping to single figures during the summer months. Other notable counts 6 at Lyng Easthaugh on 7th Jan, 2 at Gt Ryburgh on 22nd Apr, 8 in Sparham Pools area on 15th Sept and 10 at Haveringland Hall on 21st Dec.

No evidence of breeding.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

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

Recorded throughout the year at Pensthorpe and during the winter periods at Creaking Gate Lake (Bittering), Great Ryburgh and Sparham Pools. Highest count of 18 at Pensthorpe on 10th Feb.

No breeding evidence.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

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

Records throughout the year from 9 sites close to or on the Wensum river. Notable high counts c35 at Swanton Morley GP on 11th Jan, 100+ at Pensthorpe on 10th Feb and 19th Dec, 50 in Sparham Pools area on 19th Feb and during Oct, 60 at Lyng on 19th Dec.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe and Sparham Pools area.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce winter visitor. Red listed.

An unconfirmed report of a Scaup or Lesser Scaup at Colney fishing pits on 19th Feb (EJ).

A single male Scaup present in Sparham Pools area for just over a month from 21st Feb to 23rd Mar. (CS, *et al*).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Scarce winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

Single bird seen on fishing lake during HBW on 15th Mar (DK).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Very scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. **Amber listed**

A single wintering bird recorded at Great Ryburgh on 4th Jan (PB *et al*). Up to 3 birds recorded at Pensthorpe throughout the year but their origin is uncertain.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Very rare winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

A single record from Swanton Morley GPs on 4th Jan (DK *et al*, IB), and 2 birds at Bittering on 14th Mar (IB). Records from Pensthorpe of up to 4 birds during both winter periods. The provenance of these is uncertain although it was suspected that at least one male was a wild bird.

Red-breasted

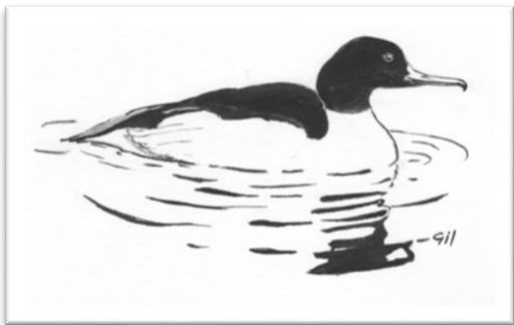
Merganser

Mergus serrator

Very rare winter visitor.

Green listed.

A single bird at Pensthorpe on 28th Jan (MW, PA).



Goosander, by Gil Brooking

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. **Green listed.**

In the first winter period up to 8 in Sparham Pools area between Jan and early Apr, 1 at Haveringland Hall on 10th Jan, 3 at Lyng Easthaugh on 11th Jan and 2 at Ringland on the Wensum on 16th Mar. In the second winter period a single bird in Sparham Pools area on 31st Dec.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Common naturalised resident.

Recorded throughout the valley with counts of 9 at N Tuddenham on 26th Jan and 23rd Sept, 7 at Bylaugh on 3rd Mar, 16 at Ringland on 4th Apr, 10 at Costessey on 2nd May, 20 on the HBW on 18th Oct and 13 at Worthing on 23rd Nov.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Scarce resident, declined in recent years. Red listed.

Despite its relative scarcity compared to Red-legged, records from 14 locations throughout the year with good numbers of 7 at Scarning on 4th Jan, 7 at Daffy Green on 30th Sept, 12 at Bittering on 4th Dec. Two pairs resident at Sparham Hall Farm throughout the year.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Very common naturalised resident.

Game managed on many farms and estates in the recording area. Counts of up to 7 throughout the year with exceptionally high counts of 45 at Costessey on 1st Apr, 26 at Ringland on 2nd May and 25 at Worthing on 9th Dec.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Rare passage migrant in valley. Amber listed.

A single juvenile recorded on the HBW on 20th Sept was the first ever for this long running and regular count made by NWT members (DK).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

Wintering records from 11 sites in the recording area, on or near rivers and lakes, with peak counts of 20 at Elsing on 5th Jan, 14 in Sparham Pools area on 16th Jan, 13 at Lyng Easthaugh on 17th Jan, 14 at Costessey Pits on 4th Feb and 15 at Pensthorpe on 19th Dec. Summer records of up to 3 birds from Pensthorpe, Costessey and HBW.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Very scarce winter visitor. Red listed.

Three records of wintering birds: 2 at Pensthorpe on 12th Feb, 1 at Lyng Easthaugh on 17th Feb (SC) and 1 bird in Sparham Pools area until 3rd Mar (CS).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Very scarce resident. Amber listed.

Present year-round with most records 1-3 birds from riverside sites. Notable high counts of 8 at Pensthorpe on 24th Feb, 4 at Great Ryburgh on 30th Apr, 4 on the HBW on 17th May.

No evidence of breeding received although it is likely they breed in the recording area.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

A very rare vagrant.

A single individual was recorded by a number of observers in the Lyng Easthaugh / Sparham Pools / Lyng area between 4th Jan and 28th Mar.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common resident. Green listed.

Records of mostly 1-3 birds throughout the recording area in all months, with notable high counts of 8 at Ringland on 1st Feb, 12 at Costessey Pits on 1st May, 7 on the HBW on 19th July and 5 at Elsing on 19th Sept.

Possibly breeding in the recording area although no evidence received.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

A very rare vagrant.

A single record at Queen's Hills, Costessey on 18th Apr (AB). Origin uncertain.

Little Grebe *Trachybaptus ruficollis*

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

Records from 9 locations either on lakes or the River Wensum with most counts varying between 1 and 3 individuals.

Sparham Pools area had an exceptional count of 8 on one pool on 26th Oct and up to 10 during Nov and Dec.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe with one juvenile recorded.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

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

Good numbers recorded at 6 locations throughout the first winter period and spring, with notable counts of 15 at Swanton Morley on 11th Jan, 11 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr and 1st May and 11 in Sparham Pools area on 1st May.

Numbers recorded decreased through late summer to the first winter period with just singles and pairs observed from Aug onwards.

Proof of breeding established at Costessey pits with an adult pair and juveniles on 10th July.

Breeding also confirmed in Sparham Pools area with 3 nesting pairs on 22nd Mar and an adult pair with 2 juveniles on 13th July.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

*Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.***

Two records of singles from the Swanton Novers Watchpoint on 7th June (PA) and 11th July (GAJ).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

*Very scarce resident established from reintroductions elsewhere in England. **Amber listed.***

Over 80 records of mainly singles from 31 locations, a good indication that the species is becoming less scarce in the recording area. High count of 5 over Ringland on 9th May.



Red Kites, by Gil Brooking

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Very rare vagrant.

One fortunate member observed a single bird flying over the A47 SE of Swaffham on 14th Mar (IB).

Earlier the same day a bird had been reported over Great Cressingham and then late afternoon at Warham Green on the N Norfolk coast. Subsequently there were sightings of this species in the Cley/Sheringham/ Hickling area on the 16th Mar, near Loddon on 18th, Ranworth on 19th, Great Yarmouth/Hickling on 20th, Horsey/Hickling on 23rd, Dereham on 29th, in Apr at Titchwell on 18th, Horsey on 21st, at Salthouse/Cley on 25th then at Holkham and finally at Holme as it flew W offshore on the same day.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

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

Total of 25 reports of 1-2 birds from 12 sites between Jan-Nov.

First winter period at Bintree Mill, Gateley, Guist Common (2), Melton Constable and Pensthorpe.

During Apr-Sept period at Beetley, Bintree Mill (2), Elsing, Great Ryburgh, Guist Common (2), Pensthorpe (2) and Scarning.

During the second winter period a single bird at Sparham Hall Farm seen on 3 days during Oct and an adult female with juv at Guist Common in Nov.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

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

A "Ring-tail" (female or juv) at New Costessey on 20th Feb (AG) and a female at Swanton Novers on 19th May (IB).

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

*Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. **Amber listed.***

Unconfirmed report of a single bird at Ringland Common on 18th Apr (AB).

(*Editor's note:* There was a subsequent unconfirmed report of a female inland at Barnham Broom on 17th May but the rest of the County records were of birds on the NW coastal strip).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

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

A total of 127 sightings of largely 1-2 birds from 47 scattered sites. Higher counts of 3 on HBW in Mar, 12 at Costessey Quarry in Apr, 9 at Costessey Pits, 3 at Dereham SW and 3 at Lenwade in May and 3 on HBW in Dec.

Two pairs confirmed breeding at Sparham Hall Farm.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Scarce resident and passage migrant. Green listed.

Now seen regularly throughout the year with reports of 1-2 birds at 79 sites. Higher counts in **Jan** at Sculthorpe (8); in **Feb** Ringland (11); Bylaugh (6), Sparham Pools area (6), Elsing Bridge (5), Pensthorpe (5); in **Mar** Pensthorpe (10), Easton (6), Bylaugh (6); in **Apr** Costessey (24), Pensthorpe (8); in **May** Costessey Pits (16), HBW (10), Pensthorpe (7); in **June** Pensthorpe (6); in **July** HBW (6); in **Aug** Pensthorpe (6); in **Sept** Mill Street, Elsing (7), Scarning (7), Pensthorpe (10), Great Ryburgh (9). Some of these counts probably included migratory or post-breeding dispersal movements.

Confirmed breeding of one pair at Sparham.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

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

One spring record of a single bird at Sparham on 14th Apr (CS).

In autumn 1-3 birds (not aged) at Sparham between 16th Sept-1st Oct with up to 2 juv birds in area of Three Bridges Farm, Elsing / Elsing Bridge / Elsing Hal / Lyng between 18th Sept-7th Oct (IB, *et al*) possibly the same birds. These birds were making a stopover to feed whilst on migration.

Water Rail *Rallus aquatus*

Very scarce resident and winter visitor. Green listed.

Jan-Apr reported at SMHOT (3), Pensthorpe (1), Lyng Easthaugh (1-3) and Sparham Pools area (1-3).

No further reports until July when singles at Guist Common and Dereham Rush Meadows then at Pensthorpe in Sept; Dereham SW (2) and Scarning (2) in Oct; Great Ryburgh (2), Sparham Pools area and Guist Common in Nov; at Dolphin Drain, Marriott's Way, Norwich (2) and Guist Common (2) in Dec.

Very difficult to confirm breeding but birds heard calling at Pensthorpe on 23rd Mar and at Guist Common on 19th July.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*.

Common resident supplemented by autumn immigrants. Green listed.

Reported present at 15 sites. Regular monthly counts at Pensthorpe – Jan 40, Feb 40+, Mar 40, Apr c30, May 22, June 18, July 16, Aug c30, Sept 38, Oct 34, Nov 29, Dec 28.

Other high counts of 21 Hevingham Hall lake in Mar and c25 at Creaking Gate Lake, Bittering in Oct.

Breeding confirmed at Pensthorpe and Great Ryburgh.

Coot *Falica atra*.

Common resident and winter visitor. Green listed.

Reports from just 9 sites. Highest monthly counts from Pensthorpe were for Jan 54, Feb 54, Mar 45, Apr c50, May 21, June 30, July 74, Aug 110+, Sept 92, Oct 105, Nov 67, Dec 85.

Elsewhere 7 at Lyng Easthaugh and 9 at Haverlingland Hall lake in Jan with 12 in Mar and 45 in Sparham Pools area in Oct.

Breeding confirmed at Pensthorpe with up to 3 pairs, no reports received of breeding elsewhere.



Coot, by Gil Brooking

Common Crane *Grus grus*.

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

Two birds flying over New Costessey on 30th Mar (AB), 4 flying over Pensthorpe woods on 20th Apr (SC, BP) and 2 over Hall Walk, Lenwade on 2nd May (SG).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare summer visitor. Amber listed.

Earliest report was of single bird at Pensthorpe on 6th Mar with 11 on 12th Mar & 2nd Apr, 10 on 1st May increasing to 13 on 25th including 4 young. Eight on 4th June included 6 young (R&CG, *et al*).

