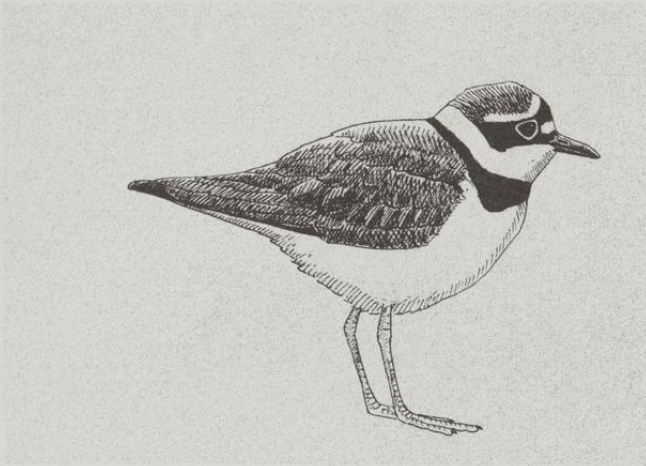


Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society



Eighth Annual Report
2010



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Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society

2010 Annual Report

Contents	Page
Introducing the WVBS	4
Chairman's Report	6
2010 Programme	8
Diary of Events – edited by Colin Wright	10
Systematic List - edited by Ray Gribble	27
List of Contributors	89
Earliest & Latest Reported Dates of Summer Migrants	90
Latest & Earliest Reported Dates of Winter Visitors	91
Locations and Grid References	92
2010 Ringing Report – Allan Hale.	94
2010 Weather Report – Norman Brooks	100
Pensthorpe Annual Report 2010 – Thomas Spencer	107
Hempton Marsh Report 2010 – Sophie Barker	116
Changes of Habitat for Birds in the Wensum Valley – Charles Sayer	123
Snow and birds at Lenwade 2010 – Jacky Pett.	128
Common Terns at Sparham Lakes 2010 – Ray Gribble	132
Recording Area Map	133



Covering the Wensum Valley from Norwich to Fakenham and beyond.

Formed in March 2003, our aim is to:-

- Encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching in the Wensum Valley.
- Encourage novice birdwatchers to take an active part in birdwatching.
- Share information with other members.
- Gather and collate data on birds in the area.
- Participate in regional and national surveys within the defined area.
- Liaise with other conservation groups within the area and more widely.
- Administer the society in an environmentally sensitive manner.

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

Committee 2010

Officers:

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

Web Page: www.wvbs.co.uk

2010 Chairman's Annual Report

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

The Society has enjoyed another successful year with membership showing a steady growth.

This year there has been a programme of 13 outdoor and 9 indoor meetings plus a member's week long visit to Scotland and two social evenings for members. You can re-live the highlights by reading Colin Wright's review of the year.

In addition to this very full programme the Society participated in Pensthorpe's Wild About the Wensum event and the Wild About Norfolk Conservation Fair at East Dereham.

The Society was in attendance at the opening of the Community Hall in Costessey, an Open Church Week at Beetley and also led a session for the pupils of Lyng School at their Open Day in November.

As you can realise this amounted to an extremely busy year and it wouldn't have been possible without the assistance of all the members of our willing and hard working committee, the members who have helped during our indoor meetings, the leaders of our outdoor meetings, the managers of the Society's website and finally all the other members who have helped in any way at the Wild About the Wensum & Wild About Norfolk events. Thank you to you all for giving of your time so generously. I would also like to thank the Manager of Morrison's, Fakenham for allowing us the use of the car park for the duration of our outdoor meetings enabling members to car share whenever possible.

In November we published our 2009 Annual Report which we hope proved of interest to you. I know the editorial team would appreciate any suggestions members may have about the report and how it might be improved in the future.

During the year we also updated our Society's logo and this has now been used on the Society's sweatshirts, t-shirts and caps which I hope members will be proud to wear at our future outdoor meetings.

The Common Terns that nested on the Society's tern raft had a successful breeding season with 6 pairs producing 9 chicks. One visit was made to the raft by Ray Gribble and Allan Hale to ring the juveniles. The raft's flotation problems continued last year but action is being taken to rectify the problem so it should remain afloat in the future.

I trust you have all enjoyed your membership of the Society over the past year and will continue to do so.

Alwyn Jackson

WVBS Programme 2010

- 10th Jan Outdoor meeting – Winter Bird Count cancelled due to adverse weather.
- 21st Jan Indoor meeting – “Out of Africa Project”
Speaker Phil Atkinson (BTO).
- 31st Jan Outdoor meeting – WWT Ouse Washes NR, Welney
Leader Alwyn Jackson.
- 18th Feb Indoor meeting – “RSPB Titchwell Marsh NR – Past, Present and Future” Speaker Paul Eele (RSPB).
- 27th Feb Outdoor meeting – North Norfolk coast –
Leader Colin Fenn.
- 18th Mar Indoor meeting – “A Birder’s Year in Norfolk”
Speaker Allan Hale.
- 28th Mar Outdoor meeting – Lyndford Arboretum –
Leader Richard Norris.
- 15th Apr AGM followed by talk “Patagonia – in Darwin’s Footsteps” Speaker Peter Lambley MBE.
- 24th Apr Outdoor meeting – East Norfolk –
Leader Ray Gribble.
- 10-15th May Member’s trip to Speyside, Scotland –
Leader Ray Gribble.
- 20th May Indoor meeting – “The wildlife of Kenya”
Speaker Dr Kevin Elsby.
- 22nd May Wild About the Wensum at Pensthorpe.
- 30th May Outdoor meeting – Dawn Chorus at NWT Sparham Pools NR – Leader Alwyn Jackson.

17 th June	Outdoor meeting – Nightjar Evening – Leader Josh Leeder.
15 th July	Summer Social at Weston Longville Village Hall.
25 th July	Outdoor Meeting – RSPB Minsmere NR – Leader Colin Fenn.
14 th Aug	Outdoor meeting – RSPB Snettisham NR – Leader David Knight.
19 th Aug	Indoor meeting – “Bats – Denizens of the night” Speaker Sam Phillips (Norwich Bat Group).
26 & 28 th Aug	Bird ID Workshop; Pipits, larks, finches & buntings – Leader Steve Cale.
16 th Sept	Indoor meeting – “Highlights of a long term study of Sparrowhawks” Speaker Prof. Ian Newton.
26 th Sept	Outdoor meeting – Lenwade area – Leader Jacky Pett.
21 st Oct	Indoor meeting – “Birdwatching in Oman and the UAE” Speaker Chris Mills.
31 st Oct	Outdoor meeting – North Norfolk coast – Leader Colin Fenn.
18 th Nov	Indoor meeting – “Trinidad & Tobago – Terns, Tropicbirds, Trogons and Turtles” Speaker Julia Burton.
27 th Nov	Outdoor meeting to High Ash Farm cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.
9 th Dec	Christmas Social at Weston Longville Village Hall.

Diary of events in 2010

Sunday 10th January: Winter Count.

This event was cancelled due to the adverse weather conditions.

Thursday 21st January: Talk “Out of Africa” given by Dr Phil Atkinson (BTO).

This project is one of the BTOs prominent themes for the next few years and aims to improve our knowledge of the ecology of migrants wintering in Africa. Little is known about when they arrive, how they move around and what habitats they use. It is known that two thirds of these species are declining. The Wood Warbler, for instance is declining by 10% per year. To address this knowledge gap the BTO, in collaboration with the RSPB, the Ghana Wildlife Society and Naturama, will be monitoring migrants in five West African habitats ranging from the arid Sahelion area of Burkina Faso to the lush tropical habitats of southern Ghana. The survey starts in the winter of 2009/2010.

After the break Dr Phil looked back at a hundred years of bird ringing. A sixteenth century wood carving showed Swallows being fished from a pond as it was then widely thought they spent the winter at the bottom of reedbeds. It was not until the early 1900s that the first bird ringing schemes were hatched to answer the question of where our summer visitors spent the winter. Two excellent presentations to the usual BTO's high standard.

Sunday 31st January: Outdoor Meeting at WWT Ouse Washes Reserve, Welney led by Alwyn Jackson.

Seventeen members met at Welney for a day's birding. The Ouse Washes Reserve has been improved beyond recognition with its new eco-friendly visitor centre and, with the recent spell of bad weather, this was the perfect place to watch the daily feeding of the wintering wild swan, from the comfort of a centrally heated hide. Members spent a couple of hours enjoying this spectacle before moving on to Dunkirk Bridge to see if a

reported Great White Egret was still there. A local birdwatcher had spotted the egret and those present were able to join him and take in distant views of this fairly rare visitor to Britain. Finally the party made a brief stop at Denver Sluice on the River Great Ouse. A thoroughly enjoyable day's birding with 71 species seen which included Tree Sparrow, Reed Bunting, Marsh Harrier and Black-tailed Godwit.

Thursday 18th February: Talk "RSPB Titchwell Nature Reserve – Past, Present and Future" given by Paul Eele (RSPB).

Paul talked about the problems affecting the Titchwell reserve on the North Norfolk coast. Titchwell has three basic types of eco-system, salt-marsh, fresh-water marsh and freshwater reed beds which makes this area of great importance to a wide range of species, notably waders and other flocks of migrant birds. It also plays a vital role in the conservation of the Bittern and the Avocet. Paul said the main problem at Titchwell is that of coastal erosion, underlined by some dramatic aerial photos of sand bars, sand banks and marine inlets. Major construction work on new sea walls and dams using the latest sea-defence technology is underway and large tracts of Titchwell Marsh will be closed to the public this summer (2010) during this work. An interesting and informative talk.

Saturday 27th February: Outdoor meeting on the north Norfolk coast led by Colin Fenn.

The first stop was Choseley barns. The earlier rain had eased slightly and members left their cars to seek out Corn Bunting and Yellowhammers. Several other more common birds also joined the list. On to Titchwell and as everyone assembled in the car park the weather looked brighter. Great views of the solitary Woodcock were enjoyed by all as they walked towards the visitors centre. Further on they found a Water Rail close to the feeders and Marsh Harriers were over the marsh towards Thornham. Then a shout went up "Bittern". Most of the group saw it flying low and disappearing into the reeds. Walking towards the beach platform members gathered a great list of birds on the way among the best being

Spotted Redshank, Goldeneye and Water Pipit. There was also a lot of Pintail on the water. The list was fast approaching 60 species. Upon reaching the beach and scanning the sea a huge raft of Common Scoter could be seen and as they took flight a few Velvet Scoter with their white wing bars could be seen amongst them. There was a fine male Goldeneye on the sea and lots of the more common shore birds including fine Bar-tailed Godwits and, unusual for the coast, a single Common Sandpiper. On the shoreline Golden Plover and Red-breasted Mergansers were added to the list. On the way back to the cars for lunch Ruff was noted and closer views of Water Pipit were gained along with a Common Buzzard in the distance. Bearded Tit were also seen and a Cetti's Warbler was heard. The sun was now shining in a blue sky.

After lunch the party headed for Wells where Scaup had been reported. The skies were darkening upon arrival and the rain started again. Despite this all the group had a distant, but positive view of the Scaups on the far end of the boating lake. As they drove off towards Holkham the rain stopped again and they arrived to clear skies. Pink-footed Geese were in the fields and overhead. The clear skies seemed to be a trigger for the Barn Owls to start hunting and four were seen at the same time with a fifth seen later. It was now quite pleasant in Holkham Bay as everyone walked towards the far dunes looking for Shore Larks and Snow Buntings. Despite walking what seemed like the entire beach they had no success so they headed back to the cars enjoying the lengthening evening light and re-capping on a great day out. The day ended with a superb list of 86 species.

Thursday 18th March: Talk “A Birder’s Tear in Norfolk” given by Allan hale (WVBS member).

An entertaining talk with plenty of feedback from the floor to help Allan keep track of which month we were in. We learnt the history of some birds from their ring numbers such as gulls seen at Yarmouth which have also been seen in Croatia, France and Poland. Also a fascinating description of the intricate details of plumage seen during a ringing session. The

length, shape and colour of feathers revealing gender, age and in some cases, what sort of winter they endured. Allan manages to make a list of ordinary species seem something special and we were shown some dramatic pictures of a Bittern seeing off a Grey Heron trespassing on his patch and a Little Ringed Plover displaying an imaginary broken wing to lure predators away from its nest. We learnt that careful handling is required when ringing birds such as the Hawfinch, whose powerful bill can crack a cherrystone. A Sparrowhawk was shown, held in a thick gloved hand belonging, we were told, to a somewhat wary handler, prompting an immediate complaint from fellow ringer Ray Gribble (whose hand it was), pointing out that an earlier picture of his ungloved hand, scratched and bleeding, was unashamedly censored. A lively and absorbing evening featuring, according to Allan, "The best birding County in the UK" and ending with a sunset.

Sunday 28th March: Outdoor meeting at Lynford Arboretum led by Richard Norris.

Around 40 members met at the Arboretum for an excellent morning walk. The Hawfinch that frequents this area proved to be very elusive but several Crossbills were spotted and a surprise appearance of a Red Kite gliding over the tall pine trees was a bonus.

Thursday 15th April: AGM followed by a talk "In the Footsteps of Darwin" given by Peter Lambley MBE (Botanist and WVBS member).

Peter presented a well illustrated talk about his trip to Patagonia, a region of mainly desert and arid scrub occupying almost the entire southern half of Argentina. Many tourist spots had information boards quoting Darwin, who explored South America by sea and land. Part of Tierra del Fuego is named Beagle, after Darwin's ship. We were shown pictures of species to be found in that part of the world. Some of the less familiar ones were the Chalk-browed Mockingbird, Monk Parakeet, Burrowing Parrot, Burrowing Owl, Rosy-billed Pochard, Speckled Teal, Guira Cuckoo, Chilean Skua, Chilean Flicker, Austral Parakeet and the magnificent Southern Right

Whale. A fascinating talk which brought an unfamiliar part of the world to life.

Saturday 24th April: Outdoor visit to East Norfolk led by Ray Gribble.

Starting from Horsey Mill car park members had their first glimpse of the newly returned Swallows and also saw Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. In fact Willow Warblers were in abundance as everyone walked along the waterside. Also seen or heard were Blackcap, Sedge Warbler and Marsh Harrier. No trip to this area would be complete without seeing Norfolk's resident Cranes which were seen feeding in a field. After lunch a visit was made to Horsey Gap where Wheatear, Stonechat and Common Whitethroat were seen. Many members were hoping to see Ring Ouzels but no luck this year but as they returned along the beach it was their turn to be watched - by five inquisitive Grey Seals just offshore. In total 61 species of birds were recorded during a good day out.

Monday 10th to Saturday 15th May Member's trip to Scotland led by Ray Gribble.

Members arrived at Grantown during Monday afternoon and after settling in and a meal decided to make an early start next morning for the RSPB site at Loch Garten.

They arrived at the visitor centre at 05.15 to find a considerable queue already forming, all hoping for views of Capercaillie which after a hesitant start finally obliged. However whilst waiting they were able to watch the Osprey activity around the nest and also Red Squirrels and Redstart in the surrounding woods. Later that morning a trip to Findhorn Valley and then on to Loch Ruthven hoping primarily to see Golden Eagle in the valley but on this occasion they were unlucky. However, later looking over the loch they were lucky to have a good view of a Slavonian Grebe. Their first full day ended with half the group going to a purpose built hide hopefully to see Pine Martens and Badgers but on this occasion had to be content with an obliging Wood Mouse, fleeting views of a Tawny Owl and a Badger paying a quick visit.

On Wednesday morning before walking part way up Cairngorm they were at the old ski station and in brilliant sunshine were lucky enough to see a pair of Ring Ouzel feeding young. A walk up to Coire an Sneachda despite a lot of searching failed to produce any Ptarmigan but was nevertheless on such a day a very enjoyable experience.

They took an early walk on Thursday morning through local woods to the old Spey Bridge and were rewarded with views of Dippers and Grey Wagtail feeding. Later in the day trips to Loch Garten produced Scottish Crossbill and after a ride on the Cairngorm funicular in near freezing temperatures were rewarded with a view of a male Snow Bunting in fine plumage. A little later the weather cleared and the elusive Ptarmigan showed themselves at long last. That evening the remainder of the party went to the hide, again without much luck seeing only the Wood Mouse and Tawny Owl.

A pre-breakfast trip on our last full day saw them at Tulloch Moor for the Black Grouse lek and in the early morning light were lucky enough to see three birds performing on their favourite grounds. As they were about to return to the hotel for breakfast Lesser Redpoll showed themselves on the path nearby. Later to they visited Findhorn Bay via Lochindorb where a Black-throated Diver was on the loch and travelling around the bay in beautiful weather saw among others Hooded Crow, Little Egret, Common Scoter, Fulmar and Gannets at Burghead. In the late afternoon sunshine a trip to Loch Mallachie where a Crested Tit nest was in full view with much activity around it affording good views for all.

Finally on Saturday before starting for home some went back for another look at the Black Grouse while others chose Loch Mallachie for more Crested Tits.

Thursday 20th May: Talk “The wildlife of Kenya” given by Dr Kevin Elsby.

Starting with a short course in Swahili the first word we learnt was the greeting ‘Jambo’ (hello). This was followed by a map of Kenya showing such famous names as the Masai Mara, the Rift Valley, Mount Kenya,

Samburu, Amboseli and Tsavo. As to be expected there were lots of unusual birds such as the Hammerkop with its huge nest, the colourful Superb Starling, the less than handsome Lappet Vulture contrasted with the stunning looking Lilac-breasted Roller and the Little Bee-eater. Particularly impressive were pictures of hundreds of thousands of Flamingoes on Lake Nakuru in the Rift Valley. No presentation about Africa would be complete without a look at the animals of the area, the timid Thompson's Gazelle contrasted with the graceful cats and the cute looking, but very dangerous, Water Buffalo and Hippo. Plenty of odd facts and survival tips such as, when confronted by a cheetah the best strategy is to stand still since they only like moving targets. The excellent talk finished with 'Kwa heri', which is goodbye in Swahili.

Other activities in May included having a stand at the 'Wild about the Wensum' Conservation Fair at Pensthorpe, as always a brilliant success and we also flew the flag at the grand opening of the Costessey Community Centre which attracted well over a thousand people.

Sunday 30th May: Dawn Chorus at Sparham Pools led by Alwyn Jackson.

Twenty-nine members met in the car park of the NWT Sparham Pools Nature Reserve in the early morning light surrounded by the sound of bird song. Setting off they appreciated the fine tone of a singing Garden Warbler, which remained in full cover as they passed by. Further along the path they stood to listen to a Blackcap and were able to distinguish the delicate differences between its song and that of the very similar Garden Warbler. The remarkable song of a diminutive Wren came drifting through the early morning air. The sky remained overcast as they left the reserve to walk beside the River Wensum by kind permission of Charles Sayer. Another Garden Warbler appeared fleetingly before retreating to thicker cover. A Reed Bunting was observed across the river but preferred to stay elusive as the rain increased in intensity. Very few wildfowl were braving the open water in the prevailing weather conditions, a pair of

Egyptian Geese and a pair of Gadwall accompanied by Great Crested Grebe. A distant Cuckoo tried to lift their spirits with its repetitive call and a Grey Heron drifted slowly over the meadows. Even the Sedge Warblers were staying in low cover, a bird you can normally expect to climb to the top of a delicate stem. However they were treated to a spectacular aerial display by increasing numbers of House Martins, Sand Martins and Swifts as they descended and rose in pursuit of their plentiful insect prey.

Gaining the shelter of a belt of trees members obtained close views of a Willow Warbler as it performed its song of descending notes. A few members witnessed a fledgling Treecreeper as it tumbled to the ground in its early efforts to fly. The party progressed along the lakeside paths until they reached the footpath where they were greeted by the sight of over thirty Greylag geese standing in a developing cereal crop with just their heads and necks showing above the sea of green.

Re-entering the reserve there was a brief glimpse of Reed Warblers as they moved through the marginal vegetation below the path. Reaching a viewpoint they were able to watch the breeding Common Terns, amazing to think that these birds had once again found their way to Sparham from West Africa.

The smell of cooking bacon drew the members swiftly back to the car to enjoy a bacon butty, a cup of coffee and a "mardle". They had managed to find a total of 58 species despite the adverse weather conditions.

Thursday 17th June: Nightjar evening led Josh Leeder.

Our annual Nightjar Evening started with loads of conviviality at the Marsham Arms. Then members made their way to Marsham Heath and standing silently heard the unmistakable churring of nightjars. Usually after about half an hour these ethereal creatures make an appearance but this night only two fleeting flights were enjoyed throughout the evening. Perhaps it was the dark overcast sky coupled with the east wind and lack of insects and the coldest start to June for many a year that discouraged them from flying. Nevertheless an enjoyable event at which the party was joined by guests - one of whom was only ten years old.

Sunday 27th June: Outdoor meeting at HOT Sculthorpe Moor Community Nature Reserve led by Jacky Pett.

The Reserve is a first-rate facility created by the Hawk and Owl Trust just outside Fakenham to protect the very special habitat in the Wensum Valley. Entry to the reserve is free and the boardwalks provide good access for all. On our visit the group enjoyed views of Hobby, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Golden Pheasant, a Yellowhammer and Marsh Harriers. There was also a webcam set up so visitors could view a harrier's nest. Having explored the reserve thoroughly the members then moved on to the Great Ryburgh Raptor Watchpoint where several Common Buzzards, Kestrels and Sparrowhawks were seen. There was a lull in the local bird activity as the noonday temperature had risen appreciably so it was decided to call it a day. Members had had a very enjoyable morning's birdwatching together.

Thursday 15th July: Member's Summer Social.

This year the BBQ at Weston Longville Village Hall was a real DIY event. Not only did members provide their own food and drink but thanks to Lin, Richard and David they even cooked their own food on the tried and trusted Taverham Scouts hot coals machine. Add to this a delectable array of deadly desserts and it was a feast worthy of masterchef. The evening also included a short talk by Ray Gribble on the member's recent trip to Scotland. A pleasant evening at which everyone enjoyed a bit of social repartee in a relaxed atmosphere.

Sunday 25th July: Outdoor meeting at RSPB Minsmere Nature Reserve led by Colin Fenn.

Twenty members attended this annual trip, the weather was perfect and most parts of the reserve were visited. At this time of year there was also quite a varied selection of butterflies and dragonflies to be seen. Around 65 bird species were recorded. Later on some members of the group made for Dunwich Heath to see Dartford Warblers which rounded off a good day's birdwatching

Saturday 14th August: Outdoor meeting for the Snettisham High Tide Spectacular led by David Knight.

The main reason for visiting Snettisham was for the high tide so that waders could be seen being pushed off the mud by the incoming water and flying on to the islands and banks of the lagoon. Curlews and Godwits were already flying overhead as members left the car park. They were there in time to see the Knot performing their aerial dance as more and more clouds of them appeared before their eyes. Many were still in their breeding plumage. Godwits flew over, Oystercatchers joining them. This is always a magical half hour with clouds of birds in the sky and the sound of hundreds of pairs of wings carrying their owners to safety. Soon the mud was totally covered with water and the party made its way to the hide at the end of the lagoon. What a sight met their eyes: birds everywhere. Oystercatchers covered the left bank and several of the islands, Cormorants had staked their claim along with Knot in their breeding plumage. A Green Sandpiper visited then a Dunlin and Ringed Plovers but not in huge numbers. A beautiful Grey Plover with his black underparts still in breeding plumage. Further down the lagoon were Greenshanks and a group of Spotted Redshanks on a small spit outside one of the hides. There were some Turnstones amongst the Oystercatchers and an excellent Bar-tailed Godwit. He gave a stunning view and a comparison could be made with the Black-tailed Godwit's which were about. A Common Sandpiper was a good sighting at some distance and a pair of Barnacle Geese swimming on the water added to the enjoyment. Members made their way back to the edge of the Wash to see the birds coming back over the bank as the tide ebbed. Not always easy to get the timing right but they did on this occasion. Soon black lines of Oystercatchers returned, the Knot flew over, the Dunlin and Ringed Plovers joined the gulls already on the mud flats. The flights much more direct this time. The wander back to the cars gave views of flocks of Golden Plover, these also still with their black bellies. The butterfly enthusiasts in the group found two specials, amongst others, on the walk back – a Wall Brown and a Brown Argus.

