



The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



February 2024 – Issue 104

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

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Through a Lens ...



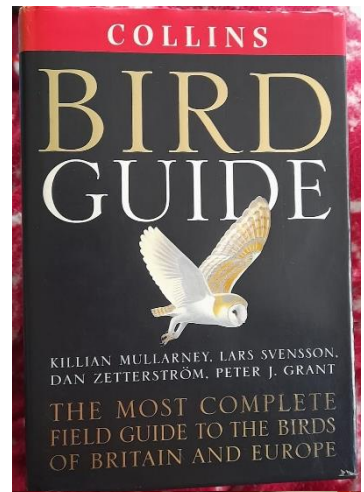
By Nigel Redman

Most birders have a collection of bird books – sometimes quite extensive. This will invariably include a selection of field guides, identification guides and county avifaunas in which birds are treated systematically in ‘taxonomic order’. This is intended to represent their evolutionary history and usually means big birds first and smaller birds (the songbirds or passerines) last. If you are accustomed to using an index to find the species you are looking for, then you may not have paid much attention to the sequence of bird families in your books. Older birders will have witnessed considerable changes in sequence over the years. Indeed, if you pick out a selection of books from your shelves, you will undoubtedly find several different treatments in the order of families. These changes reflect advances in our knowledge of evolution and relationships, and while this may well be a good thing in many ways, it is not very helpful to the average birder. Does it really matter if the ducks come first in our books or a little later on? There was a time when there was relative stability in the sequence of families. When I started birding I quickly learnt more or less where each family appeared in a book, and I could usually find what I was looking for without having to use the index. Those days are long gone. Some modern field guides have such an unfamiliar sequence of families that I now have to look everything up in the index. That may seem trivial, but the whole point of a field guide is to be user-friendly. I want to be able to look up a species as quickly as possible, and scanning through a dense index simply takes longer than flicking through the pages if you know roughly where to look. Some guides do have a quick index in addition to the main index, but even looking up a species group in that takes a few seconds longer. Maybe I’ll get used to a new order eventually, but there is no consistency at present, and changes to the sequence of families seem to appear with increasing frequency.

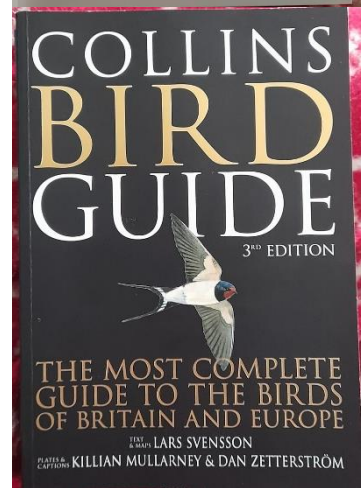
So, who makes these decisions about the sequence of families in our bird books, you may ask? The answer is taxonomists. But who are these taxonomists and are they actually birders? Some of them undoubtedly are quite keen birders; others will have more than a passing interest in watching birds in the field, and a few will probably be entirely academic in their ornithological interests, rarely if ever venturing out with a pair of binoculars. I often wonder if taxonomists ever think about the ramifications of their research. They must use books themselves, but perhaps they are content to use

the index. Not long ago, the falcons were moved to follow the woodpeckers, instead of their usual position close to other birds of prey. From a scientific point of view, this may well be a more accurate representation of their evolution, but it is counter-intuitive to most birders who consider falcons to be regular birds of prey.

Taxonomy is a fairly niche area of ornithology and its key players are not usually well-known names to most birders. The majority work in museums, as curators or research associates, or in universities, and most of their work is published in serious scientific journals. While much of their research may not concern the average birder, some of it does affect all our lives as birders. Taxonomists describe new species and subspecies, decide on the merits or otherwise of these new taxa, and give names to them. The recent proliferation of new species, mainly as a result of elevating subspecies to species, cannot have escaped the attention of any serious birder. This is often welcomed, as everyone likes to get more species on their lists, but many are also beginning to question whether it is now going too far. Traditionally, a species should be identifiable in at least one plumage from a congener, or be vocally distinct or



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exhibit habitat or behavioural differences, but we now have the situation with a few cryptic species where you have to collect a feather or some poop to test its DNA in order to decide whether it is that species. These debates are set to continue for a long time yet.

But many taxonomists also work with higher-level taxa, notably at the generic and family levels. Many of you will have noticed that a good number of species are now in different genera from former longstanding ones, and some species have even been reassigned to different or new families. Indeed, the number of families currently recognised by the various world lists is now about 250, compared to a little over 200 just a generation ago. But families have not just been added, they have also been moved around, sometimes profoundly. New genetic studies and insights are constantly challenging our knowledge of the evolution of these families, and as a

consequence, the position of various families in world checklists has changed radically in recent years. And when the world lists change their sequence, other books invariably follow suit. Perhaps it is time to consider a different approach. Why do field and identification guides have to change their sequence of families every time a new study comes out? A few years ago, a group of well-known birders published an article suggesting that field guides should stick to a standard and logical order of families, irrespective of their evolutionary history. So, waterbirds would be grouped together, aerial birds such as swifts and swallows would follow each other, and diurnal and nocturnal raptors would not be separated. And the sequence would be the same in every field guide. Sadly, authors and publishers have not taken up the challenge so far..

A Note from the Editor



By Carol Thornton

Hi folks. Welcome to February newsletter. Many thanks to those popping records and photos up on our new website and to catch up with folk again on Zoom / at the hall for January's talk and on the couple of walks last month. At last year's AGM Trevor mentioned that we will be reaching our 10 year anniversary at the end of the year and we are planning some commemorative activities so if you have any ideas on that front, do please get in touch – and those of you who have already – thank you!

Last month's **Through a Lens** subject for the front page was **CORVIDS**. Our cover images this time are courtesy of Thomas Wright [Magpie], Philip Cartlidge [Rook], Ellie Farrow [Hooded Crow], Doug Cullern [Carrion Crow], Richard Farrow [Jay], Andrew Gorton [Jackdaw]. Thanks everyone. For February, the **Through a Lens** subject will be **Birds in Flight**.

My **Editor's Pic of the Month** from January was this Redwing from Claire Brayne, simply because the colours made me cheerful!



We are a bit short on articles for the upcoming March, April and May newsletters so if anyone fancies putting 'pen to paper' and writing something bird-related, I would be very much obliged! Short or long, with photos or without, whatever suits. Thank you!

We are still in need of new images of some of our locations to illustrate our new website. If you are out and about at any of the following sites in the coming days and weeks armed with a camera, please see if you can get a nice shot and let me have it ...

Aylsham Woodgate, East Runton (Thains Lane), Erpingham, Felbrigg Park & Lake, Gresham, Hempstead, High Kelling, Holt, Hunworth, Knapton, Little Barnham, Metton, Paston, Ridlington, Sustead, Thornage, Thorpe Market, Upper Sheringham & Weynor Gardens.



Welcome to Our New / Returning Members - we look forward to seeing you soon!

*** Richard Kershaw * Lucinda Cooper * Will Fitch ***
*** David Griffiths * Richard Webb * Bob Farndon * Victoria Nippard ***

326 individual
members across
212 households

11,397
bird records
logged

Lots of
photo uploads!

146 bird species /
subspecies
reported

Please keep adding all your sightings to our website at www.nenbc.co.uk. Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting or need assistance on how to upload your records. More information from our website records, Twitterings and social media presence in **Data, Records, Posts & Tweets** from [page 33](#).

Details on **2024 membership renewal** on [page 11](#) if you haven't already. If we don't hear from you soon we will assume you don't wish to renew this year. Thanks for your support thus far.

Club Achievement Awards

Star Badges

No new Star Award recipients this month.

Currently, **4** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **20** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous 81 members now hold the **BRONZE STAR** status.

For any of the club events that take place in the club area you can include all of the species you see so join us for a walk. It always helps to get on to more birds when you are in a group of like-minded folk.

Keep up the good work everyone – star badges are within everyone's reach!



Number of bird species recorded in the NENBC area since joining the club:

BRONZE [100] self-certified
SILVER [200] peer reviewed
GOLD [250] peer reviewed
PLATINUM [300] peer reviewed

We will notify members when they achieve the Bronze badge but for the higher-level badges, members should notify us on nenbc@aol.co.uk when they are ready for their website records to be peer reviewed by the Peer Review Group.

Eco-Badges

No new Eco-Badge recipients this month.

We currently have **23** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 14 | Inland: 9] and **4** who have achieved **COASTAL SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 3 | Inland:1].

Those of you wanting to submit, please let us have a list of species, dates seen and locations that is derived from your website records (we can help you download your data) as we can't yet tell on our website if you are driving or not! If you need help getting your list of species downloaded, please ask!



Number of bird species recorded in the NENBC area at or from home without the use of motorised transport since 1st January 2020 (or date of joining if later):

GREEN ECO-BADGE: 75 species required for lists with only inland sites / 100 for lists with any coastal locations

SUPER-GREEN ECO-BADGE: 125 species required for lists with only inland sites / 175 for lists with any coastal locations

Lists to be submitted by members from **their club website records** to nenbc@aol.co.uk along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.



By Russ Malin

All records are from the NENBC website and submitted by members unless otherwise stated.

≈ 11,400 individual records covering 146 bird species were added in January

There were 11,397 records submitted for January which is 1,856 less than those submitted for the same period last year and 7,114 more than the previous month of December. Total species records were 146 which was 5 less than were recorded in the same period in 2023.

January had **BARNACLE GOOSE** and **TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE** at Weybourne together with **BEWICK'S SWAN** and **WHOOPEER SWAN** a little further inland. The large goose flock at Weybourne also had a **RUDDY SHELDUCK** (photo courtesy of Trevor Williams) on the 18th and, surprisingly, one was reported from a farm pond at Aylsham on the 27th. **BLACK-THROATED DIVER** were noted offshore including two birds at Sheringham on the 27th. A **HOODED CROW** was reported from Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course and Weybourne Cliffs on the 29th and three **WAXWING** were present in Beach Road, Weybourne early in the month and a **BLACK REDSTART** was also at Weybourne together with a second bird later in the month at High Kelling.