Elsewhere single birds at Sparham on 7th May (CS) and at Great Ryburgh on 2nd July (GRWG).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Scarce summer visitor. Amber listed.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe where a pair observed with 3 young in late May and an adult with a juvenile in late June. Two pairs in Sparham Pools area but no subsequent outcome of breeding success received.

At Pensthorpe highest counts of 14 in Mar, 11 in Apr, 21 in May, 12 in June & July.

Latest reported sighting there of single bird on 25th Sept.

Elsewhere 8 at Rawhall GP, Bittering on 27th Mar, 7 at Ringland on 2nd May with 1-3 birds at occasional times between 26th Feb – 17th July at a further 6 sites.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

During first winter period counts in **Jan** of c200 at Hoe on 2nd, up to c400 also at Hoe between 4th-15th and 10 at Gressenhall on 17th. In **Feb** 20 at N Tuddenham on 5th, c50 at Worthing on 14th and a single bird at Ringland on 28th. In **Mar** 27 over Great Ryburgh on 5th and 20 over Worthing village on 8th was latest reported sighting.

The earliest report of returning birds was on 3rd Oct when 800 at Sparham. Thereafter in **Oct** c500 at Sparham Grove on 11th and c900 at Dunton on 12th. In **Nov** 40 at N Tuddenham on 21st and 23 at Dunton on 23rd.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Very rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Single bird at Thorpe Marriott on 24th July (MMc).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.

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

Max counts in Jan of c500 at Hoe, 200 at Gressenhall, 100 at Pensthorpe; in Feb 400+ at Pensthorpe, c100 at Thurning and 51 at Worthing; in Mar 250 at Pensthorpe and 12 at Worthing on 27th; in Apr c25 at Pensthorpe and 1-4 birds at a further 6 sites.

Evidence of breeding at Great Ryburgh where 4 chicks seen on 24th Apr; at Pensthorpe where 1 nest with 3 chicks on 1st May, 2 broods each of 3 & 2 chicks on 25th May, an adult with a juv on 30th June and 100 birds including young on 13th July.

High counts in second half of year – Aug 300+ at Pensthorpe; Sept 260 at Pensthorpe and 60 at Dunton; Oct 56 moving NW at New Costessey; Nov c100 at Pensthorpe, 15 at N Tuddenham and c200 at Fakenham.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadris dubius*

Passage migrant and very scarce summer visitor. Green listed.

Reported present at Beetley, Bintree Mill, Great Ryburgh, Pensthorpe and Rawhall GP. Earliest was single bird at Pensthorpe on 23rd Mar and the latest at same site on 13th July.

Proof of breeding at Pensthorpe only and highest count of 7 there on 4th June.



Little Ringed Plover, by Gil Brooking

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Very rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

At Pensthorpe 4 birds displaying on 13th May, 2 there on 25th and a single bird on 13th July (LW, PA, *et al*)

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Single bird at Dunton on 16th Apr (PB) and 2 at Great Ryburgh on 11th July (GRWG).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Very rare passage migrant. Amber listed (islandica).

Single bird flying over at Sparham on 5th Apr (CS), single birds at Pensthorpe on 9th & 12th Apr (EW, EB; MS.LB) and 3 at same site on 1st May (PA, RN).

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

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

Two birds at Pensthorpe on 13th July (MW, CH).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

Single birds at Hindolveston on 17th Mar, in Sparham Pools area on 22nd Apr, at Pensthorpe on 13th May, at Great Ryburgh on 15th June and then again at Pensthorpe on 13th July, with 2 there on 21st July and singles on 25th Aug and 23rd Sept.

Dunlin *Calidris canutus*

Very rare passage migrant. Red listed.

Single bird at Pensthorpe on 2nd Apr (MW, PA).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Reports from 6 sites. In Mar 1 at Costessey on 22nd, 1 at Rawhall GP on 27th; in Apr 2 at Bintree Mill on 12th and 1 at Great Ryburgh on 14th; in June 3 at Great Ryburgh on 24th and 3 at Pensthorpe on 30th; in July 4 at Pensthorpe on 10th, 7 on 13th and 6 on 21st; in Aug 8 at Pensthorpe on 6th, 4 on 11th and 17th, 1 at Great Ryburgh on 13th and 1 in Sparham Pools area on 25th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*.

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

All reports from Pensthorpe; 2 on 12th Apr, 4 on 1st May, 1 on 8th, 2 on 13th; 2 on 11th June (MS, *et al*).

Woodcock *Scotopax rusticola*

Scarce resident, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Amber listed.

Ten reports from 10 sites. In Jan 4 at Sparham on 4th, 1 at Pensthorpe on 14th & 1 flying over Dereham early morning on 26th. In Feb 1 at East Raynham on 15th and in Mar 1 at Costessey Marsh on 11th, 1 at Briston on 17th, 1 at Queen's Hill, Costessey and 2 at Gunton Lane Costessey on 22nd.

No further reports until Nov when 2 at Scarning on 9th & 2 at Ringland on 29th.

No reports of roding birds received.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

Very scarce resident and scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Amber listed.

In first winter period 1-3 birds recorded at 5 sites with high counts of 10 at Scarning on 2nd Jan, 10+ at Dereham SW on 17th Jan (IB), 52+ at Costessey Marshes on 18th Feb with 30 there on 11th Mar (AB).

Between Apr and Aug recorded at 3 sites only. In Apr 2 at Rush Meadows SW, Dereham on 4th, 3 at Ringland on 18th; in May 3 at Pensthorpe on 1st and a single there on 11th Aug.

In second winter period records from 8 sites. In Oct 1 at Pensthorpe on 16th, 3 at Scarning on 20th, 7 at Rush Meadow, Dereham on 27th. In Nov 6 at Guist Common on 25th, 8 on 30th. In Dec 4 at Great Ryburgh on 6th, 6 at Swanton Morley on 11th, 2 at Guist Common on 16th & 5 at Buxton Heath on 21st.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis sandvicensis*.

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

Single bird at Scarning on 11th July (IB).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Three at Sparham Pools on 9th Apr earliest report (CS). Subsequently recorded at a further 6 sites with highest counts of 10 at Lyng Easthaugh GP on 17th Apr, 2 at Great Ryburgh on 29th Apr, 22 at Costessey Pits on 1st May, 8 at Pensthorpe on 25th May and 14 in Sparham Pools area on 11th June.

Two pairs nested on a bank at Pensthorpe as Black-headed Gulls occupied the tern raft there. In Sparham Pools area 7 pairs bred and at Costessey Pits a pair with young on 10th July.

Last report was a single bird at Pensthorpe on 17th Aug.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

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

In first winter period highest counts at Pensthorpe Jan 220, Feb 52, Mar c250; high count at Haveringland Hall of c100 in Jan/Feb and 700 in Sparham Pools area in Mar.

Breeding at Pensthorpe where up to c30 nesting on tern raft and at Sparham Pools c30 pairs.

Post breeding and second winter high counts mainly from Pensthorpe of 184 in Jul, 124 in Aug, c 300 in Sept, 300 in Oct, 269+ in Nov and 180+ in Dec. Smaller counts of 28 in Sparham Pools area in Oct, 25 at Scarning Fen and 20 at Bittering GP meadows in Dec.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Rare winter visitor. Amber listed.

Eight at Great Ryburgh on 12th Mar (SCa) and 2 at NWT Sparham Pools NR on 22nd Apr (PL).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

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

Recorded at 16 sites with 1-8 birds present. Higher counts in Jan of 21 at Pensthorpe on 14th; in Feb 19 at Costessey Pits on 4th, c70 at Pensthorpe on 24th, 60 in Sparham Pools area on 25th; in Mar 12 at Great Ryburgh on 1st, 12 in Sparham Pools area on 5th, 47 at Pensthorpe on 19th; in Oct 11 at Dunton on 15th and 15 at Pensthorpe on 16th; in Nov 10 seen on HBW on 15th; in Dec 17 at Pensthorpe on 19th and 56 at Swanton Morley Barracks on 29th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

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

Reported present at an increased number of sites perhaps reflecting greater observer awareness. Most reports of 1-5 birds but higher counts of 25 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr & 1st May, 10 at Costessey quarry on 7th June with 10 at Pensthorpe on 11th. In Aug 12 at Mill Farm, North Tuddenham on 18th with 8 at Springfield Cottage, North Tuddenham on 3rd Sept.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

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

Seen in every month throughout the valley in small numbers. Highest counts 13 at Ringland on 1st Feb, 17 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr and 19 on 1st May and 12 at Pensthorpe on 2nd Apr and 12 on 25th Nov.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

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

Records from 3 sites only: 2 birds at Pensthorpe on 14th Jan and 1 bird on 19th Dec, a single bird at Ringland on 17th May and 1 bird on the HBW in both June and July.

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

*Common resident associated with human habitation. **Green listed.***

Records from 3 sites: 3 on 13th Feb and 11 on 2nd May at Costessey Pits, 4 at Thorpe Marriott on 17th Apr and 2 birds at Pensthorpe on 18th Feb.



*Stock Dove,
by Gil Brooking*

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

*Fairly common resident. **Amber listed.***

Records of 1 to 8 birds at over 20 sites throughout the valley. Highest counts: 13 at Sparham Pools on 26th Mar, 16 at Costessey Quarry on 2nd Apr, 17 at Ringland on 2nd May, 14 at Pensthorpe on 30th June, 18 at Gt. Ryburgh on 20th Dec.

Breeding in nest boxes at Costessey (3 pair), Drayton, Dunton, East Tuddenham, Elsing & Swanton Morley (4 pair) and with young at Bintree in June.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Very common resident. Green listed.

Notable counts were c70 in Sparham Pools area on 2nd Jan, 200+ at Felthorpe on 11th Jan, 200+ at Pensthorpe on 19th Jan, 200+ on 18th Feb, 200 on the HBW on 15th Mar and 300 at Gt. Ryburgh on 18th Nov.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Fairly common resident associated with human habitation. Green listed.

Small numbers recorded throughout the valley in all months. Highest counts: 12 at Lyng Easthaugh on 29th Jan, c100 at Pensthorpe on 23rd Mar, 11 at Ringland on 2nd May, 12 at N Tuddenham on 23rd Sept and 14 at Swanton Drive, Dereham on 18th Dec.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur turtur*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed.

Earliest record was at Lenwade on 25th Apr (WG) and the latest at Swannington on 12th Aug (TF).

Two birds at at Swannington on 27th May (TF), at Lyng Easthaugh on 27th May (DD), at Lenwade on 7th June (RG) and at N Tuddenham on 28th June (B&BP).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed.

Earliest record was single bird in Sparham Pools area on 13th Apr. Recorded at 15 sites with 7 at Costessey Pits on 2nd Apr, 4 at Ringland on 19th Apr, 2 at Pensthorpe on 13th May and 2 at Pensthorpe on 11th June.

Latest record was from Weston Longville on 29th June.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed.

Regular records from over 40 sites throughout the year. Highest counts: 3 birds at Fakenham on 4th Jan, 3 at Ringland on 1st Feb, 4 at Worthing on 10th Mar, 2 at Scarning on 3rd Apr, 2 at Costessey Pits on 23rd June, 2 at Swanton Morley on 7th July, 6 at Gt Ryburgh on 30th Dec.

Evidence of breeding at Swannington, Swanton Morley (2 pairs), Taverham and Worthing.

Little Owl *Athene noctue*

Fairly common naturalised resident.

Records from 24 sites throughout the year, again most records from Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham which provided records of at least 2 birds most months. Daffy Green was another good site with 2 birds on 20th Mar followed by regular sightings in the year. There were sightings in most months from Apr onwards at Dunton.

Evidence of breeding with 1 young at Worthing on 18th June, 2 young at Elsing on 30th June, 3 young at Swanton Morley on 7th July, 1 juvenile at Waterfall Farm, Swanton Morley on 30th July.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Fairly common resident. Green listed.

Records were received from 19 sites throughout the year, 2 birds at Taverham on 1st Jan, at Elsing on 10th Mar, in Sparham Pools area on 20th Mar and at Thorpe Marriott on 10th May.