The group made their way to Abbey Farm at Flitcham as 'you always see Little Owls there'! As they entered the hide there were five Little Owls sitting on fence posts at the far end of the field. Magnificent! Scopes were quickly erected so everyone could have a really good view of these small owls. Several Buzzards were taking advantage of the wind and enjoying an afternoon flight. A fantastic female Marsh Harrier gave a master class in flying not very far from the hide and quite low over the ground. A Turtle Dove was seen sitting on the electricity pole immediately opposite the hide. He appeared so small when a Woodpigeon settled on the same pole. A Snipe flew left to right in front of the hide and after a while flew right to left, presumably it was the same bird. This rounded off what was a truly a good day.

Thursday 19th August: Talk "Bats - Denizens of the night" an illustrated talk given by Sam Phillips.

Sam is chairman of the Norwich Bat Group that was formed in 2007 and works to help protect, conserve and raise the awareness of bats in Norwich and the surrounding area. Sam gave an interesting talk about the habits and life cycle of bats and said there are 17 species in Britain at least seven of which have been recorded in and around Norwich. We learnt that bats are not flying mice but are of the order 'Chiroptera', which means "hand-wing" and are related to monkeys and lemurs. Sam then set about exploding some of the myths surrounding these little known creatures. We were told that bats are not blind, in fact they have very good eyesight and they don't get tangled in people's hair, they are merely flying low to catch insects using their superb echo-location sonar. Bats are very clean and spend a lot of time grooming and only a few species of bats actually roost hanging upside down. One bat can catch 3000 insects in a single night and they are excellent pollinators and seed propagators - in fact they are generally good for the environment. They have been around for about 60 million years but like many species, are in decline. They are protected by law and disturbing a roost can incur a hefty fine. We were then introduced to Debra, a tiny Daubenton bat

quietly snoozing in a cardboard box whose cute face soon won the audience over. Unfortunately the demonstration of the bat detecting kit had to be abandoned due to the untimely arrival of some August rain. Nevertheless this was an unusual and fascinating talk by Sam who is a keen advocate for bats and the best PR man they could wish for.

Thursday 26th & Saturday 28th August: Bird ID Workshop – Pipits, Larks, small Finches and Buntings led by Steve Cale.

An insatiable appetite for help with bird identification led 12 members to the Old School Room at Sparham one Thursday evening to meet up with Steve Cale. The small finches, pipits, larks and buntings were the topic for this Bird ID Workshop.

First of all fix the family. How many times has Steve said this over the years, but is it that simple? Some pointers are that Pipits have pointed bills and long tails; Larks have longish rather thicker bills and a long hind claw (if you can see it!); Buntings have seemingly triangular bills and a deep 'v' at the end of the tail; the small Finches a similar bill but a small 'v'. No more looking at a bird and guessing!

The Pipits studied were Rock and Water, Meadow and Tree. Larks: Skylark, Woodlark and Shore Lark. Buntings: Reed, Corn, Yellowhammer and the winter Snow and Lapland Buntings. The small Finches were Redpoll, Linnet and Twite.

To reinforce the ID features of these birds the group met on Saturday morning at Salthouse Beach and Kelling Quags. A very cold wind met them and some succumbed to hats and gloves although one member of the group survived wearing a short sleeved polo shirt. The target birds they encountered were Meadow Pipit and Linnet. They should all be able to identify those with confidence now. There was also Sandwich Terns sitting by one of the pools. It is rare to get such a very good view of this species. Sea-watching brought Gannet and walking through the dunes Wheatear and Whinchat. It was good to see Whinchats so well.

Kelling Quags produced more good views of Linnet and Meadow Pipit. Then Whitethroat, seemingly oblivious of the watching members, and a wonderful Garden Warbler.

Time was marching on and some of the group had to leave. Steve, unstinting of his time, continued on with about half the group. They progressed towards the sea but took a path off to the right. Four birders they had met told of Pied Flycatcher, Garden Warbler and others seen in the wood. Unfortunately as the members reached the spot they disturbed them but patiently sitting on the damp ground under an oak tree brought a pair of Bullfinches, two Blackcap families, more Whitethroat and a superb Garden Warbler. Patience rewarded but, alas, no Pied Fly. Not quite the target species for the day but no matter.

Rain descended on the way back to the cars so, wet and bedraggled, the group treated themselves to a pot of tea and big slices of cake in the Gallery Tea rooms. All were agreed that these ID courses are very well worthwhile.

Thursday 16th September: Talk “A long term study of Sparrowhawks” given by Prof. Ian Newton OBE.

Ian gave a learned presentation on the highlights of this long term study of Sparrowhawks. These monogamous birds had suffered a sharp decline due to the use of organochlorine pesticides but have made a good recovery and are now quite widespread. Their diet consists almost entirely of woodland birds although the female, which is the larger of the pair can take the odd pigeon or partridge. They produce young in early summer, coinciding with the peak of the songbird population. They have up to six young but 72% die before breeding and only 22% actually breed. Their population has remained fairly stable over the period 1970 – 1990. They are not especially long-lived and only about 10% survive for 10 years. A truly fascinating talk given by a world renowned expert.

Sunday 26th September: Outdoor meeting – A walk in Lenwade area led by Jacky Pett.

Members gathered at The Bridge Inn to join Jacky in exploring birding opportunities round Lenwade. First port of call was to seek birds outside the Mill, along the river and over the lawned area at the side. Sharp-eyed birders saw the tail of a Reed Bunting disappearing at the foot of the reeds! The Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail proved elusive. They crossed the road and walked along the path by the side of the river. A Robin was singing and a silent warbler – either a Willow Warbler or a Chiffchaff. Still no Kingfisher but a cry of “Osprey” found eager pairs of eyes searching the sky. There it was and a few minutes later another view of it being mobbed by two gulls. This was a real treat and with their eyes now looking upwards a Sparrowhawk appeared from nowhere. Everyone was very fortunate to have excellent views of a Treecreeper. As they neared Marriotts Way a flock of titmice flew across the path; Blue and Great Tits, Long-tailed and Coal, and a lovely Goldcrest. Along the old railway track a few of the group were pretty certain they heard the soft call of Bullfinch. There is a public footpath on the left which goes down to two fishing lakes almost at the western end of Great Witchingham. The lakes are private but good views can be had of the water from the footpath. Jacky had gained special permission to walk round one of them. A beautiful Fly Agaric toadstool became an exhibit for an art class the following day, groups of Shaggy Inkcaps stood proudly among the birches and a late Comma butterfly was pleasing. Another group of mainly Long-tailed Tits flew about and a Marsh Tit was recorded along the path between the lakes. Turning right along a footpath brings you to a field, the other side of which is Heath Lane. Some of the group spied a Buzzard and on a ploughed field there were Black-headed Gulls, Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove and Starlings. The group went through the village, down Common Lane to Great Witchingham Common. Fish thieves have meant that the lakes here are closed off. Fortunately Jacky had a key as it really is a treat to walk round these lakes. No sign of Otter although an otter-proof fence has been put up to prevent them becoming ‘fish thieves’ also. There

wasn't a lot about on this day but Jacky did point out the precise spot where she had flushed a Bittern on New Years Day. A very interesting exploration of the Lenwade area came to a close at the local with a species list of 45.

Thursday 21st October: Talk “Birdwatching in Oman and the United Arab Emirates” given by Chris Mills.

Chris, an experienced birdwatcher, ringer, photographer and tour guide along with a small group of birders started their tour in Abu Dhabi in the UAE then crossed into Oman, a haven for migratory birds from both India and Africa. The tour travelled through Al Ain, the Muntasar Oasis, Al Beed, the Dhofar region and the isle of Masira. Lots of less familiar bird species were shown like Mourning Wheatear, Ballion's Crake, Rufous Bushchat, Black-crowned Finchlark, Bee-eater, Ruppell's Weaver, Shining Sunbird, Imperial Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Hume's Tawny Owl, Crab Plover and the very elegant Red-billed Tropicbird. Chris succeeded in showing members how exciting this area might be and where species from Africa and Asia could be seen if a visit was made at the right time of year.

Wednesday 10th November: Lyng School Open Day.

The Society attended this event in order to stimulate some interest in birds. The children were asked to name garden birds and their habitats. Within minutes of opening there was a flock of enthusiastic youngsters whose natural curiosity had them discussing species and habitats like veteran birders. A vast number of children completed their forms for which the reward was a selection of sweets. It was impressive to see several children who graciously accepted a sweet but reminded the “distributor” that they needed an extra one for a brother or sister! In all it was a delightful afternoon that gave one hope for the future of our planet if these children are anything to go by. Thanks to Helen Watson, Head of Lyng Primary School, for inviting the Society to go along.

Thursday 18th November: Talk “The Birds of Trinidad and Tobago” given by Julia Burton.

Julia is a widely travelled naturalist and she set about telling us about the wonderfully rich flora and fauna of these tropical islands, off the north east coast of Venezuela. The islands boast over 2000 species of plants such as palms and orchids, 100 species of mammals including ocelots and anteaters, 70 different reptiles, 50 types of snake, more than 800 species of insects and butterflies and importantly, 420 species of birds along with 15 species of hummingbird.

Excellent photos showed the many vivid coloured species of birds, with dramatically different combinations of feather colour for the head, wings, chest and tail feathers. Space does not allow for a full list but includes White-tailed Parrots, a luminous Green Sabre-wing, Kingfishers, Palm Finches, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Amazonian White-tailed Trogon, a blue and black crow, green birds such as the Hermit, which makes a pendant nest on trees and a Copper-rumped Hummingbird seen on flowers. Also the yellow Tanager and Golden-headed Manakin with a luminous lilac body. The Manakins are small brightly coloured tropical American birds of the family Pipridae but the ultimate colour seen was the Scarlet Ibis, the national bird of Trinidad, found in large numbers at the Caroni Swamps. This is a vast area of mangrove forest and mudflats.

Julia included some video clips, one of kingfishers and then a species of water bird that flies very low over the water while its long beak continually skims the water surface for food. The mud flats are a rich feeding ground and are home to many species, some with extra large webbed feet for walking on mud. We were shown the famous Fiddler Crab with its one giant and one small pincer. The crabs popped down into muddy bolt-holes when predator birds arrived.

One of the most unusual birds seen are the so called Oilbirds at Dunstan Caves. This species which lives in caves mimics a fruit eating bat. It is nocturnal and relies on echo location to fly around and find fruit. Also amazing is the sight and sound of the Bellbirds high in the tree canopies. This was a magical experience, resembling an echoing peal of

church bells. Julia's talk was a wonderful introduction to the fascinating wildlife of these islands.

Saturday 27th November: Visit to High Ash Farm was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

Thursday 9th December: Christmas Social. This was well attended and proved to be a very convivial occasion. A fitting end to a successful year's events.

Compiled by Colin Wright with contributions from Liz Bridge, Ray Gribble, Derek & Rosemary Harvey, Alwyn Jackson, David Knight and Jacky Pett.

WVBS Systematic List 2010

Editor Ray Gribble

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

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

Where the species is of conservation concern it is noted i.e. **Red** or **Amber** listed. This means the species is of major or significant conservation concern respectively.

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

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

Finally this is a summary of about 9,000 records received during 2010. My apologies to anyone if a record has been missed or not correctly acknowledged.

The following abbreviations have been used:

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Fairly common breeding resident. Amber listed.

Regular counts up to 59 reported at Attlebridge/Ringland (MS, WO, CH, JP) for the first four months of the year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Attlebridge / Ringland	40	40	59	55	-	-	-	-	-	19	36	-

Numbers from 1 to 10 seen throughout the valley every month of the year. Proof of breeding mainly at Pensthorpe where up to 9 juveniles were reported from June to September (TS, JP).

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus colombianus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers. Amber listed.

Only two reports. 10 flying west over Lyng 17th Nov (BB) and a single landed on Square Meadow Lake, Sparham Pools on 27th Nov (BB).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Uncommon winter visitor. Mainly flyovers.

Two reports, both flyovers. 25 on 15th Nov over North Tuddenham going North-east (B&BP) and 4 on 22nd Nov over Taverham going South-west (MMc).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

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

A number of reports over the winter period January to Feb and Oct to Dec. Mainly flyovers. Flocks of up to 450 throughout the valley with a maximum of 1500 flying over Hoe Common heading North-west in several skeins on 17th Oct (DK).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Rare winter visitor to WVBS area, possible escapes. Amber listed.

One report only of 18 on 1st Dec River Tud valley, New Costessey (AG).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common resident & passage migrant.

Common throughout the valley in every month of the year. Significant numbers of up to 170 HBW on 17th Oct (DK); Lenwade Common 130 on 11th Sept (RG); Elsing 104 on 25th Jan (EJ) and Sparham Pools 90 on 7th Feb (DH). Breeding confirmed with a sighting of 12 adults and 28 goslings at Sparham Pools 18th May (JP).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Common introduced resident.

Seen every month of the year with most sightings at Lenwade Mill where numbers up to 60 were recorded (JP). Also good numbers at Sparham Pools and HBW throughout the year with a max 70 on 22nd Aug (JP) and 25 on 20th June (DK) respectively.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

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

Only one record 8 Pensthorpe 13th Feb (RY) described as 'free winged'.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Introduced resident, locally common.

Significant sightings every month of the year with numbers up to 12 generally. Highest numbers recorded were 22 Lenwade Mill 10th Oct (JP).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

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

Reports over the months Jan to July with Pensthorpe their favourite place with 10 max 20th Jul (TS) and breeding pairs with 4 juveniles seen throughout June and July. Also single and pairs at Sparham Pools (BB/JE, PS), Bintree Mill (IB, RY) and WVRWP (IB, RY).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

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

Seen Jan to March and Sept to Dec with maximum of 150 Guist Bridge 17th Jan (RY); 40+ Attlebridge 19th Jan (WO); Guist Common 14th Feb (RY) and 68 Bintree Mill 11th Mar (RY). About 150 were present on Resting Lake, Pensthorpe during Dec. Also reported from Bylaugh, Mill St. Elsing, Old Costessey & Sparham Pools.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Resident, passage & migrant winter visitor. Amber listed.

Seen throughout the year with Sparham Pools having the most sightings and also the largest number with 52 on 21st Feb (BB/JE) together with several sightings over 10.

Teal *Anas crecca*

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

Sightings in every month except May, mainly with counts up to 20. A significant number of 100 were at Bintree Mill on 17th Jan (RY) with several up to 30 on 17th Jan Lenwade (RG); Old Costessey 12th Mar (PS); Costessey Marshes 21st Dec (AB); Bintree Mill 18th and 20th Mar (RY). The highest count of the year for Pensthorpe was 319 on 4th Dec (TS).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident & winter visitor.

Recorded every month of the year with numbers mainly in single figures. However there were some significant counts of 50+ Sparham Pools on 31st Jan (JP) and 13th Oct (BB/JE); Dec 31st (BB); Sparham North & Lyng Lakeside 12th Aug (JP). The maximum recorded count was of 83 Lenwade Common on 11th Nov (RG). There was only one record of confirmed breeding when a pair with 6 young was seen at Mill Meadow on 4th May (PL).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Again Sparham Pools recorded the most sightings with singles on 11th, 12th and 17th Oct (BB, LB), 1st & 29th Nov (CS, BB) and 1st Dec (BB). Two were at Pensthorpe on 3rd Dec (TS) and 5 (3m & 2f) at Old Costessey 7th Mar (AB).

Garganey

Anas querquedula

*Rare summer visitor
and passage migrant.*

Amber listed.

A single record – a female at Pensthorpe on 8th Sept (TS).

Garganey, by Steve Cale



Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A winter visitor and rare breeder. Amber listed.

Numbers up to 20 seen regularly through the year at Pensthorpe, Sparham Pools, Bintree and Gressenhall with max counts of 11 Old Costessey 7th Mar (AB); 18 Pensthorpe 23rd Dec (EB-J); 21 Pensthorpe 4th Dec (TS) and 50 there 13th Dec (TS).

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Very rare vagrant.

Four reports. 1 Sparham Pools 16th March (BB, AJ, RG, PLam) and 2 with chicks Pensthorpe 9th May (RY).

Pochard *Aythya farina*

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

Numerous sightings in the six winter months of the year. Maxima of 3 Costessey Pits 13th Jan (DH); 6 Gressenhall 3rd Mar (IB); 5 Lenwade Mill 12th Dec (JP); 7 Lyng 18th Dec (BS); 10 Pensthorpe 26th Jan (RY); 11 Swanton Morley GP 6th Feb (AT). Sparham Pools had the most sightings with regular counts of 30+ with a maximum of 57 seen 24th Feb (BB/JE).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Summer breeder also common passage migrant & winter visitor.

Seen throughout the valley in every month of the year with maximum counts at the following sites. 20 Costessey Pits 12th Jan (DH); 50+ Swanton Morley (Holkham Lake) 6th Feb (AT); 4 Bintree Mill 24th Feb (RY); 14 Great Witchingham Common 9th Mar (JP); 12 Lyng Lakeside 12th Sept (B&BP); 86 Swanton Morley GP 17th Oct (RG,AJ,PLam); 31 Lenwade Common 11th Nov (RG); 3 Hoe Bird Walk 21st Nov; 45 Lyng Kingfisher Lake 2nd Dec (BB). At Pensthorpe 100 on 13th Feb (RY) also a female + 4 juv seen from 16th Jun to 8th Jul (TS).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Very scarce winter visitor.

1 (female) Lyng Kingfisher Lake 9th Dec (BS) was the sole record.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor & passage migrant. Amber listed.

Mainly pairs seen in the winter months Jan to Mar and Dec. At Lyng, Kingfisher Lake (A&CJ, PLam, BB) through Dec and Sparham (CS, BB) again in Dec. There were 2 males Costessey Pits 5th Feb (AG); 1 male Lyng, Kingfisher Lake 11th Dec (AJ) and up to 3 males Pensthorpe 13th Dec (TS). 1 female & 1 juv were at Old Costessey 20th Dec (AB) and 1 female at Sculthorpe Moor HOT 8th Mar (PL).

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor.

Only six records involving five of a "redhead" i.e. female or juvenile. The only adult male recorded was at Sparham GP on 1st Jan (CS). The redhead was at Sparham GP 8th Dec (CS) and Lyng Kingfisher Lakes through to 18th Dec (BS, BB, A&CJ).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Winter visitor & passage migrant.

First record of the year was 11 Sparham GP 1st Jan (CS) then Lenwade Mill 3rd & 10th Jan with a max 5 (JP, R&CG). Sparham Pools was the favourite place as previous year with sightings through till 26th Mar with a max count 19 on 4th Mar (JP). Good counts throughout this period of between 2 and 16 (B&BP, BB/JE, CH, DH, EJ, MS&DG, LB, NS). The last sighting in the valley was 4 Old Costessey 21st April (AB). The first returning bird at Sparham Pools was 1 Lyng 16th Oct (NM), building up to 6 before the year end.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Common introduced resident.

The area around Springfield Cottage, North Tuddenham was a good place to see these birds with 8 on 11th Jan; 14 on 14th Jan; 3 max on 15th Jun; 10 on 2nd Sept (with proof of breeding) and 21 on 14th Nov (B&BP).

(continues)

Red-legged Partridge (continued)

There were records throughout the year and throughout the valley. Fustyweed, Elsing had 2 adults and 5 young in a garden (BS); 6 Gunton Lane, Costessey 23rd Mar (PS); 10 HBW 17th Jan (DK); 6 pairs Itteringham 27th May (RG); 10 Pensthorpe 1st Sept (TS); 10 Shereford 8th Mar (PL); 2 New Costessey 16th Apr (PS) and Sculthorpe Moor HOT. Also a pair Weston Longville 6th Apr (JP).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

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

Again, North Tuddenham was a good place with ten sightings over the year with 8 on 10th Jan and up to 7 over the period Jun to Oct (B&BP). The maximum counts, however, were 20 Gateley 19th Jan (RY); 18 Gt. Witchingham 5th Feb (AB) and 14 Gressenhall 10th Dec (IB).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Common introduced resident.

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

Seen each and every month of the year throughout the valley generally in ones and twos. There were up to 12 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge Jan to Apr (WO). At Springfield Cottage, North Tuddenham up to 7 March to July with maximum counts of 12 on 29th Oct and 14th Nov (B&BP). 7 were also seen on HBW 17th Oct (DK) and 9 Ringland/Morton Hall 6th April (JP). In June and July a melanistic female was recorded at Pensthorpe with 4 chicks (one was melanistic) and 21 birds were counted on 13th Dec (TS).

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

Localised introduced resident from Central Southern China.

All sightings only at Sculthorpe Moor HOT of single birds. Recorded during Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June & Dec (PL, BB/JE, AJ, EJ, IB). There is one report of a pair on 7th Apr (PL).

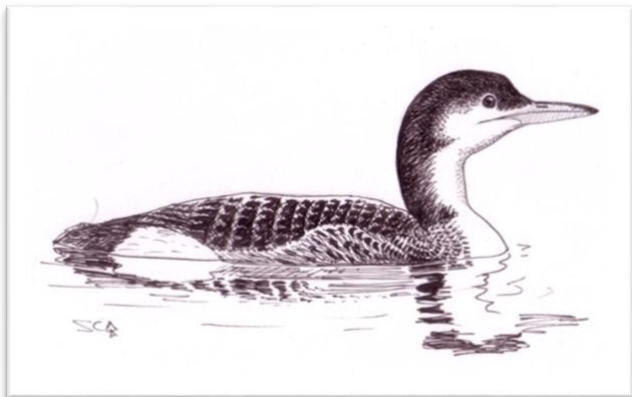
Black-throated Diver

Gavia artica

Very scarce
winter visitor.

Amber listed.

1 at Swanton Morley GP giving good close views over the five day period 31st Jan to 4th Feb was the only record (DK, IB, B&BP, EJ, AJ, BB/JE, DH, AT).



Black-throated Diver, by Steve Cale

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

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

Recorded in twos and threes every month of the year throughout the valley. Maximum counts in the winter and autumn months with 18 and 45 seen on 10th and 31st Jan respectively at Lenwade Mill (JP). Then 45 Lyng 22nd Sept (NM), 40 Sparham Pools 1st Dec (BB) and 18 Lenwade Mill 5th Dec (JP).

Bittern *Botaurus Stellaris*

Scarce visitor. Red listed.

Twenty-two records, mainly singles, along the Wensum. In the first winter period: Gt Witchingham Common 1st and 10th Jan & 18th Feb (JP, R&CG); Norwich, Colney Lane 6th Jan (RP); Sculthorpe Moor HOT 7th Mar (GH); Sparham Hall Farm Lakes 12th Jan (BB/JE); Swanton Morley GP 14th Jan, 6th, 7th (2 birds) & 11th Feb, 6th Mar (K&SJ, AT, DN, CH, DC) and lastly Holkham Lake, Swanton Morley GP 6th Feb (AT).

(continues)

Bittern (continued)

Up to 5 birds were probably present during this time.

Then one at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 8th & 9th Sept (NMid). This is early for a winter visitor, had it summered in the valley?

During the second winter period: several records Oct onwards, possibly 2 birds at Sparham Hall Farm Lakes (CS, BB/JE); singles at Pensthorpe 10th, 13th and 28th Dec (TS); Hellesdon Bridge 21st Dec (AG); Lyng, Kingfisher Lake 24th Dec (PLam); Hempton 29th Dec (AS); Elsing Mill 30th Dec (P&GLam, A&CJ). Probably 4 birds were present during this second winter period.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

A very rare vagrant.

A single sighting of 3 flying N on 9th Nov over River Tud valley, New Costessey (AG).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce but increasing breeding resident. Amber listed.

Singles recorded every month of the year. Sites included Attlebridge with 3 on 14th Mar (WO); Beetley (RG, AH) with 3 seen 2nd Aug (RG); Bintree Mill (IB, PR) with 8 seen 31st Mar (RY); Blickling 22nd Mar (MS); County School & Elsing with 5 on 12th Dec (B&BP); Dereham SW (IB); Dukehouse Bridge nr. Foulsham (RY); Foulsham SW & Gateley (RY); Gressenhall; WVRWP; Guist Common (IB) and 4 there 25th Mar (RY); Gunton Lane, Costessey (PS); Hengrave Common (TF); Hindolveston (G&AJ); HBW with 3 on 19th Sept; Lenwade Mill (JP, RG); Lyng (NM, BB/JE); North Tuddenham (B&BP); Pensthorpe with a max 2 on several occasions (TS); 3 on 18th Dec (TB); Sculthorpe Moor HOT with a max of 3 on 13th Jun & 29th Nov (PL, NMid); Sparham Pools with 2 on 9th Mar & 3rd Apr (BB/JE, CH); Swanton Morley GP with 2 on 11th Feb (LB); Worthing with a max 2 on 1st Mar (DK) and lastly Yaxham (CH).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common resident throughout the valley, present all year.