Brent Goose Reports from a number of locations throughout the month from a number of locations. Notable reports were 354 at Weybourne on the 26th, 273 east and 81 west, and a feeding flock in cereal fields, also Weybourne, which included one pale bellied and two hybrid pale bellied / dark bellied birds. *Photo 1 courtesy of Mark Clements*

BARNACLE GOOSE A single bird was noted in a flock of pink-footed Geese at Weybourne on the 18th.

TUNDRA BEAN GOOSE A single bird reported from Weybourne, with the Pink-footed Goose flock, on the 14th, 16th and 17th. *Photo 2 courtesy of Mark Clements*

BEWICK'S SWAN Three birds were in cereal fields between Gunthorpe and Brinton on the 3rd.

1



2



3



WHOOPEER SWAN An adult and two juvenile birds were in the Bale and Field Dalling and Saxlingham areas between the 1st and the 17th. What was presumably the same group were present on the sea between Sheringham and West Runton on the 27th. *Photo 3 courtesy of Paul Laurie*

Egyptian Goose Small numbers reported during the month from Brinton, Hanworth, Letheringsett & Ford, Felbrigg Park & Lake, Weybourne Camp, Melton Constable, North Barningham and Blickling Park. Up to 5 birds were noted from Barningham Hall Lake. *Photo 4 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

RUDDY SHELDUCK A single bird was with Pink-feet at Weybourne on the 18th and on a farm pond at Aylsham on the 27th. *Photo 5 courtesy of Tony Forster*

Pintail Three birds were off Weybourne on the 2nd followed by 4 birds west at Sheringham on the 5th. Weybourne and Weybourne Camp also reported this species in January.

Common Eider Small numbers offshore at Weybourne throughout the month. A high count were 38 birds, west, from Sheringham on the 5th.

VELVET SCOTER Reported throughout the month from Weybourne / Weybourne Camp. A high count was of 11 birds on the 14th. *Photo 6 courtesy of Stu Buck*

Goldeneye Eighteen birds were west at Sheringham on the 5th. Other reports came from Weybourne Camp involving 1-2 birds.

GOOSANDER Three birds, a male and two females, were noted on the lake at Haveringland Great Wood on the 15th and a female was at Selbrigg Pond (Lower Bodham) on the 1st. Other reports included 2 birds west at Weybourne Camp on the 4th. *Photo 7 courtesy of Steve Hale*

BLACK-THROATED DIVER Single birds was west off Weybourne on the 2nd and west past Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on the 23rd. Two birds were off Sheringham on the 27th.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER Single birds were reported on several dates in January from Weybourne, Sheringham and Cromer Lighthouse and East Cliffs. Two birds were east past Weybourne on the 17th.

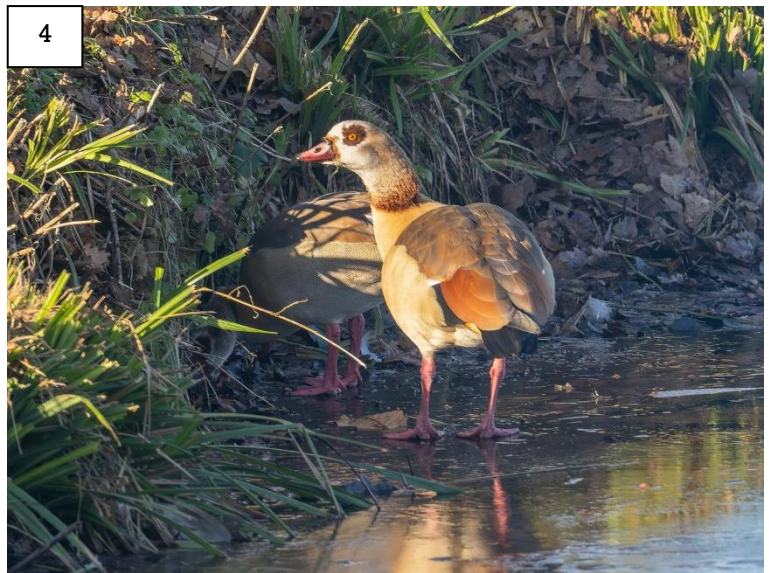
Fulmar Almost 40 reports for January received from Sheringham, Weybourne, Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course, East Runton and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. *Photo 8 courtesy of Thomas Wright*

RED-NECKED GREBE Single birds were on the sea at Weybourne on the 11th and 20th and Sheringham on the 24th.

SLAVONIAN GREBE Single birds off Weybourne Camp on the 13th and Weybourne on the 20th.

Little Egret One or two birds reported throughout the month from several sites but 6 were recorded at Ingworth on the 24th.

Shag Single birds reported from Weybourne Camp on the 18th and Happisburgh on the 21st.



GOSHAWK Single birds were noted from Thornage on the 1st and Melton Constable on the 18th. Two birds were at Hempstead on the 16th.

Marsh Harrier Reports of 1-2 birds through the month from Weybourne and Weybourne Camp. Other reports came from Holt, Field Dalling & Saxlingham and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs.

HEN HARRIER Reports received from Thornage on the 1st, Felbrigg Park and lake on the 14th, Northrepps on the 18th and Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on the 29th. Two birds were present at Weybourne Cliffs on the 27th. *Photo 9 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

SHORT-EARED OWL A bird was at Felbrigg Park and Lake on the 10th. *Photo 10 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

Red Kite Many records from a variety of locations throughout January including Melton Constable, Antingham & Bradfield, Hanworth and Alby. The roost at Little Barningham peaked at 36 birds on 1st.

Water Rail Reports of 1-2 birds were received during the month from Felbrigg Park & Lake, Weybourne, Selbrigg Pond (Lower Bodham), Pigneys Wood, Baconsthorpe and Gimingham

Grey Plover Up to 21 birds recorded from West Runton during January. Other reports were received from East Runton, Sheringham and Weybourne Camp. *Photo 11 courtesy of Claire Brayne*

Bar-tailed Godwit A single bird was recorded over Thornage on the 1st.

Knot There were 13 birds west past Weybourne on the 26th and 7 west at Sheringham on the same date. Single birds were past Weybourne on several dates.

PURPLE SANDPIPER Up to 2 birds at Sheringham throughout the month with singles from Walcott on several dates and Beeston Bump on the 17th.

Woodcock Single birds were seen at several locations during the month. Up to 5 birds were present at Felbrigg Park and Lake during the month. *Photo 12 courtesy of Connie Flynn & Philip Elliston*

JACK SNIBE Single birds were reported from Felbrigg Park & Lake during the month. Other records came from Gresham on the 9th, Weybourne Camp on the 17th and Beeston Common on the 20th.

Green Sandpiper Single birds reported in January from Sharrington, Letheringsett & Ford and Baconsthorpe. *Photo 13 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Kittiwake Eight birds, 7 east and 1 west, were pat Sheringham on the 5th and singles were noted from Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on the 10th and Beeston Regis on the 22nd.

9



10



11



12



13



LITTLE GULL Twelve birds, all adults were past Weybourne Camp on the 5th. Single birds were also noted from Sheringham on the 5th and inland at Northrepps on the 24th and 25th.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL Single were reported during the month from Northrepps, Sharrington, West Runton, Weybourne, East Runton and Weybourne Camp. Two birds were west past Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on the 4th.

CASPIAN GULL Single birds were reported from Mannington Hall Park on the 1st, Buxton & Little Hautbois on the 14th and Walcott on the 20th. *Photo 14 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Razorbill Six birds east at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on the 3rd were followed by reports of single birds from Sheringham on the 21st and 31st.

Barn Owl Just 11 reports received, all single birds, from Holt, Felbrigg Park & Lake, Gresham, Brinton, North Barningham, Weybourne Camp and Corpusty & Saxthorpe.

Little Owl Reported throughout the month from Felbrigg Park & Lake, Weybourne Camp, Bodham and Gresham.

Kingfisher Single birds were reported from Selbrigg Pond (Lower Bodham), Pigneys Wood (NWT), Felbrigg Park & Lake, Kelling Heath, Beeston Common, Blickling Park NT, Mannington Hall Park and Haveringland Great Wood. *Photo 15 courtesy of Carol Thornton*

MERLIN Singles reported from Weybourne Camp on the 28th and Bodham on the 29th. *Photo 16 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

Peregrine Falcon Reports from Cromer throughout the month of both adults plus other reports from Sharrington on the 13th and Overstrand on the 17th.

HOODED CROW Single birds, presumably the same individual, reported from Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course and Weybourne Cliffs on the 29th. *Photo 17 courtesy of Ellie Farrow*

RAVEN Single birds were seen over Felbrigg Park & Lake on the 4th and Weybourne on the 28th.

WAXWING Three birds were present in Beach Road, Weybourne on the 7th. A further single bird was at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on the 19th. *Photo 18 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Marsh Tit Just over 60 records throughout January. Mainly involving 1-2 birds but 5 birds were noted from Selbrigg Pond (Lower Bodham) on the 1st.

WOODLARK Kelling Heath was the only site for this species, with up to 3 birds singing on the 7th.



CETTI'S WARBLER The only reports received were of a single bird on several dates at Weybourne.

DARTFORD WARBLER Up to 2 birds were reported from Kelling Heath on several dates during the month.18

FIRECREST Single birds were noted from Bodham, Sheringham Park, Beeston Common, Pretty Corner Wood, Aylmerton and Holt during the month. Three birds were present at Roman Camp on the 8th.