Evidence of breeding at Sparham with 2 pairs successful with young. Two young at Swanton Morley and Bylaugh, young also at Ringland and Weston Longville all on 30th June. Two young also recorded at Mattishall on 3rd July.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

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

Records this year from 4 sites; single birds at Guist Common on 6th Oct (NM), at Gt Ryburgh on 1st Dec (GRWG), at Horsford on 2nd Dec (PB) and the last sighting at Kingfisher Lakes, Lyng on 6th Dec (JH).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Scarce summer visitor. **Red listed.**

Only one record this year, 1 bird seen and 2 others heard at Buxton Heath on 23rd June (JH).

Swift *Apus apus*

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

Earliest sighting was a single bird at Sparham on 28th Apr.

Highest counts: 50+ at Pensthorpe on 25th May, 20 on the HBW on 21st June (DK), 15 at Hindolveston on 15th July and c.25 at Lenwade on 22nd July.

Evidence of breeding from numerous sites.

Latest record was a single bird at Swanton Drive, Dereham, on 30th Aug.



Swifts, by Gil Brooking

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Scarce resident. **Amber listed.**

Reports on a regular basis from 20 sites. Two birds at Swanton Morley GP on 4th Jan, 4 at Scarning on 14th Mar, 6 at Costessey Pits on 2nd May, 2+ at Costessey Pits on 10th July, 2 at Three Bridges Farm, Elsing on 18th Sept and 2 at Elsing on 19th Sept.

Evidence of breeding at Gt Ryburgh on 1st July.

Green Woodpecker *Picis viridis*

Fairly common resident. **Amber listed.**

Single birds seen mainly from 23 sites during the year. Parties of 4 birds at Costessey Pits on 13th Feb, 3 at Sparham Pools on 8th Apr, 3 at Ringland on 5th July, 4 at Sparham Hall Farm on 13th July, 3 at Hindolveston on 25th July and 3 during HBW on 16th Aug (DK).

A young bird was seen at Worthing on 18th Aug.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

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

Regular sightings from 27 sites throughout the year.

Highest counts: 2 at Sparham Pools on 7th Jan, 2 at Lyng Easthaugh on 8th Jan, 3 at Haveringland Hall on 24th Jan, 6 at Costessey Pits on 5th Feb, 3 at Pensthorpe on 10th Feb, 3 at Blickling Park on 14th Feb and 3 at Taverham on 18th Mar.

Evidence of breeding with a juvenile at Pensthorpe on 11th June, a single juvenile at N Tuddenham on 28th July and another at Elsing on 8th Aug.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor comminutus*

Very scarce and declining resident. **Red listed.**

The first sighting for some years in the valley with a single bird seen over a 2 week period at Costessey from 16th Mar (PS).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common resident and passage migrant. Amber listed.

248 records over the year of mainly single birds.

Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham provided several records each month of up to 2 birds and the HBW had records of 1 to 3 birds in most months.

Elsewhere 4 were seen over the A47 at Dereham on 1st Jan, 2 at Sculthorpe on 18th Jan, 2 at Felthorpe on 24th Jan and 2 at Pensthorpe on 12th Mar.

Two pairs bred at Sparham and also evidence of breeding at Bylaugh, Dunton, Pensthorpe and Scarning.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*.

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Green listed.

32 records this year compared to 24 in 2014. First sighting was at Costessey on 25th Apr and final record at Pensthorpe on 23rd Sept.

Highest counts: 5 at Costessey Pits on 2nd May, 2 at Worthing on 27th May and 2 at Pensthorpe on 4th June.



Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Records from 8 sites usually of single birds mostly around the Norwich area. Two at Norwich Cathedral on 4th Jan subsequently bred again and observed at nest change over on 13th Apr. The pair hatched 4 young with 3 surviving.

(continues)

Peregrine, by Gil Brooking

Peregrine (continued)

Elsewhere single birds in Feb at Gt Ryburgh on 8th (GRWG) and at Thorpe Marriott on 17th; in Apr at Rush Meadow SW (Dereham) on 2nd, Costessey Quarry on 4th, at Drayton Low Road on 7th, at New Costessey on 10th and 2 at Costessey on 18th were possibly spring passage birds.

Single bird at Scarning, near Dereham on 17th Dec.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident. Green listed.

Records of 1 to 3 birds from 26 sites.

Highest counts of 125+ going to roost at Sweetbriars Meadows, Norwich on 11th Feb, 30 at Earham Marsh on 19th Feb, 16 at Costessey Pits on 1st May, 8 at Guist Common on 25th Nov and 18+ at Victoria Woods, Taverham on 20th Dec.

Jay *Garrulus glandaris*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor. Resident British Jay (rufiturgum) Amber listed. Very scarce irruptive visitor in autumn (Continental Jay). Green listed.

Records from 22 sites of largely 1-2 birds with a few counts of 3-6.

Highest counts of 22 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr with 7 on 1st May and 9 on the HBW on 20th Sept.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Common resident. Green listed.

Highest counts of 50 at Sparham Pools on 2nd Jan, 75 at Pensthorpe on 6th Mar, 40 at Worthing on 12th Mar, c.150 at Hindolveston on 15th July, 160 at Pensthorpe on 21st July and 100 at Pensthorpe on 25th Sept.

Proof of breeding at Alderford, Great Witchingham, Hockering (2 pair), Lyng, Pensthorpe, Swannington, Swanton Morley (3 pair), Themelthorpe (3 pair) and Wood Norton (2 pair).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident. Green listed.

High numbers at Pensthorpe with highest counts of 300+ on 19th Jan and 25th Nov, 150 on 4th Jan at Swanton Morley, 120 in Sparham Pools area on 16th Jan, 100 at Gt Ryburgh on 7th Feb and 40 on the HBW on 15th Mar.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident. Green listed.

Records of 1 to 8 birds from 16 sites.

Highest counts of 10 on the HBW on 18th Jan (DK), 26 at Costessey Pits on 1st May, 14 at Ringland on 7th June and 12 at Pensthorpe on 11th June.

Evidence of breeding at Pensthorpe.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

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

Records from 18 sites throughout the year.

Highest counts of 8 at Ringland on 1st Feb, 6 at Haveringland Hall on 19th Feb, 13 at Costessey Quarry on 1st Apr and 10 on the HBW on 20th Dec.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor, very scarce in winter. Amber listed.

Two records this year of single birds at Haveringland Hall on 19th Feb (JH) and on the HBW on 20th Dec (DK).

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Common resident. Green listed.

Records from 26 sites. Highest counts of 24 at Pensthorpe on 25th Aug, 15 on the HBW on 18th Oct and 30+ at Pensthorpe on 19th Dec.

Evidence of breeding at Bintree, Hindolveston, Lyng Easthaugh, Mattishall, Pensthorpe and Sparham Pools area.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Records from 24 sites through the year.

Pensthorpe recorded double figures with highest counts of 14 on 13th July (MW, CH), 10 on 9th Nov and c.25 on 19th Dec. Elsewhere records of 21 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr (MMcC) and 6 at Bintree on 2nd Aug (RD).

Evidence of breeding at Elsing, Mattishall and Pensthorpe.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Records from 24 sites.

Highest counts of 13 at Costessey Quarry on 1st Apr and 10+ at Pensthorpe on 19th Dec.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Fairly common resident. **Red listed.**

Records from 17 sites of 1 to 3 birds.

Highest counts of 6 at SMHOT on 4th Jan and 5 at Pensthorpe on 20th Apr.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce visitor to valley. **Amber listed.**

A record of 5+ birds at SMHOT on 11th Oct (NM).

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Scarce resident and passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

Records from 2 sites only.

Two birds seen regularly at Buxton Heath between Feb and Apr (JH) and single bird at Dereham SW on 10th Oct (IB).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

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

Records from 20 sites of 1 to 10 birds.

Higher counts of 10+ in Sparham Pools area on 2nd Jan, 20 at Hoe on 4th Jan, 24 at Costessey Pits on 2nd Apr, 20 at N Tuddenham on 22nd Nov, 16 at Gt Ryburgh on 3rd Dec, 15 at Elsing on 9th Dec and c.20 there on 23rd Dec. There were 25 breeding pairs at Sparham Hall Farm (CS).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

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

Earliest record was a single bird at Sparham on 6th Apr (CS) and the latest record a single bird at Pensthorpe on 25th Aug (LW, CH).

Highest counts of 10 birds on the HBW on 19th Apr and 20 birds on 16th Aug, c50 at Walnut Tree Farm, Lyng Easthaugh on 4th July and 25 birds at Worthing on 20th July (DK).

There were 80 active nestholes at Lyng Easthaugh.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

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

Earliest records were a single bird at Sparham on 1st Apr (CS) and 2 at Dereham SW on 4th Apr (IB).

Highest counts of 23 at Pensthorpe on 13th July, c.50 at Guist Common on 31st July, 350 at Daffy Green on 17th Aug, 26+ at Waterfall Farm, Swanton Morley and 30 at N Tuddenham on 28th Aug, 30 at Dereham and 23 at Bintree on 29th Aug and 100+ at Lyng on 18th Sept.

Proof of breeding at Attlebridge (Old Hall Farm), Elsing, Guist Common, N Tuddenham (with a second brood), Pensthorpe, Reepharm Industrial Estate and Swanton Morley.

Fifteen birds were ringed at Guist Common in July.

Latest record 2 in River Tud valley at New Costessey on 18th Oct (AG).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Earliest records were of a single bird at Dereham SW on 4th Apr (IB) followed by 2 birds at Lyng Easthaugh (A&CJ) and 8 birds at Costessey Quarry both on 12th Apr (MMcC).

Highest counts of 50 at Gt Ryburgh on 12th July, c50 at Dunton on 17th July, 91+ at Pensthorpe on 27th July and 40 at Worthing on 21st Aug (DK).

Proof of breeding at Elsing Mill (78 active nests), Lenwade and Sparham.

Latest record of 5 birds at N Tuddenham on 30th Sept (B&BP).



*House Martin,
by Gil Brooking*

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare resident expanding its range through valley. Green listed.

Three records this year of single birds; the first at Sculthorpe on 18th Jan (IB), then at Pensthorpe on 24th Feb (RG, LB) and at same site on 12th Mar (RG, RN).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident. Green listed.

Records from 39 sites.

Highest counts c100 at Great Ryburgh on 4th Jan, 24 in Sparham Pools area on 23rd Feb, 37 at Pensthorpe on 13th July and 20 on HBW on 15th Nov.

Evidence of breeding at Hindolveston, Pensthorpe and Sparham Pools area.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor, passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor.

Green listed.

One to two birds overwintered at Bylaugh SW 4th, 5th & 11th Jan, 1 at Costessey Marshes 18th Feb and 1 in Sparham Pools area 22nd Feb.

First summer arrivals – 2 at Queen's Hill Country Park, Costessey on 13th Mar (AG) followed by 4 singing males in Sparham Pools area on 17th Mar. Records came from 35 sites with a remarkable 42 recorded at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr.

Last summer bird 11th Oct at Swannington (TF).

There were two reports of Dec birds: on 21st at Haveringland Hall and 29th at Bylaugh SW.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

First record: 4 at Pensthorpe on 9th Apr (LB, EW).

Recorded from 11 sites with a maximum count of 13 at Pensthorpe on 20th Apr.

The last record was as early as 27th July at Pensthorpe (MS, LB).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor, passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor.

Green listed.

A male wintered in a New Costessey garden feeding on nectar from Mahonia flowers on 30th Jan and was seen again on 10th and 27th Feb. A pair visited feeders in Lenwade on 25th & 26th Feb.

First arrival of summer visitors was 2 on 9th Apr at Pensthorpe (LB, EW). Recorded from 21 sites with the maximum count of 28 at Costessey pits on 12th Apr.

Last recorded on 25th Aug at Pensthorpe (CH, EW). There were no records during the second winter period.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green listed.

First record was 2 in Sparham Pools area on 13th Apr (SC).