A large number of recordings for every month of the year and every area including Attlebridge, Bintree, Gt.Ryburgh, Hempton, Hindolveston, HBW, Itteringham, Lyng, Lenwade, Marriots Way, Pensthorpe, Sculthorpe Moor, Sparham, North Tuddenham, Swanton Morley GP, Ringland, Taverham and Worthing. Mainly singles and pairs but up to 4 were seen together Attlebridge Old Hall Farm on 1st Jan & 1st Mar (WO) and a maximum 7 on 25th May at GRRWP (IB).

Only 13 nests were occupied at the Great Witchingham Ark colony compared with 36 in 2009. (AJ, RG).

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare passage migrant.

Just two sightings. 1 circling over Lyng before heading East 22nd May (NM) and 1 Pensthorpe 27th June (MP).

Little Grebe *Trachybaptus ruficollis*

Mainly a winter visitor uncommon resident. Breeds in small numbers

Sighting records for every month of the year. Mainly singles and pairs at Attlebridge, Beetley, Costessey, Elsing, Gt.Ryburgh, Guist Bridge, HBW, Lenwade, Pensthorpe, Sculthorpe, Sparham Pools and Swanton Morley GP. Some records of note were 5 Sparham Pools 11th /12th Oct (BB); 3 on 17th Oct Swanton Morley GP (RG, AJ, PLam); but the highest count was 11 at Holkham Lake, Swanton Morley GP on 6th Feb (AT). There were records proving breeding, mainly at Pensthorpe, where up to 2 adults and 2 juv were seen over June and August (TS).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

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

Good numbers throughout the year with some notable high counts and breeding evidence. The maximum counts Jan to Apr were from Swanton Morley GP: 6 on 31st Jan (B&BP), 9 on 6th Feb (AT), 12 on 6th Mar (BB/JE), 6 on 4th Apr (B&BP).

Breeding records were 2 pr at both Lyng GP and Sparham Pools (CS). Also 1 adult with 2 juv recorded 20th Jun Pensthorpe (TS); 1 adult with 4 juv. HBW 15th Aug (DK); 2 adults plus 2 juv 22nd Sept Kingfisher Lake, Lyng (RG); 1 adult with 1 juv 2nd Oct Sparham Pools (RG).

Second winter maximum counts were 8 on 12th Sept Kingfisher Lake, Lyng (B&BP) and 6 on 20th Sept Swanton Morley GP (IB) then 4 on 17th Oct HBW (DK), 2 on 29th Nov Sparham Pools (BB) and 2 on 12 Dec Swanton Morley GP (B&BP).

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

*Rare migrant breeder and scarce passage migrant. **Amber listed.***

Singles Great Ryburgh RWP 21st & 23rd May (RG, IB) plus two records of single birds over Sculthorpe Moor HOT in first week of June (NMid). Singles: 1 flying east over Dereham Rush Meadows 19th July (AG) and over Scarning on 17th Sept (IB).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

*Increasing visitor mainly from reintroduction projects. **Amber listed.***

A greater number of records this year. During first winter period single at Sculthorpe Moor HOT 6th Jan (PL), in Mar 1-2 at Honingham (PR, AH), 2 at Ringland on 9th, single at Easton on 13th (PR), single at Sennowe Park on 18th (RY), 2 over N Tuddenham on 22nd (B&BP).

Possible spring migrant during April single birds at Sparham Hall Farm on 1st, 27th & 30th (CS, NM), at Lyng on 3rd & 14th (BB), at N Tuddenham on 12th & 28th (B&BP), at Ringland on 18th (IB) and 1-2 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 6th, 15th & 16th (PL). (continues)

Red Kite (continued)

During breeding period 1-2 birds at 7 sites in the valley with 5 birds together in July at one site.

Autumn/second winter period 2 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 8th Sept (NMid), single at N Tuddenham on 16th Sept (B&BP), 3 at Ringland on 3rd Oct (IB) with one on 1st Nov (IB) and single at Worthing village on 30th Oct reported by a local resident.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

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

Most records from four main areas.

First bird at Sculthorpe Moor HOT reported on 12th March (BB/JE), a female on 18th after which both sexes seen daily with 2 males and two females on 25th (PL). Birds observed mating on 12th April and subsequently two nests found one with 7 eggs on 11th May and the other with 4 eggs on 20th. Also nearby at Hempton one nest with 4 eggs on 27th May. Two recently fledged young on 27th June (JP) and one on 2nd July (BB) then 6 fledged young with female on 22nd July (NMid). Two birds seen daily through Sept and last record of single bird on 8th Oct.

First male bird at Guist Common on 18th Feb (RY) with female observed on 21st Mar. On 24th Mar male observed carrying food nearby at Bintree Mill and pair on 28th. Singles and pair seen through May (RY, IB) and male only in June, July and Sept (RY, RG, RN). No reports of juveniles received during this period although single on 16th Nov identified as possible female or juvenile.

Two nests at Helhoughton on 24th June, one with 4 young and the other with 2 young and 3 eggs (AW, RG, AH). No subsequent records received.

One pair reported at Pensthorpe 22nd May (CF *et al*) and singles between 9th June – 16th Sept possibly birds wandering from Sculthorpe included a juvenile on 4th & 16th Sept (TS). Late female here on 27th Dec probably over-wintering.

(continues)

Marsh Harrier (continued)

Single passage or wandering birds recorded at Longwater Lane 20th Mar (PS); male Great Ryburgh RWP 22nd Mar with 2 birds on 22nd May and single 23rd (IB, RY); Foulsham 8th Apr (NM); female Kettlestone Common 14th May (RY); HBW on 16th May & 20th Jun (DK); Lyng on 7th June and 11th July (NM); N Tuddenham on 23rd July (B&BP); Worthing on 20th Aug (DK); female Dereham & Lyng 9th Sept (IB;NM).

Four birds at Beetley GP on 23rd July reflected a successful brood (AH,RG).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

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

In first winter period a "ringtail" over A47 near Scarning Fen 28th Jan (IB), a male flying along the Wensum at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 3rd Feb (NMid) and a "ringtail" over Swanton Morley GP on 6th Feb (AT).

Second winter period juv at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (LB) and a single bird flying NE over Taverham both on 7th Nov (MM). Also a single bird flying over Old Costessey on 12th Dec (AB).



*Hen Harrier,
by Steve Cale*

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor to valley.

An increasing number of records this year.

During early part of year Jan – mid-Apr 1-2 over Sculthorpe Moor HOT with pair displaying in Feb (NMid, IB, BB/JE, PL).

A female flew over Taverham 24th Apr (CH) and later a single seen at Great Ryburgh RWP on 23rd May (IB).

Latter part of year singles at Lyng 21st Sept and male at Broom Green on 8th Oct (NM). The latter bird observed being mobbed by crows one of which was captured by the Goshawk but managed to escape.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Widespread fairly common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Reports from 45 locations throughout the area of 1-2 birds. Four birds at Sculthorpe Mill in Jan (IB) and Sculthorpe Moor HOT in Apr (PL).

Displaying birds observed at Foulsham in Jan (RY), Scarning in Feb (IB) and HOT Sculthorpe Moor NR in Apr. Nest found there in May and breeding confirmed in June (PL). Other possible breeding at Hellesdon where single bird in “suitable nesting habitat” in June (JP), a bird carrying a faecal sac at Lenwade Mill in May (JP) and a juvenile in a garden at Taverham in Dec (LB).

Several garden sightings – one bird killing a Collared Dove at Taverham in Apr (CH), another killing a Blackbird also in Taverham in July (LW) and a bird regularly through a garden in Thorpe Marriott in Aug (MMc).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Small but increasing breeding population in the valley.

Recorded at 42 locations throughout the area and year. Two peaks of sightings in Mar and Sept probably reflecting migrants moving through the area.

(continues)

Buzzard (continued)

Breeding at Sculthorpe Moor HOT where pair mating on 16th Mar and nest found on 12th Apr (PL). At Wellingham young in nest (NarVOS) and at Sparham Hall Farm on 24th June a nest blown out of a tree leaving 2 young in tree top (CS, RG).

Highest counts **Feb** 5 at Ringland on 14th (IB), 5 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 19th (PL, BB/JE); in **Mar** 6 at Honingham on 7th (PR), 5 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and 7 at Sennowe Park (PR) on 16th, 5 on HBW on 21st (DK), 8 at Great Ryburgh RWP on 22nd (RY), 5 at Bintree Mill on 27th (IB); in **Apr** 11 at Great Ryburgh RWP on 5th (RY), 6 at HOT Sculthorpe Moor NR on 8th (PL), 5 at Kettlestone Common on 14th (RY), 5 at Great Ryburgh RWP on 21st (RG) with 7 on 22nd (IB) and 5-7 on 23rd (RY, IB); in **July** 5 at Lyng on 25th (NM); in **Aug** 5 at Pensthorpe on 5th (TS) and 5 on HBW on 15th (DK); in **Sept** 7 at Sparham Hall Farm on 9th (CS), 6 at Scarning on 16th (IB), 8+ at Swanton Novers Great Wood on 18th (IB), 12 at Peaseland Green, Elsing on 21st (B&BP) and 5 at Lyng on 21st (NM).

Osprey *Pandion halaetus*

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

Late spring records – singles Sparham Hall Farm 3rd May (CS), over Taverham 4th May (LB), over Lyng 3rd June carrying fish (NM) and Great Ryburgh RWP on 9th June (RP).

Autumn records relating to possibly 5 individual birds. Single at Taverham 28th Aug (AB), over Lenwade (BG) and probably same bird Sparham Hall Farm on 8th Sept (CS), a juvenile over Lyng 14th Sept (NM), single at Swanton Morley GP between 20 –25th Sept (DK, IB, BB) possibly same bird moved to Sparham Pools/Lenwade area 26th Sept (AJ, LB, JP, BB) and single over Lyng 2nd & 6th Oct (R&CG, BB).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder and passage. Amber listed.

Records of 1-2 birds in 37 locations probably reflecting the distribution of the observers. No indication that present throughout the year at any of the sites.

Three breeding records – pair in nestbox at Mill Meadow, Sculthorpe on 4th Apr (PL), 2 pairs bred Sparham Hall Farm (CS) and a nest with 5 eggs at Wellingham in May (LF).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

A female flying SW 7th Oct and single bird again flying SW on 9th Oct in R Tud valley, New Costessey (AG)

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*.

Scarce migratory breeder and passage migrant throughout the valley.

1-2 birds in 26 locations in general area of Sculthorpe/ Pensthorpe/Fakenham, Guist/ Great Ryburgh RWP, Elsing/ Lyng/Sparham/Lenwade, Dereham/Scarning/Gateley, N Tuddenham, HBW/Worthing, N Tuddenham, Foulsham, Briston, Taverham/Thorpe Marriott and Ringland/New & Old Costessey.

Earliest spring records singles at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 23rd Apr (NP) and Lyng on 27th Apr (NM). Four at Lyng on 11th Sept (NM). Latest autumn record juvenile on 8th Oct in R Tud valley, New Costessey (AG).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Sightings of a single bird possibly ranging between Bintree Mill, Great Ryburgh RWP, Sculthorpe Moor HOT and south of Great Snoring 28th Jan-19th Mar (RY;BB/JE;PL). Two birds at Great Ryburgh RWP on 22nd Mar (RY).

(continues)

Peregrine (continued)

No further records from this area until 3rd Sept when single bird west of Little Snoring (RY) and subsequent report of singles over Worthing village 5th Sept (DK) and at Pensthorpe through Dec including a juvenile female on 17th (TS).

At Norwich Cathedral 2 birds first reported 22nd Mar and then adult male and female with juvenile female on 31st Mar (AG). A female present when nesting box being positioned on 15th Apr (PL) with pair present on 10th May (NMid), a single bird on 15th and 22nd June (BB, AG). No further reports received. Single at Old Costessey on 16th Apr possibly one of these birds (AB).

Water Rail *Rallus aquatus*

Uncommon resident and winter visitor. Amber listed.

First winter period single in **Jan** at Sparham Pools on 2nd (BB/JE), 6 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 7th (PL), singles at Swanton Morley GP, Lenwade Mill, Sparham Hall Farm and Costessey (Marriott's Way & SSSI) on 10th and the two sites at Costessey on 11th with single at Lenwade Mill on 31st. In **Feb** single at Swanton Morley GP on 4th, 1-2 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 5th and 6th, single at Pensthorpe on 13th. In **Mar** single again at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 19th/20th and final winter record at Dereham SW on 19th Apr.

No breeding records received.

Second winter period in **Sept** singles Guist Common on 2nd and Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 19th; in **Oct** Lenwade Common on 7th, Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 15th and Lenwade Common on 27th; in **Nov** 2 at Scarning on 6th, up to 3 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT throughout the month and single at Guist Common on 16th; in **Dec** again up to 3 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT which were ringed on 30th, singles at Dereham SW on 3rd, Lenwade Mill on 5th & 19th, at Sparham Pools on 8th, up to 3 at Pensthorpe between 13th – 31st with single at Lyng on 29th.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*.

Common resident. Widespread throughout valley supplemented by autumn immigrants.

Records from 14 locations but probably under reported. Highest counts Lenwade Mill 13 in Jan, 12 in Feb & Oct, 10 in Nov and 13 in Dec (JP).

Evidence of breeding at Lenwade Mill where recently fledged young on 2nd May and 13th June; at Sparham Pools where nest with 4 eggs on 5th May (AJ) and 4 recently fledged young noted on 30th July (JP); at East Bilney where 4 birds including fledged young (RG) and at Pensthorpe where 1 very small juvenile on 6th Aug (TS). Breeding also confirmed on Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL).

Coot *Falica atra*.

Common resident and winter visitor.

Records from 9 locations so probably under reported. Highest counts 28 Swanton Morley GP on 3rd Feb, Sparham Pools 30+ on 28th Feb & 4th Mar down to 12 by 26th Mar (JP), 25 Lenwade Mill on 28th Oct, 20 at Swanton Morley GP on 12th Dec (B&BP) and 90+ at Lyng (Kingfisher Lake) on 30th Dec (BB).

Evidence of breeding at Sparham Pools NR where 1ad+8juvs on 5th May (AJ), 2 birds nesting on 25th June (TC), an adult on occupied nest on 27th (JP); at Lyng (Kingfisher Lake) 1 bird nest building on 18th May and 4 recently fledged young on 12th Aug (JP); at Beetley GP 1 pair with young and 1 pair nesting on 26th May (RG); at Lenwade (Hall Walk Lakes) adult with young on 1st July; at Pensthorpe where family party on 8th July (TS).

Common Crane *Grus grus*.

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

At Pensthorpe 2 on 26th Jan and single 22nd May (RY). Single flew over Lenwade on 22nd Aug (WG); on 8th/9th Sept 2 adults with one juvenile flew around Pensthorpe all day (TS) and 2 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 9th possibly the same birds (MP). Single Sparham Hall Farm 30th Sept (CS); 3 over Lyng 21st Nov (PLam) and Pensthorpe 2nd Dec (TS).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

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

Earliest record 13th Feb when 2 at Pensthorpe. Occasional sightings of 1-4 birds also from Sculthorpe Moor HOT, Bintree Mill, Great Ryburgh, Sparham Pools, Lenwade Mill, Elsing, Attlebridge, Taverham GC, Old Costessey, Bowthorpe, Worthing, HBW, Beetley GP and Gateley.

Courtship and display involving 4 birds at Lenwade Mill on 21st Mar but no evidence of breeding although birds remained in area until 1st Aug. (JP, RG).

Evidence of breeding at Sparham Pools from 30th Apr when adult on nest and subsequently pair with 2 chicks 18th May and recently fledged young on 27th June (JP). At Pensthorpe 3 young on 1st June and subsequently an adult with 2 juvs on 28th (TS). Two pairs over Sculthorpe Moor HOT regularly from 9th May (PL) and pair at Beetley GP 23rd June (RG/AH). Latest record 2 at Sparham Pools NR on 12th Aug (JP).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

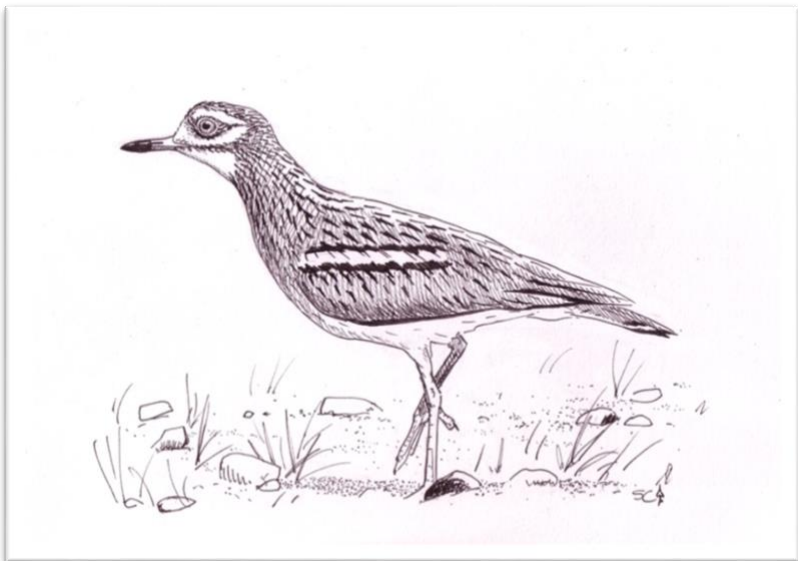
Rare summer visitor to WVBS area. **Amber listed.**

Earliest record 2 birds at Great Ryburgh on 8th May (RY) and subsequently at Pensthorpe from 16th where they bred on W Scrape producing 4 juvs. Adults and 3 juvs departed after 22nd July leaving 1 juv until 6th Aug (TS).

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oediconemus*

Scarce summer visitor. **Red listed.**

One possibly two birds at Taverham (Thorpe Marriott) flew over the observer's house at 2.30am on 18th June (MMc).



Stone Curlew, by Steve Cale

Little Ringed Plover *Charadris dubius**Passage migrant and breeding summer visitor in small numbers*

First record single Sparham Pools NR on 5th May (AJ). Four at Pensthorpe on 9th May. One pair bred there producing a single chick which hatched on 12th June (RY, TS). A pair also bred successfully in central Norwich near a temporary pool on a building site adjacent to Dragonfly House, Guilders Way. Four chicks hatched around 24th June and 3 were still present on 30th. At least 2 maybe 3 chicks fledged (AG).

A pair observed displaying at Old Beetley on 22nd June (RG).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria**Common passage migrant and increasing winter visitor. Amber listed.*

First winter period 4 flew over N Tuddenham on 24th Feb (B&BP), 50-60 at N Tuddenham on 6th & 8th Mar (RG, B&BP), 5 flew S at New Costessey on 20th Mar (AG) with 15 during HBW on 21st the latest spring record (DK).

First record in second winter period single bird flying over Pensthorpe on 1st Sept (EB-J) then winter concentrations of 160 at N Tuddenham on 30th Sept (B&BP), 200 Foxley 1st Oct (NM), 430 Lenwade/Hockering 10th Oct (RG), 300+ N Tuddenham 20th/24th Oct (RG, B&BP), 40+ Lyng 28th Oct (BB), 45 Sparham 12th Nov (RG), 80+ Lyng 20th Nov (BB), 500 Primrose Green, Elsing 26th Nov (A&CJ) and c.32 flew over Hindolveston 26th Nov (G&AJ).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.*Passage migrant and winter visitor, declining breeder. Red listed.*

Highest concentrations in first winter period in Feb 40 Ringland/Morton Hall on 15th (JP), 42 Gressenhall on 23rd (IB), 50 Coldblow, near Lt Snoring on 25th (RY), on 1st Mar 250+ at Sparham Pools (BB/JE) and 250 at Attlebridge (WO). Smaller numbers in Jan at Foulsham (9), Worthing Church (up to 7), Costessey (4); in Feb at Bintree (9) and N Tuddenham (16); in Mar at Twyford (4) and Old Costessey (5).

(continues)

Lapwing (continued)

Single bird on territory at Great Ryburgh on 11th Mar and single bird displaying east of Bintree Woods on 19th Mar (RY) with probably 3-4 pairs breeding on scrape at Bintree Mill. Chicks observed there on 5th May but all nests failed by 10th June (RY). Recently fledged young at Sparham Pools 27th June (JP). Proof of breeding observed at N Tuddenham (B&BP). Also present during breeding period at New Costessey, Sculthorpe Moor HOT, Sculthorpe Mill, Pensthorpe, Great Ryburgh RWP (8 on 22nd May), Attlebridge and Coldblow near Lt Snoring (6 on 11th June; 10 on 23rd July).

Probably post breeding flock at Pensthorpe of 30-32 in July, 24-80+ in Aug and c40-120 in Sept. Also 25+ at Taverham in July and 40+ at Attlebridge.

Second winter concentrations in **Oct** 17 at Lenwade/Hockering on 10th, 22 HBW on 17th; in **Nov** c.40 Sparham on 12th, c.40 Hindolveston and 31 flying SW at Costessey on 17th, 50 in Bawdeswell area on 24th; in **Dec** 20 flying SW at New Costessey on 1st, 23 at Gressenhall on 10th and 16 at Pensthorpe on 17th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Scarce passage migrant.

Five at Old Costessey on 6th Mar (per AB) is a noteworthy record of this predominantly coastal species.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

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

Singles at Sculthorpe Moor HOT 18th Mar (PL), 19th Sept (MP), 13th Oct (PL) and at Sparham Hall Farm on 14th Oct (CS).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

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

First winter period steady build up of numbers at Costessey where 6 in Jan, 12 in Feb, 31 in Mar and 54 in Apr (AB).

Highest counts at other sites in **Jan** Sparham Hall Farm 5 on 3rd (BB/JE), 4 at Attlebridge on 4th (WO), 3 at Foulsham on 10th (RY), 4 at Lenwade on 18th (CG); in **Feb** 3 near Reepham on 13th (CH), 3 at Bintree Mill on 17th (RY), 6 at Attlebridge on 23rd (WO); in **Mar** 3 at Broom Green on 11th (RY), 6 at Sparham Pools on 15th (BB/JE), 10 at Bintree Mill on 16th with 15 on 20th and 19 on 25th (RY), 3 at Lenwade on 17th (PR); in **Apr** 10 in New Costessey on 3rd and 7 at Sparham Hall Farm lakes on 14th (BB).

1-2 birds in Jan at, Dereham SW, Lenwade Mill, N Elmham, Hengrave Common, Foulsham, Billingford, Guist Common (also Feb); in Feb at Great/Little Witchingham; in **Mar** Sculthorpe Mill (also Apr), HBW.

No records received between 14th Apr and 22nd Aug nor of any drumming birds.

In autumn/second winter period earliest reports single at Guist Common on 22nd Aug (2 on 22nd Oct; 1 on 14th Nov) (RG), single at Old Costessey (AB) and 2 at Pensthorpe on 23rd (TS). In **Sept** singles at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and HBW on 19th (DK) and Pensthorpe on 24th (TS); in **Oct** 1 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 1st (BB), 3 at Hindolveston on 11th (RY) and 2 at Guist Common on 22nd (RG); in **Nov** single Guist Common on 14th (RG), New Costessey on 16th (PS), 3 in Sparham Pools area on 26th (BB); in **Dec** 3 at Dereham SW and Sparham Pools on 3rd, 10 at Pensthorpe on 4th with 1-5 throughout the month (TS), 6 at Lyng (BS) and 7 at Dereham SW (IB) on 18th, 1 at Scarning on 29th (IB).

Woodcock *Scotopax rusticola*

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

Large numbers on Sparham Hall Farm during Jan (CS). Elsewhere 1-2 birds in **Jan** at Gunton Lane, Lenwade Mill, Sparham Pools, Costessey, Old Costessey, Lenwade Common, Great Snoring, Blickling Park, Kettlestone Common; in **Feb** at Attlebridge, Sculthorpe Moor/Fen, Sparham Pools, Gressenhall; in **Mar** at Foxley Wood, Kettlestone Common, Sparham Pools, HOT SMNR. Higher counts in **Jan** 5 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 8th, 4 at Costessey Marshes on 10th, 3+ at Sculthorpe Mill and Broom Green on 17th; in **Feb** 3 at Attlebridge on 18th.