BLACK REDSTART A single bird was present at Weybourne Heath on the 7th, and another was reported from High Kelling on the 16th. *Photo 19 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Treecreeper Reports of birds received during the month from lots of locations including Felbrigg Park and Lake, Letheringsett & Ford, Bodham and Kelling Heath. *Photo 20 courtesy of Mark Clements*

European Stonechat Over 80 reports, mainly involving 1-2 birds, for January but up to 5 birds were present at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course in the latter half of the month

Grey Wagtail Single birds recorded from several location during the month. One of the most reliable sites in our area appears to be the sewage works at Holt.

ROCK PIPIT Single birds were recorded from Cromer 18on the 8th and 9th and Weybourne on the 26th. *Photo 21 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

Brambling Reports of small numbers received from a number of locations including High Kelling, Aylsham and Swanton Novers. Up to 30 birds were present at Bodham, near the church, on the 1st.

HAWFINCH A bird was noted flying across the A149 at Felbrigg Park and Lake on the 18th.

Lesser Redpoll Small flocks throughout the area but the high count was of 30 birds at High Kelling on the 22nd. *Photo 22 courtesy of Geoff Snelson*

Common Crossbill Up to 14 birds reported from Weybourne Heath at the beginning of January. Thirty-one birds were noted at Haveringland Great Wood on the 23rd.

Siskin Lots of reports of small groups received from numerous locations during January with Letheringsett & Ford giving us a high count of 75 birds on the 3rd.

LAPLAND BUNTING Single birds were at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on the 4th and 16th. Three birds were at Weybourne Cliffs on the 17th.

SNOW BUNTING The only report for January was a single bird at Weybourne Camp on the 29th.





February is a month when some of the exiting winter birding is tailing off, but we haven't seen the first migrants yet, but there is still plenty to be on the lookout for.

I did mention this last year, but we are fortunate enough to have **Goshawk** in the recording area (*photo courtesy of Julian Thomas*). There are several well-known sites for this large raptor, but any good stretches of woodland locally are worth staking out. Even if you are not fortunate enough to see one you should pick up a lot of the commoner woodland species whilst you do the rounds and perhaps you turn up something like a **Hawfinch** or **Firecrest**. It is extremely unlikely that the **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** is still in our area, the last report being 8 years ago, but is it possible they could be hanging on in some under watched patch of woodland somewhere in the NENBC area?

Commoner species such as **Tawny Owl** (*photo courtesy of Tony Forster*) might be a little easier to see during the day as there are less leaves on the trees. They can be very early nesters and on average are laying during March but there is every possibility they could be nesting in February so if you know of an owl box or other nesting site it might be worth keeping an eye on it for this declining species. Its decline is thought to be down to changes in woodland management, increasing urbanisation and/or the influence of climate change on small mammal abundance, but more research is required.

And finally, look up! It can be a good time of year to see **Raven** (*photo courtesy of Julian Thomas*) or pick them up with their incredibly distinctive call which you can listen to [here](#) It is only a matter of time, surely, before this species is added to the breeding list for our recording area. You may immediately think of cliffs and moorland, but you are just as likely to find a Raven building a nest in a tree (particularly Scots Pine), pylons and other large man-made structures.



A Members' Night of 4 Mini Talks! September 2024

We are looking for volunteers to take to the floor for our next "Members' Night" and give us a 20-minute talk of their choice on something about birds or any other related subject. This has been a popular event previously with an eclectic range of subjects embraced by our members.

It doesn't have to be scientific or funny (but could be!) – an appreciation of any aspect of a birding life, a birding patch or holiday, a related hobby, a cause you are passionate about, a grumble to get off your chest, a project you would like some help with.

A simple talk would be lovely, but slides are a great addition and if you needed some support with that then help is at hand!

Please get in touch if you want to have a chat.

| Alan Stevens | 07765892515 |
| ahstevens52@gmail.com |

Conservation Corner

If you have any suggestions for content for our Conservation Corner slot, please let us know and we'll pass your ideas on to our writers.

Restocking our 2nd hand bookstall

We could do with some more book donations for our birds and other nature stall at our indoor events. We have rather a lot of Field Guides to the rest of the world so don't really need any more of those, but we could do with some more reading material from a bit closer to home. If you have any books languishing on your shelves that might suit, bring them along to one of our events or let us know on nenbc@aol.co.uk

Speaker Suggestions

We are always on the lookout for recommendations for speakers for our indoor programme, or ideas you may have of subjects you'd like us to find a speaker on. If you have any thoughts, please drop Alan an email on ahstevens52@gmail.com

Thank you!

Membership Renewal Subscriptions for 2024

We hope you will continue to support the club in 2024 by renewing your membership with us. The subs, which were due on 1st January, remain the same as last year:

2024 calendar year membership of £15 per household to include a copy of the club's printed 2023 Annual Bird Report which we hope will be ready for publication in the spring, or **£12 without the report.**

Our preferred method of payment is by standing order, but one-off payments can be made electronically to the club account (Account Number: 20842968 / Sort Code: 30- 94-34; TSB) or by posting a cheque to the membership secretary Colin Blaxill at Caitlins, Bernard Close, High Kelling, Holt NR25 6QY. Cheques need to be made payable to "North East Norfolk Bird Club" and not NENBC. If you want to pay by cash then catch Colin or one of the other Committee Members at one of our events.

Many thanks for your continuing support and engagement

Contributions to the Newsletter

The newsletter is reliant on input from others, is certainly much richer from having a wide range of articles included and we could really do with some of your interesting stories! You really don't have to be a birding 'expert' to write something for our newsletter. It can be long or short, with or without photos, whatever suits. Please have a think about whether there is anything you could write about for a future publication. The copy deadline for any issue is the last day of the previous month, but it would be good to know in advance if you are planning to submit an article.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

WhatsApp Groups.....



The club runs two WhatsApp groups:

NE Norfolk sea-watching is administered by Trevor Williams and is for any active and participating seawatchers along the north east Norfolk coast whether they are club members or not.

NENBC Alerts is administered by Tony Forster and is solely for club members to share news of interesting birds within the club area – no gossip allowed!

The advantage of both these groups is that you can get instant details about a bird sighting rather than having to rely on looking at the website later in the day and missing out. If either of these groups are of interest, drop us an email on nenbc@aol.co.uk and we'll put you in touch with the appropriate administrator. You'll need to provide your mobile number and sign up to the group rules. Both groups are free but to get the most out of them you'll need to be able to use the internet on your phone when you are out and about.

Club Sponsor Bird Ventures offer a 5% discount on own-branded wild bird food to NENBC members all year. Have a look at the Bird Ventures website www.birdventures.co.uk as they also supply feeders and much more with good advice and help for garden bird enthusiasts. Free local delivery available












Bird Ventures, The Wildlife Shop,
9B Chapel Yard, Albert Street,
Holt, Norfolk NR25 6HG

Telephone 01263 710203
salesbirdventures@aol.com

Opening Hours:
Monday
10:15am–4:00pm
Tuesday to Saturday
9:00am–4:00pm
Sunday Closed



Summary of our annual offer directly below with info after that of upcoming events. Our website is the place to go for the most up to date and detailed info.

-  Talks on the last Thursday evening of the month at Gresham Village Hall from Sep-Nov and Jan-Apr, also available live via Zoom
-  Walks around Felbrigg Park on the 3rd Wednesday morning of the month Sep-Jul
-  Varied monthly weekend walks and the odd evening one from Sep-Jul
-  Special events including:
 -  Coordinated Seawatch
 -  Walks Weeks
 -  Christmas Social & AGM
 -  New Year's Day Birding Challenge
 -  NENBC Big Sit
 -  Global Big Bird Day activities
 -  Birding for Beginners Course

Car-sharing is always encouraged, or even better, walking or cycling.

INFO FOR ALL WALKS:

Please wear clothing suitable to conditions - footpaths can be muddy at any time of the year - and continue to respect social distancing on the walk if appropriate.

YOUNG PEOPLE: Children are always welcome if accompanied by well-behaved adults and we would be happy to see young members aged 16 and 17 attend unaccompanied with prior written consent from a parent or guardian who has also supplied a phone number where they can be contacted in an emergency.

DOGS: We regret no dogs.

EQUIPMENT: Binoculars are always recommended to gain full enjoyment from your birding and for some of our walks, a scope is definitely useful.

ACCESSIBILITY: Unfortunately most of our walks aren't suitable for wheelchair users but please do contact us on nenbc@aol.co.uk to see which of our events are or could be adapted to be so.

BADGES: Birds seen on club-area walks count towards individual Star Status badges & if you walk or cycle from home, they also count towards your Eco-Badges.

BOOKING: For the Felbrigg Park Walks no booking is required so just turn up on the day if you fancy it, although it is always nice to know to expect you so feel free to let us know! For the other, generally weekend, walks that are led by Janice, booking is essential and numbers are limited to 15. Please book with Janice at least 2 days prior to the walk on janicedarch@gmail.com

Wednesday 21st February | 9.00am-11.00am |
Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk
 with Trevor Williams



No advance booking needed

This sociable walk caters for all levels of birding ability so come and give us a try. We take a leisurely stroll around the park and lake, route dependent on the local bird and other wildlife recently reported or likely to be present on the day. We regularly see over 40 bird species on an average walk and even on the 'worst' of days more than 30.

MEET: Main car park | **PARKING:** Although access to the grounds is free to all and parking is free in the main car park for National Trust [NT] members with their machine-validated membership card, a parking fee is payable via the machines for non-NT members (£5 per vehicle at time of writing). Sexton's Lodge car park at the western end of the estate however remains free to all users and you can walk up from there along the internal estate road to the start point. | Check out the [NT website](#). | **DISTANCE:** up to 2-mile circular walk | **ACCESSIBILITY:** The walk is usually 'off-road' along dirt footpaths and tracks, across fields, through woods and can include a few stairs by the lake. As such, this event isn't suitable for wheelchair users. | **FACILITIES:** Toilets and café facilities available at Felbrigg Hall. | **BADGES:** Walk within the club area so records count for Star Badges plus Green Eco-badges if non-motorised transport conditions are met.