Recorded from only 8 sites with 4 on HBW on 17th May and 4 at Pensthorpe on 25th May being the maximum counts.

Last recorded on 12th July at Costessey Pits (MMcC).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common visitor and passage migrant. Green listed.

There were only 9 records with the first on 13th Apr from Great Ryburgh (GRWG). Other localities were Costessey Quarry, Costessey Marshes, Dereham SW, Ringland Church, R Tud Valley, Scarning and Sparham. All records were singles except for 6 at Costessey Marshes on 8th May.

The last record was from Costessey Quarry on 3rd July (MMcC).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor. Amber listed.

First reported on HBW on 19th Apr (DK).

Recorded from 13 localities with a maximum of 17 in West Ringland on 2nd May.

The last record was on 10th Sept at Reepham Station (DG).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green listed.

The first record was one in Sparham Pools area on 13th Apr (SC, CS). Recorded from 7 localities with a maximum of 6 at Costessey Pits on 16th Apr.

The last record was from Pensthorpe on 11th Aug (MW, RN).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. Green listed.

The first record was one at Pensthorpe on 9th Apr (LB, LW).

Recorded from 7 localities with a maximum of at least 15 at Guist Common on 31st July. Guist Common was the only site from where proof of breeding was received.

The last record was from Great Ryburgh on 31st Aug (GRWG).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

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

A single record of 5 being observed for 2 hours feeding in an apple tree alongside A148 at Alethorpe, near Fakenham on 16th Feb (PB, LP).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Fairly common resident. Green listed.

Recorded from 22 locations throughout the year with breeding only proved from Ringland Common. 6 were at Costessey Pits on 2nd May while one at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge was the first recorded for 3 years.



Nuthatch, by Gil Brooking

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Fairly common resident. **Green listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 11 localities. Mainly singles but up to 5 were recorded in Sparham Pools area in Jan.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common resident. **Green listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 25 localities. Mainly in single figure counts but 12 singing males were recorded at Pensthorpe in Apr & May.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

During the first winter period there were two significant counts: 1000 at Weasenham St Peter on 2nd Feb and c.500 were roosting in conifer trees at Potters Fen, Dereham during Mar. The next highest count was 85 at Felthorpe on 21st Feb.

Proof of breeding came from Mill Street, Elsing, Lyng Easthaugh and Pensthorpe.

Between 11th Oct and 23rd Nov AG recorded 2915 migrating through R. Tud Valley at New Costessey.

During the second winter period 100 were at N Tuddenham on 5th Nov and 250 going to roost at Guist Common on 25th Nov.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Nominate Scandinavian form ("*Black-bellied Dipper*") a rare or very rare vagrant. **Green listed.**

A bird of uncertain sub-species was present in Worthing from at least the 21st Oct to 1st Nov (DK, LH, CB). See David Knight's report on Page 94.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

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

Records were received in all months and from 27 localities.

Only double figure counts in first winter period were 25+ at Pensthorpe in Jan & Feb and 12 at Hindolveston on 23rd Feb.

25 on 2nd Apr and 28 on 1st May at Costessey Pits could have included over-wintering birds.

Proof of breeding was received from Elsing (Mill Street), Hindolveston, Lenwade, Lyng Easthaugh, Mattishall and Pensthorpe.

During the second winter period there were 13 on HBW on 18th Oct, 15 at Pensthorpe on 3rd Dec and 11 at Neatherd Moor, Dereham on 31st Dec.

168 were counted migrating through the R Tud Valley at New Costessey between 11th Oct and 23rd Nov with a peak count of 67 on 22nd Nov (AG).

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Red listed.

The year began with up to 150 in the Sparham Pools area; 30 nearby at Lyng Easthaugh; 14 at Felthorpe; 60 Mill Farm & 50 at Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham; 70 at Pensthorpe; 50 at Pudding Norton; 30 at Waterfall Farm, Swanton Morley; 20+ at Weston Longville Equestrian Centre and 25 near Worthing Church all in Jan.

Good numbers continued in Feb with 150 Daffy Green, Dereham; 85+ Felthorpe; 40+ Marsham Heath; 20 Mill Farm, N Tuddenham; 70+ Pensthorpe; 27 Sculthorpe Mill; 150 Sparham Pools area; 50+ Swannington and 13 Worthing Church area & 50 in Worthing.

Numbers continued high in Mar with 35 Bintree Mill; 100+ Bylaugh; 250+ Daffy Green, Dereham; 20 Dunton; 100 on HBW; 120 Lyng Easthaugh; 20+ Pensthorpe; 150 Sparham Pools area; 20 Swanton Pits; 11 Thorpe Marriott, Taverham and 40 Worthing Church area.

The last spring records were 2 on 1st Apr at Costessey Pits and c.30 at Briston Road, Edgefield on 8th Apr (PB).

(continues)

Fieldfare (continued)

Numbers were generally lower in the second winter period with the first record of c.90 at Dunton on 15th Oct (PB). Later this month there were 23 at Sorrel Lane, Beetley; 12 Potters Fen, Dereham and 50 Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham.

Nov brought c.40 Dunton, 23 Edgefield and 30+ Upgate, Swannington.

Dec records were 22 Bittering, 100 Dunton, 30 Hoe & HBW, 20 Scarning and c.25 Worthing Church area.

545 were counted migrating through the R Tud Valley at New Costessey between 15th Oct and 26th Nov with a peak count of 164 on 27th Oct (AG).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident and passage migrant. Red listed.

Reported in every month in mainly single figure numbers from 30 localities. There were 9 together at Mileham on 26th Feb and at Costessey Pits 15 on 2nd Apr and 26 on 1st May.

Breeding was confirmed at Reepham Station and singing males were at Pensthorpe, Sparham Pools area (2) and Worthing.

166 were counted migrating through the R Tud Valley at New Costessey between 16th Sept and 22nd Nov with a peak count of 24 on both 11th & 12th Oct (AG).

Redwing *Turdus illiacus*

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

During the first winter period there were c.50 at Buxton Heath in both Jan & Feb. Other double figure counts were 12 Bowthorpe Marsh, 10 Great Ryburgh, 30 Sculthorpe, 10 Sparham Pools area and 12 Worthing Bridge. At Sparham numbers increased in Mar to 20 on 5th, 110 on 17th, 70 on 20th then 50 on 22nd demonstrating the typical return passage.

Other Mar records were 14 Bintree Mill, 12 Buxton Heath, 30 Lenwade, 25 Swanton Pits and 30 Worthing Bridge. The last spring record was of 2 at Costessey quarry on 1st Apr (MMcC). (continues)

Redwing (continued)

AG recorded the first autumn birds with 3 migrating through the R Tud Valley at New Costessey on 7th Oct. They continued until 23rd Nov when 1587 had been counted passing through with a peak count of 245 on 19th Oct.

Numbers continued to the year end with peak counts in:

Oct: 2 Dereham SW on 9th, 20 Sculthorpe Moor on 11th, 30 Scarning on 12th, 65 Dunton on 14th, 18 Pensthorpe on 16th, 100 HBW on 18th; Nov: 6 Great Ryburgh on 2nd, 23 Pensthorpe on 9th, 10 Great Wittingham and 3 HBW on 15th, c.110 Briston and 3 Sparham Pools area on 16th and 3 Sparham Pools area on 16th c.50 Dunton on 23rd

Dec: c.100 Dunton on 7th and 16 HBW on 20th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common resident. **Amber listed.**

Recorded throughout the year from 34 localities. Evidence of breeding came from Dunton, Lenwade, Pensthorpe (2 pairs) and Sparham Pools area (2 pairs).

Flocks of 9 at Costessey quarry on 4th Apr, 40 on stubble at Sparham on 28th Aug and c.35 at Dunton on 14th Oct.



*Mistle Thrush,
by Gil Brooking*

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common but declining summer visitor. Red listed.

First record 2 at Sparham on 11th May (CS).

Recorded from 16 localities with breeding proven at 9 of them. Two on HBW on 16th Aug were the first sightings since 17th Aug 2008 which was encouraging news. Less encouraging was that a pair at Waterfall Farm, Swanton Morley were predated at the egg stage. Other breeding records were fortunately of fledged young.

Last record at Sparham on 28th Aug (CS).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

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

This ubiquitous species was recorded throughout the year from 27 localities but evidence of breeding came from only 7 places.

34 at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr and 28 at Costessey Quarry on 2nd May were the highest counts while at Pensthorpe 18 on both 17th & 23rd Sept and 19 on 16th Oct could be evidence of an autumn influx.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rare decreasing summer visitor. Amber listed.

Only recorded from Bintree and Ringland. Earliest date 16th Apr at Ringland (MMcC) and latest 23rd June also at Ringland (JH).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

Rare visitor & passage migrant. Amber listed.

A single record – 1 Ringland Church 16th June (GC).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Scarce passage migrant in the valley. Amber listed.

A single record – 1 Swanton Drive, Dereham on 20th Aug (BH).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce passage migrant. **Green listed.**

All are wintering records: a female Bowthorpe Marsh 16th Feb (EJ), a male Guist Common 18th Feb (EB-J) & 6th Mar (RG), Dereham SW 15th Mar & 9th Oct (IB) and 2 Great Ryburgh on 13th Nov (GRWG).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Scarce passage migrant. **Amber listed.**

There were up to 4 between 11th Apr and 1st May at Sparham Hall Farm (CS, SC).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Common sedentary resident. **Amber listed.**

Recorded at 26 localities but evidence of breeding came from only 7 places. The only double figure counts came from Costessey Pits where 25 on 1st Apr and 28 on 1st May (MMcC).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

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

This once ubiquitous species was recorded from only 21 localities. Sites with double figure counts were 30 Great Ryburgh, 10 Lyng Easthaugh, 35 Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham, 18 Pensthorpe, 25 Scarning Fen & Poplar Farm, Scarning and 30 Worthing.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Uncommon declining resident. **Red listed.**

Only two records this year and both in the same week in the same area; first on 13th Oct (CS) and again on the 18th (SC). On both occasions 3 birds were seen and on the latter date they were identified as adult male birds.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Very scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed.

Only two records received, both from the same week in Apr. One bird on the 11th Apr at Sparham (CS) and 6 at Gt Ryburgh (SMcC) on the 14th.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

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

Recorded at 26 sites and every month of the year with pairs at Lyng and Worthing with confirmed breeding at Swanton Morley (4 young). A member had one visit their suburban garden in Hellesdon when it alighted on an ornamental waterfall during Oct (JH).

Pied Wagtail (White Wagtail) *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

British form yarrellii (Pied Wagtail) fairly common resident, summer visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed. Nominate continental form (White Wagtail) a scarce passage migrant. Green listed.

Recorded every month of the year at multiple sites with a highest count of 90 on a ploughed field at Sparham on the 7th Mar (SC). Other notable counts of 20 at North Tuddenham on 26th Jan and 21 at Weasenham St. Peter on the 2nd of Feb. Autumn migration through the Tud Valley saw 81 birds counted passing through between Sept and Nov (AG).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant. Red listed.

A single record of a singing male in display flight at Buxton Heath on the 18th May (JH).



Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Scarce resident and passage migrant. Fairly common winter visitor.

Amber listed.

Recorded from Jan to Apr and from Sept to Nov at 12 sites. High counts of 10 at Costessey Marsh on 11th Mar (MMcC) and 20 at Sparham through Nov (CS).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers.

Green listed.

Recorded from Jan to Mar and then from Oct to Dec at 12 sites. The highest count of 15 birds from Sparham through Nov and Dec (CS). Also counts in the second winter period of 12 + at Swannington Upgate on 9th Nov and 12 at Bylaugh Old Hall Farm through Dec (TF). Two lucky members also had birds visiting their garden feeders with 5 in Hindolveston on 27th Mar (JAJ) and 1 in Elsing on 19th Dec (A&CJ).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

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

Records from every month of the year at multiple sites. High counts of 50 in Jan at Sparham and 50+ at SMHOT in Dec. Autumn migration through the Tud Valley saw 379 birds counted passing through between Sept and Nov (AG).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed.