Single bird in suitable nesting habitat at Sparham Pools on 30th Apr (JP). In June at Sculthorpe Moor HOT single bird seen regularly in one area and breeding suspected (TS). 1-2 birds in second winter period during Oct at Lenwade Common, in Nov at Scarning and Dec at Pensthorpe (in Ibis aviary and 5 other locations), Dereham SW, Costessey, Sparham Pools and Lyng. Higher counts of 4 in Sparham Pools area on 26th Nov (BB) and 3 at Hempton on 4th & 6th Dec (IB).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

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

Single flying NW at Costessey on 17th Mar (AB), 1 at Great Ryburgh RWP on 18th June (RY), 2 at Coldblow, near Lt Snoring on 5th Oct (RY); in Dec singles at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 12th (PL), during HBW on 19th (the first record for many years) (DK) and flying E over Sparham Pools on 22nd (BB).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage migrant, widespread.

Singles at Sparham Pools on 26th Apr, 5th May, 18-20th July, 30th July, 12th Aug and 28th Sept (BB, AJ, JP). Elsewhere singles in May Swanton Morley GP on 2nd (IB), Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 10th (NMid) and Guist Common on 18th (RY). Further singles at Pensthorpe on 28th July & 23rd Aug (TS) and flying over Thorpe Marriott on 13th Aug (MMc).

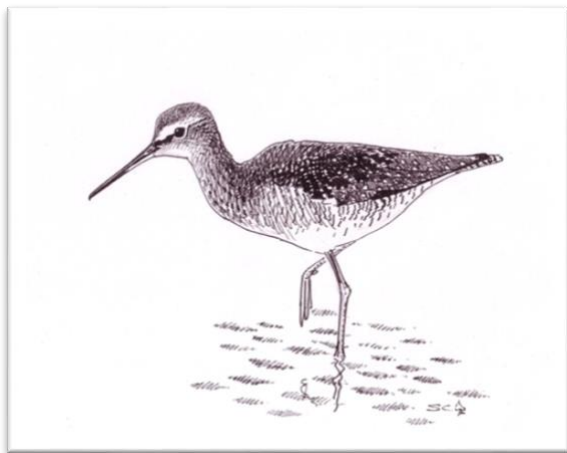
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

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

Wintering birds in **Jan** at Lenwade Mill on 3rd, Old Costessey Marshes on 5th, Dereham SW on 9th; in **Feb** at Dukehouse Bridge near Foulsham on 25th, Bintree on 28th; in **Mar** at Costessey on 19th, Old Costessey on 20th, Kettlestone on 25th-27th, Dukehouse Bridge on 28th and Attlebridge on 29th.

In April probably single spring migrants at Sculthorpe Moor HOT and Sparham Pools on 8th and Dereham SW on 18th.

First reports of probable Autumn passage migrants 2 at Sparham Pools on 28th June followed in July by 3 at Attlebridge on 13th and single at Lyng on 13th, 1-5 at Pensthorpe from 19th, 1 at Beetley GP on 23rd and New Costessey on 24th. Passage continued in Aug with 2-5 at Attlebridge daily, 2 at Beetley GP, 1-6 at Pensthorpe between 3rd-27th, 1 at Costessey Marshes on 10th, 2 at Sparham Pools on 12th and 8 at Scarning on 14th. The last passage birds reported from Pensthorpe when 2 on 8th Sept. A wintering bird at Pensthorpe on 30th Dec.



Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

Rare passage migrant.

Single at Pensthorpe on 24th Aug the first record there for a number of years (TS).

*Spotted Redshank,
by Steve Cale*

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Rare passage migrant.

Single at Swanton Morley GP on 2nd May (IB) and on Western Scrape at Pensthorpe in July on 24th, 26th, 28th & 29th presumably the same bird (TS). Two at Dereham SW (IB) and single flew over Thorpe Marriott on 14th Aug (MMc) with another single on the Viewing Lake, Pensthorpe on 31st (TS).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Rare passage migrant.

Singles at Hindolveston (IB) and Dukehouse Bridge north of Foulsham (RY) on 8th May and 2 on Western Scrape, Pensthorpe on 22nd (IB, CF *et al*).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*.

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Single at Bintree Mill on 21st Mar (RY), 2 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 8th Apr an unusual species for the reserve (NMid) and 2 on Western Scrape, Pensthorpe on 29th July (TS).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Abundant and widespread passage migrant and winter visitor

Reports from 18 sites along the valley and in Dereham area.

Highest counts in first winter period **Jan** 1000 Bylaugh, 500 Brick Kiln, Dereham on 10th (B&BP), 500 HBW on 17th (DK), 290 Elsing on 17th (AJ), 100 Wensum Valley GC on 27th (EJ); **Feb** 20+ Swanton Morley GP on 6th (AT), 64 Lenwade Mill on 7th (JP); **Mar** 1000 Wellingham on 1st (NarVOS), 52 Sparham Pools on 16th (JP). Counts of between 2-18 in Jan at Great Witchingham Common, Lyng; Feb at Ringland, Reephams and Helledon.

A leucistic bird in flock of 20 birds at Swanton Morley GP on 4th Apr (B&BP).

(continues)

Black-headed Gull (continued)

Bred at Sparham Pools NR where 1 nest with 2 eggs on 5th May (AJ) and observed nesting on small island on 18th May (JP). Later reports of 3 young on 25th June (TC) with 4 on 5th July (BB).

Post breeding flock of 200+ at Scarning on 18th Aug (IB) and 45 at Lenwade Heath/Foxford Bridge on 26th Sept (JP).

Highest counts in second winter period **Oct** 60 Lenwade on 2nd (RG), c.300 Lenwade/Hockering on 10th (RG), 500+ Sparham on 22nd (RG); **Dec** 120+ Lyng (BB) and 80 HBW on 19th (DK).

Monitored throughout the year at Lenwade Mill with highest monthly counts of Jan 30; Feb 64; Mar 20; May 1; June 3; July 12; Aug 20; Sept 20; Oct 24; Nov 24; Dec 26 (JP).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce visitor. **Amber listed.**

In May single at Pensthorpe on 22nd (CF *et al*) and 4 at Great Ryburgh RWP on 22nd (IB). In June single adults at Little Snoring airfield and south of the village on 14th with 1st summer bird at Little Snoring and another single at Great Ryburgh RWP on 17th (RY). On July 7th an adult bird at Pensthorpe and apparently a different adult on the Western Scrape on the same day (TS).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

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

Highest counts during first winter period **Jan** 1000 at Bylaugh and 500 at Brick Kiln, Dereham on 10th (B&BP); **Feb** 20 Blickling Park Lake on 20th (BB/JE), 17 Ketts Lane, Swannington on 22nd (TF), 32 Smugglers Lane, Swannington on 24th; **Mar** 80 HBW on 21st (DK). Elsewhere Jan 2 Great Witchingham Common on 1st, 4 Lenwade Mill on 10th (until 21st Feb), 6 Sparham Pools on 18th; singles Feb Swanton Morley GP on 11th and Ringland on 15th. Three lingering in Apr at Swanton Morley GP on 4th and single during HBW on 18th. (continues)

Common Gull (continued)

Wandering non-breeding birds seen during HBW through summer – single 18th July, 3 on 15th Aug, 2 on 19th Sept.

Highest counts in second winter period 10 HBW on 21st Nov (DK) and 28 at Pensthorpe on 15th Dec (TS). Smaller numbers elsewhere – 4 Lenwade 2nd Oct, single Great Witchingham Common 27th Nov, 5 Sparham Pools 7th Dec.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

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

Wintering birds 5 at Bylaugh on 10th Jan (B&BP), single HBW on 21st Nov (DK) and adult Pensthorpe on 17th Dec (TS).

Probably wandering non-breeding birds in Apr single Sparham Pools on 2nd, 2 Weston Longville on 6th (JP), 10 at Taverham on 24th (CH); May HBW single on 16th (2 on 20th June, single 18th July, 2 on 15th Aug) (DK), 2 Weston Longville on 23rd (JP); single Lyng 30th July (JP)

High count of 20 at Mill Farm, N Tuddenham on 10th Sept (B&BP), with 2 on HBW on 19th (DK) and 3 at Lenwade Mill on 26th (JP) possibly autumn passage birds.

Herring Gull *Larus argentus*

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

Wintering birds in first winter period at Lenwade Mill in **Jan** with up to 3 on 24th (JP), at Swanton Morley GP in **Feb** where 4 on 6th (AT) and singles at Reepham on 18th (J&BP). In **Mar** single Lenwade on 7th, 2 at Lyng on 16th (JP) with larger gathering of 12 adults at Gateley on 28th presumably birds on passage to breeding area (RY). Further single at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 1st Apr (PL). No records received in May-July period.

(continues)

Herring Gull (continued)

In **Aug** 3 at Lenwade Mill on 8th and 2 at Lyng on 12th (JP).

During second winter period single on HBW and 4 Lenwade Mill on 17th Oct (DK, JP). Higher gathering of 8 at Lenwade Mill on 17th Nov (JP) and c.10 (5ad+juvs) at Pensthorpe on 28th Dec (TS).

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Scarce but increasing late summer/autumn visitor

A first year bird at Foulsham and a third year bird at Great Ryburgh RWP on 25th July (RY). Presumably these birds remained in Britain after wintering here and did not return to breeding colonies in France and Spain with adult birds.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

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

Wintering bird seen over Sculthorpe Moor HOT throughout Jan (PL). No further records until Sept when 3 at Worthing village on 4th (DK) and 2 during HBW on 19th (DK).

Only records during second winter period were of 3 at Weston Park & Farm on 16th Nov (JP) and one at Pensthorpe on 13th & 28th Dec (TS).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Scarce passage migrant.

Only 2 reports: a juvenile on 22nd & 23rd Sept at Kingfisher Lake, Lyng (RG, CS, BB) and possibly the same bird 25th Sept Swanton Morley (IB).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce migrant in valley

Only 1 recorded 2nd May at Swanton Morley Gravel Pits (IB).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant in valley.

Seen the length of the valley. First seen on 18th April at Lenwade Mill (JP). At least 24 pairs were nesting on Sparham Pools NR on 20th May (AJ) and raised 24+ young while 6 pairs raised 9 young on the raft nearby. At Pensthorpe 1 pr raised 2 young (TS, GE).

Last seen on 24th Sept Pensthorpe (TS).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Scarce passage migrant. Amber listed.

Just 1 report of a single bird at Swanton Morley Gravel Pits on 2nd May (IB).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident throughout valley. Amber listed.

Seen in every month of the year at 21 locations. Double figure counts include: 20 at Worthing Church on 10th March (DK), up to 10 at Attlebridge on a regular basis (WO), a maximum of up to 20 at Pensthorpe June to Sept (TS) and 16 Itteringham (RG).

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident throughout the valley.

Significant numbers recorded with 300 on 14th Feb at Ringland Mill (PR), 300 on 22nd Feb. at Honingham (PR), 650 on 1st March at Wellingham (NarVOS), 100+ on 1st March at Attlebridge (WO), 197 on 29th March at Felthorpe (MS), 100+ on 14th Dec. at Fustwyed, Elsing (BS) and 200 Wellingham 28th Dec.

A total of 1665 moved mainly S / SW through the Tud Valley at New Costessey between 17th Oct and 28th Nov with max day count of 519 on 1st Nov (AG).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident, associated with human habitation.

Seen throughout the year mainly in groups of 2 -6, e.g. at Lenwade Mill (JP).

60 recorded on 8th July at R.Tud Valley (AG) and 20–30 in Dec at Fulmodeston and Hindolveston (G&AJ). Records from 15 locations.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Decreasing migratory breeder and passage migrant. Red listed.

Earliest recorded on 27th April at Worthing Village (DK) with the latest record on 30th Aug at N Tuddenham (where 1 to 3 seen daily from 30th April) (B&BP), 2 on 11th May at Alderford Common (LB), 1pr Attlebridge 21st June (RG), 1 Bates Moor and 3 Bintree Woods on 30th May (RY), 2 on 19th May at Kettlestone Common (RY), 1 on 22nd May at Gt.Ryburgh (IB). Pensthorpe held a pair from 22nd May to 8th July (TS et al). Singles recorded between 27th Apr & 21st June in Worthing Village/ Church area (DK). At Lenwade 2 were in a garden during the first few days of June (S&BG), 2pr were in Lyng Easthaugh during June (CS, RG) and on the HBW on 20th June, 18th July, 15th Aug (DK). Also recorded from Croxton (PL), Fakenham (PL, RY), Foxley Wood (B&BP) and Sparham Pools (CS).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Migratory breeder and passage migrant. Amber listed.

Widely seen throughout the valley with the first on 19th April at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and the last on 13th July at Pensthorpe Ram's Field (TS). 3 birds were seen at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 9th June (PL) and 2 males & a female were recorded at Sparham Pools on 11th June (BB).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

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

150 sightings in all months with several sightings of pairs. Adult + 4 young on 13th July at Scarning, Riverside Farm (RG), 1 in the nest on 7th July at Sparham Hall Farm (CS) and 2 on 5th Dec (BB). 3 on 14th Feb at Guist Common and 2 here on 17th Feb (RY), 2 on 24th Feb. and 1st June at Attlebridge, Old Hall Farm (WO), 2 on 11th May at New Costessey (PS) and 3 on 2nd June at Mill Street (PL).

Little Owl *Athene noctue*

Introduced resident. Fairly common in WVBS area.

Recorded every month of the year. Attlebridge (WO), Briston (PL), Daffy Green (IB), Elsing (RG), Guist (RY) and at Lyng (A&CJ), Sparham Hall Farm (BB), Worthing (DK) and 2 on 8th Mar at Tuddenham (CJ).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident.

Again recorded every month, 3 on 17th Jan at Sculthorpe Mill (IB), 2 on 12th Feb at Hockering (PR), 2 on 1st Mar at Wellingham (NarVOS), 2 on 11th Mar at Dereham (IB), 2 on 28th Mar at Lenwade Mill (JP) and 3 on 11th Sept at Lenwade Common (RG). Regularly seen at Sculthorpe Moor HOT.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Rare resident and winter visitor.

Seen on 7th Feb at Sculthorpe Moor (PR, IB), 2 on 4th and 6th Dec at Hempton (IB) and 1 recorded on HBW 19th Dec (DK)

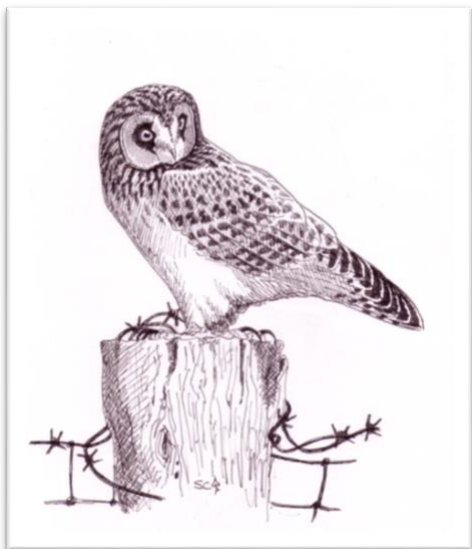
Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

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

Only 1 recorded on 19th Jan at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (NJ).

*Short-eared Owl,
by Steve Cale*



Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

*Scarce migratory breeder. **Red listed.***

Several seen at Marsham Heath on 15th and 17th June (DG).

Swift *Apus apus*

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

First seen on 26th April (10) at Sparham Pools (BB) and last record on 15th Sept at Old Costessey (AB). 50 on 3rd May at Sparham Pools, 100+ on 5th May at Sculthorpe Moor HOT, 100 on 8th May at Ryburgh Watchpoint (RY), 30+ on 1st and 20th June at Pensthorpe (TS), 30 on 4th July at Lenwade Mill (JP).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Common resident in the valley. Amber listed.

Recorded every month. With records from Attlebridge, Bintree, Dereham, East Barsham (2), Great Witchingham Common, Guist Common, HBW, Lenwade Mill (2), Sculthorpe Moor HOT (2), Lyng, Swanton Morley GP, Worthing Church.

The only proof of breeding was from East Barsham (MSm).

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Very rare passage migrant

1 recorded on 27th April at Great Ryburgh (AJ, PLam). The second year running a Hoopoe has been recorded in Great Ryburgh.

Green Woodpecker *Picis viridis*

Fairly common resident. Amber listed.

Seen every month, mainly single birds but 2 on 27th Jan at Lenwade Heath (RG), 2 on 11th Feb at New Costessey (DH), 2 on 9th March at Gt. Witchingham Common (JP), 2 on 17th March at Wensum Valley Golf Club (EJ), 3 on 5th April at Upgate (MS), 2 on 28th July at Pensthorpe (TS).

Regular seen on the HBW (DK).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Common resident. Increasingly visiting garden feeders. Amber listed.

Recorded every month, mainly single birds. Several pairs, on 17th Jan HBW (DK), 23rd Jan at New Costessey (DH), 3 on 6th Feb at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL), 3 on 27th March at Bintree Mill (IB), 4 on 18th April at HBW (DK), 3 on 17th Feb at Gt. Witchingham Common (JP), 4 on 23rd June at N Tuddenham (B&BP).

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce resident. Occasionally visiting garden feeders. **Red listed.**

7 sightings: on 27th Jan, 19th Feb at SMHOT (NMI, PL), also at Wellingham on 1st Mar (LF), Bintree Mill 1 calling on 23rd Mar (RY), a report in May from Sennowe Park (per RG), Sparham Pools heard in Dec (PM) and on 14th Sept East Wood Taverham heard & seen (NS).

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

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

1 sighting on 5th May at Fakenham by-pass (NM).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Very rare passage migrant.

3 sightings, Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 13th to 15th Oct (PL, PO, BB).



Great Grey Shrike, by Steve Cale

Magpie *Pica pica**Common resident.*

Recorded from 17 localities in mainly 1s and 2s but an incredible 100+ going to roost on 8th Mar Sweetbriar Meadows, Norwich (AG).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hoe Bird Walk	7		3	1	6	1	4	1	6	3	1	8

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

Recorded every month from 25 localities, 4 on 3rd Feb at RNGC Helledon (JP), 5 on 7th July at Lenwade, Hall Walk Lakes (RG), 6 on 4th Dec at Hempton (IB)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hoe Bird Walk	3		8		5	4	1	3	6	6	4	2

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula**Common resident.*

Recorded every month, 65 on 3rd Jan at Sparham Pools (JP), 20 on 10th Jan at Lenwade Mill (JP), 20 in Feb and March at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (WO), 40 on 10th March at Worthing Church (DK), 83 on 6th April at Ringland/Morton Hall (JP), 41 on 22nd June at East Bilney (RG), 116 on 16th Nov at Weston Park and Farm (JP), 45 on 21st Nov at Lenwade Mill (JP).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus**Common resident.*

Seen every month, 500+ in Jan and Feb at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (WO), also large numbers here most months. 174 on 8th Feb at Sparham North and Lyng Lakeside (JP). Only reported nesting Ringland with 24 & 29 nests in different plantations (MS) and Worthing 3 nests (DK).

Rook and Jackdaw Flocks: 3000 to 5000 on 17th Jan, 23rd Nov and 12th Dec going to roost at Elsing Hall Wood (B&BP).

Carion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident.

Recorded every month throughout the valley. Mainly in single figures but 11 Swanton Morley GP on 6th Feb (AT), 11 Weston Park & Farm and 20 - 28 on 15th Feb, 6th Apr (JP) and 17th June at Ringland/ Morton Hall (JP). The latter were 2 hour tetrad counts.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Very rare but increasing vagrant

2 birds seen on 8th Oct at Sparham Hall Farm (CS).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

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

Recorded every month, usually singles but 3 on 19th Feb at HBW (DK), 3 on 9th June at Bintree Woods (RY), 2 on 4th and 4 on 25th July at Lenwade Mill (JP), 9 on 18th Sept at Swanton Novers (IB), 2 on 21st Sept at Taverham (EW), 4 on 12th Oct at Sparham North and Lyng Lakeside (JP).

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

3 sightings: 1 Guist on 7th Apr (SH), 1 on 7th Nov at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and 1 on 4th Dec at Sculthorpe Fen (BS).

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Common resident.

Recorded every month through the area. 20 on 20th June HBW (DK), and 10 on 23rd June at N Tuddenham (B&BP). In Lenwade RG trapped 259 (cf. 193 in 2009) different birds in his semi-rural garden as part of a long term study. The largest number seen at any time did not exceed 20.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident.

Recorded every month throughout the valley. 12 on 3rd Jan at Sparham Pools (JP) seen here on a regular basis as at Great Witchingham Common and Ringland / Morton Hall (JP). In Lenwade RG trapped 83 (cf. 88 in 2009) different birds in his semi-rural garden as part of a long term study. The largest number at any time did not exceed 5.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident.

Seen regularly usually in numbers of 1 to 4. 7 on 17th June at Ringland / Morton Hall (JP) and 8 on 29th Nov at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL).

In Lenwade RG trapped 41 (cf. 31 in 2009) different birds in his semi-rural garden as part of a long term study. The largest number seen at any time did not exceed 4.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Rare rapidly declining resident. Red listed.

NB Due to the difficulty in separating this species from Marsh Tit the potential for confusion must be recognised.

4 sightings, 31st Jan at Sparham Pools (JP), 6th Feb at Sculthorpe Fen (BB), 25th June at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (IB), and 15th Aug at HBW (DK).

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Uncommon and declining resident. Red listed.

Seen every month usually as singles. Recorded from: Bintree Mill (RY), Bintree Woods 2 pairs on 28th March (RY), Broom Green 2 (RY), Corpusty 2 (RG), Dereham SW (IB), East Bilney family party of 6 on 22nd June (RG), Mill St, Elsing (A&CJ, CN), Fakenham (RY), Foxley Wood (RY, DK), Fustyweed (BS), Gressenhall (IB), Guist Common 2 (RY), Hempton 2 (IB, JP), Hindolveston (G&AJ), Hockering Wood (AJ, PLam, RG), HBW 6 (DK), (continues)

Marsh Tit (continued)

Kettlestone Common (RY), Lenwade Common & Mill (RG, JP), Lyng Bridge (BB), New Costessey (PS), Pensthorpe (TS, GE), Scarning 2 (IB), Sculthorpe Moor HOT 8 (PL *et al*), Sparham Pools 2 (AJ, JP *et al*), Swannington, Ketts Lane 2 (TF), Swanton Morley GP (DK, B&BP), Wellingham (LF) and Worthing (DK).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

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

3 seen on 11th Oct at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL).

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Very scarce breeder and winter visitor. **Amber listed.**

1 from 6th to 10th March at Gunton Lane Rec., Costessey (PS, AG).

To quote PS "Bird found on afternoon of 6/3 in poor light calling when flushed. Refound on 10/3 and seen with scope in good light. Bird feeding in stubble but field ploughed on 11/3 and not subsequently seen."

Woodlark,
by Steve Cale



Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

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

Recorded every month. 135 on 1st Jan at Daffy Green (IB), 90 on 5th Jan at Old Costessey (AB), 80 on 9th Jan at River Tud Valley (AG), 50 on 27th Nov at Worthing Church area (DK), and 3 flocks - 65, 12 & 85 on 30th Nov at Sparham Hall Farm, where 30 pr bred (CS).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

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

First seen on 21st March on HBW (DK) and last record on 19th Sept again on the HBW. At Beetley GP 110 nestholes were recorded on 26th May. Despite heavy predation by Foxes the colony was fairly successful. In total over 225 birds were ringed at this site between 23rd June and 2nd Aug (RG, AH). A colony of 180 nestholes at Walnut Tree Farm, Lyng Easthaugh deserted completely on 8th June. The reason for desertion is believed to be due to heavy rain being blown into the nestholes. Elsewhere 3 pr nested at Pensthorpe (TS) and 4 pr at Bintree Mill (RY).