Saturday 2nd March | 9.00am-1.00pm |
Gresham Village and lanes walk
 with Janice Darch



Booking required via Janice by 5pm on the Thursday before janicedarch@gmail.com (15 places)

We will explore the lanes and footpaths around the village, including the sewage works which can be good for wagtails. I expect to find common hedgerow and woodland birds like finches, tits, warblers, perhaps woodpeckers, Buzzards, Kestrels, wintering thrushes such as Redwing and Fieldfare are likely as well as Sparrowhawk, Barn Owl, Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge. Flocks of geese may be on the fields or even late wintering wild swans.

MEET: Gresham Churchyard | **PARKING:** alongside the church on East Beckham Road, NR11 8RF [OS Explorer 252 | TG167386]. | **DISTANCE:** 2 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Along muddy footpaths, tracks and rains so not wheelchair-friendly | **FACILITIES:** None | **BADGES:** Walk within the club area so records count for Star Badges plus Green Eco-badges if non-motorised transport conditions are met

National Nest Box Week runs from 14th to 21st February each year. For everything you ever wanted to know about nest boxes, take a look at the official website www.nestboxweek.com or pop into [BirdVentures](#) in Holt, NENBC's club sponsor, to purchase one.

Monthly Evening Club Talk

Thursday 29th February | 7.30pm-9.30pm |

Gresham Village Hall or via Zoom from home

zoom



"Avian influenza in the UK: impacts and conservation"

... an evening talk with the BTO's Phil Atkinson

THE SPEAKER AND THEIR TALK: Since the start of the 2021 outbreak of H5NI Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the UK, a number of sources of data on the mortality associated with HPAI have been collated by statutory nature conservation bodies, as well as conservation and volunteer-based organisations. The UK hosts internationally important numbers of breeding waterbirds and these species were most affected by avian flu, with Great Skua, Gannet, Barnacle Goose and Black-headed Gull being particularly badly hit. In his talk Phil will cover the impacts, conservation and knowledge gaps around avian influenza. Phil is the BTO's Head of International Research & Principal Ecologist. He has developed a program of international work focussing on the impacts of environmental change on bird populations and the ecology of Palaearctic migrants and leads the BTO's international research program.

AT THE HALL: Those of you attending in-person at the hall can expect a selection of home-made cakes plus tea, coffee, hot chocolate, wine and cold drinks during the interval and of course the chance to socialise with other members. We can cater for gluten-free or other requirements if you let us know in advance. We have a 2nd hand 'natural world' book stall for you to purchase from / contribute your no-longer-required stock to, supplies of our club publications to buy (including our annual bird reports), a display of member photos and details on our upcoming events. We are happy to offer members' old birding equipment for sale at our events (or in our newsletter) with a contribution going to club funds.

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS: It is always nice to know if you are coming to the hall but by no means essential

so if it takes your fancy on the evening, please just turn up as we would love to see you! If you are intending to join via Zoom though, you definitely need to let us know in advance so we can get the link out to you in good time. You can get in touch via nenbc@aol.co.uk.

ACCESSIBILITY: The hall is wheelchair accessible. The level car park at the hall is shingle but we can reserve a space next to the entrance if you need it.

DIRECTIONS: Gresham Village Hall, East Beckham Road off Church Lane, Gresham, Norfolk, NR11 8RT but note the published postcode might not take you to exactly the right spot! If you are coming through Aylmerton and Lower Gresham, turn right by the church (just after the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are coming through Gresham, turn left at the church (just before

the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are dropping down from East Beckham, the hall is on your right opposite the church.

PARKING: Access to the hall car park is actually off East Beckham Road, opposite the church. There is additional parking on the road along the side of the church itself and an overflow car park has kindly been offered to us by Gresham Village School. The school car park is located on Cromer Road to the left of the school as you face it and at the left-hand end of the row of houses - about a 300m walk from the hall. Please park considerately to allow maximum number of cars in the car parks and on the road but with enough space for passing traffic to be able to get through, including agricultural vehicles. We can send you a map of the locality on request.

"The Work of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel" - a talk with Dawn Balmer
Thursday 15th February - 19:30 - 21:30 at Cley Village Hall

This is our annual JOINT EVENT with CLEY BIRD CLUB and NWT LOCAL GROUP. In addition to being a keen Norfolk birder, Dawn Balmer is the chair of the Rare Birds Breeding Panel, which monitors the status of the rare and scarce breeding birds in the UK. She will present an illustrated talk on how the work of the panel contributes to the conservation of these birds. The Rare Breeding Birds Panel collate breeding data on all species with fewer than 2,000 breeding pairs (both native and non-native) in the UK in order to report annually on their numbers, trends and distribution, and maintain a secure archive to support conservation and research for these species. These data are used to set conservation priorities and are also used in wider assessments of biodiversity such as governmental wild bird and priority species indicators, and 'The State of the UK's Birds' and 'State of Nature' reports.

Sorry - we were late with the newsletter this month so this has already happened!

Last Month's Club Mid-Week Walk

Felbrigg Park | 17th January



By Dave Billham

With the new year celebrations long over and Christmas fast becoming a fading memory (even Carol had reluctantly allowed her twinkly lights to be taken down), the first club walk of 2024 took place on a cold, grey and calm Wednesday morning. Twenty stalwart members braved the low temperature to see what avian activity would be witnessed over the allotted two hours. With a larger than usual group, Trevor wondered if some new year's resolutions were working in our favour; if so, long may that last! With many hoping for additions to their 2024 year list, anticipation was high as we gathered in the car park.

Noted as we were waiting to start were **Common Gull** (large numbers in the adjacent fields), **Wood Pigeon**, a singing **Robin**, **Jackdaw**, **Rook**, **Blue Tit**, **Feral Pigeon**, **Blackbird**, **Carrion Crow** and **Chaffinch**, whilst overhead was a flock of **Goldfinch** and a singleton **Black-headed Gull**. With Brambling having been present in the park for some weeks we had hoped to also see this species, especially as they often frequented the area around the car park; but with no luck. Then, after Trevor's brief and just as we were setting off, (fortunately, as we saw no others), a few **Brambling** flew into the nearby tree-tops.

We started our walk by crossing the fields towards the church. A **Pheasant** was seen in the distance, along with a number of **Starling** feeding in the grass closer to us. I was chatting to John H as we walked, and he mentioned the many Lapwing that are currently in the NENBC area. Within seconds of him saying this a shout alerted us to a lone **Lapwing**, flying across our line of travel. We asked John to mention another

bird species, preferably a rarity, to see if he could do it again; he didn't, probably because a good magician never reveals their secret. As we neared the church we heard a short drum from a **Greater-spotted Woodpecker** – the bird was initially invisible, but was later spotted as it flew, the first of a number seen and heard. At the church it initially appeared to be fairly quiet; however movement in the grass beneath some small trees in front of us revealed a **Mistle Thrush**. Further movement gave away some **Redwing**, then a **Fieldfare**; a real gathering of thrush. Non-thrush species with this group were a single **Wren**, a pair of **Magpie**, and the bird so eagerly sought on December's walk (to ensure it was on 2023's species list), **Collared Dove**! At least this will not be a 'bogey bird' for 2024.





Noting a **Herring Gull** flying over our heads, we set off in the direction of the lake. Some members observed a **Jay** flying into a tree at the far end of the field we were crossing; when we reached those trees, and could see into the next arable field, a few **Stock Dove** were spotted feeding, along with further Lapwing and Common Gull. Continuing on we arrived at the gate in the wall overlooking the beck; here Trevor said he would go down towards the beck and follow the line of the fence to see if the wintering Jack Snipe was present. Meanwhile, we were to position ourselves higher up the slope. Crossing the unexpectedly boggy ground we counted forty plus **Meadow Pipit** as they flew up from the rough grass. A **Grey Heron** was found standing motionless by the beck, and a Roe Deer was observed picking its way through the vegetation. As we were listening to the calls of **Teal**, hidden from us at this point, two **Common Snipe** flew up and off into the distance.



Indicating that we should keep a good lookout, Trevor started walking along the fence. Almost immediately a snipe was up and off - it was a **Jack Snipe**! It was followed by a few more snipe, one of which was thought to be a possible Jack, but our view of it was brief and it was fast. Once Trevor had re-joined us, we set off for the lake. Unfortunately the continuing cold weather meant that it was mostly frozen over, severely reducing the number of ducks present.

Mallard, a few **Gadwall** and five **Mute Swan** were all that we found, on one of the small open water patches over by the far bank. We then slowly walked along the dam wall footpath in order to allow time for Trevor to put some food out on the feeding log just inside the woods. The birds rapidly found the seed; by the time we arrived Blue Tit were present, and new to our list, **Coal Tit**, **Great Tit** and **Nuthatch**, which gave great views. We could also hear more drumming, and a pair of Greater-spotted Woodpecker were seen taking an interest in a nesting hole.

Walking into the woods we soon added **Goldcrest** to the list. Further along the path we reached a spot favoured by Woodcock, though these secretive birds are rarely seen. Trevor walked into the undergrowth amongst the trees, flushing three **Woodcock**, one of which flew almost right over our heads. Heading back towards the lake, we paused at a spot on the lakeside path known to be frequented by Water Rail. Trevor played their squealing call on his phone, and within seconds got a reply from a bird hidden in the swampy ground. The **Water Rail** continued to call for some time, though only some of the group got a glimpse of it. Whilst we were waiting to try to catch a glimpse of the rail, a small flock of **Siskin** flew into the alders above us. A **Moorhen** was the final species found by the lake.