Recorded in every month of the year at multiple sites.

In the first winter period counts of 5 at Pensthorpe on the 8th Jan and 8 at SMHOT on the 18th were of note. Whilst in Feb a pair visited garden feeders in Worthing on the 7th (DK).

In the second winter period the most notable count was 6 at Sorrel Lane, Beetley throughout Dec (JH).

The highest overall count was of 10 birds at Costessey Pits on 1st Apr (MMcC).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Common declining resident. Green listed.

Recorded at 30 sites with counts of up to 10 birds at multiple sites. The most notable counts were all in Nov with 200 at Sparham and 60 at Swannington Upgate feeding in a field of sunflowers on the 9th with 60 at Sparham Hall Farm on the 24th.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Fairly common resident. Red listed.

Recorded throughout the year and present at 17 sites. Notable counts of 60 at Gateley on 5th Jan, 50 at Worthing level crossing on 20th Nov feeding on set-aside, 150 at Sparham on the 1st Dec and 200+ at Dunton on 13th.

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

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

All records of single birds at 7 sites. The most notable record was a single male bird visiting garden feeders in Elsing over a fortnight from 5th Dec (A&CJ).



Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Very scarce resident and irruptive winter visitor. Green listed.

A single record of 2 at Swanton Novers on the 13th July (IB).

*Crossbill,
by Gil Brooking*

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
Common resident. Green listed.

Recorded in every month of the year and at 27 sites. The highest count was of 80 feeding in an arable field in Costessey on 28th Dec. Other notable counts of 50 on the HBW on 15th Nov and consistent counts of 50+ at Pensthorpe throughout the year, with juveniles seen here and at Bintree. Autumn migration through the Tud Valley saw 161 birds passing through between Sept and Nov (AG).

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*
Common or fairly common winter visitor. Green listed.

Recorded from Jan-Apr and Jun-Dec and from 20 sites. Notable counts of 20 at SMHOT on 4th Jan, 35+ at Elsing on 18th Sept and 40+ at Swannington on 17th Nov.

Autumn migration through the Tud Valley saw 93 birds counted passing through between Sept and Nov (AG).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
Common but declining resident. Red listed.

Recorded in every month of the year except Sept and from 25 sites. Highest count of 120 birds at Mileham on 26th Feb (AH). Double figure counts of 12 at Ringland on 5th Feb and 15 at Rawhall Lane on 13th Dec. Singing males heard at Buxton Heath, Sparham and Worthing.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*
Fairly common resident. Amber listed.

Recorded in every month of the year and at 20 sites. Notable counts of 20 at Mileham on 26th Feb (AH) and 25 at Sparham through Nov and Dec (CS). Birds visited feeders in Lenwade and Potter's Fen during March. Singing males heard at Pensthorpe and Sparham.

Escapes

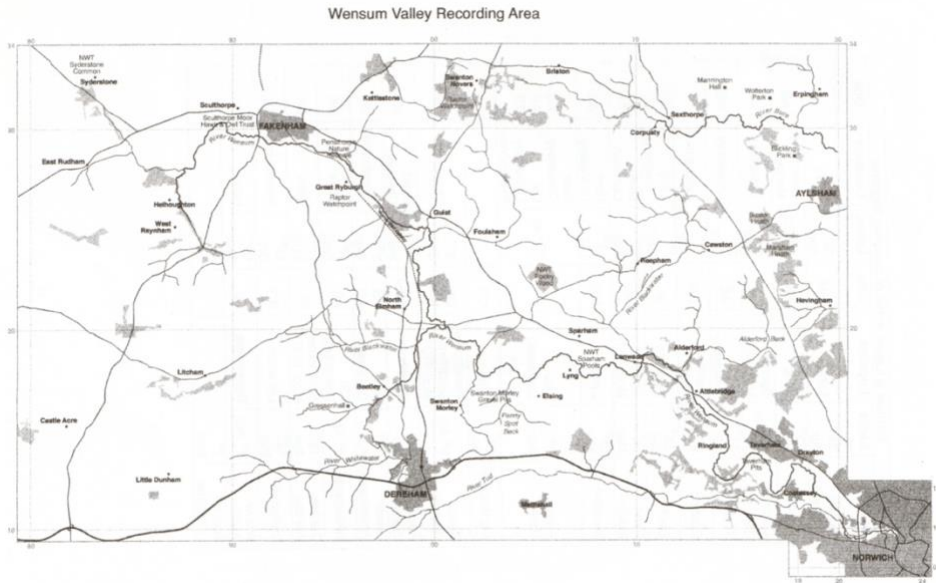
Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Parts of NW & E Africa; India, Pakistan Sri Lanka; E Asia.

Two seen in the Costessey area on 12th Dec and a single again seen on the Marriott's Way in the same area on the 28th (AG).

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Principal Sites and their Grid References

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

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

GP = gravel pits

SW = sewage works

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

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

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

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

Earliest & Latest Reported Dates of Summer Migrants 2015

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Common Tern	9 th Apr	Sparham	CS	17 th Aug	Pensthorpe	BP, RG
Turtle Dove	25 th Apr	Lenwade	WG	12 th Aug	Swannington	TF
Cuckoo	13 th Apr	Sparham Pools	SC	29 th June	Weston Longville	RD
Swift	28 th Apr	Sparham	CS	30 th Aug	Dereham	BH
Hobby	25 th Apr	Costessey	MMcC	23 rd Sept	Pensthorpe	PA, SC
Sand Martin	6 th Apr	Sparham	CS	25 th Aug	Pensthorpe	EW, CH
Swallow	1 st Apr	Sparham	CS	18 th Oct	New Costessey	AG
House Martin	4 th Apr	Dereham SW	IB	30 th Sept	North Tuddenham	B&BP
Chiffchaff	13 th Mar	Costessey	AG	11 th Oct	Swannington	TF
Willow Warbler	9 th Apr	Pensthorpe	LB, EW	27 th July	Pensthorpe	MS, LB
Blackcap	9 th Apr	Pensthorpe	LB, EW	25 th Aug	Pensthorpe	CH, EW
Garden Warbler	13 th Apr	Sparham Pools	SC	12 th July	Costessey Pits	MMcC
Lesser Whitethroat	13 th Apr	Great Ryburgh	GRWG	3 rd July	Costessey Quarry	MMcC
Whitethroat	19 th Apr	HBW	DK	10 th Sept	Reepham	DG
Sedge Warbler	13 th Apr	Sparham Pools	CS, SC	11 th Aug	Pensthorpe	MW, RN
Reed Warbler	9 th Apr	Pensthorpe	LB, EW	31 st Aug	Great Ryburgh	GRWG
Spotted Flycatcher	11 th May	Sparham	CS	28 th Aug	Sparham	CS
Nightingale	16 th Apr	Ringland	MMcC	23 rd June	Ringland	JH

Latest & Earliest Reported Dates of Winter Visitors 2015

Species	Latest	Location	Obs	Earliest	Location	Obs
Goosander	13 th Apr	Sparham Pools	SC	31 st Dec	Sparham Pools	SC
Golden Plover	8 th Mar	Worthing	DK	3 rd Oct	Sparham	CS
Fieldfare	8 th Apr	Edgefield	PB	15 th Oct	Dunton	PB
Redwing	1 st Apr	Costessey	MMcC	7 th Oct	Costessey	AG
Brambling	29 th Mar	Hindolveston	JAJ	12 th Oct	Scarning New Costessey	IB AG



Hen Harrier, by Steve Cale

WVBS 2015 Ringing Report

Ringers were busy in the Wensum Valley during 2015, and this report documents the results of their efforts. This report covers a mixture of longevity and distance movements. There are several exchanges with continental Europe – a Wigeon to Russia, a Cormorant from Sweden, a Marsh Harrier that went to both Portugal and Belgium, a Woodcock to Denmark, a Black-headed Gull to Poland and a Herring Gull from the Netherlands.

My thanks to all the ringers that operated in the WVBS study area during 2015 for access to their records.

Selected WVBS Recoveries Notified During 2015

Ringing details are shown on the first line whilst recovery information is on the second. M = male, F = female.

Wigeon

2 nd year female	17-Oct-1991	Pensthorpe
Fresh shot dead	20-Oct-2015	Naryan-Mar, Russia (3269km ENE)

As well as the large distance this bird had travelled it was 24 years between ringing and being shot. It may well have been a bit tough when eaten! Longevity record is 34years 7months.

Tufted Duck

1 st year female	14-Sept-1993	Pensthorpe
Caught by ringer	07-Jan-1994	Rye Meads, Herts (132km SSW)

This is the longest distance recovery within Britain reported in 2015, but why it has taken 21 years to be reported??

Cormorant

Nestling	17-June-2015	Eskilstorps Holmar, Vellinge, Sweden
Freshly dead	21-Sept-2015	Hevingham (820km WSW)

An indication of the source of at least some of the Cormorants in Norfolk

Little Egret

Nestling	18-May-2014	Besthorpe Gravel Pits, Newark
Alive	23-May-2015	Great Ryburgh (120km ESE)

This rapidly increasing species shows considerable mobility within Britain

Marsh Harrier

Nestling Female	10-July-2011	Sculthorpe Moor, Fakenham
Alive	25-Dec-2012	Aerodromo de Leziria, Lisbon, Portugal (1720 SSW)
Alive	13-Apr-2013	Spurn Point (97km NNW)
Alive	16-Apr-2013	Anderby Creek, Lincs. (58km NW)
Alive	14-Nov-2015	Nr Ploegsteert, Hainaut, Belgium (277km SSE)

This bird is one of several nestlings wing-tagged in Norfolk. This project was initiated to determine whether young returned to their natal area i.e. where they fledged from. The wing-tags enable individual birds to be identified in the field by birders with binoculars, telescopes and increasingly cameras. As can be seen from the above they can be quite nomadic.

Hen Harrier

Nestling Female	04-July-1972	Stenness, Orkney
Long Dead	14-Sept-2015	Aylsham (741km SSE)

The longevity record for Marsh Harrier is 15years 9months. This may have far exceeded it if the date of its demise was but known.

Kestrel

Nestling Female 11-June-2015 East Barsham
 Freshly Dead 29-Nov-2015 Lidcutt Farm, Cornwall (469km WSW)

Kestrel fledglings are known to be evicted from the adult territories and this is an example of significant post natal dispersal

Peregrine

Nestling Female 21-05-2012 Norwich Cathedral
 Alive 19-05-2014 Newcastle Upon Tyne
 Alive 06-04-2015 Newcastle Upon Tyne
 Alive 17-04-2015 Newcastle Upon Tyne (323km NW)

Nestling Female 29-05-2013 Near St John's Church, Bath & NE Somerset

Alive 17-04-2015 Norwich Cathedral
 Alive 13-11-2015 Norwich Cathedral (288km ENE)

Two examples of fledglings moving from their natal areas

Woodcock

First year 18-03-2013 Gateley
 Freshly shot 07-11-2015 Plantagej, Vojens, Denmark
 (608km ENE)

It is likely that this bird is of Fenno-Scandian origins and was ringed while wintering in Britain and shot on its return to winter here.

Black-headed Gull

Adult Female 25-Jan-2005 Lenwade
 Alive 06-Apr-2015 Swiniujscie, Poland (883km E)

Note that there is 10 years 2 months and 12 days between ringing in Lenwade and the ring being read in Poland. Many of the Black-headed Gulls wintering in Great Britain breed in the Baltic States.

Herring Gull

First year	14-Aug-2008	Ijmuiden Harbour, The Netherlands
Freshly dead	14-June-2015	Norwich (224km W)

Woodpigeon

Adult	29-June-2007	Lenwade
Freshly shot	26-Mar-2015	Lenwade

Although this bird lived to nearly 7 years 8 months before being shot it is 10 years short of the longevity record for this species.

Barn Owl

Nestling Male	03-Aug-2006	Hill farm, Gateley
Freshly dead	03-Mar-2015	Litcham (11km SW)

Unfortunately this bird suffered the fate of too many Barn Owls – it was hit by a car. It was 8 years & 7 months old.