At least 15 were going to roost with Swallows on Guist Common on 17th Aug.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

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

First recorded on 30th March at Sparham Pools (BB/JE) last record on 10th Oct at River Tud Valley (AG). Apr saw numbers of around 10 at Ryburgh Watchpoint (RY), 10 on 19th Apr at Worthing Church (DK), 30 on 3rd May at Swanton Pool (B&B P), 150 to 200 on 21st July, 100+ on 5th Aug, 80 to 100 on 22nd Aug at Guist Common (RG,RN,AH), 35 on 8th Aug at Worthing Village (DK). Proof of breeding from Barney 10 pr (PL), Hindolveston (G&AJ), Old Beetley (RG), Ringland/Morton (JP) and Swanton Morley 3 pr (BM).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Common migratory breeder and passage migrant. Amber listed.

First record was on 5th April at Ryburgh Watchpoint (RY) with the last on 28th Oct at Lyng (BB).

Seen throughout the area but larger numbers were recorded as follows: 10 on 3rd May at Swanton Pools (B&BP), 8 on 23rd May at Lenwade Mill (JP), 15 on 13th June at Lenwade Heath (RG), 20 in July and Aug at Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (WO), 20 on 8th Aug at Worthing Village (DK). Surprisingly the only breeding report was from Ringland/Morton (JP).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare resident expanding its range through valley.

One at Old Costessey on 7th Mar (AB) was possibly the same bird singing at Costessey Fish Farm Meadows from 28th Apr until at least 5th May (AG). A bird singing at Fakenham on 18th May (RY) is fairly certainly a different bird to that recorded at Sculthorpe Moor HOT from 28th Apr to 9th May then again on 7th Nov when 2 birds present (PL).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident.

A Long-tailed Tit of the Northern white-headed sub-species was with a mixed party of Tits visiting the bird table at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 4th Dec (BS).

The largest flock recorded was an amazing 35 at Lyng on 29th May (NM).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hoe Bird Walk			5	3	12	4	2		15		8	12
Sparham Pools	13	8	8	2	8	3	10	5		16		11
Lenwade Mill	13	9	8	2		4	10	12	12	8	11	12

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer resident, passage migrant and increasing winter visitor.

An over-wintering bird was recorded calling at Costessey on 10th Jan for several days (AB). The first spring record was 15th Mar at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) followed by one at Sparham Pools on 18th (BB&JE), one Bintree Woods 19th (RY) then from several sites from 21st onwards. The last 2 birds of the year were recorded on 13th Oct at Broom Green (NM) and New Costessey (AG).

Recorded from 39 locations. An indication of numbers present 20 birds were ringed at 2 sites in the valley and 10 were recorded in a 2hr survey in a tetrad in the Ringland / Morton Hall area on 6th Apr (JP).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

First recorded on 26th Mar at Sparham Pools (JP) again here on 28th (BB&JE) when 1 singing at Bintree Woods (RY). The main influx did not start until a few days later. Recorded from 17 locations. Largest counts were 12 on Kettlestone Common on 19th May and 15 on 30th May at Bintree Woods (RY). A total of 14 were ringed at 2 sites in the valley.

Last sighting 25th Sept Old Costessey (AB).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

Several wintering birds at the start of the year. One was in Reepham station car park on 3rd Jan when the ground was covered with "half inch snow, 1deg C" (DG). On 13th Jan a male was in New Costessey (AG) and a female in Old Costessey (AB). While in Guist Road, Foulsham a male visited feeders on 23rd Jan with a second bird joining it next day.

(continues)

Blackcap (continued)

There were then 1 or 2 birds through to 6th Mar with an exceptional 3 on 15th Feb (RY). A bird feeding daily on fatballs and sunflower hearts in a garden in Chapel Close Reepham during Feb could be the same bird that was in Reepham station car park (J&BP). A report was received on 3rd Feb of an overwintering male at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (NMid).

The arrival of summer visitors started in Mar with the first on 16th singing at Sparham Pools NR (JP), a pair at New Costessey on 20th (AG), singing male Sparham Hall Farm on 28th (CS) and a male Ringland on 30th (MS).

Recorded from 35 localities.

The last "summer visitor" was a female recorded on 7th Oct in Taverham (EW) and a wintering bird on 24th Dec also in Taverham (LB). Both were in gardens.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

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

A report on 26th Mar at Sparham Pools is exceptionally early (JP) with more normal records from 10th Apr New Costessey (AG), 21st New Costessey (AB), 23rd Sparham Hall Farm (CS) and 26th Sparham Pools (BB). Recorded from 15 localities.

The latest record was an adult on Guist Common on 29th July (RG).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce summer resident and passage migrant.

First records 14th Apr Swanton Morley GP (BB), 18th HBW (DK), 23rd New Costessey (PS), 26th near Sweetbriar Marshes, Norwich (AG), 27th Sparham Pools (NM) and 28th Foulsham (PL). Recorded in ones and twos from 12 localities.

Last record 8th Sept Old Costessey (AB).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Very common summer resident.

First record 10th Apr New Costessey (PS) then regularly from 23rd Lyng Easthaugh (NM). Recorded from 24 localities with 7 pairs the highest count at Itteringham on 27th May.

Last sighting 16th Sept Old Costessey (AB).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Scarce summer resident and passage migrant. Red listed.

First record 21st Apr Old Costessey (PS, AB). Mainly singles recorded from 9 localities – Costessey (Fish Farm Meadows, Marshes & Gunton Lane), Guist Common, Kettlestone Common, Pensthorpe, Scarning, Sculthorpe Moor HOT and Sparham Pools.

Last record 11th Aug Guist Common (RG).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant.

First record 6th Apr Guist Common (RY). Recorded from 15 localities.

As an indication of how common this species is in the right habitat 79 birds (inc. both adults and juveniles) were caught on Guist Common as part of a long term study.

Last record 30th Sept Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common summer resident and passage migrant.

First records 30th Apr (JP) & 1st May (CS) Sparham Pools, 5th May Guist Common (RY) then regular from mid month.

Recorded from only 9 localities is perhaps an indication of its specific breeding habitat requirements.

102 birds were caught on Guist Common and 22 in a tiny reedbed at Beetley GP shows how common this species can be in the right habitat.

Last record 12th Sept Lakeside, Lyng (B&BP).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor. Rare in valley.

A good year for this much sought after bird with 2 early year records – 5 in North Earlham on 7th (EJ) & 9th (PR) Mar.

A significant influx from 23rd Oct when AG recorded a total of 121 over the R Tud Valley, New Costessey until 28th Nov. 8 in Taverham on 5th Nov built to 50+ on 22nd (MMcC).

Between 4 and 12 were recorded at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 7th Nov (LB, PL). 32 flew WNW over Ringland on 14th Nov (MMcC). 8 were being mobbed by a Mistle Thrush protecting his Rowan tree in Breckland Park, Costessey on 16th Nov but this did not stop the number of birds rising to 60 on 20th & 21st (PS).

Elsewhere Aylsham had 80+ on 22nd Nov (BS) rising to 100+ at times by end Nov. 3 at Stibbard on 27th Nov and 1 over on 28th (TS) may be part of the 5 at Hindolveston on 28th Dec (G&AJ). Elsing Village had 10 on 7th Dec (A&CJ, DP) and 8 on 18th Dec (B&BP). 10+ were a mile away at Mill Street, Elsing on 25th Dec (CJ) – a good Xmas Day sighting! Pensthorpe had single fly-overs on 15th & 29th Dec (TS).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Uncommon resident.

Recorded from 22 sites with proof of breeding only from Barney (PL) and Hoe (EJ).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Unobtrusive resident.

Recorded from 20 sites with proof of breeding only from Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and Ringland / Morton Hall (JP).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes**Abundant, mainly sedentary resident.*

This ubiquitous and abundant species was recorded in every month and from 24 localities. High counts Lenwade Common 10, Lenwade Mill 8, Street Farm North Tuddenham where 8 roosting in a House Martin nest on 22nd Dec (B&BP), Sparham Pools 8 (TC, JP), 14 Ringland / Morton Hall, 10 Weston Longville, 10 Weston Park & Farm. Most of these are from BTO Atlas timed tetrad visits by JP.

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

During AG's autumn passage watch over New Costessey he recorded 24,396 between 24th Sept and 22nd Nov mainly heading W/NW with highest daily counts of 15,386 on 26th Oct and 4,993 on 1st Nov. Elsewhere the only count over 100 was 160 to NW at Sparham Hall Farm on 17th Oct (RG).

Details of daily counts above 10: Hall Farm Attlebridge 40+ on 7th Mar (WO), Brick Kiln Pig Farm Dereham 50 on 10th Jan (B&BP), HBW 40 on both 21st Mar & 17th Oct (DK), Hindolveston 16 on 22nd Dec (G&AJ), Lenwade Heath 40 on 26th Sept (JP).

Lenwade Mill 12 on both 3rd & 10th Jan, 48 on 14th & 24 on 21st Nov (JP), County School North Elmham 50 on 17th Mar (B&BP) and Worthing 15 on 10th Feb, 13 on 19th Mar and 30 on 7th Nov (DK).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Rare passage migrant. Amber listed.

The only record was one feeding for 2 hours in AG's New Costessey garden on 30th Sept.



Ring Ouzel, by Steve Cale

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Over 150 records received from 27 sites. Sites with more than 10: Briston 30, Drayton 12, Foulsham 22, HBW 16, Hengrave Common 15+, Hindolveston 20, Lenwade Common 12, Lenwade Mill 12, Sculthorpe Moor HOT 45, Weston Park & Farm 25. All of these are winter records.

Between 9th Oct and 30th Nov AG recorded 293 passing, mainly to W, over his New Costessey garden.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Amber listed.

More than 50 records for the early part of the year with the highest count of c.500 on 5th Feb in Great Witchingham (AB) and the last record 26 on 20th Apr at Swanton Morley GP (NM). Other counts of 50 or above for this period are: c.50 Hindolveston on 6th Jan (G&AJ), 80 Worthing Church most of Jan (DK), 100+ Swanton Morley GP on 6th Feb (AT), 60 Kett's Lane Swannington on 10th Feb with 70 on 14th (TF), 80 Hockering (PR) and 100 Mill Farm, N Tuddenham (B&BP) on 24th Feb, 150 Wellingham on 1st Mar (LF), 70 Mill Farm, N Tuddenham (B&BP) on 7th Mar, 50 Bintree Mill on 8th Mar (PR), 73 Worthing on 10th Mar (DK), 100 Dunton on 15th Mar (PR), 150 County School, N Elmham on 17th Mar (B&BP), 120+ Lyng Easthaugh on 28th Mar (BB/JE).

The first autumn record was 1st Oct which was the start of AG's autumn passage monitoring over New Costessey when 9463 moved mainly W / SW from then until 19th Nov with peak counts of – 1,105 on 20th Oct, 3,582 on 24th Oct, 1,422 on 25th Oct, 1,308 on 1st Nov. Other counts of 100 or more: 300 Broom Green on 15th Oct (NM), 200 at 3 sites in N Tuddenham between 22nd & 29th Oct (B&BP), 200 Sparham Hall Farm on 6th Nov (CS). Numbers seemed to drop then until 125 Pensthorpe on 15th Dec (TS) and 250 Wellingham on 28th Dec (NarVOS).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

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

Recorded in every month in 1's to 4's from 34 localities. The only exceptions being 15 Bintree Woods on 30th May (RY) and AG's autumn passage monitoring over New Costessey when 885 moved largely W / SW between 25th Sept with highest daily counts of 151 on 28th Sept, 248 on 29th Sept. "Way above previous records for this site (previous autumn highest total 255)".

Redwing *Turdus illiacus*

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

44 records for the early part of the year with the highest count of 96 NE over New Costessey on 28th Feb (AG) and the last record 2 on 10th Apr at Reepham (NM).

Other counts of 20 or above for this period are: 50 New Costessey feeding on Holly berries on 8th Jan (DH), 30 Broom Green on 17th Jan (RY), 20 SNRWP also 17th Jan (EJ), 25+ Sparham Pools (BB/JE) and 20 Worthing Bridge (DK) both on 18th Jan, 40 Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge on 5th Feb (WO), 25 Alderford on 24th Feb (TF), 50 Bintree Mill on 8th Mar (PR), 20 Bintree Woods on 19th Mar (RY), 20 Litcham on 22nd Mar (PR) and same day 43 W over New Costessey (AG).

The first autumn record was 25th Sept when 23 W over New Costessey (AG) which was the start of AG's autumn passage monitoring when 6,316 moved mainly W / SW from then until 28th Nov with peak counts of – 1,119 on 20 October, 1,177 on 1 November “relatively low peak counts compared to previous years”.

Other counts of 20 or more: 100 HBW 17th Oct (DK), 40 Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 19th Nov (BB) while CS reported “a very strong showing all autumn” on Sparham Hall Farm.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

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

Over 80 records of mainly 1s and 2s in all months from 25 localities. Notable post-breeding flocks were 65 which “stayed around for about 10 days before dispersing” at Sparham Hall Farm from 9th Aug (CS) and 17 at Pensthorpe on 22nd Sept (TS).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Uncommon and rapidly declining summer resident. Red listed.

First reported on 14th May at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL).

Reported from Barney - bred (PL), Coldblow (RY), East Barsham – bred (PL), East Bilney – 2 sites (RG), Guist (RY), N Tuddenham – bred (JL), Old Beetley (RG), Pensthorpe – bred (TS), Pockthorpe – bred (RG), Sculthorpe Mill – bred but nest washed out (PL, IB), Sculthorpe Moor HOT (BB, EJ, AJ, PL), Sparham Hall Farm - bred. “In spite of offering a nesting box, this pair insist on always nesting in a downpipe – with obvious disadvantages! However an old pair of socks seems to stop most of the water.” (CS), Swanton Morley – bred 4 young (BM), Worthing – bred 3 young (RT, DK).

Last report 12th Aug Sparham (JP).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

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

Recorded every month of year with proof of breeding from Barney (PL), Lenwade Mill (JP), Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL), Sparham Pools (JP) and Ringland/Morton Hall (JP).

An interesting behavioural observation during Apr in Taverham – “Mouse feeding on bird peanut feeder chased away via branches by a Robin” (R&DH).

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rare summer visitor to WVBS area. Amber listed.

Only recorded from 6 sites. First record 26th Apr 2 at Old Costessey (AB) and the last record was 2 on Alderford Common on 8th Aug (LB). In between these dates 1 Lenwade Mill 9th May to 4th July (JP), 1 Pensthorpe (TS), 1 Ringland Common 4th May (B&BP) and 1 Stibbard 25th May (RY).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochuros*

Scarce passage migrant to the valley. Amber listed.

A single record Lyng Easthaugh 17th Apr (NM).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce winter visitor to the valley. Amber listed.

One Dereham SW on 1st Jan (IB), a pair at Guist Common between 30th Jan and 4th Apr (IB, RY), 1 pair Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 1st Feb then at end of year 1 Hellesdon Mill on 21st Dec (AB).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Scarce passage migrant to the valley

First recorded 23rd Mar at Costessey then a female Gunton Lane New Costessey 2nd, 6th, 11th Apr (PS, AG). This was followed by a male on 21st Apr (PS, AG, AB). One was at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 20th Apr (NMid). In May a female was at Bintree Mill on 5th (RY) and another at Primrose Green, Lyng on 10th (A&CJ).

In the autumn 1 Pensthorpe on 19th Aug (TS) and 1 Sparham Hall Farm on 2nd & 3rd Oct (CS).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Rare passage migrant to valley. Amber listed.

Two autumn records – 23rd Aug Old Costessey (AB) and 30th Sept Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Common sedentary resident. Amber listed.

Recorded in every month of the year in small numbers from 23 localities. Confirmed breeding reported from Lenwade Mill (JP), Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and Sparham Pools (JP).

An interesting comment from Sparham Hall Farm “25 flushed from wild birdfood mix in Dec. These strips hold quite good numbers of Dunnock, but they are quite ‘skulky’ and easy to underestimate.” (CS).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common but declining resident. Red listed.

Although still relatively common this declining species was only reported from 16 localities. This species has a liking for thick hedges which makes them difficult to count. Maximum counts above 10 were received from: Mill Street, Elsing 14 (A&CJ), Hindolveston 12 (G&AJ), Morse Close, Lenwade 40 (per RG), Old Beetley 25 (RG), Ringland/Morton Hall 13 (JP), Scarning 25+ (IB), Springfield Cottage, N Tuddenham 40 (B&BP), Waterfall Farm, Swanton Morley 12 (B&BP), Wellingham 12 (NarVOS) and Worthing 25 (DK).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Uncommon declining resident. Red listed.

Only recorded from 6 sites: Lizard Farm, Foulsham 5 on 19th Mar (RY), Fustyweed Elsing 3 on 18th Dec (BS), Morse Close, Lenwade 2 on 1st Aug (per RG), Poplar Farm, Scarning 30 on 1st Jan had reduced to 14 on 8th Aug (IB), Wellingham 16 on 16th Oct and 15 on 25th Dec plus an adult with 1 young gave proof of breeding, and Wood Dalling 5 on 3rd Feb (CH).



*Yellow
Wagtail,
by
Steve
Cale*

Yellow Wagtail *Motecilla flava flavissima*

Rare passage migrant to the valley. Red listed.

Three records and only the 2nd, 3rd & 4th since the Society began. The first was in 2006. Lyng 27th Apr (NM), Guist Rd, Foulsham 9th May – “calling as flying over” (RY) and Bintree Mill 14th May (RY).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

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

Recorded in mainly 1's and 2's in all months from 23 sites: Bintree Mill (RY), Bylaugh SW (CH, B&BP), Gunton Lane, Costessey (PS), Dereham SW - bred (IB), Fakenham (RY), Lenwade Mill (JP, RG), Lyng - bred (CS, BB, AJ, RG), Pensthorpe - bred (TS, TD), Scarning (IB), Sculthorpe Mill (IB), Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL, IB), Swanton Morley GP (IB) and Worthing Bridge (DK).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Scarce passage migrant.

A single record, one at Dereham SW on 19th Apr (IB).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Recorded from 23 localities with proof of breeding from Barney, Old Beetley, Pensthorpe and Worthing Bridge. Most records are in single figures but 17 on 20th Jan then 30 on 26th at Bintree Mill and 96 on 21st Feb at Guist led to a combined total of 300 going to roost at Bintree Mill / Guist Common on 24th Feb (RY). On 18th May there were still 11 roosting at Guist Common (RY). (*Could some of these be Icelandic birds still passing through? – Ed*).

(continues)

Pied Wagtail (continued)

22 were feeding at Bylaugh SW on 10th Jan (B&BP) with smaller numbers between before 11 on 5th Feb (CH). Pre-roost gatherings in Hockering were 80 on 15th and 100 on 24th Feb (PR).

Autumn records include 10 on 14th Nov and 12 on 3rd Dec at Dereham SW (IB) with a roost 54+ at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 12th Oct (PL) while the roost at Guist Common increased from 30 on 24th July to 110 in mid-Nov (AH, RN, RG).

A total of 105 moved mainly W over New Costessey between 24th Sept and 28th Nov (AG).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

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

Amber listed.

Recorded in very small numbers from 11 localities. The nearest “proof of breeding” was one singing Guist Common on 16th May (RY). 8 on Kettlestone Common 24th Jan (RY) and 20 on 11th Oct N Tuddenham (B&BP) were the highest counts reported.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Considering this ubiquitous species is one of the most common in Britain it is recorded in relatively small numbers in WVBS area compared with the west of the county in winter. The largest flocks recorded were 50 at Upgate, Swannington on 20th Jan and 50+ at Felthorpe on 27th Nov (MS).

AG recorded 2,230 moving mainly W over New Costessey between 24th Sept and 29th Nov with daily maxima of 115 on 7th Oct and 101 on 10th Oct.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla**Passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers*

At the beginning of the year present in 1's and 2's, often at feeders, with last bird a male in full breeding plumage at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 9th Apr (PR).

First autumn arrival noted: 3 near Guist on 27th Sept (NM). One Sculthorpe Moor HOT the next day (AC) then during Oct records of 1 to 6 from Coldblow (RY), Foulsham (RY), HBW 5 (DK), Swanton Morley GP 6 (AJ, PL, RG), Felthorpe (MS), Dereham SW 3 (IB), Sculthorpe Moor HOT 11 (BB), Sparham Pools 4 (BB), Hindolveston 2 (G&AJ), Mill Farm, N Tuddenham 3 (B&BP). At Sparham Hall Farm 50+ in birdfood strips late Oct (CS). In Nov only recorded from Lenwade, HBW & Worthing 4 (DK) and Sparham Hall Farm where 70, 50 & 20 in different birdfood strips (CS, BB). More reports were received in Dec with Sparham Hall Farm again having about 50 to year end (CS), Pensthorpe 41 max (TS), Fustyweed, Elsing 3 (BS), Lenwade Mill 2 (JP), Lyng 1 (PL), New Costessey 2 (DH), Wellingham 3 (NarVOS) and Worthing 2 (DK).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris**Common resident.*

Numbers continued to remain low through 2010 showing little recovery from the effects of the *trichomoniasis* parasite. All double figure counts reported during the year: 11+ in Jan Hindolveston (G&AJ), 10+ in Feb Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge (WO), in Nov Sparham Hall Farm "Quite a tumble in numbers. Although a flock of 50+" (CS), in Dec 10 Wellingham (NarVOS), 10 Worthing (DK) and 25 Dereham SW (IB).

AG recorded 343 moving mainly W from 29th Sept to 28th Nov over New Costessey. The highest daily count was 69 on 17th Oct.

Monthly maxima for Lenwade Mill (JP) are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	8	8	8	6	4	4	6	6	12	12	6	12

Nearby in Lenwade RG trapped 37 (cf. 87 in 2009) different birds in his garden as part of a long term study.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis**Common resident.*

In contrast to the above species Goldfinches seem to be benefitting from the increasing provision of nyjer seed at garden feeding stations.

The year opened with a roving flock of 150 at Sculthorpe Moor HOT (NMid) and 120 going to roost at Heath Road, Lenwade on 19th Jan (RG). Another significant roost was 160 at Norwich Rd, New Costessey on 5th Feb (AG). In the autumn 100 were coming to nyjer seed in gardens in Morse Close, Lenwade in Sept and 165 were in New Costessey on 18th Oct (AG).

Monthly maxima for Lenwade Mill (JP) are tabulated below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lenwade Mill	13	13	8	6	6	6	8	6	12	11	35	25
HBW	8	-	1	4	-	4	1	3	3	22	7	2

In Lenwade RG trapped 183 (cf. 98 in 2009) different birds in his garden as part of a long term study.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus**Winter visitor in varying numbers.*

An average year. In Jan 50+ Hengrave Common (TF), 60+ Lyng Bridge (BB/JE), 100 Broom Green (RY), 15 Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL, G&AJ), 30 Sparham Pools (LB). In Feb 35 Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL), 15 Scarning (IB), 30 Lenwade Common & 30 Morton Hall (JP), 30+ Sparham Pools (BB/JE), 50+ Bottom Plantation, Swannington and 40+ Upgate Common (TF). By Mar there were only single figures from Bintree Mill, Broom Green, Guist Bridge, HBW, Sparham Pools and Wellingham with the last on 21st.

Summer records 1 to N over Melton Constable on 9th June (PL), 1 male Lenwade 12th July and a pair on last day of Aug (RG). 5 Mill Court, Fakenham 28th Aug (LF). No proof of breeding received.

(continues)

Siskin (continued)

In Sept singles Lyng (NM) and Lenwade plus 26 Broom Green on 28th (NM). Numbers built from this date when AG recorded 127 to W over New Costessey from then to 27th Nov. In Oct a max of 20+ Sculthorpe Moor (BB, LB, PL) and 40 Sparham Pools (JP, CS, LB, BB), 20+ Lyng (BB) and 24 Lenwade Common (RG).

Nov brought records from Lenwade Mill 25 (JP), 10 Dereham SW & 14 Scarning (IB), 20 HBW (DK), 6 Elsing (AJ), 6 Worthing (DK), 8 Lenwade Common, 6 Weston Park & Farm (JP) and 60+ Walcis Farm, Lenwade (BB).

Dec max 140 Pensthorpe (TS), 60+ Sparham Pools (BB, CS), 30+ Sculthorpe Moor HOT (PL) and c.30 Nethergate (JC).

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Declining resident. Red listed.

Large flocks at the start of the year were 100+ Gressenhall Farm 1st Jan (IB), 150+ Booton on 5th Feb (AB), 45 Worthing on 19th Mar (DK) and 65 New Costessey on 24th Mar (AG).