Moving on, we got to the normally fairly productive pools at the end of the lake. Of course, they were also frozen, resulting in nothing being found. Continuing on along the path towards the house, a **Red Kite** drifted into view; as it flew low over the boggy ground surrounding the beck it put up forty plus Teal which had been hidden in the vegetation. Once they had re-settled, some on tiny patches of water that remained clear of ice, we left them in peace in order to return to the car-park. Nearing the house, a **Kestrel** flew across our path, and despite our best efforts this proved to be the final species seen during the allotted two hours. Once we were back at the car-park Carol talked us through the upcoming club events, and also let me know that the tail-end of the group had seen **Pied Wagtail**, resulting in a total of **45 species**. And this despite the fact that, for the first time in a long time, we had not seen a Buzzard – hopefully this will not be 2024's 'boggy bird'!



Carol later informed me that her hubby, Ken, who had been walking the park over roughly the same time period but separately to ourselves, had found Song Thrush by the lake, Dunnock near the feeding log and Pink-footed Goose over (how did we miss them?). The birds are there, so the long-awaited 50 count has to be on the cards. February has proved to be a productive month in the past, so why not join us on the next walk to see if it can be achieved – providing I haven't just put the kiss of death on it by daring to mention it!

Photos from Carol Thornton

Last Month's Club Weekend Walk

North Point Pools & Garden Drove | 20th January



By Janice Darch

Our first walk of 2024 was what has become an annual visit to a roost sight. However to start with we had some time to bird in daylight around the North Point Pools which are east of Wells next the Sea. Here we saw 28 species. On the fields south of the pools our selection included Lapwings and a Common Pheasant in the stubble while a large flock Brent Geese were on the hill around the barns to the east. Starlings were murmuring in that area too and Woodpigeon were around and two Stock Doves. Overhead Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and Kestrel were showing. The eastern scrape had plenty of wildfowl including Teal, Wigeon, Shelduck, Shoveler and a couple of Mallard plus a group of gulls. The gulls were mainly Black-headed, with a few Common and Herring Gulls with one Lesser Black-backed Gull and one Greater Black-backed. The western scrape was 80% frozen over and so had not attracted as much activity. In the grassland north of the scrapes we had 5 Snipe flying over which were probably the same ones that we had fly over and dive into the grass at the eastern scrape earlier. We heard a Water Rail by a pool in the grassland but it didn't want to reveal itself. Our walk over the fields to the Coastal Footpath gave us Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Blackbird, Magpie, Robin, Yellowhammers and a Meadow Pipit. Once on the Coastal Footpath we headed eastwards towards Garden Drove and started to add a different suite of birds. Immediately we saw Little Egret, Curlew, Redshank and Cormorant. Buzzards were over the Saltmarsh and very soon a prize for some was a Ringtail Hen Harrier ie a female or immature male. Very soon we also had a male Hen Harrier. We saw more Marsh Harriers too. A flock of Goldfinch flew by and at a copse we had Redwing, Blackbird, Bluetit. We tried very hard for the Pallid Harrier but despite having more great views of Hen Harrier it somehow bypassed us very distantly.

In all we had a list of 40 species of birds, plus several hares and Chinese Water Deer.

Photo courtesy of Val Stubbs plus Little Egret (library) Mark Clements





By Carol Thornton

The 1st talk of the new year and we were rather on tenterhooks having purchased some new IT equipment over Christmas. NENBC are now the proud owners of a club laptop, a new projector and Zoom mics. Those of you who have been around a while will know that our attempts to continue to offer a Zoom option for our talks post-lockdowns in addition to the in-person event have sometimes been a bit fraught. Trevor, Andy and I have variously been using our personal Mac / laptops since we started the club along with an old donated one for the Zoom option plus a projector we were given about 9 years ago as the set-up. Increasingly these bits of kit have all become a bit temperamental, working fine in practice then refusing to talk to each other when it mattered. The experience of the Zoomers has declined over the past year and we were hoping that our new equipment and our new way of working things would make a difference. Well I am pleased to report that I have only had positive feedback so far of much better audio clarity from those at home so I am really hoping that this is the beginning of a much better offer. Thanks for your patience everyone and please do keep any comments or suggestions coming in.

Now, on to the talk itself....



"Wardening at Wheatfen Broad"

an evening talk with Will Fitch



We were very happy to welcome Will Fitch as our speaker last month. Will has been the Warden at Wheatfen Nature Reserve for a number of years now, helping to look after and manage the reserve with the help of their trusty volunteers. For those of you who haven't heard of this lovely little reserve, it is the opposite side of the river to Strumpshaw Fen and is owned and managed by the Ted Ellis Trust. There is a site map overleaf showing the various habitats and trails.

Will began his talk telling us all about the life of Ted Ellis (1909-1986) alongside his wife Phyllis. Will took us on an anecdote-laden journey of this meticulous naturalist, writer and broadcaster which I can't do justice to, from his early fascination with nature, through how he became keeper of Natural History at the Castle Museum in Norwich for nearly 30 years, to his 40 years of living on Wheatfen exhaustively recording its wildlife. Due to Ted's work, Wheatfen remains one of the most closely observed areas in the UK. As a naturalist Ted had a national reputation but he also had the ability to communicate his infectious enthusiasm to everyone and was a well-known character in East Anglia.





Some of the key species that can be seen at Wheatfen are illustrated on 12 marker posts that you will find around the reserve. The posts are also shown on the map (■).

These markers indicate the typical habitat for the species although you may also see them in other parts of the reserve.

Footpaths

Summer Path
Access only during the summer months

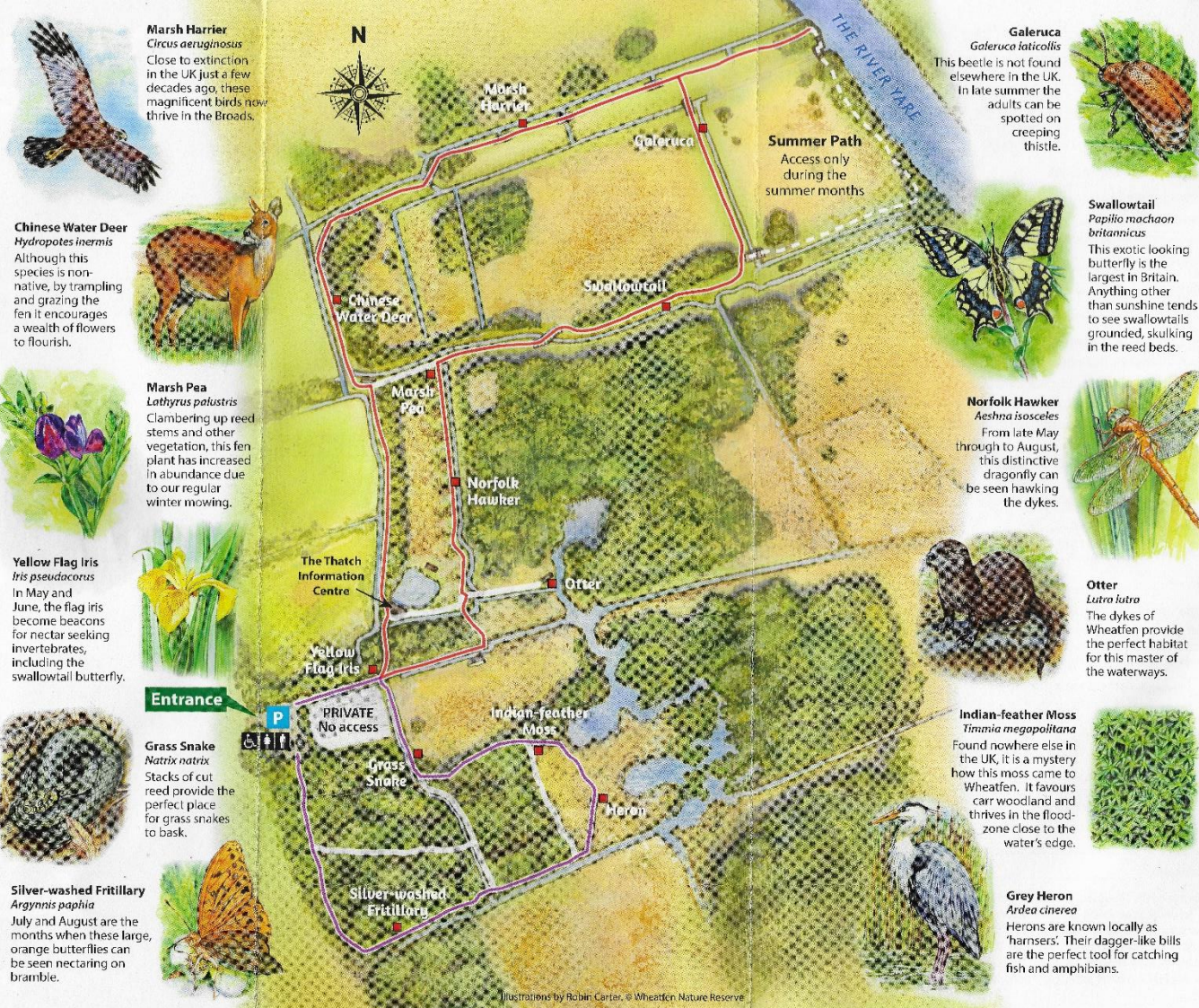
A walk exploring Wheatfen can take anything from half an hour to a full day, depending on what you find!

Here is a guide if it is your first visit:

Long walk (1 hour) 2.5k

Short walk (30 mins) 900m

0 100 200
Metres



Marsh Harrier
Circus aeruginosus
Close to extinction in the UK just a few decades ago, these magnificent birds now thrive in the Broad.

Chinese Water Deer
Hydropotes inermis
Although this species is non-native, by trampling and grazing the fen it encourages a wealth of flowers to flourish.

Marsh Pea
Lathyrus palustris
Clambering up reed stems and other vegetation, this fen plant has increased in abundance due to our regular winter mowing.

Yellow Flag Iris
Iris pseudacorus
In May and June, the flag iris become beacons for nectar seeking invertebrates, including the swallowtail butterfly.

Grass Snake
Natrix natrix
Stacks of cut reed provide the perfect place for grass snakes to bask.