Nestling	19-June-2014	Dersingham Bog, Norfolk
Adult	22-July-2015	Swanton Morley (37km ESE)

A typical post breeding dispersal.

Magpie

First year	06-July-2014	Thetford
Caught by ringer	29-Oct-2014	Thetford
Freshly Dead	08-Apr-2015	Great Snoring Airfield (52km NNE)

This a significant movement for such a sedentary species.

Marsh Tit

First-year Male	17-Aug-2009	West Lexham
Re-trapped	17-Mar-2015	East Lexham

This is one of the oldest Marsh Tits recorded in 2015 at 5 years 7 months but falls well short of the record of 10 years 4 months 25 days set in 2013.

Sand Martin

First –year 22-Aug-2013 Pett Level, Icklesham, East Sussex
 Caught by ringer 25-June-2015 near Easthaugh
 Caught by ringer 06-Aug-2015 near Easthaugh

Icklesham is a major ringing station and this bird was ringed on its passage south to its wintering grounds in the Sahel region of Africa.

Blackcap

First-year Male 19-Sept-2014 Beachy Head, East Sussex
 Caught by ringer 16-Aug-2015 Litcham (224km N)

In all probability this was ringed as a passage bird heading south to its wintering area around the Mediterranean then captured in its breeding area the next year

Reed Warbler

Juvenile 22-Aug-2009 Snettisham Coastal Park
 Caught by ringer 25-June-2015 Pensthorpe (32km ESE)

At 5 years and 10 months this is one of the oldest Reed Warblers caught in 2015

Juvenile 14-Aug-2013 Cantley Beet Factory
 Adult 07-Aug-2015 Guist Common (46km WNW)

Blackbird

First-year Male 05-Mar-2008 Little London, Corpusty
 Caught by ringer 05-July-2015 Little London, Corpusty

At 7 years and 4 months this is one of the oldest Blackbirds caught in 2015 but still well short of the maximum recorded of 14 years and 9 months.

Brambling

Full grown Male 13-Feb-2013 near Kettlestone
 Caught by ringer 27-Dec-2015 Duke's Warren, Surrey (205km SSW)

Evidence of a Brambling wintering in a different part of Britain.

Report on Monitoring of Common Terns & Black-headed Gulls at Sparham for 2015

As in previous years the monitoring of Common Terns and Black-headed Gulls at Sparham Pools NWT and Sparham Hall Farm Lakes threw up some interesting results and questions. Since 2014 a second raft was launched alongside the existing raft.

Sparham Pools NWT

There was no evidence of Common Terns breeding among the Black-headed Gulls which have taken over the island on the reserve. No visits were made to the island in 2015 as NWT had stipulated that, although the chicks could be ringed, any disturbance should not lead to birds swimming away. Unfortunately this is always the case and from several years' experience at other Black-headed Gull colonies chicks always return to the island colonies. The NWT have removed this restriction for 2016 so it is intended to monitor the Sparham Pools NWT island in 2016.

Sparham Hall Farm Lakes

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

Visits were made to the raft and the island on 11th and 29th June.

11th June

The Rafts

Common Tern – None, usurped by Black-headed Gulls.

Black-headed Gull – The chicks were large and wandering so it was not possible to identify individual nests. It is estimated that there were at least 20 nests in total. There were 30 chicks on the old raft and 21 on the new raft. All were ringed.

Island

Common Tern – 9 nests: 2 x 3 eggs; 2 x 2 eggs; 3 x 1 egg and 1 with a downy chick + 1 egg.

Black-headed Gull – 9 nests: 4 x 3 eggs; 2 x 2 eggs; 2 x 1 egg and 1 x 1 downy chick.

There were also 2 **Mallard** nests: One with 4 eggs and the other with 15 eggs.

29th June

The Rafts

No visit was made to the rafts on this date due to the risks of young getting over the surrounding “fences” and being unable to get back.

Island

The island was visited again but as in 2014 not a single egg or chick was found. Predation had been absolute. The cause of this is unknown but the most likely candidate is Otter as both eggs and chicks had been decimated. Avian predators are unlikely to have been able to reach all the chicks with pipes and bushes to hide in & under.

Summary

It was another devastating year on Sparham Hall Farm Lake Island. It raises the question of whether to continue to attract birds to nest if they are to be predated.

The rafts continue to support nesting but the Black-headed Gulls are usurping the Common Terns to a large degree.

BTO nest record cards were completed for 9 Common Tern, 8 Black-headed Gull, 2 Mallard, 1 Egyptian Goose and 1 Great-crested Grebe nests.

Plans for 2016 Season

It is intended to clean and maintain the rafts in Oct / Nov 2015 and cover them with tarpaulins. The tarpaulins will be removed as soon as the first Common Tern arrive in Spring 2016. By doing this it should prevent the

Black-headed Gulls getting a head start and allow the Common Tern to compete for nest sites.

The NWT island will be monitored.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to NWT and Charles Sayer for their permission and support of this project and to my many helpers who I'll not try to name as I'm bound to forget someone!

Right – the sartorial elegance of one of the noble helpers

Ray Gribble



*Common Tern,
by Steve Cale*

Hempton Marsh Reserve Report

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

Regular monthly ringing visits were again made to the site, contributing to further our knowledge of local species movements and site fidelity. A total of 155 new birds were ringed during the year with a further 72 previously ringed birds retrapped. There were two controls, birds originally ringed elsewhere, these were both Blue Tits one ringed at a nearby site in Fakenham the other at the Hawk and Owl trust reserve at Sculthorpe during the previous year. More unusual species ringed included a young male Sparrowhawk, two Nuthatches and three Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

Nestbox monitoring at the site included both nest record cards submitted and nestlings ringed, these included Great and Blue Tits, and Barn and Tawny Owls. Colour ringed Marsh Tits continued to be reported though sightings and numbers ringed are slightly down on the previous years. Several of the more interesting sightings included L353746 (blue/red) ringed in July 2010, seen regularly during 2011 and not seen subsequently until this year, where has it been? In contrast is Y313149 (yellow/red) was originally ringed in 2011 and has now been re-sighted eleven times and in every year since ringing and D209472 (red/green) ringed in 2013 and reported on seven dates in 2015.

A total of 7307 bird records were amassed, with the highest counts being made during the earlier and latter parts of the year. This is possibly a reflection on birds being more visible on the feeders and more people visiting the site at these times of year.

BIRDS

The year started with regular counts of birds made visiting the feeders during **January**, which included small numbers of Chaffinches and the expected tit species. Single Great Spotted Woodpeckers were recorded on five dates and Nuthatches on four dates, the latter a species that is

now seemingly recorded with more regularity. Slightly more unusual sightings during the month included a Woodcock (19th), a pair of Bullfinches on 4th and a male on the 8th, 11 Redpolls on the 4th and Siskins on the 4th (8) and the 8th (10).

During **February** Goose numbers started to increase with Greylags reported on eight dates with a maximum of seven on the 15th and two Egyptian Geese on five dates up to the middle of the month. A single Grey Heron was noted on the marsh on seven dates and six Teal were present on the 12th. In the woodland area Great Spotted Woodpeckers continued to be recorded with regularity with birds on eight dates, with Jays also putting in an appearance on eight and Treecreeper on five. Slightly more unusual sightings included two Stock Doves on the 15th, and a single Skylark and Meadow Pipit on the 16th.

During **March** Greylag Goose sightings again increased on the marsh, with birds reported on thirteen dates and two Grey Herons also present on three dates at the start of the month. Woodpigeon numbers peaked, with a flock of 200 on the 28th. Stock Doves were recorded again on three dates. Kestrels were noted on four dates with two on the 15th and 26th although unfortunately weren't to stay to breed on the reserve this year. The first Chiffchaff of the year was on the 12th and more unusual sightings included two Red Kites on 8th, and single Redpoll and Grey Wagtail on 20th.

April saw an increase in Common Buzzard sightings, recorded on seven dates, all singles other than two on 12th, which isn't totally surprising given how much commoner the species has become in the county. The local Tawny Owls became more vocal during the month being noted on three dates and more unusual species included a Little Egret and Common Snipe on the 5th and Skylark and Goldcrest on the 8th. The first Blackcap was heard on the 16th (2), and Willow Warbler on 26th, with Chiffchaff numbers increasing throughout the month with up to four heard singing from the 11th onwards. A male Reed Bunting took up territory on the edge of the boardwalk near the entrance to the reserve noted first on the 5th. Two Tufted Ducks were noted on the river on the 18th and 28th.

May saw summer visitors continuing to appear with the first Cuckoo recorded on the 7th, four days later than last year. The first Sedge Warbler was noted on the 3rd and Reed Warbler on the 7th, with Garden Warbler recorded from the 17th and noted on four dates during the month. Other returning summers visitors that appeared during the month included the first Swallows on the 6th and Swift on the 17th. Blackcap numbers rose to at least three singing males on site and the singing male Reed Bunting was noted on five dates. A family of Mute Swans appeared on the river with seven cygnets in tow and other birds that bred locally included a family of Long-tailed Tits noted around the feeding site from the start of the month and into June. Slightly more unusual was an Egyptian Goose noted on the Marsh on the 17th.

The first Kingfishers and Marsh Harriers were seen during **June**, Kingfishers noted on the 7th and 11th and Marsh Harriers on the 3rd and 18th. Cuckoos continued to be heard, on the 11th and 12th, and Little Grebes were noted on the 16th and 30th with two Pied Wagtails also seen on the latter date.

July as would be expected was somewhat quieter bird wise, though regular visitors to the reserve included Grey Heron on seven dates and a Common Buzzard recorded on nine. Notable records included a large count of 107 Woodpigeons made on the 30th with two Siskins on the 2nd, presumably local birds rather than travellers from further afield. Two young Tawny Owls were discovered mid afternoon in a path side tree on the 21st, almost certainly the two birds ringed on the reserve in May prior to fledging. Woodland species continued to be reported, with Nuthatches on three dates and warblers included Sedge Warblers on five dates, Garden Warbler on the 4th and Willow Warbler on the 5th.

August was somewhat quieter bird wise though several with birds of note included single Marsh Harrier (12th), Little Egret (14th) and Curlew (14th). Buzzards continued to be reported with records on seven dates in total, and a maximum of three individuals seen on the 16th. The woodland area saw an increase in Nuthatch sightings recorded on seven dates with Treecreeper also noted on a similar number of occasions.

In **September** a Kingfisher was seen on 18th, with other notable sightings the same day included a flock of nine Mistle Thrushes and six Siskins. Numbers of woodland species increased considerably especially the tit species, with Marsh Tits recorded on nine dates and Coal Tit on five, which included four on the 18th. Roaming Long-tailed Tit flocks also featured recorded on eleven dates with up to ten noted on the 6th and 26th and Chiffchaff numbers increased to a maximum count of 12 on the 3rd. The last Swallow was seen on the 17th. Somewhat of a surprise was the reappearance of presumably the family of nine Mute Swans first seen in May with the cygnets all now fully grown, a large brood for Mute Swans and no mean achievement bringing all safely to maturity.

During **October** more notable sightings included a Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail on the 8th, the first record of the year for this latter species, undoubtedly under-recorded and breeding locally at several nearby sites. The first Lapwings of the year were also seen with two on the 20th. Woodland activity saw an increase in Jay records, with birds noted on eleven dates during the month. A rather late Reed Warbler was at the site on the 8th, choosing a rather uncharacteristic perch a Hawthorn bush near the hide to sit and enjoy the morning sun. Records were also received for Siskin, Bullfinch and Redpoll on the 8th with another Siskin noted on the 23rd.

By **November** the last of the summer visitors had left although a variety of woodland species were still present, their numbers supplemented by the first of the winter visitors with two Siskins noted on the 12th. Birds of note during the month included Bullfinch (2), Skylark, Mistle Thrush and Kingfisher on the 12th and Egyptian Geese (2) on the 18th. Corvid counts started to increase late afternoon as birds pass overhead towards their roost site, with 200 Jackdaws among the higher counts on the 5th. Another high count was of 17 Common Gull again on the 5th.