Only confirmed breeding Sparham Pools (JP).

22 Wellingham end July (NarVOS) then flocks at back end of year 30 HBW mid-Sept (DK), c.30 Scarning in Oct (IB), c.100 Worthing Church in Nov (DK), 200+, 100+ and 70+ in 3 different birdfood strips on Sparham Hall Farm in Nov (CS) where there were still 300+ in Dec (BB) and c.150 at Pensthorpe in Dec (TS),

Also reported in small numbers from Attlebridge, Bintree Woods, Gateley, Kettlestone Common, Marsham, Reepham, Ringland/Morton Hall and Sculthorpe Moor.

Lesser Redpoll (Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

Scarce resident and winter visitor. Amber listed.

Most records of Redpoll were not specific. The highest counts were 20 – 25 at Windmill Lane, Old Costessey on 5th Jan (AB) then 10 Kettlestone Common on 24th Jan (RY). All other records were between 1 & 3. 1 male 27th Jan Lenwade Heath (RG). Then in Feb 3 Dereham on 6th (IB), with singles Guist Common on 17th, Foxley Wood on 20th and Bintree Mill on 21st (all RY). In Mar there were 2 at Guist Bridge on 19th, 2 Broom Green on 21st and 1 Pensthorpe on 24th (all RY).

There were no further reports until Dec when singles were recorded on 3 days from 15th to 31st at Pensthorpe (TS). One visited a feeder in Wellingham on 28th Dec (NarVOS) - the only report received of this behaviour.

Common Redpoll (Mealy Redpoll) *Carduelis flammea*

Very scarce winter visitor.

The only record that was specific – 6 Sparham Pools 8th Dec (PM).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Very rare resident breeder following eruptions.

19 Bintree Woods on 30th May (RY) and 6 Broom Green on 13th Oct (NM) were the only records.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Declining resident. Red listed.

A well reported species with over 130 records received from 50 localities. 9 HBW on 19th Dec (DK) and 14 Dereham SW on 24th Oct (IB) were significant counts. Proof of breeding only from Beetley GP and Guist Common.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare resident. **Red listed.**

A single record 1 W over New Costessey on 7th Oct (AG).



Hawfinch, by Steve Cale

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare passage migrant.

A single record 1 S over New Costessey on 28th Sept (AG).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Declining common resident. Red listed.

Reported from 28 localities. Double figure counts were received from Kettlestone Common 10 roosting (RY), N Tuddenham 12 (B&BP), Gressenhall Farm 25 (IB), Kett's Lane, Swannington 30 (TF), Dereham 30+ (IB) all in Jan. Then in Feb Wood Dalling 11 (CH).

12 pairs Sparham Hall Farm in the summer (CS).

In November 10+ Attlebridge (LB), 10 Lyng House, Lyng (AJ, PL, RG) and 13 on HBW in Dec (DK).

Incredible numbers were on Sparham Hall Farm in Nov "Farmland birdfood strips numbered 30+, 20+, 50+" and "By year end one strip of millet had 110 – which was pretty good" !! (CS).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon resident. Red listed.

25 left an overnight roost at Sculthorpe Moor HOT on 24th Jan (PL), 29 were ringed on Guist Common during the year (RG) and at Sparham Hall Farm "Quite good numbers on HLS birdfood strips end Nov. About 40 on one and 10/15 on each of 3 others" (CS). All other records were less than 10 birds.

Records were received from: Old Hall Farm, Attlebridge, Beetley GP, Broom Green, Costessey, Dereham SW, Gressenhall, Guist Common, Hempton Marsh, HBW, Kettlestone Common, Lenwade, N Tuddenham, Pensthorpe, Ringland, Scarning, Sculthorpe Moor HOT, Sparham Hall Farm, Sparham Pools, Swanton Morley GP, Taverham and Worthing.

Proof of breeding was received from Guist Common, Ringland and Sculthorpe Moor HOT.

Escapes

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

Blue-winged Teal *Anus discors*

Americas and very rare vagrant.

One report of 2 Pensthorpe 16th May (RY) described as “free-winged”.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

South and Middle America.

Two reports of 1 on 23rd May at WVRWP (RY) and 1 Guist Common 2nd Sept (RG, RN) but probably present in this general through the year.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

India.

One record only 14th Feb Morton Hall (JP).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

SE Europe, Asia and N Africa.

A pair at Foulsham Airfield 25th Feb (RY) and a single there 5th Apr (RY). 1 Dukehouse Bridge near Fakenham 12th Oct (RY).

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

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

Single recorded 13th Feb Pensthorpe (RY) and 31st Mar Bintree Mill (RY) and pairs Guist Bridge 28th Mar and Pensthorpe 9th May (RY).

Contributors to the Systematic List

Daryll Banyard	Chris Hudson	Mike Powles
Bob Bradley	Alwyn & Carole Jackson	John & Brenda Palmer
Ed Bramham-Jones	Eric Jarvis	Sara Phillipson
Liz Bridge	Nigel Jenkinson	Richard Preston
Ian Brittain	Geoff & Ann Jones	Barry & Bridget Pummell
Andrew Brown	Kath & Selwyn Jones	RBA
Trevor Brown	David Knight	Adrian Riley
Ann Cleall	Peter & Gill Lambley (PLam)	Paul Riley
Jon Clifton	Josh Leeder	Jim Rivett
David Cobham	Phil Littler	Ashley Saunders
Toby Cockburn	Mrs EM Lowe	Charles Sayer
Tony Durkin	John Loveridge	Pete Sewell
Nick Edwards	Bernie Marsham	Bill Shepherd
Gary Elton	Mike McCarthy	Tim Smith (TSM)
Jenny Evans	Nigel Mears	Thomas Spencer
Colin & Jacquie Fenn	Nigel Middleton (NMId)	Martin Spriggs
Tony Forster	Peter Milford	Julie Stevens
Linda Free	NarVOS	Nick Street
D Gant	Dave Norgate	Andy Thompson
Adrian Gardiner	Charles & Fran Neale	Roger Thorneley
David Gibbons	Richard Norris	Liz Waller
Bill & Sue Gibney	Pete Otte	Liz Wilder (LWi)
Ray & Chris Gribble	William Oram	Paul Woolnough
Allan Hale	Lin Pateman	Robert Yaxley
Derek & Rosemary Harvey	Mike Pearson	
David Hubbard	Jacky Pett	

Earliest & Latest Reported Dates of Summer Migrants

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Honey Buzzard	21 st May	WVRWP	Per RG	17 th Sept	Scarning	IB
Hobby	23 rd Apr	Sculthorpe Moor	NP	8 th Oct	New Costessey	AG
Common Tern	18 th Apr	Lenwade Mill	JP	24 th Sept	Pensthorpe	TS
Turtle Dove	27 th Apr	Worthing	DK	30 th Aug	N Tuddenham	B&BP
Cuckoo	19 th Apr	Sculthorpe Moor	PL	13 th July	Pensthorpe	TS
Swift	26 th Apr	Sparham Pools	BB	15 th Sept	Old Costessey	AB
Sand Martin	21 st Mar	HBW	DK	19 th Sept	HBW	DK
Swallow	30 th Mar	Sparham Pools	BB/JE	10 th Oct	New Costessey	AG
House Martin	5 th Apr	WVRWP	RY	28 th Oct	Lyng	BB
Nightingale	26 th Apr	Old Costessey	AB	8 th Aug	Alderford Common	LB
Sedge Warbler	6 th Apr	Guist Common	RY	30 th Sept	Sculthorpe Moor	PL
Reed Warbler	30 th Apr	Sparham Pools	JP	12 th Sept	Lakeside, Lyng	B&BP
Lesser Whitethroat	14 th Apr	Santon Morley GP	BB	8 th Sept	Old Costessey	AB
Common Whitethroat	10 th Apr	New Costessey	PS	16 th Sept	Old Costessey	AB
Garden Warbler	26 th Mar	Sparham Pools	JP	29 th July	Guist Common	RG

(continues)

Earliest & Latest Reported Dates of Summer Migrants (continued)

Species	Earliest	Location	Obs.	Latest	Location	Obs.
Blackcap	16 th Mar	Sparham Pools	JP	7 th Oct	Taverham	EW
Chiffchaff	15 th Mar	Sculthorpe Moor	PL	13 th Oct	Broom Green New Costessey	NM AG
Willow Warbler	26 th Mar	Sparham Pools	JP	25 th Sept	Old Costessey	AB
Spotted Flycatcher	14 th May	Sculthorpe Moor	PL	12 th Aug	Sparham	JP

Latest & Earliest Reported Dates of Winter Visitors

Species	Latest	Location	Obs.	Earliest	Location	Obs.
Goosander	21 st Apr	Old Costessey	AB	16 th Oct	Lyng	NM
Golden Plover	21 st Mar	HBW	DK	1 st Sept	Pensthorpe	EB-J
Fieldfare	28 th Mar	Lyng Easthaugh	BB/JE	1 st Oct	New Costessey	AG
Redwing	22 nd Mar	Litcham New Costessey	PR AG	25 th Sept	New Costessey	AG
Brambling	9 th Apr	Sculthorpe Moor	PL	27 th Sept	Guist	NM
Siskin	21 st Mar	Broom Green HBW	RY DK	28 th Aug	Fakenham	LF

Locations and their Grid References

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

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

Site	Grid ref.	Site	Grid ref.
Alderford Common	TG1218	East Barsham	TF3234
Attlebridge	TG1216	Eastgate, Cawston	TG1422
Badley Moor, Dereham	TG0212	Easton College	TG1210
Bawdeswell	TG0402	East Rudham	TF8226
Beetley GP	TG9818	Elsing	TG0416
Billingford	TG0020	Elsing Mill	TG0416
Billingford Common	TG0018	Etling Green	TG0012
Billingford Pits	TG0018	Fakenham	TF9228
Bintree Mill	TF9824	Felthorpe	TG1618
Bintree Wood	TG0020	Foxley	TG0220
Bittering	TF9216	Fustyweed, Elsing	TG0418
Broom Green	TF9824	Gateley	TF9624
Bridge Lake, Lenwade	TG1018	Great Ryburgh	TF9426
Briston	TG0632	Gt Ryburgh Raptor Watchpoint	TF9624
Bylaugh	TG0218	Great Witchingham Ark	TG0818
Bylaugh Hall	TG0218	Gressenhall	TF9616
Bylaugh Marshes	TG0218	Guist	TF9824
Bylaugh Sewage Works	TG0218	Guist Common	TF9824
Caddes Hill, Lyng	TG0616	Hindelvoston	TG0228
Clippings Green, Mattishall	TG0412	Hempton Marsh	TF9028
Costessey	TG1610	Hockering	TG0612
Costessey Mill	TG1612	Hall Farm, Attlebridge	TG1214
Costessey Pits	TG1612	Hoe	TF9816
Coxford	TF8428	Hoe Common	TF9816
Coxford Heath	TF8230	Horningtoft	TF9222
Drayton	TG1812	Kettlestone	TF9630
Dunton	TF8830	Lenwade Common	TG0818

Site	Grid ref.	Site	Grid ref.
Lenwade	TG0818	Sculthorpe Mill	TF8830
Lenwade Bridge	TG1018	Sennowe Park, Guist	TF9824
Little Ryburgh	TF9628	South Raynham	TF8624
Little Snoring	TF3294	Sparham Hall Farm	TG0618
Longham	TF9414	Sparham Holes	TG0418
Lyng	TG0616	Sparham Pools NR	TG0616
Lyng Easthaugh	TG0818	Swanton Morley	TG0016
Manor Farm, Gt Witchingham	TG1020	Swanton Morley GP	TG0018
Marsham Heath	TG1622	Swanton Novers Raptor Watchpoint	TG0030
Marriot's Way, Lenwade	TG1018	Taverham	TG1614
Mattishall Burgh	TG0410	Themelthorpe	TG0422
Mileham	TF9018	Thorpe Marriot	TG1614
Mill Street, Elsing	TG0416	Three Bridges Farm, Elsing	TG0418
Mill Farm, Gt Witchingham	TG0820	Twyford	TG0024
Morton-on-the Hill	TG1612	Union Farm, Gressenhall	TF9616
New Costessey	TG1810	Walnut Tree Farm, Lyng Easthaugh	TG0816
North Elmham	TF9820	Wendling	TF9212
North Tuddenham	TG0214	Wensum Valley Golf Club	TG1412
Old Costessey	TG1610	West Raynham	TF8624
Pensthorpe	TF9428	Weston Green	TG1014
Pockthorpe	TG0618	Weston Longville	TG1016
Pudding Norton	TF2692	Whissonsett	TF9422
Ringland	TG1412	Whitwell	TG0820
Ringland Common	TG1212	Whitwell Common	TG0820
Roosting Hills, Beetley	TF9816	Worthing	TF9818
Sculthorpe Airfield	TF8630	Worthing Church	TF9818
Sculthorpe Fen	TF9828/ 30	Worthing GP	TF9818

WVBS Ringing Report 2010 – Allan Hale

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

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

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

Highlights amongst the recoveries were many, with Sand Martins to and from France, a Swallow to France, Sedge Warblers from Spain and to Belgium, a Reed Warbler to North Africa and a Blackcap to Belgium. Finally, thanks to the ringers that operated in the WVBS study area during 2009 for access to their records.

Selected WVBS Recoveries Notified During 2010

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

Cormorant

Nestling	25-07-2009	Inverbervie, Grampian Region, Scotland
Freshly dead	22-02-2010	Swanton Morley (502km SSE)

This bird was shot, doubtless to protect fishing interests. The effect of Cormorants on commercial fisheries has long been a controversial subject.

Collared Dove

Full-grown (F)	29-09-2009	Lenwade
Freshly dead	08-09-2010	East Dereham (11km WSW)

This bird flew into a window at East Dereham.

Sand Martin

Juvenile	05-07-2010	Coxford Gravel Pit, Fakenham
Re-caught	14-08-2010	Pett Level, Sussex (215km S)
Adult	02-08-2010	Beetley, East Dereham
Re-caught	04-09-2010	Pett Level, Sussex (203km S)

First-year	09-08-2007	Canal de Tancarville, Tancarville, Seine-Maritime, France
Re-caught	15-06-2008	near Easthaugh, Lyng (363km N)
Re-caught	23-06-2009	near Easthaugh, Lyng
Re-caught	11-07-2009	near Easthaugh, Lyng
Re-caught	23-07-2010	Beetley, East Dereham (361km N)
Juvenile	22-06-2009	Beetley, East Dereham
Re-caught	28-07-2009	Rosliere, Charente-Maritime, France (810km S). 36 days
Juvenile	31-07-2009	Guist Common
Re-caught	08-08-2009	Rosliere, Charente-Maritime, France (818km S)

Many thousands of Sand Martins are caught at Pett Level in Sussex, including many from Norfolk. This site is clearly on the migration route of our birds, especially in autumn. A further three birds from Beetley made this same journey, but are not detailed in full.

The last three shown are particularly interesting, representing as they do, the 13th from France to Norfolk, and the 29th and 30th in the opposite direction. Note that the Last two went to the same French site, close to Bordeaux on the Atlantic Coast, the last taking only eight days to make the journey.

As usual with Sand Martins, there were a host of interchanges between Norfolk colonies. Birds often change breeding colonies from year to year and juvenile birds do visit different colonies in the year that they were hatched. Additionally, on 8th June a colony at Lyng Easthaugh deserted *en masse* and the birds clearly re-located at other colonies. The reasons for this behavior are not totally understood, though bad weather is suspected with the rain driving into the nest holes.

Swallow

Juvenile	20-07-2009	Guist Common
Freshly dead	07-05-2010	Saint-Medard-De-Guizieres, Gironde, France (866km S)

The 30th Norfolk-ringed Swallow to be found in France (out of a total of 64 found abroad).

Sedge Warbler

Nestling	03-08-2009	Seaside Dyke, Errol, Tayside, Scotland
Re-caught	05-05-2010	Kettlestone, Fakenham (475km SSE)
Juvenile	26-07-2010	Sculthorpe Moor, Fakenham
Re-caught	08-08-2010	Pett Level, Sussex (216km S)
Juvenile	02-09-2010	Guist Common
Re-caught	10-09-2010	Pett Level, Sussex (211km S)
First-year	15-08-2009	Dodro, Coruna, Spain
Re-caught	19-07-2010	Guist Common (1,330km NNE)
Juvenile	20-07-2009	Guist Common
Re-caught	22-08-2009	Veurne, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium (224 km SE)

The first shown was doubtless still on migration northward when trapped at Kettlestone. The second and third were caught whilst on southward migration at a major ringing site in Sussex. The 4th shown represents the only Spanish-ringed Sedge Warbler to be found in Norfolk (out of 13 foreign-ringed birds found in the county). The last was clearly fattening up in Belgium prior to its long journey southward – it weighed 14.3 grams when caught there, compared with only 11.0 grams at Guist some 33 days previously.

Reed Warbler

First-year	20-09-2009	Waterhay, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire
Re-caught	26-07-2010	Sculthorpe Moor, Fakenham (229km NE)

First-year	12-04-2002	Arroyo Del Infierno, Ceuta, Spain
Re-caught	02-07-2009	Beetley Sand Pit, East Dereham (1,934km NNE)

The second shown is fascinating on two counts. Firstly its age (of over 7 years) is exceptional and secondly its ringing place, shown as Spain, is in fact the Spanish enclave of Ceuta which is in North Africa.

Blackcap

First-year (M)	21-09-2009	Hollow Farm, Worplesdon, Surrey
Re-caught	07-04-2010	Kettlestone, Fakenham (205km NNE)

First-year (M)	30-08-2009	Charnwood Lodge, Oaks in Charnwood, Leicestershire
Re-caught	28-04-2010	West Lexham , Swaffham (138km E)

First-year (M)	26-09-2009	Rutland Water, Leicestershire
Re-caught	09-08-2010	Litcham (100km E)

First-year (F)	03-08-2009	Shereford, Fakenham
Re-caught	02-09-2010	Bokrijk, Limburg, Belgium (380km SE)

The last shown is interesting in that it is only the 5th Norfolk-ringed Blackcap to be found in Belgium, out of 41 Norfolk-ringed to be found abroad.

Chiffchaff

Adult	07-04-2010	Lenwade
Re-caught	01-08-2010	Guist Common (13km NW)

A modest movement but a ringer would only expect a recovery from every 400 Chiffchaff ringed.

Long-tailed Tit

Adult	04-08-2004	Kettlestone, Fakenham
Freshly dead	27-01-2010	Kettlestone, Fakenham

An example of a long-lived Long-tailed Tit. However, at five and a half years of age, it still has some way to go to approach the British longevity record of 8 years and 8 months.

Marsh Tit

First-year	22-01-2006	Swanton Great Wood, Fakenham
Alive	26-05-2010	Sculthorpe Moor, Fakenham (12km W)

Adult	04-02-2010	Litcham
Freshly dead	05-12-2010	Lexham Hall, East Lexham, Swaffham (3km)

Recoveries of Marsh Tits are few and far between. The first was identified at Sculthorpe by its colour-ring combination; the second was hit by car.

Blue Tit

Juvenile	02-09-2010	Lenwade
Re-caught	04.10.2010	Holme Bird Observatory (47km NW)

An example of juvenile dispersal, at 47km this is more than the average Blue Tit manages.

Goldfinch

Adult	18-12-2005	Brandon, Suffolk
Re-caught	05-10-2010	Lenwade (46km NE)

There was almost 5 years between the two capture dates. This represents a good age for a Goldfinch, although still well short of the national longevity record of 8 years and 8 months.

Weather Report 2010

January

With a mean temperature of 1.4°C it was the coldest January locally since the much colder January of 1989.

Snow was much in evidence, being observed to fall on fourteen days with a snow cover persisting for seventeen days. The mildest day, the 17th had a maximum of a mere 7.6°C and the lowest minimum was -6.4° on the 6th.

Total Rainfall: 61.7 mm (106% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 1.4°C (2.6°C below normal)

Ground Frosts: 22

Air Frosts: 16

Wind Direction Summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	1	5	2	4	0	1	0	7	11

February

This was another cold month, with the December – February period locally the coldest since the severe winter of 1978/9.

Snow fell on fourteen days and lay on five, but never to any great depth. Unusually for a cold winter month it was significantly wetter than normal with only two dry days. On the 27th the temperature just reached 10°C for the first time since December 10th.

A period of seventy nine days devoid of even a brief mild interlude is very rare in our maritime climate.

Total Rainfall: 88.6 mm (206% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 2.5°C (1.3°C below normal)

Ground Frosts: 21

Air Frosts: 19

Wind Direction Summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	1	5	4	2	2	0	3	3	8

March

From the 1st–13th maxima were below 10°C but from the 14th–31st every day exceeded the March average.

Spring arrived in mid-month with the soil temperature exceeding 6°C, (the threshold for plant growth to resume) on the 17th after a period of ninety-seven days continuously below this figure.

Total Rainfall: 40.3 mm (84% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 6.9°C (1.0°C above normal)

Ground Frosts: 14

Air Frosts: 9

Wind Direction Summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	7	1	0	3	3	7	6	4

April

This was a sunny and very dry month with warm days and cold nights. Dry ground and many clear nights allowed ground frosts to form with exceptional frequency retarding spring growth. This fact was exemplified by bluebells only coming into bloom during the closing days of the month.

Over the United Kingdom as a whole spring, as indicated by plant growth was twenty five days later than 2009

Total Rainfall: 18.0mm (37% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 9.0°C (1.4°C above normal)

Ground Frosts: 19

Air Frosts: 3

Wind Direction Summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	2	5	1	0	2	6	8	4	2

May

The coldest May since 1996 and the driest since 2001. As in April the frequency of clear nights allowed ground frosts to be unusually frequent. The combination of these frosts and deficient rainfall inhibited spring growth with signs of wilt on even sizeable plants and bushes. A brief warm spell from the 19th–24th gave a foretaste of summer with a maximum temperature of 28.5°C on the 23rd.

Total Rainfall: 33.5 mm (63% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 10.8°C (0.5°C below normal)

Ground Frosts: 3

Air Frosts: 12

Wind Direction Summary

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

June

This was a dry and sunny month with alternating periods of cool conditions with an occasional warm day. This culminated in a true heatwave from the 22nd–30th and the maximum of exactly 30° on the 27th was notable.

The lack of rain caused the countryside to assume a parched appearance. A rogue thunderstorm at Calthorpe on the 8th deposited 33.1 mm of rain accompanied by damaging hail. At Costessey although the fall was much less at 18.5mm it accounted for almost half of the month's rainfall.

Total Rainfall: 37.5 mm (70% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 15.4°C (1.1°C above normal)

Wind direction summary

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

July

The month was warm and dry with less sunshine than usual and a preponderance of south westerly winds.

The monthly maximum of 31.7°C was the hottest day locally since July 26th 2006 and the countryside was showing signs of distress due the deficient rainfall.

Total Rainfall: 51.3 mm (91% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 19.1% (2.6°C above normal)

Wind direction summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	0	1	0	0	2	16	6	4	2

August

As so often Mother Nature restores the balance with the monthly rainfall total being in excess of double the August average. There was a total absence of any settled weather and the month's highest temperature in the United Kingdom was 26.7°C at Weybourne on the 21st. The night of the 20th–21st was exceptional with the minimum of 19.5°C being very close to the record of 20.6°C on August 9th 2004.

Total Rainfall: 105.8 mm (207% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 16.4% (normal)

Wind direction summary

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

September

This was the wettest September locally since 2001 but with near normal temperatures. Variable cloud during the coldest nights saved most of the county from the first frosts of autumn.

Total Rainfall: 90.4 mm (173% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 14.1°C (0.2°C below normal)

Wind direction summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	6	2	1	2	4	8	3	4	0

October

With rain recorded on nineteen days it was the wettest October locally since 2004. Otherwise it was a benign month devoid of fog, air frosts or a single gale and a bonus of glorious autumn colours.

Total Rainfall: 80.6mm (139% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 10.9°C (normal)

Ground frosts: 3

Wind direction summary

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

November

The month was initially mild but with a sudden onset of wintry conditions on the 24th. Overall the month was generally wet and the coldest locally since 1993.

However the first week was so mild that lawns were still being mown and the maximum of 17.3 on the 4th was appropriate to early June.

Snow fell daily from the 24th–30th and covered the ground from the 25th with a maximum depth of 7cms.