Silver-washed Fritillary
Argynnis paphia
July and August are the months when these large, orange butterflies can be seen nectaring on bramble.

Galeruca
Galeruca laticollis
This beetle is not found elsewhere in the UK. In late summer the adults can be spotted on creeping thistle.

Swallowtail
Papilio machaon britannicus
This exotic looking butterfly is the largest in Britain. Anything other than sunshine tends to see swallowtails grounded, skulking in the reed beds.

Norfolk Hawker
Aeshna isosceles
From late May through to August, this distinctive dragonfly can be seen hawking the dykes.

Otter
Lutra lutra
The dykes of Wheatfen provide the perfect habitat for this master of the waterways.

Indian-feather Moss
Timmia megapolitana
Found nowhere else in the UK, it is a mystery how this moss came to Wheatfen. It favours carr woodland and thrives in the flood-zone close to the water's edge.

Grey Heron
Ardea cinerea
Heron are known locally as 'hansers'. Their dagger-like bills are the perfect tool for catching fish and amphibians.

After his death, the Ted Ellis Trust was launched to raise money for the purchase of the land to set up a nature reserve and the Friends of the Ted Ellis Trust was formed. At the launch of the Trust in 1987 the patron, Dr David Bellamy, said:

"Wheatfen Broad is, in its way, as important as Mount Everest or the giant redwood forests of North America. It is probably the best bit of fenland we have, because we know so much about it. That is purely because one man gave his life trying to understand it – Ted Ellis."

Conservation Management of the Fen

Ted Ellis once said "I wouldn't like Wheatfen to go to someone who would spoil it by "gardening" – by tidying it up too much. I hope it will go to someone who will look after it by not looking after it, as I have done." Will took us through the challenges and results of the conservation activities of the volunteers and staff covering the hydrology (the key to the fen), the battle against the scrub, the mowing regime and some of the wildlife found there.



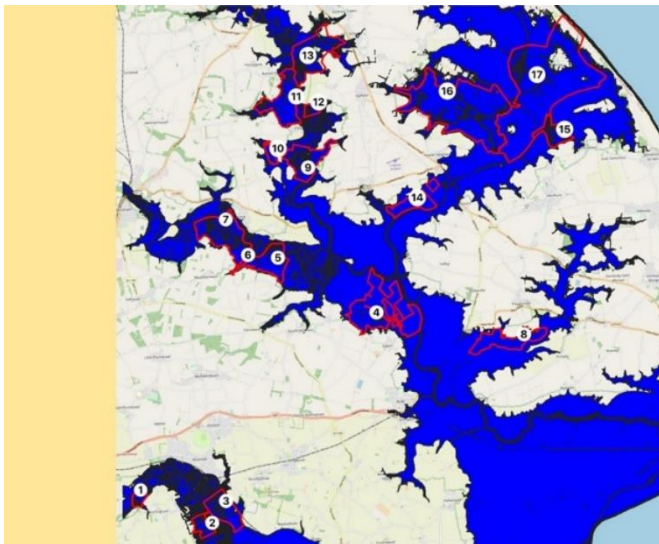
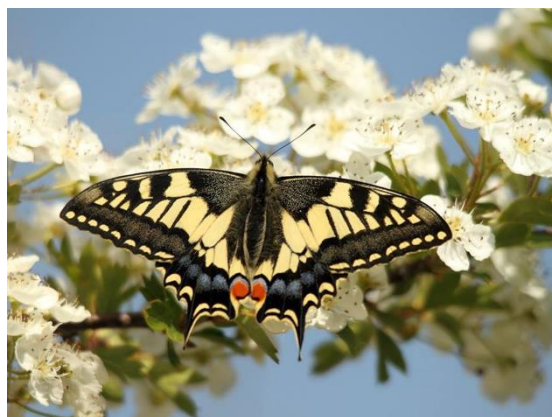


Water voles Swallowtails Marsh Harrier
Kingfisher Silver Washed Fritillary
Individual Species Management
Bittern Bearded Tit
Meadow Rue
Norfolk Hawker Otter



The Future of Wheatfen

And what of the future? Climate change concerns could have a significant effect on the fen in the long term but in the meantime, Will and the team have lots of conservation and engagement activities in the pipeline to boost the wildlife and the footfall on this fantastic little reserve. Who knows what species might be attracted to their varied habitats in the future and call the place home.



1.02 m
predicted sea
level rise in the
next 100 years

Wheatfen number 2 on map



We really hope Will's talk has inspired you to visit Wheatfen. I know I will be down there soon to check it out for myself and we will definitely schedule in one of our club weekend walks there next season. *Photos all used with permission of Will Fitch from within his presentation.*



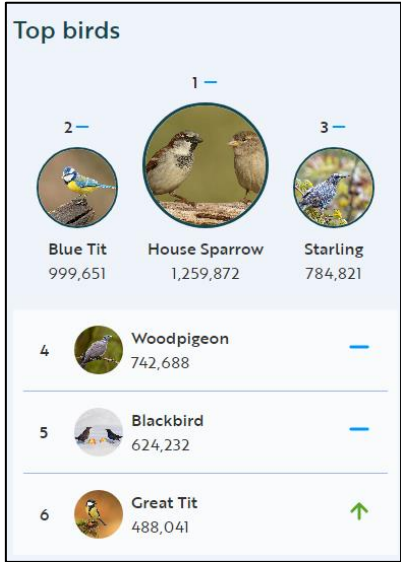
To top off an excellent evening we were delighted to be able to present Phil Borley with his Super-Green Eco-Badge for recording 125 bird species from home without the use of motorised transport – ie on foot or by bike. Since we started the scheme during lockdowns, we have awarded just 3 Super-Green badges but they were all for the Coastal option. Phil is the 1st to achieve the Inland award having seen / heard all his species away from the sea locations which attract more species.
CONGRATULATIONS!



The annual RSPB survey count the birds you see land in your garden for an hour anytime in the three-day period

Many thanks to the 14 members who took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch this year, the UK's biggest citizen science wildlife survey, and logged 145 records of 30 species across 9 areas from Weybourne down to North Walsham. Thirteen of the activities were in gardens and one of our members without a garden was able to take advantage of the RSPB advice that the survey could be carried out from “your garden, balcony or in your local park” so did two sessions over the weekend. Interestingly they didn’t report any species that weren’t reported within others’ gardens so similar habitats in both.

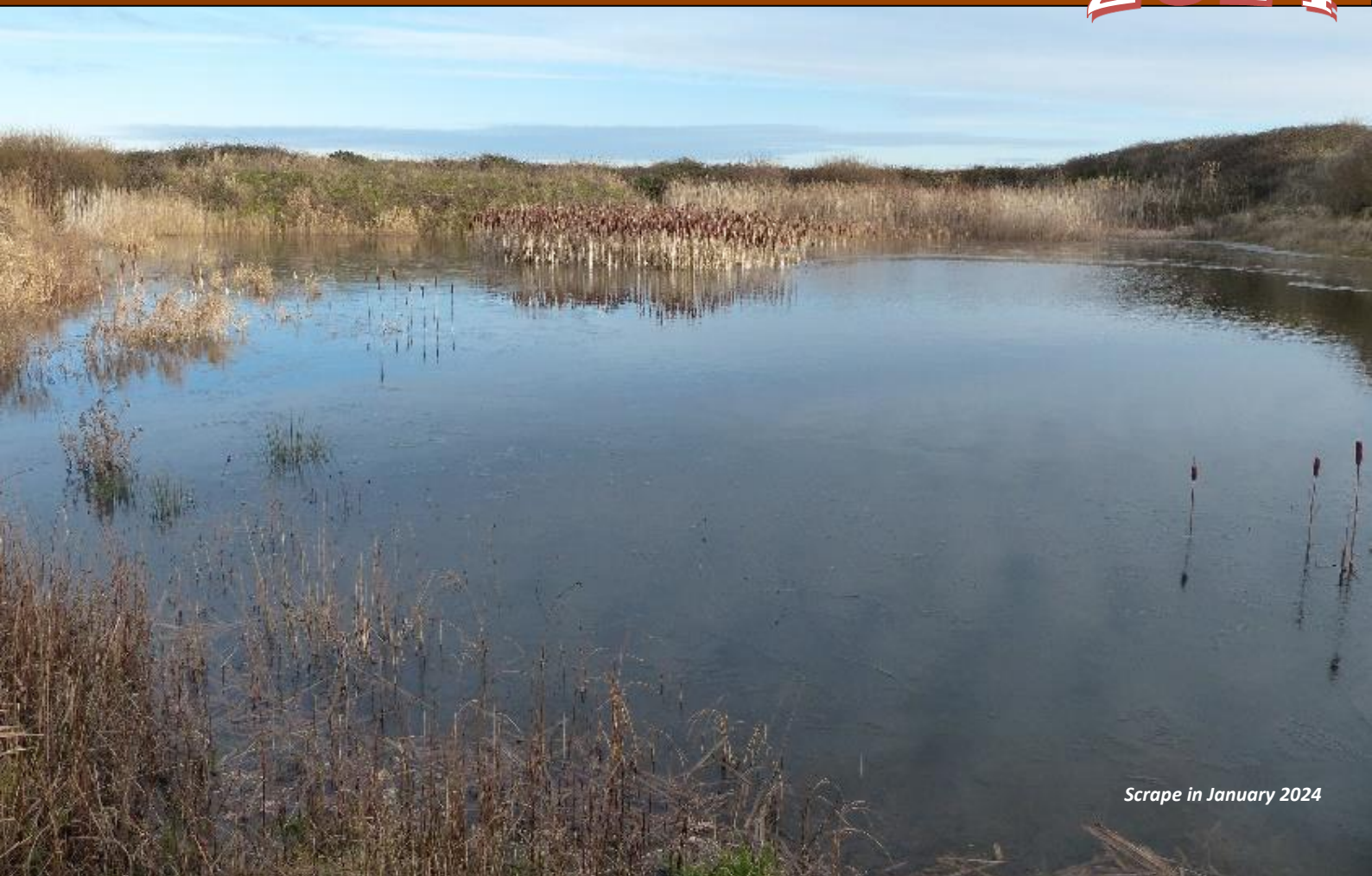
Nationwide over 9,000,000 birds have been counted. Our stats are listed on the right, with the most commonly reported species at the top. For us, this was **Blue Tit** in 1st spot followed by **Robin** and **Woodpigeon**. Current stats are shown below from the UK (pretty much mirroring the 2023 results for the top positions) and Norfolk and we are certainly not reporting the volumes of House Sparrows picked up elsewhere in the country and county.