During **December** the winter feeding site continued to be well stocked and equally well visited, with Nuthatches noted on seven dates. Siskins were also in the general area on the 27th (6) and 29th. High counts of Jackdaws continued with 200+ again on the 3rd and 10th. Kingfishers put

in an appearance with single birds noted on three dates, with other records of note which included Little Egret on the 3rd and 27th, and a flyover Grey Wagtail noted on the latter date. A reflection on the time of year was the appearance again of Barn Owls during the day at the site, with singles on the 29th and 30th and two on 24th.

INSECTS

A total of 196 casual insect observations were made during the year, a decrease on the previous year, with the majority of records unsurprisingly related to butterflies.

The first of these for the year were in **March**, with Peacock (*Aglais io*) seen on the 4th and Brimstone (*Gonepheryx rhamni*) on the 12th. Unsurprisingly these were the only records for the month.

April sightings were again rather few and far between with a total of nine butterfly records. The sightings included the first Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) on the 9th, both Small White (*Pieris rapae*) and Comma (*Polygonia c-album*) on the 23rd and an Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) on the 21st and 25th. The first Large Red Damselflies (*Pyrhosoma nymphula*) were also seen towards the end of the month on the 25th, a day later than last year.

During **May** numbers remained low, a similar picture to the disappointing previous May, with just thirteen butterfly records for the month. New species during the month were Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*) on the 6th and Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegaria*) on the 8th and 10th.

In **June** numbers were worryingly low with only four records for the whole month! These were Orange Tip (3rd), Speckled Wood (6th), and Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) on the 6th and 26th. The first dragonflies were recorded with Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*) seen on the 25th and damselflies included the appearance of Banded Demoiselles (*Calopteryx splendens*) on the 11th and Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*) with 4 on the 7th.

July was a much better month with 60 records of eleven species of butterfly recorded. Red Admiral, Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*) and Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) were the most abundant with ten records

of the former and nine each of the latter. New species for the year included Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) on the 30th and the first and, surprisingly, the only sighting for the year of Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) on the 18th.

Banded Demoiselles were recorded regularly throughout the month as in previous years, though records of Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*) were the only Dragonflies of the month.

August saw eleven species of Butterfly recorded during the month, though numbers of records for this month were low compared to the previous year. A Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) was noted on the 23rd, with Small Skipper on the 8th and 23rd with the most numerous species recorded being Gatekeeper and Speckled Wood with six records of each. Dragonflies recorded during the month were Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*) on the 8th and 23rd, Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) on 1st and 29th and Southern Hawker on 23rd, 27th and 29th, with only one Damselfly record, a Banded Demoiselle on 29th.

September Butterfly sightings were of three species, Large White, Small Tortoiseshell and Speckled Wood, the latter the most numerous and noted on eight dates. Dragonfly species seen were the expected ones; Ruddy Darters on six dates, Brown and Southern Hawkers on two dates and Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) the only one of the year on the 29th.

October saw the season coming to an end; with Small Tortoiseshell and Speckled Wood the only Butterflies recorded, the last a Speckled Wood on the 14th. Ruddy Darter was the only dragonfly species recorded noted on two dates, with the last on the 8th.

MAMMALS

A total of 154 mammal records were collected this year, a slight decrease on 2014. A large percentage of these were for one species, Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) with 66 records, followed by Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*, 28 records) and Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*, 16 records). Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) were noted on the grazing Marsh on five dates during March, with a maximum of 4 on the 15th, and

a further record of one in April. Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) records continue to increase, recorded on eleven dates with multiple counts on the 10th May and 7th June. The remaining records were made up as follows; Stoat (*Mustela ermine*) on the 11th February, 15th March and two on the 4th July, Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*) singles on the 2nd April and 10th May, and Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens*) on the 7th June.

Gary Elton
Assistant Warden



Goldfinch, by Gil Brooking

Pensthorpe Bird Report 2015

Ed Bramham-Jones – Reserve Manager

2015 was an exciting and busy year at Pensthorpe with plenty of rare and migratory species visiting, while habitat management improvements occurred across the reserve.

The start of the year saw good numbers of waterfowl on the wader scrape with the highlights being a pair of Smew and 3 Goldeneye in January. Numbers of Teal peaked at around 350, while Wigeon, Shoveler, Pintail and Gadwall were present in the colder months.

Goose numbers were high, with up to 300 Greylag also being joined by a small flock of 5 Brent Geese on the 4th February and skeins of Pink-footed Geese were often seen flying overhead in the mornings.

2 Bitterns were spotted on the 15th February in the reedbed on Crane Mere and an individual was often seen between here and the Wader Scrape.

2 Green Sandpipers stayed on the edge of the lakes in January and February due to the mild conditions. Snipe numbers far lower than the previous year, but a count of 19 on Rushy Marsh on the 19th February was a highlight.

Flocks of 60 Siskin and up to 20 Redpoll were often seen in the Alder Carr woodland, these were joined by a small number of Crossbills in early March.

The spring started with 4 Wheatears seen on the cultivated area by the Wader Scrape on the 4th April and stayed for around a week. The first Turtle Dove arrived in late April and a male was often heard calling around the drive and car park until late May. Two pairs of Spotted Flycatchers bred on the reserve and the young could be seen in July just before the Scrape hides.

Wader numbers were good across the site. 12 Avocet were joined by 6 Little Ringed Plovers and several pairs of Lapwing were present on the scrape. Migrant Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits were spotted while Dunlin, Ruff, Common and Green Sandpiper increased in number due to

habitat enhancements. A flock of 26 Oystercatchers on April 5th was a recent high for reserve.

As part of a Catchment Restoration Fund project, 2km of the river restoration was restored in connection with over 30 acres of reed bed, wetlands and scrapes created. The largest wetland on Wensum Meadow saw a pair of Ringed Plover breed for the first time, while Lapwing and a pair of Avocets were also successful. The site later in the year saw 8 Little Egrets seen daily. This area will be opened to the public later in 2016 with access to a new woodland area and farmland winter bird food plot.

Good numbers of warblers were present throughout the summer, with Garden Warbler, Reed and Sedge Warblers, Lesser and Common Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff all breeding. The Constant Effort Site (CES) ringing site ran by Gary Elton was again greatly valuable to seeing how the breeding and migration pattern for the year was happening, with various species of passerines being recorded.

Later into the warmer weather, two new dragonfly species were seen for the first time at Pensthorpe. In July, Adrian Riley found a Norfolk Hawker in the last week of July and in September Willow Emerald were on the wing.

Numbers of dragonflies and butterflies were on the low side due to the lack of a continuous dry spell, but Clouded Yellow, Silver-washed Fritillary and White Admiral butterflies were seen by visitors.

Late summer and early autumn saw lots of activity with migrants coming through. An Osprey was seen in mid September for a week while numbers of Hobbies peaked at 4 in September but with one bird still present on the 14th October. Sightings of Goshawk were sporadic but Marsh Harriers were much easier to spot throughout the year.

The introduction of cattle grazing and control of rank vegetation around the Wader Scrape and Crane Mere saw much better habitat created for migrant waders and wintering wildfowl. Numbers of Lapwing started to flock together from September and around 300 were seen. 12 Snipe on the 6th October were a pleasant site in front of the new hide on the islands. With the water levels increased in November to start to kill off

the vegetation on the islands for next spring, waterfowl numbers increased. 55 Shoveler, on the 23rd November were joined by 400 Teal into December. A juvenile Peregrine was regularly hunting over the reserve at this time.

The woodland hide became a great spot to view birds from as temperatures dropped as up to 3 Nuthatch, 2 Treecreeper, small numbers of Brambling with large flocks of tits and finches could be seen at close quarters feeding.

To the end of the year, scrub removal and reedbed enhancements were carried out across the site to improve the mosaic of habitats and 2016 will certainly see the benefits for breeding birds and viewing areas for visitors.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the sightings and surveys at Pensthorpe in 2015.

Ed Bramham-Jones

Pensthorpe Constant Effort Site

For the tenth year running the NOA carried out ringing for the Constant Effort Site (CES) study at Pensthorpe, achieving ten site visits in total during the season.

The number of individual birds caught this year (289) was slightly down on 2014 (383). This reduction was due to a degree to the slightly lower number of visits against the previous year, and the reduction in nettaging on the CES site, due to management work along the river Wensum.

Compared to the stormy winter experienced in 2014, the early part of 2015 was relatively benign. It was the sunniest winter since 1929, with near average temperatures across the board. This helped our resident species especially those susceptible to the cold, such as Wren and ground feeders such as a Blackbird, Robin and Dunnock to survive the winter. The summer itself was cooler and wetter than the previous two summers. June was predominantly dry and calm, particularly in the south, but July and August again saw unsettled weather with spells of heavy rain.

CES results indicate that 2015 was a mixed year for migrant species. Short-distance migrants Chiffchaff and Blackcap, which typically winter around the Mediterranean basin and into North Africa, demonstrated statistically significant increases in abundance in 2015 compared to the five-year mean (2010-14). Data show that both species fared well over the winter months, with Blackcap experiencing the highest survival rates since CES began in 1983; Blackcap numbers may also have been boosted by an extremely productive 2014 season which saw very large numbers of young birds produced. Increases in Blackcap abundance were broadly similar across the UK, but Chiffchaff numbers increased more markedly in the north of England and Scotland.

Despite a generally productive breeding season in 2014, long-distance migrants, defined as those that winter south of the Sahara, fared less well in 2015, with both Willow Warbler and Whitethroat exhibiting

their worst year for abundance since CES records began in 1983. Previous analyses have shown that growing season droughts in the Sahel region of Africa can have strong negative consequences for sub-Saharan migrants, decreasing food availability on passage, and figures from the period July-October 2014 indicate that rainfall totals were indeed below average over this period. However, the fact that declines showed strong regional variation, with abundance in the east less significantly affected than in the north or west, suggests that weather on the breeding grounds also influenced numbers. Sedge and Reed Warbler also fared better in the east, but significant increases there were cancelled out by declines in other parts of Britain.

It is always difficult to draw assumptions from a small data set, as with the results at Pensthorpe, as its value is largely in contributing to the bigger national picture, but many of our catches would seem to mirror the national trends. Short-range migrants such as Blackcap seemed to fare well as expected, with catches virtually the same as 2014, though Chiffchaff were slightly down. Longer distance migrants such as Sedge and Reed Warbler again reflected the larger national picture with their numbers down around 25% and only one Common Whitethroat was trapped, down from six in 2014 and a far cry from the fifty-five caught in 2011! Both Garden Warbler and Willow Warbler numbers though were on par with 2014, with the habitat at Pensthorpe historically supporting healthy numbers of both species.

As always several were at odds though, with eighteen Dunnocks trapped in 2014 and only five in 2015 and Great Tit numbers down from forty-eight in 2014 to fourteen in 2015. One other big drop was Greenfinch, down 80%. Again, a small data set demands caution but the disease *Trichomonosis*, is still prevalent and is known to still be impacting on Greenfinch numbers and survival.

As with previous years extra nets were erected when time and man power allowed adjacent to the CES site. This resulted in a further 148 birds ringed with this total including four Bullfinches and three Treecreepers. Nestling ringing produced another 62 new birds, Blue and Great Tits plus two kestrels which were fitted with colour rings as part of a local study of this species.

Gary Elton

Assistant Warden

A Wensum Valley Dipper reporter *David Knight*

My tiny village of Worthing lies off the B1145 between Billingford and North Elmham. Along its northern boundary runs the Blackwater River – a tributary of the Wensum. I know all the residents and many know of my interest in nature especially birds and contact me with queries and sightings.

On the 21st October 2015 I was walking through my patch as I do as often as possible to see what's about. I met my near neighbour, Chris, a keen naturalist and my main source of birding information in and around the village. Over the years he has alerted me to many great birds – Kingfishers; Spotted Flycatchers; Red Kites and Ospreys to name but a few specials. He greeted me and queried "Had I seen the Dipper?" "The What?" I said. Apparently on two occasions a few days ago he had observed a Dipper from the river bridge. For once I found it hard to believe that he had seen such a rare bird in the village so hurried on to look for myself. But, alas, no joy.