(continues)

November (continued)

Total Rainfall: 102.8 mm (147% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature 5.7°C (1.0°C below normal)

Ground frosts: 13

Air Frosts: 10

Wind direction summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	4	3	2	2	0	4	2	5	8

December

Locally it was the coldest December since 1981 with the temperature below freezing for 130 hours between the 16th and 22nd. Snow, mainly slight fell on twelve days and covered the ground on eighteen.

With the ground frozen to a depth of 10cm it was obviously a difficult period for many bird species.

As is usually the case in cold winter months it was dry and there was an absence of wind. The lowest screen minimum of -17°C was recorded at Buxton on the 18th.

Total Rainfall: 27.1 mm (44% of average)

Monthly mean Temperature: 0.0°C (4.8°C below normal)

Ground frosts: 27

Air frosts: 24

Wind direction summary

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	3	5	1	1	1	1	2	5	12

Annual Summary 2010

Total Rainfall	741.2 mm (114% of average)	Wettest Day	25 th Aug (20.9 mm)
Days with rain recorded	200	Days with thunder	8
Lowest maximum	-3.2°C (20 th Dec)	Lowest minimum	-11.6°C (18 th Dec)
Lowest grass minimum	-12.4°C (18 th Dec)		
Air frosts	84	Ground frosts	131
Days with sleet or snow	48	Days with snow lying	46
Days with hail	8	Mean cloud cover at 0900hrs:	69%
Highest Maximum:	31.7°C (10 th July)	Highest minimum:	19.5°C (21 st Aug)
Days with gales:	1 (11 th Nov)	Days with fog (0900hrs):	16

Longest period without any measurable rainfall: 14 days from 12th - 25th May)

Annual mean maximum: 13.3°C - Annual mean minimum: 5.4°C - Annual mean: 9.3°C
(The coldest year since 1987)

Wind direction summary at 0900hrs

Wind	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Calm
Days	30	48	16	16	25	60	53	65	52

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

Norman Brooks (Fellow Royal Meteorological Society)

Pensthorpe Annual Report for 2010

The year began with some ice and snow still present in shaded areas. On 2nd **January** two duck and one drake Goldeneye were seen, with a Tawny Owl found in woodland on the same date. A flock of 35 Redpoll flew over on 4th, Woodcock was seen on 5th then around 80 Linnets were located on 7th. A pair of Little Grebes frequented a small open patch in the ice on one of the lakes for several days. Mid-month, after heavy rain had washed away the remaining snow, a visitor took photographs of a Bittern at the Wader Scrape but sadly I missed what would have been a new bird for me here! A welcome sign of the approach of spring was a male Chaffinch in nearly full song on 18th, when five Bullfinches were seen in a flock, good numbers for the site in recent years. Linnet numbers jumped to over 200 by 21st when one flock held 160 birds and on the same date Shelduck reappeared. A Greater Snow Goose was also present, along with the first Pink-footed Goose I have seen actually on the property, as opposed to flying over. Skylarks were first heard singing on 28th while Barn Owl was seen on two dates towards the month end.

February got off to a good start with a recent record of 367 Wigeon on 1st, along with 313 Teal, the second highest count in 2010. On 5th the first returning Oystercatcher was logged while on 11th a record count of Stock Doves was made, with 114 on farmland. Linnet numbers continued to grow with around 220 recorded in all. Siskins were scarce until 12th when a pair was seen. Spring seemed a little closer on 25th when a Blackbird began singing and Mallard were seen copulating. Despite rain on 27th a Great-spotted Woodpecker was heard drumming.

In early **March** Woodcock were still present. A Treecreeper was seen on 1st while Lapwing were back on 2nd, when Buzzards were up soaring and Green Woodpecker was heard. On 5th a total of 23 Oystercatchers was recorded while on 8th a total of 186 Wigeon was counted, as the birds began to depart. 28 Common Gulls were also seen, a build-up that is normal for the time of year. A Tawny Owl was seen again and female

Marsh Harrier flew up the valley. I finally caught up with Grey Partridge here, when a pair was seen on 11th; Golden Plover was heard that day too and Buzzards were up displaying. Finch numbers in the Wild Bird Feed areas held up quite well with five Bramblings, around 50 Chaffinches and about 60 Linnets; a single Fieldfare was seen as well that day. A fantastic sighting on 12th was of three Otters together at the Wader Scrape. On 15th a total of five Little Egrets was seen there with about 30 Fieldfares nearby. Pochard were recorded in small numbers at this site throughout the month, with three drakes and a duck on 16th. Unusually, a group of four Little Grebes was seen on 17th while the pair of Grey Partridges was seen again on 18th. The first Chiffchaff of the year was recorded on 19th when one was heard singing and Little Grebes were singing by 20th. Another new species here for me was a Stonechat on 22nd seen by the Wader Scrape, where nine Snipe were also seen, on 24th. To finish the month off, Sand Martin were first recorded for the year on 30th.

On 4th April the first Blackcap this year was singing, while at the Wader Scrape, Little Ringed Plover had returned. A rather odd Wood Pigeon was seen, being whitish all over; perhaps not the greatest colour. Marsh Harrier was seen on 5th again. Butterflies appeared on 6th when Brimstone, Comma and Peacock were recorded, along with the first Bee-fly of the year. Willow Warbler and Green Sandpiper were next to announce their return, on 7th, when a pair of Little Ringed Plovers was displaying and Avocets appeared on 9th. Reed Bunting, having been absent, began to be recorded regularly as breeding males made their presence obvious. At the Scrape waders were well-presented with, on 12th, two Little Ringed Plovers, three Avocets, three Redshank and ten Snipe; a flock of about 1,000 Wood Pigeons seen nearby was an unusual sight. Common Terns were back on 15th when three were seen, while five Wigeon, six Teal, two Pochard and 38 Shoveler were still present.

All the work that was carried out at the Wader Scrape last autumn proved its worth when a Ruff turned up on 16th, the first record for a number of years. Reed Warbler was heard singing on 18th and our first

Common Sandpiper was seen then too. On 20th further firsts for the year were recorded: Sedge Warbler, House Martin and two gorgeous adult Mediterranean Gulls that flew over calling. 30 Linnets were still here on 21st and around 50 Stock Doves, while a single Wheatear was new for the year. Towards the end of the month a number of birds were on eggs but migrants continued to appear, with Cuckoo and Whitethroat on 25th. Wildfowl persisted, with eight Wigeon, 11 Pochard, eight Teal and four Gadwall; 36 Tufted Ducks on one lake alone was a good count. Swifts came back on 28th but a greater surprise was a Black-tailed Godwit at the Wader Scrape, the first with us for number of years and a reflection of the improved conditions there. Completing the month came a male Marsh Harrier on 29th although perhaps more exciting was a male Emperor Moth, the first I have seen here.

May 1st began with light rain but thankfully only until first light, so my first Dawn Chorus Walk of the season took place in fairly calm and warm conditions. All the usual species were identified, such as Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Sedge and Reed Warblers; Cuckoo was heard too and Treecreeper seen well. Later that day a Lesser Whitethroat, the first for the year, was 'pushed' from Blackthorn bushes and the next day a Hobby was seen over the Courtyard. Turtle Dove was first heard on 4th, always a welcome sound. More butterflies started to appear with Small White and Small Copper on 5th, then on 6th the first Garden Warbler too. Two Marsh Harriers were seen together at the Wader Scrape that day as well and Little Grebe was located on its nest. Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk continued to be seen quite regularly and a pair of Grey Partridge was seen on two occasions. On 9th May the dragonfly season kicked off when Broad-bodied Chaser, Large Red and Common Blue Damselfly were recorded. On 11th a Treecreepers' nest was watched while both adults brought in food, Great Crested Grebes were seen on the nest and Marsh Harrier was again seen at the Wader Scrape and on the next day too. On 12th I was surprised to see Water Vole sitting on a branch about a foot over the River Wensum; as I watched, it plucked a short, leafy shoot and ate it, grasping the stem with

its front paws. A family party of Mistle Thrushes was seen, two adults with four juveniles, while on 13th a pair of Long-tailed Tits was seen with four young too. Yellowhammers, not often recorded here now, were represented by at least one pair although there were possibly two; Grey Partridges were again seen. On that date, Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner was found on the appropriate tree; in due course the damage caused to the tree would become obvious. On 14th an Osprey was present early in the day only, appropriately on one of our Osprey platforms! Sadly it was not seen by me.....better luck next time.

The Wader Scrape Mute Swans surpassed themselves when they appeared with nine cygnets on 18th, having had six last year. Both Hobby and Cuckoo were seen regularly to the end of the month, as were the Avocets and Little Ringed Plovers at the Wader Scrape. A beautiful melanistic female Pheasant was found on 20th with 13 young, some of which were also dark-coloured. At 'Wild About the Wensum' on 22nd, two Wood Sandpipers, the first recorded here for a number of years, were located at the Wader Scrape and two adult Mediterranean Gulls flew over the Courtyard. On 23rd Hairy Dragonfly was found, my first here, and the first Banded Demoiselle of the year was seen too. One Wood Sandpiper remained at the Wader Scrape and a pair Oystercatchers was seen with three chicks; one Little Grebe and three Gadwall were also present. On 25th, a pair of Shelduck had eight young with them although by the next day they were reduced to only six. On 26th, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Marsh Harrier were all seen, with a single Common Tern again, after a short absence.

Springwatch were at Pensthorpe again this year and as they were keen to feature Glow-worms, I went out in the evenings to search for them but cooler weather put them off until I struck lucky on 5th **June** when I found two females, both glowing green from the end of their abdomens. A late new bird for the year was a Spotted Flycatcher on 7th; on 8th the Avocets at the Wader Scrape appeared with four young while an adult Little Grebe was seen on one of the lakes with two large juveniles and a young Wood Pigeon was seen with its parents too. On 9th, two Meadow

Pipits were recorded, the first for a while; a Kingfisher, the first record for the year, was at the Wader Scrape too; Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Hobby were all seen. Two Kingfishers were seen on 13th, giving some hope that they might settle but sadly that did not occur; three adult Little Ringed Plovers were present and a single tiny chick that had hatched the night before. Sand Martins returned to breed here, with occupied holes noted on 16th; 12 Stock Doves were seen, numbers beginning to increase as they usually do at this time of year and two Turtle Doves were recorded. On 20th June we were thrilled to see a sitting Common Tern on the breeding raft; after carrying out a lot of work on the raft earlier in the year, we had high hopes that the Terns might breed successfully, having failed to do so in recent years. On 21st the Spotted Flycatchers' nest had juveniles in it and a pair of Tufted Duck was seen with nine ducklings, while a pair of Great Crested Grebes had two large young ones with them. The Wildflower Meadows, looking stunning this year perhaps as a response to a relatively hard winter, held a minimum of 300 Common Blue Damselflies, a new record for me. Late June saw the Avocets with their four young and the Mute Swans with their nine young still, on the Wader Scrape; Cuckoo continued to be heard. On 27th, a single Spoonbill was seen early in the day, the only record recently, while a flock of 50 Lapwing was also seen, a hint of autumn already. Bee Orchids were found on 28th when around 20 Stock Doves were seen.

July began well when the melanistic female Pheasant was seen again, though now with only four young. An early Grey Wagtail record was on 4th. An adult Mediterranean Gull was at the Wader Scrape on 7th, when Hobby, Spotted Flycatcher and Sparrowhawk were also seen. At least seven Skylarks were seen on 8th and song heard; a female Marsh Harrier passed over the Wader Scrape and Turtle Dove was heard in the woods. An adult Little Grebe was with two small juveniles as well as a larger one from its earlier brood. Numbers and species of dragonflies and of butterflies increased at the start of the month, in response to some hot weather. On 12th, both the Shelduck and Avocet young at the Wader

Scrape were seen flying for the first time; on 13th a Humming-bird Hawkmoth was noted in the Courtyard, while in the woods a Roe doe was seen with twins. On 14th, Small Red-eyed Damselflies were seen, the first of the year; this is only the second year they have been recorded at Pensthorpe. A Grasshopper Warbler was heard at the Wader Scrape on 19th when a Green Sandpiper was also present; a juvenile Common Tern was observed too, on the breeding raft. On 21st, during a butterfly walk, a Purple Hairstreak was seen, my first here and the first record for a number of years. The first Gadwall since late June and the first Shoveler since late May were noted at the Wader Scrape too. On 22nd, two Green Woodpeckers were seen, then on 23rd a Grey Wagtail and a Marsh Harrier were seen. The next day, a Greenshank was recorded, a year first, along with three Green Sandpipers. Late July saw ten Skylarks on the hill, where there was also Red-legged Partridge with one juvenile; six Jays were noted and Common Sandpiper appeared at the Wader Scrape; a Barn Owl was seen; Green Sandpipers increased to five; Gadwall numbers went up to 22; and the first Migrant Hawker was recorded.

A flock of over 80 Lapwing was seen on 3rd **August**, when two Common Tern chicks were detected on the raft: for a long time it was thought there was only one! After something of an absence, five Buzzards were up together on 5th. Teal numbers began to pick up, with around 12 on 23rd; on 24th our first Spotted Redshank in recent years was recorded. On 28th a Little Grebe was located with two very small young, its third brood. Two Hobbies were seen over the drive on 30th and on 31st a female Marsh Harrier flew over.

September 1st saw two juvenile Marsh Harriers flying over the hill and a Kingfisher was seen while another was ringed; a single Golden Plover flew over. On 2nd a juvenile Grey Wagtail was seen in the woods and later two were on the cafe roof. A larger flock of Lapwing was seen on 5th, when over 120 were counted at the Wader Scrape; on 6th a family party of Cranes arrived from somewhere and a male Marsh Harrier was seen. The best bird, though, was a female Garganey that dropped into

one of our pools on the latter date. The first Wall (Butterfly) for several years was recorded on 9th; on 13th two male Marsh Harriers were seen while on 16th there was a juvenile. The first Wigeon of the autumn appeared on 17th, when three were at the Wader Scrape. 17 Mistle Thrushes were in a flock on the hill on 22nd and a Meadow Pipit, the first since 7th July, was present. By 24th, Teal were up to about 100; on 27th the first Redwing of the autumn were heard. 11 Snipe were recorded at the Wader Scrape on 30th.

October gave another new bird for the autumn when Siskin were heard flying over on 1st, then a Water Rail was heard on 2nd and Redpoll were heard on 4th. A Cetti's Warbler, my first here, was heard on 5th, when a Nuthatch was heard and a Kingfisher seen. On 6th, 36 Wigeon, 215 Teal and 14 Cormorants were on the Wader Scrape and a flock of 24 Linnets was recorded on the hill along with two Buzzards and a Wheatear. A male Brambling on 12th was another new bird for the autumn as were Pink-footed Geese on 13th, when about 190 flew west; a female Marsh Harrier was also recorded that day. A nice surprise on 14th was the sight of two White-fronted Geese, then on 15th, 29 Snipe were counted at the Wader Scrape. On 17th the White-fronts had increased to 12, including four juveniles and on the same date about 40 Fieldfare, the first for the autumn, were seen. Late butterflies and dragonflies continued to be seen until the month's end.

A pair of Pintail on 1st **November** marked the start of a new month and the Cetti's Warbler was heard again. On 5th a late male Blackcap was recorded and single Grey Wagtails began to be noted quite regularly. A flock of 58 Pied Wagtails were seen at the wader Scrape on 9th, when a pair of Sparrowhawks was also noted. 40 Goldfinch were in front of the cafe on 15th; on 16th the Cetti's Warbler was heard again, a Nuthatch and a water Rail were seen and two Marsh Tits were ringed. About 30 Redpoll were recorded on 24th, when 15 Shoveler were present.

Snow arrived on 26th and about 30 Siskins were noted; on 30th the first Woodcock of the autumn was recorded.

On 2nd **December** daylight temperatures did not exceed zero; a very tame Song Thrush, no doubt made desperate by the conditions, was hopping about close to people; a pair of Pintail was seen again as well as two Treecreepers. On 4th, about 150 Linnets were seen on an area sown with wild bird feed, along with at least 23 Brambling, a recent record here; 319 Teal, 144 Wigeon, a female Goldeneye, 2 Pochard, 21 Shoveler, two Cormorants and two Little Grebes were counted on one of the lakes while a single Lapwing was noted in a field and 10 Snipe flew over. On 9th, two Bullfinches, a Green Woodpecker and a Sparrowhawk were seen while on 10th a Peregrine was recorded, followed shortly afterwards by my first Bittern here at Pensthorpe.

On 13th, 30 Mute Swans, 50 Shoveler, three male Goldeneye, six Pochard and about 150 Wigeon were counted; Water Rail and Peregrine were also seen. On 14th another new bird for me at Pensthorpe, in the shape of a male Goosander and a Peregrine was seen again. On 15th, with nearly all the snow gone, 72 Gadwall, 140 Teal and 28 Common Gulls were counted; Woodcock and Brambling were noted too. Best of all, a single Waxwing flew over, another Pensthorpe first for me. By 17th it was bitterly cold again and some snow was lying once more: Water Rail and Barn Owl were seen as were two Bullfinches, a single Meadow Pipit and juvenile female Peregrine; the male Goosander was still present. On 18th December it was minus 10.2C at 7:45 a.m. and nearly all the lakes were completely frozen over: despite the weather, a Bittern was seen very well as were both Woodcock and Barn Owl. On 23rd, with the lakes still nearly all frozen solid, a Peregrine was again seen, as were Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Marsh Tit, Barn Owl, 18 Shoveler and a flock of about 20 Siskins. On 26th a Snipe was flushed from a ditch but a pleasant surprise was a female Marsh Harrier, seen at the Wader Scrape. The wild bird feed area held about 100 Linnets, at least 30 Brambling and two Skylarks. A Bittern was seen again on 28th as it walked from a footpath towards a small pond; the male Goosander was still present; about 100 Wigeon, a Pochard and a Shoveler were counted; at the Woodland Hide, two Long-tailed Tits, a Treecreeper and a Marsh Tit were seen. A

Waxwing flew north on 29th and a Barn Owl flew over; a Water Rail was heard at the Wader Scrape. On 30th, 140 Siskins, the biggest flock in recent years, was seen in Alders; both Wood Pigeon and Stock Dove were heard singing and two Hares were seen boxing briefly, all encouraging signs that winter would not last forever. Much more unusually, a Green Sandpiper was heard calling.

The year drew to a close on a foggy note but what a year it had been.

Thomas Spencer

NOA Hempton Marsh Report 2010

After the success of the fencing and grazing of Hempton Marsh in 2009 the reserve was in top condition at the start of 2010, with the vegetation returned to its ideal length and water levels being buoyed by the winter snow. Visitor events during this year were repeated on a similar basis to that of the previous year with a floral walk, two moth days, a ringing demonstration, an insect walk, and a fungal foray, all well attended, with thanks to Peter Lambley and Dr Tony Leech for their expertise in the floral and fungal events.

Wildlife monitoring continued throughout the year, and this was possible due entirely to the hard work of the many volunteers who take care of the reserve and monitor its wildlife on a daily basis. Their efforts produced a total of 10,262 records of birds, insects, mammals, and amphibians during the year. A big 'Thankyou' to everyone who has contributed, through manning the reserve, recording sightings, taking part in the events and entering the data collected.

One exciting new project based at Hempton but including Sculthorpe Moor and Pensthorpe reserves was a collaborative colour ringing project studying Marsh and Willow Tits in the Wensum Valley, run by the NOA Ringing Group. This involved colour ringing Marsh and Willow Tits to identify both the species and the individuals in the field, and find out more about their longevity, movements and survival rates. Full details of the first years' results of the study are given on page.

Birds

As with previous years, bird records made up the vast majority of wildlife records from Hempton, with a total of 9,825 bird records for the site in 2010. February (1337) and March (1427) being the greatest months in terms of bird numbers recorded. These high numbers were apparently the result of large counts of birds going to roost on specific dates; with 350 Jackdaws on February 16th and 250 Black-headed Gulls recorded on March 2nd. These observations are important as they give a snapshot

of the type of numbers passing over the site, but it is likely that in reality these types of movements happen regularly over the reserve during the winter when these species are non-territorial and seeking the security of large feeding flocks. Overall bird numbers per month fluctuated between 1,427 in March and 486 in August.

As those of you who regularly visit Hempton Marsh will know, many of the sightings recorded relate to common woodland birds such as Great Tit and Blue Tit. This year we take a look at the relative fluctuations in numbers of each species seen during the year. The first thing to notice is that winter/spring numbers of all species are higher than in summer, probably due to the fact that most are recorded at the feeding stations which will be used most during the colder months of the year. In the first half of 2010 Blue Tit and Great Tit numbers follow a similar pattern, although Great Tits are always more abundant, with numbers increasing to a peak in March, (a period when migrants are often found at the coast and may also venture further inland), dropping off sharply in April when nesting begins, increasing a little again in May when incubation and feeding of young is likely to be underway, and then falling further in June and July when the young will have fledged and dispersed, usually locally to the surrounding countryside. It is not so surprising that fewer birds are recorded during the summer months despite the fact that there are often many young in a brood and these will be out of the nest from the end of May, because inevitably species such as Blue and Great Tits will be making the most of insect prey at this time, and have less need for the seed supplied at the feeding station. In 2010 Blue Tit numbers overtake those of Great Tit in the second half of the year, perhaps relating to the high numbers of this species recorded throughout the Autumn. The drop in Great Tit numbers seen during October may relate to some emigration of local birds, but this is speculative.

Long-tailed Tits are likely to be relatively abundant because of their tendency to flock together, but there is little doubt that for several years this species has enjoyed good breeding success because of the favourable conditions early in Spring when they are nesting. It is

interesting that sightings of not only Marsh and Willow Tits but also Coal Tits remain very low during Summer months, suggesting that they are resident in only small numbers and joined by birds from elsewhere during the winter. Willow Tit and Coal Tit were the only two of the Tit species not recorded in every month.

Looking at other species, there was plenty of variety on the reserve in 2010, with raptors and waterbirds also contributing significantly to the sightings.

In **January** birds of note included a single Fieldfare (5th), Barn Owl (15th, 24th), Treecreeper (18th, 26th), a single Kingfisher (19th), a Tawny Owl (21st), 2 Woodcocks (31st), 100 Goldfinches (28th), and a Redpoll sp (31st).

In **February** 2 Egyptian Geese (2nd), a Common Crane (4th), Little Egret (14th, 24th), a Water Rail (13th), Siskin (7th, 18th), up to 3 Bullfinches (9th) and 2 Marsh Harriers (18th) were of special interest. A Nuthatch on the 23rd was an exceptional record, although this species has occurred at Hempton in the past (2 were ringed there in August 2003), there have not been more than 5 records since the site was purchased by the NOA in 1999.

In **March**, Spring brought waders to the marsh with Lapwings on the 14th and 18th, and an Oystercatcher on the 25th. The first Chiffchaff arrived on the 20th and at least 2 were present for the remainder of the month. Four Common Gulls (6th), a Lesser Black-backed Gull (18th), and a Herring Gull (30th), were also unexpected species for the site.

April saw more Spring migrants arrive, with a Cuckoo on the 20th, 25th and 27th, a Sedge Warbler on the 29th, 6 Blackcaps on the 20th, and 4 Chiffchaffs on the 14th. A flock of 30 Fieldfares on the 4th was likely to be a group returning north to their breeding grounds.

The breeding season was in full swing by **May**, with a Cuckoo and 2 Jays seen regularly throughout the month. Other highlights were a Kingfisher (4th), 2 House Martins (4th), a Hobby (15th), single Reed Buntings on the 16th and 27th, a Sedge Warbler on the 18th, 6 Swifts on the 15th and 20th, and a Cetti's Warbler on the 27th.

In **June** a Goshawk was seen (14th), a Cetti's Warbler was still present (3rd, 24th), a single Bullfinch was recorded (22nd) and up to 30 Swifts were counted (29th).

In **July** and **August** there was little out of the ordinary to report, with all the usual suspects in reasonable, but not excessive numbers, recorded on the site.

In the remainder of the year the birds of note included a Spotted Flycatcher (7th **September**), Garden Warblers on the 30th September and 2nd **October**, a Goshawk on the 7th October, a flock of 10 Redwings on 18th October, 12 Fieldfares on 21st October, and in **November** and **December** Siskins built in number with a single bird on the 3rd November, increasing to a flock of 30 by the 21st December. This was not really comparable with the numbers seen the previous year, but this irruptive species has not been as abundant during last winter.