Blue Tit	12
Robin	12
Woodpigeon	12
Blackbird	11
Dunnock	11
Chaffinch	10
Goldfinch	9
Great Tit	8
Collared Dove	7
Magpie	7
Greenfinch	6
Jackdaw	5
Long-tailed Tit	5
Coal Tit	4
Carrion Crow	3
Wren	3
Blackcap	2
Brambling	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2
Herring Gull	2
House Sparrow	2
Pheasant	2
Black-headed Gull	1
Buzzard	1
Goldcrest	1
Jay	1
Marsh Tit	1
Nuthatch	1
Redwing	1
Siskin	1

Thanks to the following for logging your records on our website: Andrew Gorton, Carol Thornton, Colin Blaxill, David Barrass, David Billham, Francis Farrow, Janice Darch, Mick Rebane, Nik Borrow, Philip Hall, Stella Baylis, Stephanie Witham, Tony Pope, Valerie Stubbs *Photos courtesy of Richard Farrow, John Wheeler and Philip Cartlidge*





Scrape in January 2024

By Moss Taylor

This is the first in a monthly series this year of the wildlife at Weybourne Camp during 2024 ...

James McCallum and I are currently the only two birders allowed unrestricted access to Weybourne Camp. However, in addition many valuable records for the area are made by other observers (in particular Phil Borley) from the coastal footpath, as well as of birds passing offshore from Weybourne beach car park. All these records will be included in these monthly reports.

The month was characterised by some very cold, windy weather, although significant hard-weather movements were notable by their absence. A feature of the latter part of 2023 were the periods of heavy rain and this resulted in the scrape once again filling up with water, to such an extent that the level is now higher than ever before. However, surprisingly few ducks or waders have taken advantage of this re-established habitat. While a few Common Snipe have been recorded, James created an area suitable for Jack Snipe by cutting down the reeds and sedges, and trampling them into the ground. This paid off when a Jack Snipe was flushed in mid-month.



Adult male Stonechat

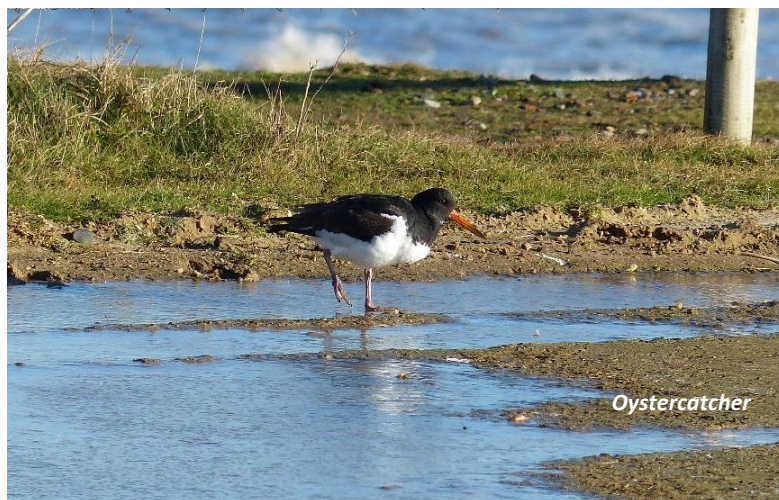
Without doubt the highlight of January has been the most impressive rafts of Common Scoters present mainly off the western end of the Camp, with never fewer than 300 and peaking at 1,800 in mid-month. Such numbers on the sea have not been recorded since the 1990s and early 2000s. As is almost invariably the case, the vast majority are females or immature drakes. It appears that the scoters have been attracted by the razor shells and other molluscs on the sea bed. The flock has been joined by small numbers of Velvet Scoters, peaking at 11 in mid-month. The rafts tend to drift eastwards during the day, flying back to the west as the morning progresses. It is during these short return flights that it is easiest to pick out the Velvet Scoters with their distinct white secondaries.

The other feature of January has been the large numbers of gulls flying along the shoreline or resting on the beach, especially Black-headed Gulls. The westerly passage peaked at 3,230 on the 13th with 2,000 on the beach on the 19th. Although some of those moving west may well have been birds arriving from the near Continent, others could well have come from the offshore nocturnal roosts to the east of Weybourne. A few adult Little Gulls were also recorded on the 5th, but just a single adult Mediterranean Gull on three dates in the second half of the month.

As is usual, far fewer Red-throated Divers were noted at Weybourne than are counted off Sheringham, a direct result of the 'bay' effect, while single Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes, and an adult Shag were recorded mid-month. A Grey Plover on the fields on the 18th and 21st was only the third record of one actually on the Camp. Six species of diurnal raptor were sighted during January, including two Marsh Harriers that were tracked flying west offshore from Cromer to Weybourne on the 27th and a female Hen Harrier feeding on the ground by the mound before flying off west on the 29th. The pair of resident Little Owls was often seen perched at the entrance to their nest hole in one of the rusting old army vehicles in the Muckleburgh Collection compound, while a Barn Owl flew out of the nest box that was only put up in the late autumn.

During spells of milder weather, Rooks were very active in the rookery in the sycamore wood, and even a pair of Magpies was watched carrying twigs into one of the pine plantations in mid month. The three Waxwings that spent some time on the telephone wires in Beach Lane on the 7th, flew west over the Camp, but not before they had been seen by a number of lucky NENBC members. Finally the Chiffchaff that had been present at the end of 2023 was last seen in the willows by the mound on the 2nd, prior to the arrival of the spell of hard weather. On the negative side, Wood Pigeons were notable by their absence throughout the month, with a maximum count of only 13.

If anyone would like a copy of the Weybourne Camp report for 2023, please send me an email at moss.taylor@btinternet.com



Oystercatcher



Pair of Grey Partridges



Grey Plover



By Val Stubbs

Well, the obvious answer is that I am slightly (!) obsessive, and a teensy bit competitive (I do miss the website Prolific Posters page - though I know it wasn't everyone's cup of tea!). But joking aside, there's a more serious reason.

When logging my NENBC records, I faced a dilemma: if I don't log every sighting, how do I choose which birds I do record?



The first time I see a species? - a year/a lifetime? This is all a bit arbitrary.



Only interesting birds? Who defines what is "interesting"? And this can change over time: my first Little Egret, in Poole Harbour back in 1989, is etched in my memory, but now they are two a penny. And who thought, back on the 1960s, that I would in the 2020s get excited at the sight of a Starling in my garden? And if we record every sighting of an "interesting" bird, it may make them appear more common than they actually are.



Interesting behaviour? If you only record interesting behaviour, how do you know what the norm is?

I suspect that everyone in NENBC has at some time or another in the last few years commented on the paucity of birds, even in north Norfolk, a mecca for birders. But how do we know for sure that this isn't just us harping back to the good old days – when everything was better? The answer of course, is records. Now, I don't consider myself a good enough birder to participate in the formal surveys such as WeBS Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys etc, nor – with my family and wildlife conservation interests – am I able to commit to the BTO's Garden BirdWatch. So logging all the birds I see or hear (well, every bird that I see or hear that I can identify!) – including the common or garden birds – on the NENBC website allows me both to keep a record of my sightings, AND to contribute to the pool of information that enables researchers to monitor bird populations, identify trends, highlight issues and trigger programmes to address declines in bird species.

So I will continue to log every "Wood Pigeon on rooftop", every "Blue Tit on seed feeder", every "Jackdaw flying over", helping to build up a picture of the whole complexity of North East Norfolk's bird life. God forbid we ever see the day when we say "Oh look, a Wood Pigeon!", instead of our current "Oh, it's just a Wood Pigeon". And maybe my records will make some small contribution to stopping this from happening.

Must go now - Wood Pigeons to log!

Wanted! – 2nd hand scope and tripod ...

Can any of you help club member William Earp with his request? ...

"I am seeking a second-hand telescope and tripod for a birding project in India. Two brothers Nirpesh and Rinkesh run an organic homestay guest house in Bharatpur where I have stayed on two occasions and they are keen to promote environmental awareness. They are exceptionally welcoming, and go to considerable lengths to meet the wishes of their guests. They organised some of the best day's birding I have been lucky enough to experience. They lack a scope to show their guests some of the wonderful birds at the world-famous Keoladeo National Park, and when I visited they were eager to share views through my scope. Their budget is £400. For this money I hope to find an older model scope and tripod which will still give good service. Perhaps there are NENBC members who might be willing to sell a scope to me for this sort of sum? Possible candidates include Opticron ES80, Hawke Endurance, (like the ones shown) or possibly one of the older grey-bodied Swarovski scopes. And is there someone with a sturdy tripod to pass on cheaply to a good home? I would be willing to top up their money for the right purchase. My email address is william@earp.me."

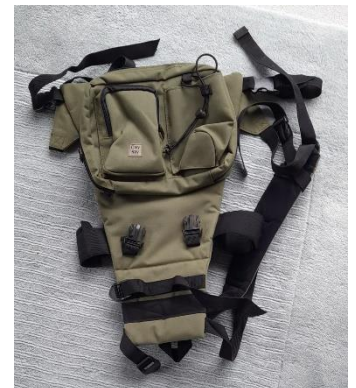


For sale! – 2nd hand gadgets

Club member Chris Mason is having a clear out and has kindly offered some bits and bobs to the club to sell.