There was no more news until on Saturday 24th October when another neighbour, Lynne, rang me to say she had seen a Dipper in her stream that loops from the Blackwater river and runs through her expansive garden. This is the same garden where I've watched Barn Owls nesting and owlets being ringed and in October 2014 an Osprey dropped in for a few days fishing in their lake. I was on my own in the house getting ready to enjoy some World Cup rugby. There's not much that will persuade me to miss international rugby but on this occasion I made an exception and raced over to join her. Again; too late. But there was now no doubt in my mind that we had a rare Dipper in our village but was I ever going to see it?

Another call from Lynne mid-morning of 26th October had me racing over again but frustratingly it was nowhere to be seen.

It all went quiet the rest of the week and I assumed it had moved on and came to accept I was not going to see it. I harboured thoughts of it

being a Black-bellied Dipper. It was the right part of the country and right time of year. What a record that would be for the Wensum Valley!

I kept the news to myself at the request of Lynne and husband Adrian. What could I show anyone if I were to broadcast the news?

Then, on Sunday 1st November, just after 9am, I received another call from Lynne to say the Dipper was back. So was it going to be third time lucky? I quickly positioned myself on their tiny bridge over the stream where the bird favoured a small muddy island of debris. I didn't have to wait long before something landed downstream of the island but was somewhat obscured by overhanging vegetation. It looked like our Dipper so I ran around some garden bushes and downstream to try and gain a better view. I could see it splashing about near the island and it was definitely a Dipper. Stay there! Stay there! I whispered as I raced as quietly as possible back to my original position. It was still splashing and feeding and then it climbed out of the water onto the island and turned and faced me for a brief second. Bingo! It looked very dark with a brilliant white breast. I could not see any chestnut waistcoat but it was all very quick and in a second it was gone. Was it Noddy *cinclus*? I would like to think so.

Sometime later when I had calmed down I reported my sighting to Ray Gribble. I had no photographs and only a very brief video taken by Adrian which is inconclusive. So we have nothing to really convince the County Recorder to register this rare sighting.

Looking at the BBRC website they state :-

Claims of nominate cinclus are welcomed if accompanied by detailed notes and preferably by good photographs. For the moment, BBRC will take the pragmatic view that birds with little or no chestnut on the belly in eastern Britain (particularly in the Northern Isles and lowland south-east England away from the range of gularis) are likely to be nominate cinclus but other claims may have to await further investigations on the variation of plumage shown by all the races likely to occur in Britain. A ringing recovery would provide additional evidence. Claims of aquaticus are

welcomed if accompanied by a ringing recovery. (updated March 2015 AMS).

Based on this and the evidence in my notes above I consider it a realistic probability that what we have seen is a Black-bellied Dipper and would like it recorded as such in the WVBS records.

The Weather Report for 2015

January

An unremarkable winter month with the mean temperature close to normal hiding the fact that the mean maximum was 1c above average and the mean minimum was 1c below.

Exceptional warmth briefly bathed our area on the 9th, when the maximum of 15.1c was the highest January temperature in the Norwich area since at least the middle of the 19th century.

Slight snow or sleet fell on five days but only provided a transient cover on the 30th.

Rainfall was close to normal with the county average being 51.1 mms

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	1	1	0	1	2	9	10	2	5

February

This was another rather featureless month with both temperature and rainfall very close to average. The whole month was dominated by an almost continuous and unusually strong jet stream that exerted an Atlantic influence over the British Isles, (and much of Western Europe).

Unsurprisingly there was little snowfall with a thin covering just on the 3rd. There was a small excess of sunshine and the county average of rainfall was 44.2 mms.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

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

March

An uneventful month but it was enlivened in the final week by a thunderstorm on the 29th and gales on the 31st.

The main feature of the month was its dryness. During the period from 1st – 24th inclusive only 3.9 mms of rain was measured and only the 15.5

mms that fell on the 29th saved March from being one of the driest on record. The eclipse on the 20th was nearly thwarted by cloud and a drop in temperature of 0.6c was recorded. 17 ground frosts were recorded, inhibiting spring growth and the county average rainfall total for the month was 28.3mms

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	3	4	3	0	7	3	9	0

April

Although daytime maxima were frequently well above average the nights were often cold with frequent frosts. A comparison of the incidence of frost for the period January 1st to May 2nd 2014 and 2015 reveals that this year more ground and air frosts had been logged by the latter date than for the entire year ending December 31st 2014.

The parched countryside bore witness to the dry nature of the month, with the lack of rain exacerbated by frequent drying winds and excessive sunshine. Indeed the county average rainfall total of 19.2 mms was barely 50% of normal.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	5	6	0	4	2	6	3	4	0

May

With rain recorded on eighteen days the rainfall total of 55.5 mms was unsurprisingly well above average

There was a marked lack of warm days with only two achieving a maximum over 21c. Early on the 22nd tremors emanating from a minor earthquake off the Kent coast were felt widely across Norfolk.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	5	1	0	1	11	11	2	0

June

Predominately cool until the final week with a maximum of 27.1c on the 30th. With a temperature of only 14c on the 9th no less than eight days in December were warmer!

With rainfall to the west of Norwich a total of 36.4 mms and to the east only 28.4mms it was a decidedly dry month.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	1	3	0	1	4	9	5	5	2

July

A fairly warm month but getting cooler at the end with the maximum of 32.1c on the 1st being the highest since August 18th 2012 and this was followed by an exceptionally warm night with the temperature failing to fall below 18.5c.

With a county average of 110.2mms it was the wettest July in Norfolk since 1988 with much of this excess was caused by torrential rain on the 24th.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	0	1	5	4	13	4	3	1

August

An unsettled and wet month with our favoured location in the East of England enjoying slightly warmer than countrywide average temperatures. The period from 1st-16th recorded only 4.8mms but thereafter it became wet with the county average of 81.2 mms showing an excess of about 50%.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	3	1	2	5	15	0	1	2

September

September was unusually cool and autumnal with few indications of lingering summer warmth. Only a single day managed to achieve a maximum in excess of 21c.

Rain was measured on 15 days and allowed the county average monthly total of 54.9 mms to be very close to normal.

The total lunar eclipse on the 28th caused the moon's disc to assume a drab dirty copper hue.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	0	5	3	1	8	1	7	3

October

Most unusually for October, winds blew from an easterly quadrant on 15 days with only the final week finally reverting to the normal westerly regime. Very few localities recorded an air frost and the county average rainfall for the month of 50.6 was slightly below normal.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	8	5	2	2	7	2	0	3

November

Exceptionally mild, (but not as warm as November 1944). With rain measured on 24 days and with leaden skies prevailing it was a dismal month. A very brief incursion of arctic air on the 20th brought slight snow on the 21st and 22nd with the first frosts of autumn and this was about a month later than usual.

The county average rainfall total of 80.3 mms was about 120% of normal.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	1	0	0	2	3	9	8	2	5

December

This was an extraordinary month with no warmer December being recorded in central England since before 1659. The maximum of 15.5c was identical to that of the 22nd June! The month shared the distinction with December 1934 of not recording a single air frost. The mean soil temperature of 8.4c (identical to that of April) allowed grass growth to continue throughout the month.

The rainfall total of 50.2 mms was close to normal.

Wind Direction Summary at 0900 hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	0	1	2	5	14	6	0	3

Monthly Summaries for 2015

Month	Total Rain-fall mms	Percentage of average rainfall	Days with Air Frost	Days with Ground Frost	Monthly Mean Temp.	Deviation from average	Mean soil temp. at 10cms depth
January	49.7	86	13	17	4.2	+0.2	3.3
February	45.3	105	10	19	4.4	+0.6	3.1
March	33.8	73	7	17	7.0	+1.1	5.1
April	23.2	47	2	14	9.4	+1.8	8.4
May	55.5	122	0	3	11.8	+0.5	11.2
June	36.4	68	0	0	14.5	+0.2	13.6
July	91.6	162	0	0	17.4	+0.9	16.9
August	80.3	157	0	0	17.4	+1.0	15.9
Sept	48.0	88	0	0	13.1	-1.2	12.0
October	49.5	85	0	4	10.7	-0.3	9.7
Nov	81.8	115	2	6	9.5	+5.0	8.9
December	50.2	111	0	4	9.9	+1.1	8.4

Annual Summary 2015

Total Rainfall	645.3mms	Wettest Day	
Days with rain recorded	195	Days with thunder	
Lowest maximum	2.0°C (19 th January)	Lowest minimum	- 5.4°C (23 rd January)
Lowest grass minimum	-7.6°C (20 th & 23 rd January)		
Air frosts	36	Ground frosts	
Days with sleet or snow	12	Days with snow lying	3
Days with hail	6	Mean cloud cover at 0900hrs	67%
Highest Maximum	32.1°C (1 st July)	Highest minimum	18.5°C (2 nd July)
Days with gales	2	Days with fog (0900hrs)	11

Longest period without any measurable rainfall: 11 days from 13th – 23rd April inclusive:

Annual mean maximum: 15.0°C

Annual mean minimum: 6.5°C

Annual mean: 10.8°C

Wind Direction Summary at 0900hrs.

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	18	30	20	26	30	111	59	41	30

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

Norman Brooks (Fellow Royal Meteorological Society)

Membership subscriptions

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

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

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

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

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

Notes for Contributors

Submission of Records for 2016 Report.

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

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

National and County Rarities

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

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

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

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



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2021 Edition of the WVBS Thirteenth Annual Report_2015 (PDF)10th October 2021

Text changes

Format changes

Where	Original text	PDF text
Diary of Events 6 th June	"present had been seen"	"present and had been seen"
Systematic List Canada Goose Wigeon Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Garganey & Shoveler Bittern Great White Egret Black-headed Gull Mediterranean Gull Herring Gull Turtle Dove Firecrest Woodlark Sand Martin Garden Warbler & Whitethroat Nightingale Redstart Tree Sparrow Tree Pipit	<i>"Branta Canadensis"</i> <i>"Anus Penelope"</i> <i>"Anus"</i> <i>"Botaurus Stellaris"</i> <i>"Ardea alba alba"</i> <i>"Larus fuscus"</i> <i>"Larus melancephalus"</i> <i>"Larus argentus"</i> <i>"Streptopelia turtur turtur"</i> <i>"Regulus ignicapilla ignicapilla"</i> <i>"Lullula arborea arborea"</i> <i>"Pensthorpe"</i> <i>"Sylvia"</i> <i>"Lusciniamegarhynchos megarhynchos"</i> <i>"Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus"</i> <i>"Passer montanus montanus"</i> <i>"Anthus hodgsoni yunnanensis"</i>	<i>"Branta canadensis"</i> <i>"Anas penelope"</i> <i>"Anas"</i> <i>"Botaurus stellaris"</i> <i>"Ardea alba"</i> <i>"Larus ridibundus"</i> <i>"Larus melanocephalus"</i> <i>"Larus argentatus"</i> <i>"Streptopelia turtur"</i> <i>"Regulus ignicapilla"</i> <i>"Lullula arborea"</i> <i>"Pensthorpe"</i> <i>"Sylvia"</i> <i>"Luscinia megarhynchos"</i> <i>"Phoenicurus phoenicurus"</i> <i>"Passer montanus"</i> <i>"Anthus trivialis" (1)</i>
Principal Sites & their Grid References		Changed to alphabetical by page
Hempton Marsh Reserve Report Birds: September Insects: July	"no mean achieving" as previous	"no mean achievement" as in previous
Pensthorpe Bird Report 2015	"Snipe numbers for lower" "were a highlight"	"Snipe numbers far lower"(2) "was a highlight"
Weather Annual Summary 2015		Changed to a table

(1) *A. hodgsoni* is the Olive-backed Pipit.

(2) "Snipe numbers were lower" is another option.