Woodcocks were seen on the 1st and 9th December and a single Brambling was there on the 5th. Finally a Bittern seen on the 29th December was very exciting – the species is known to have used the site in the distant past but has not been recorded there since the NOA purchased Hempton in 1999. Its presence is most likely to be the result of the very cold conditions which were considerably harsher in the Fakenham area than on the North west Norfolk coast, with up to 8 inches of snow falling in late November. The proximity to the river may have made this attractive, as it would be a source of free water – something a Bittern may well have been unable to find elsewhere at the coldest point of the winter.

Insects

With three years of casual insect records made in the log books it is now possible to compare years of butterfly records for Hempton Reserve. While there is always likely to be some element of observer effort influencing this data, the monthly totals for the last 3 years at Hempton suggest that 2010 was a variable year for butterflies, but that they were significantly more abundant than in 2009, particularly at the beginning of

the season. Two peaks are particularly apparent in this graph, the first being the relatively high numbers of butterflies recorded in April, May, and July 2010, with an obvious dip in June. The pattern for 2010 may indicate that first generations of the various species did far better than in the previous two years, and the second generation less so. It is interesting that in all years a noticeable reduction in numbers is seen in June, and the highest monthly numbers in July and August. This may seem obvious but the weather in June is not always colder or wetter than in the following 2 months! In previous reports this dip in numbers in June has been interpreted as a possible gap between the first and second generation of the common species recorded at the site during the year.

In 2010 the first butterfly records dated from the 6th April with the first Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*). April was a great deal better than in the previous two years, with 39 records compared to just 5 in April 2009 and 15 in April 2008. This total was mainly comprised of Peacock (*Anachis io* - 12 records) and Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines* - 15 records), but an early Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta* - 27th) suggested that hibernation of this species must have been at least partially successful.

In May cool winds probably affected the number of butterflies seen and there was little overall change with 41 butterflies recorded but with a greater diversity of species, including Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria* - 5 records), and Large and Small Whites (*Pieris brassicae* and *Artogeia napi*; 5 and 1 record for the month). Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) was recorded on several dates beginning on May 1st.

In June butterfly numbers were very low with only 20 recorded throughout the whole of the month. Dragon and damselflies were better represented, however, with 55 records including Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*), Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*), Four-spot Chaser (*L. quadrimaculata*), Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) and Large Red Damselfly.

July was a far better month with 53 butterfly records; Small White (7), Comma (*Polygonia c-album*, 7), Red Admiral (9), Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*, 9), and Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*, 8) were the

most commonly recorded. A further single Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*) was recorded on the 20th, the only record following the apparent mini-explosion of this species in summer 2009. Banded Demoiselles were also present in good numbers with 9 records for the month.

In **August** 14 species of butterfly were recorded with a Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*), Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) and Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) among those seen on the 7th. Common and Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) were seen on several dates. The frequency of butterfly records was markedly lower in the second half of August and in **September** there were only 13 butterfly records for the whole month. By **October** there were only two records of Red Admiral and none were recorded from **November** onwards, however there were 13 records of dragonflies for the month, with a Common Darter (*S. striolatum*) on 30th October.

Mammals

Mammal records once again decreased at Hempton when compared with the 218 records of 2009, possibly due to the continuation of effective grazing on the marsh during that period which, as discussed last year, would have reduced cover for deer and other species dependent on denser vegetation for cover. Of the 148 mammal records at Hempton in 2010, 90 of these consisted of Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) deer sightings. These peaked in February and then decreased to zero in June and again in August, before returning to modest numbers by the end of the year. This species remains a feature of Hempton's wildlife. Records of Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) were also made, including 1 on the 30th March and 2 on the 20th April. The infrequency of their reports suggests that they do are not resident too nearby the reserve. Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) was seen on three dates, with individuals seen on the 6th April, 7th May and 13th May. An Otter (*Lutra lutra*) was seen on the 29th December – the status of this species on Hempton remains uncertain, but it is very encouraging to see them recorded again this year.

Stoats (*Mustela erminea*) were seen on 17 dates, only one individual was reported at any one time. There were no records for January, June, August or December, however this does seem to be a regular hunter on the reserve. Happily rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) although seen regularly during the year, never reached great numbers. Squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) likewise were observed on a fairly common basis but never more than one at a time. Other sightings of interest were Wood Mice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) on the 27th March and 25th May, a Hare (*Lepus europaeus*) on April 3rd, a Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) on April 6th and a Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*) on June 17th.

Sophie Barker
Warden NOA Holme Observatory.

Changes of Habitat for Birds in the Wensum Valley

Loss of heath and grazing marsh and the creation of gravel lakes

The diversity of the Wensum valley has always made it an interesting place for birds. The incidence of waders recorded during the working of gravel illustrates how much is flying over all the time – there just needs an incentive to drop down and ‘have a look’. Much longer ago there was much more heathland, and as the small extracts below illustrate, a selection of birds that are rather different from today.

This piece of fairly ancient history is based on the diaries of Frank Norgate. He was born on December 31st 1842, the son of the Sparham parson. The diaries cover about 1858 – 1884 and can be found in the Record Office at County Hall (Diary of Frank Norgate. MC 175/12-13, 638 x 2). The diaries are 2 volumes of about 1200 pages with a wide variety of small ink illustrations. They are well worth a look. The sites he visited locally include many that will still be familiar now such as Booton and Whitwell commons, Sparham heath (now Sparham Pools) Drayton Drury, Hockering and Foxley Woods. But he also pursued his interests further afield in the county and went to Blakeney point to see the Pallas’s Sandgrouse that were part of the big irruptive invasion of 1863. (There were even twitchers then!). He studied anything to do with natural history from birds, animals and Lepidoptera to plants, fossils and shells.

It does not do to be too judgemental of what occurred in the way of collecting records. It has to be remembered that in those days, birds were shot and skinned to an extent that would not be acceptable today. Also the amount of nest clutches taken is fairly shuddering!

Here is a selection of some of the entries:

- 1859. June 18th. Red-backed Shrike with 5 eggs, Sparham.
- 1863. May 27th. Shot 2 Wrynecks, Sparham.
- 1865. July 25th. 2 Wryneck’s nests, Sparham.
- 1866. May 19th. Whinchat with 6 eggs, Whitwell Common.
- 1867. May 2nd. Hawfinch with 5 eggs, Weston.

- 1868. June 15th. Tree Pipit with 6 eggs, Sparham.
- June 29th. 2 Red-backed Shrike's nest, Sparham glebe.
- 1869. June 17th. Stonechat's nest on Sparham heath.
- 1870. May 25th. 2 Quail, Sparham.
- June 20th. 10 Wryneck's eggs taken.
- July 14th. Red-backed Shrike's nest, Sparham.
- 1871. May 23rd. Redstart's nest, Sparham rectory.
- 1873. June. 42 eggs taken from a Wryneck's nest.
- 1875. April 26th. Long Eared Owl's nest, Hockering Wood.
- 1876. May. Hawfinch nest at Weston.
- 1877. Nightingales and Nightjars nesting at Hockering Wood.
- 1879. Nightjars in the rectory garden.

That is the briefest flavouring of what is in the journal. It is clear that Red-backed Shrikes nested most years. Nightjars and Nightingales were on the heaths. Tree Pipit, Whinchat and Stonechat all bred from time to time. Wryneck nested annually in the rectory pump. Corncrakes and Quails cropped up regularly at harvest time. There were also far more butterflies – Fritillaries (5 species) and Purple Emperor in Foxley Wood: (Purple Emperor was even recorded in the rectory garden) and Fritillaries at Hockering.

Over time heathland was lost to a variety of causes – agriculture, forestry and gravel – resulting in isolated colonies which could barely sustain themselves. Woodland was not always managed in a way that was suitable for wildlife. (Felling of oaks in Foxley Wood coincided with the last sighting of Purple Emperor in the early 1960's). I was told by a local lepidopterist that the first butterfly he saw on Marsham Heath in the 1950's was a High Brown Fritillary. Pearl Bordered, Small Pearl Bordered, Dark Green and Silver Washed could also be found there. An unsympathetic planting regime did the damage there.

Well, we have lost most of those species, but we have got a lot more raptors and water birds! There are very few raptor records in the diary – just the occasional Sparrowhawk and Hobby, and very little mention of

waders and duck. It was not for another 100 years after Norgate that the waterfowl numbers took off, and the catalyst was the gravel workings.

The list below is of the waders that were recorded between Lyng Eastaugh and Sparham Pools from 1980 – 2010. The numbers refer to the years recorded in the 3 ten year periods. I have excluded Snipe, Woodcock, Lapwing and Golden Plover that could be considered unaffected by the new habitats. The figures do illustrate how much used to drop in, and how much the numbers have fallen away since extraction stopped soon after 2002.

Oystercatcher. 10/10/10. Maybe now declining?

Little Ringed Plover. 10/10/7. Typical falling away in numbers as soon as the extraction stopped. Their preference for bare ground often associated with machinery working close to the nest site is well documented.

Ringed Plover. 1/4/2

Grey Plover. 1/0/0

Knot. 2/3/0. Several winter records.

Sanderling. 3/3/0

Little Stint. 1/4/0

Temminck's Stint. 4/2/0. The target wader (spring), and easier to find than Little Stint (often in autumn)

Pectoral Sandpiper. 7th Sept 1980. The star find by Nigel Mears at Lyng Eastaugh.

Curlew Sandpiper. 1/2/0

Dunlin. 10/9/2. At one stage this was the most likely wader to find, and was recorded every month of the year.

Ruff. 3/4/0

Black-tailed Godwit. 0/1/0

Bar-tailed Godwit. 0/3/0

Whimbrel. 5/7/3. Mostly flyovers.

Curlew. 10/10/10. Maybe unaffected by the gravel pits, as so many are just fly-overs. Quite unusual to find them on the ground.

Common Sandpiper. 10/10/10. Although the numbers have fallen away, it can still be found along the margins on passage.

Green Sandpiper. 10/10/10.

Greenshank. 10/10/8. Through the valley every year and was easy to come across. This is now becoming more difficult.

Wood Sandpiper. 2/2/2

Redshank. 10/10/10. Used to breed on the water meadows that now comprise 'Lakeside' in Lyng. A fairly common bird on the gravel lakes, but now much scarcer.

Turnstone. 0/2/0

The attraction of the lakes was the differences in water levels that were created by the pumping. This allowed the material to be abstracted with diggers actually in the gravel seam, rather than with a drag-line. There was also the area where the water used for cleaning the stone, discharged back into the pit. This produced a sandy/muddy beach that would hold birds for a short while until they realised that the feeding potential was not that great!

The lakes also draw in many water-loving birds. Sparham Pools normally has 4 duck species, often 6 and sometimes 8 – as well as breeding Common Terns and grebes. The other, more open, lakes have Arctic and Black Tern regularly on passage. (Black Tern recorded 20 of the last 25 years) Ospreys are seen in increasing numbers now. There were so many sightings in the autumn of 2010, that it was difficult to guess how many birds had gone through and how many were repeat records. (I could have seen 4 and certainly 2.)

From a personal point of view the end of the gravel pits as an attraction for waders has made quite a dent in the annual valley list – which in my case is the area from Lyng Eastaugh to Elsing. My best year was 1996 with 140 species. I now see about 123. The reduction is partly because the possibility of a few interesting waders provided an incentive to get out more – so more species were seen as a result. (In 1996, Glaucous, Iceland and Mediterranean Gulls were all logged) However there are a few other birds that I saw in 1996 that are decidedly tricky now: Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Yellow Wagtail, Willow Tit and Tree Sparrow spring to mind. Then again, Little Egret, Common Buzzard and Red Kite have all appeared – thus the ever-changing scene.

The down side to the lakes is the loss of grazing marshes that used to be a breeding ground for Snipe and Redshank. The conservation message from this is that we live in rapidly changing environment. Isolated reserves are not going to do enough to halt declines on their own. The key is linking habitats to create a big enough sustainable unit. River valleys are a great opportunity.

Charles Sayer.

Snow and Birds at Lenwade 2010

Thoughts on the birds seen in the January period of snow compared with the December period

The year started and ended with snow. I was struck by an apparent difference in the birds that were about at the start and end of the year, and wondered what factors were involved – cold, availability of food, whether they had already arrived from Siberia or whether they had failed to leave. First a review of what I saw from my windows or when I donned my snow boots and set off round the woods, fields, lakes and rivers of Lenwade in 2010, taken from my journal which mainly notes the ‘unusual’ things.

New Years Day 2010: we have snow again. Went for a walk round the Common in lovely sun and crunchy snow. Love to see **moorhen** footprints all over the place. **Treecreeper**, **Nuthatch**, **most tits**, a few **Mute Swan** and **Mallard** on the river as the lakes are frozen. Three deer and... a **Bittern**!

Monday 4th January: Yesterday a view from my bathroom window of 2 female **Goosander** fishing in the millstream right up by the mill along with a **Cormorant**. They were back later joined by 3 males. They flew off, probably disturbed by movement at a window. All the lakes around are frozen and snow-covered save for a small area at Sparham Pools by the tern raft. I have at least eleven **Blackbirds** in the garden, occasionally fighting, including one with white cheek feathers.

Tues 5th Jan: **Goosanders** on the millstream again this morning and the **Kingfisher** is active, though elusive, around the dyke at the front.

Thurs 7th Jan: Snow yesterday and more snow today, back to around 4 inches deep, maybe more. Nearly out of bird food – the last of the fat balls went out today. **Green Sandpiper**, **Snipe**, **Grey Heron**, and **Bullfinch** along the river and round to Hall Walk Lakes. A **Little Egret** turned up at the weir late in the day.

Fri 8th Jan: More snow overnight to give 5-6 inches in all now. Two **Snipe** where the one was yesterday, and two **Kingfisher** flew through while I was looking at them. An adult and juvenile **Heron**, plenty of **Goldfinch** and **Redwings**.

Sun 10th Jan: Very sloppy snow; **Snipe** out on the 'grass' by the pond area near the mill and **Kingfisher** on the willow tree. Delighted to see **Woodcock** at Hall Walk Lakes. Had to call the emergency plumber out – he'd been out on a shoot over Melton Constable way and said they had hundreds of woodcock, but hadn't shot them. I should think not.

Sat 16th Jan: Snow started to thaw Tuesday. Today in the rain you wouldn't know it had snowed at all save for occasional patches left in sheltered places. Huge numbers of birds in the garden: mainly **Blackbirds**, **Goldfinches**, **Greenfinches** and **Long-tailed Tits**.

Fri 22nd Jan: the **Moorhen** hasn't been at the feeder today for the first time since the snow started.

Sun 31st Jan: The snow came back Friday. Today I was just going out in the car when I thought I saw a **Song Thrush** fly into the dyke. I stopped the car to look at him. Next to him, on a piece of floating weed, was a **Water Rail**.

The snow thawed early in February and although I made a note of the disappearance of the blackbirds, including the white-cheeked one, he returned a couple of weeks later, then went again and has not returned (unless he moulted the white feathers out).

Thurs 25th November 2010: first snowfall yesterday and a carpet today. I had previously noted large flocks of **Siskins**, **Long-tailed Tits** and presumably continental **Blackbirds** and **Chaffinches** arriving as they seemed unfamiliar with my feeders.

Sun 28th Nov: the snow continues; the birds enjoying the food in my garden. 2 **Marsh Tit** were in the garden yesterday enjoying the sunflower seed and the fats. A **Kingfisher** sat on the rail outside my window giving me an excellent view – a **Sparrowhawk** had sat in the same place yesterday.

Wed 8th Dec: Still frozen, no more snow since Saturday but temperature freezing for most of the day. About a dozen **Cormorant** feeding on the river below the weir plus six fishing in the mill race along with a **Goosander**, a **Heron** and a **Kingfisher**. Some **Gadwall** turned up later. I'm getting large flocks of **Long-tailed Tit** coming to the fat and a rare visit from a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**. Unfortunately he saw me at the window and flew off. **Marsh Tit** in daily along with **Great, Blue** and **Coal tit**.

Sat 11th Dec: a balmy 7 degrees.

Sat 18th Dec: snow again since Thursday afternoon (on a nice layer of ice). Temp last night down to -8, the lowest here so far. Even the dyke is icing over and the edges of the river around the reeds. The juvenile **Grey Heron** is staying close, I hope he's feeding: he was visible on the weir by the bridge at 11 pm last night, silhouetted by the street light. The **Kingfishers** are active, hopefully feeding well. **Redwings, Nuthatch** and **Treecreeper** on the lane to the Common, a few things and an odd **hybrid duck** on the river, but the lakes are frozen.

Tues 21st Dec, Winter Solstice. Another cold bright day, temp staying in the minus numbers (high -4 yesterday). Dyke has iced over now. River has thin ice across the top of the area just above the weirs. **Bramblings** in the garden, don't remember them at all last winter. Loads of birds in the garden, they don't seem to eat more than usual, but I'm putting some out by the dyke too which helps the **ducks** and **Moorhens**. There were **Pochard** and **Tufted Duck** on the river yesterday and I've heard the **Water Rail** about too.

Tues 28th Dec: thaw set in this evening.

So was there really a difference between the two phases of snow? The garden attracted 'huge' numbers of the regular birds, but did so in both phases. I think any differences would be down to the progress of the seasonal migration from the continent. This seems to be supported by my Birdtrack records which don't show significantly different numbers of common birds.

The main difference was the visibility of Snipe in January, when they were completely unseen in December even though I was looking out for them. Seeing one Green Sandpiper could have been just luck, as with the Bittern, but they had been forced into areas they might not usually be seen in, along the edges of open waterways. The lakes around were frozen over in both periods and goosander were active on the river on both occasions; Cormorant seemed more common in January than in December which could be that they were really searching for food further inland as the winter progressed.

I have commented about more variety of duck in December, and this appears to be true from my records, there were large numbers of Tufted Duck on the Wensum near Lenwade that were not seen in the January period, and the Pochard were the first recorded for this stretch of the river (this 10km grid square) for the winter Bird Atlas 2007-11.

I think the visibility of the more retiring birds is due to the progress of winter; they were driven out into the open in search of food as the winter progressed. The question being, where they were in December? Still there, probably, just not showing themselves. What this emphasises to me is that I normally do not see many birds that may be present, such as water rail. They become emboldened by the need to search for food in extended adverse conditions.

Jacky Pett

Common Terns at Sparham Lakes 2010

For newer members of WVBS it is worth mentioning the background to the raft. In 2005 Jordan Cereals, owners of Pensthorpe, celebrated their 150 years of trading and sponsored several wetland conservation projects across the country. Jordans approached WVBS and asked for proposals which they would consider funding. The end result is the Tern Raft at Sparham Lakes close to Sparham Pools NWT nature reserve where Common Terns had nested for many years on a small island cleared specifically for the purpose. Common Tern like to nest on bare clean shingle and one of the reasons for their varied success was encroachment of weeds. Our chairman Alwyn Jackson is warden of Sparham Pools NWT and this helped make objective comparisons of the various successes of the two sites.

During 2010 only 1 visit was made to the raft, on 14th June, and none to the island as by this stage the young on the island were large enough to disperse. The sides of the raft prevented them from scattering.

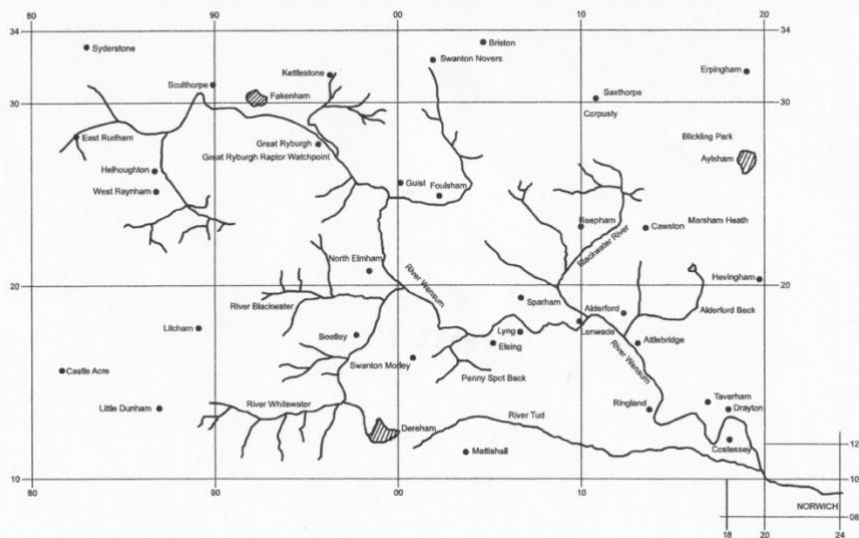
6 pairs of Common Tern successfully raised 9 chicks on the raft and this compares with 6 in 2007, 11 in 2008 and 15 in 2009. Not quite such a good year but it is pleasing to record that the island on Sparham NWT hosted 24 pairs and it is estimated that they raised 24+ young. The greatly improved success on the island is believed to be due to the vegetation on the island being sprayed in the spring complementing the good work of Alwyn and his helpers.

The raft was returned to the manufacturer for repair of the buoyancy tanks. The manufacturers found no problem with the raft but Bernie Marsham identified a design fault which he has made a provisional repair to.

The same management regime will be followed in 2011 for the island. A big THANK YOU to everyone who has helped with the management of both the raft and the island. Let us hope the Common Terns continue to appreciate our endeavours.

Ray Gribble

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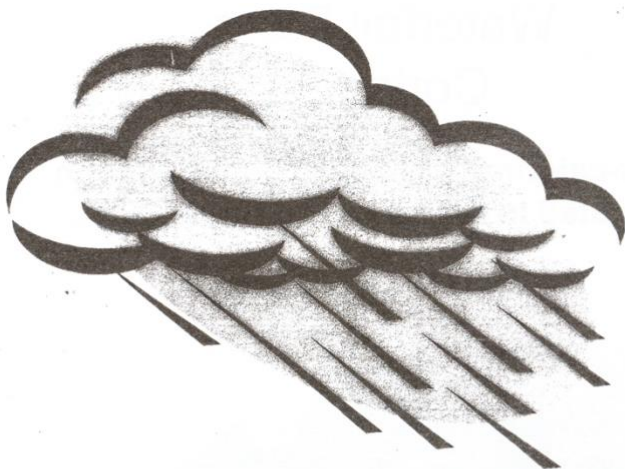
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RAMBLER DISCOUNTS
from the
OUTDOOR SPECIALISTS

2021 PDF of the WVBS Eighth Annual Report_201011th September 2021

Text changes

Format changes

Where	Original text	PDF text
Diary 31 st January 26 th September	Eco friendly Willow Warbler a Chiffchaff	eco-friendly Willow Warbler or a Chiffchaff
Systematic List Introduction Wigeon Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Garganey & Shoveler Bittern Great White Egret Lapwing, Curlew, Snipe & Green Sandpiper Spotted Redshank Black-headed Gull Mediterranean Gull Herring Gull Swift Firecrest Willow & Marsh Tit Garden Warbler & Whitethroat Blackbird Mistle Thrush Greenfinch Goldfinch	has lead to <i>Anus Penelope</i> <i>Anus</i> <i>Botaurus Stellaris</i> <i>Ardea alba alba</i> nr <i>tringa</i> <i>Larus fuscus</i> <i>melancephalus</i> <i>Larus argentus</i> 1 st <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i> Amber listed. <i>Sylvia</i> <i>Abundant, passage migrant</i> <i>Amber list</i> low through 2011 niger	has led to <i>Anas penelope</i> <i>Anas</i> <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> <i>Ardea alba</i> near <i>Tringa</i> <i>Larus ridibundus</i> <i>melanocephalus</i> <i>Larus argentatus</i> First <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i> Order of entries reversed to fit space. Marsh precedes Willow in previous reports <i>Sylvia</i> <i>Abundant resident and</i> <i>passage migrant</i> <i>Amber listed</i> low through 2010 nyjer
Earliest and Latest Summer Migrants	dates	Reported Dates
Locations and Grid References		Rearranged to alphabetical per page
Weather		Wind direction summaries converted to Tables

Changes of Habitat for Birds in the Wensum Valley Greenshank	easy to came across	easy to come across
Common Terns at Sparham Lakes	20 pair do a considerable	20 pairs due to a considerable

NB August - Monthly mean Temperature should read above or below normal (not changed)