"I have a **scope mule** in good condition. I never got on with it and have traded in my big scope for a Swarovski travelscope which does not give me neckache! Also, I have a **Garmin personal navigator** if that is of any use to anyone? I won't use it again."

If you are interested, please do get in touch for more info. We are thinking about £30 for each but happy to consider offers.



In addition, Chris has donated various natural history books and a number of textbooks of biology, ecology and conservation, hardly used as they were promo books from publishers, and all still current. If they don't appeal to members, they might to a grandchild thinking of studying biology at uni. We will have these on the 2nd hand stall at the next indoor meeting at the end of the month.

Supporting Young Naturalists in Norfolk

By Russ Malin



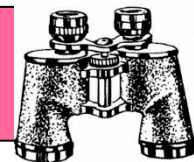
In late May 2024 I will be walking The Fen Rivers Way, a 48 mile path from Cambridge to King's Lynn in Norfolk. I am raising funds for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Children and Nature Appeal (CAN).

In 2016 the NWT set up their CAN Fund with a specific focus on projects that enabled children to learn about and experience the natural world. With help from donations from individuals and organisations, the fund helps new projects that connect children of all ages with wildlife and wild spaces through education, activities and inspiration. NWT are looking to grow their impact and create even more opportunities for Norfolk's children and young people to inspire a love of nature in the next generation.

If you'd like to support this incredibly important initiative then visit Russ's Just Giving page to share the details and/or donate [here](#).

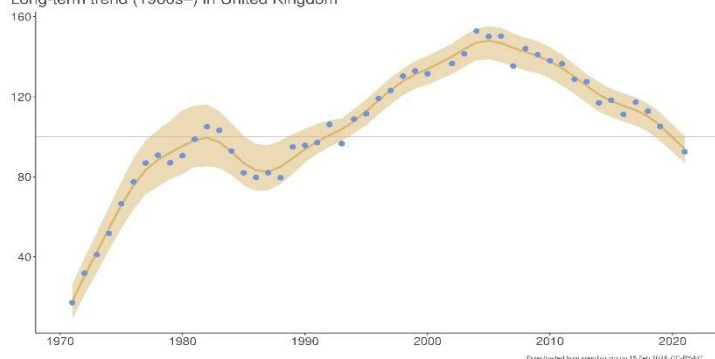
Back in the Day

The changed fortunes of our local birdlife



Jane Crossen came across this little article in a 1974 Sheringham guide book. Very interesting - especially the bit about the Collared Doves. According to the BTO, "Collared Dove is now a familiar bird, occupying a range of open lowland habitats, but only began its colonisation of Britain in the 1950s. Despite the dramatic long-term increase in numbers and range, a decline in Collared Dove populations was noted from 2005 onwards, and likely linked to the emergence and spread of finch trichomonosis."

Collared Dove population abundance
Long-term trend (1960s-) in United Kingdom



THE BIRDS OF NORTH NORFOLK

With its large variety of habitat north Norfolk is particularly rich in bird life, especially summer and autumn migrants. On the cliffs from Weybourne to Mundesley fulmars nest on ledges or in holes which they have usually excavated in pockets of sand. These superb fliers—close relations of the albatross—have spread steadily round the coast of Britain during the last seventy years and the Norfolk cliffs are their furthest extension southwards on the east side.

Further west on the sand and shingle of Blakeney Point large numbers of terns return each summer from their winter quarters off West Africa, to nest in colonies. Common and lesser terns are always present throughout the summer, but the larger sandwich terns which may nest in compact communities of up to a thousand nests are almost absent in some years. The showy black and white oyster catchers and the lively little ringed plovers conceal their nests among the shingle. Shield-ducks nest in disused rabbit holes among the dunes and noisy, piping redshanks hide their nests in the marram tufts. All these and many other species may be seen in a single afternoon visit to this interesting bird sanctuary.

Nightingales and nightjars nest on the heathlands and may both be heard singing on fine nights in May and June. The curious and monotonous churring of the nightjar is in striking contrast to the exquisite melody of the nightin-

gales. Salthouse Heath or Muckleburgh Hill are good places to listen for both of these birds.

On the coastal marshes numerous ducks and waders may be seen and as the summer progresses the migrants start to arrive from their Arctic or sub-Arctic breeding grounds. By mid-August, at least half a dozen species of migrants should be "on show" from the East Bank of Cley. These would be likely to include ruffs, wood, green and curlew sandpipers, godwits and turnstones.

In the pine woods behind the dunes at Holkham, the careful watcher will usually see crossbills. From August onwards big flocks of waders, newly arrived from the north, feed and rest beside the "lows" on the vast stretches of tidal sand.

Collared doves, the newest of Britain's breeding birds, have one of their main strongholds in the country in north Norfolk, where the pioneer pairs nested at Overstrand only a few years ago. Now, these beautiful creamy-brown doves, with their narrow black neck rings, are common all along our coast, but especially at East Runton, where some may almost always be seen feeding in the open pens of the Nature Park.

R. P. BAGNALL-OAKELEY

We suspect the rather strange 'Shield-ducks' reference is simply a typo as we can't find anything anywhere to say this was a local name for Shelduck rather than just a mis-spelling but do get in touch if you know differently!
Anyone else got any old literature lying about that has a mention of birding life back in the day?

Cromer Peregrine Project ...

A call for volunteers for the 2024 season



By Ann Cleall

The peregrines are still present on the church so we are hopeful of another successful breeding season, in which case, we will need our usual band of volunteers to be at the watchpoint talking to the public about these magnificent birds. If you are interested in joining us, I can assure you that you will get a warm welcome! You don't need to be a peregrine expert to help out, just an enthusiasm for these lovely birds. As is always the way, the more people we have the less there is to do for everyone.

We will be holding our AGM/Training session on Wednesday evening the 21st February, at 7pm, in the Community Hall in Garden Street, Cromer.

If you are interested and need any further information please contact me, on ann@tignes.co.uk or 07876 889660



Contemplating Conservation

Ecotourism – Is it the way forward for our holidays?



By Roger Fickling

This is the time of year when, for many of us, thoughts turn to our holidays. After several months of rather drear and cold weather, and a succession of storms from the Atlantic, we long for a change of scene and something maybe a bit warmer and more exciting. However, with the growing emphasis on carbon emissions and global warming in every area of life, many people feel that their choice of holiday should be far more discerning, and take these factors into consideration when booking up for their annual big trip.

Over the past 30 years or so there has been a growing trend towards more eco-friendly or sustainable holidays which are generally held to mean those which promote sustainable transport, have some component of conserving the environment, and help to improve the welfare of local populations. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has now defined ecotourism as:

“responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.”

(TIES 2015).

It is seen as a means of uniting nature conservation, local communities and sustainable travel. This is obviously a far cry from what has been seen as the traditional holiday to a Spanish “Costa”, staying in a high rise beach front hotel, and laying on the golden sand all holiday! But even this can be geared into a more eco-friendly approach by choosing carefully the mode of transport, if flying, using airlines with carbon offsets, selecting a less “touristy” destination – one with good natural areas and conservation record, and supporting the local economy by shopping and eating at small local enterprises.

However, the ecotourist market has now proliferated into something much bigger. Travel operators have seen this demand as an opportunity to build into their packages some form of “green” agenda. Some may be very well-meaning, but for others it is seen as a way to big profits while at the same time salving the consciences of the travellers booking up. Many airlines now adopt a carbon offset scheme whereby some of the income received from the holidays pays for a conservation project somewhere in the world, trying to balance carefully the costs of their carbon emissions with the amount they pay. One major problem with this

is that more and more people are likely to consider this a good idea, increasing the demand for flights and therefore increasing the amount of carbon emissions produced. It could seem like a never ending flight! The other issue is that the places where the airlines choose to support their conservation projects are unlikely to be the same places as the holidays offered, so these latter suffer from increased mass tourism and gradual degradation of the environment there.

The TIES was founded in 1990 as a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting ecotourism. It has been at the forefront of the development of ecotourism, providing guidelines and standards, training, technical assistance, and educational resources. It has also set out a number of principles which it advocates those that implement, participate in and market ecotourism activities should adopt. These include: to minimise physical, social and behavioural impacts; to provide direct financial benefits for conservation; to design, construct and operate low impact facilities. The problem with this is that so many different groups and organisations are involved, from airlines, tour operators, conservation professionals, governments, local development and tourist companies, including newly formed ecotourist companies, that coordinating all of these groups is not only difficult but, with each one at times working to its own agenda, can end up being counterproductive to the aims of ecotourism itself.

The intention of ecotourism is to offer travellers an insight into the impact of humans on the environment and to enable them to a greater appreciation of natural habitats and wild places. It aims at minimal environmental impact on the places visited, but with ever increasing numbers participating in some form of ecotourism there is a real danger of losing those very natural habitats and wild places they have come to see, and creating major impact on the environment. There is also an inherent idea towards creating some social and economic benefits for the local communities, but again it is difficult sometimes for the revenue from ecotourism to reach directly to these groups, and again with more and more people visiting, this can greatly upset the established social order which existed beforehand.

Of course ecotourism can take many forms, from the small individually tailored expedition for small groups to remote places relatively untouched by human development, to the larger mass tourist experiences that an ever increasing population want to participate

in, often fuelled by exposure on television nature and wildlife programmes. This can do a lot more harm than the well-meaning aims of some tourist companies; and the most extreme examples can now be seen in the market for wildlife safaris. Jumping on the “green” bandwagon many tour operators have marketed these as a once in a lifetime experience, helping the local economy at the same time. A lack of control and policing the regulations, however, has often meant far too high a level of tourists and vehicles entering the safari parks or wildlife areas, which has demonstrably caused stress to the animals and damage to the environment. In some instances there have been so many vehicles that local guides will drive off-road to get better views, and there have even been collisions with animals. Since 2006 the annual number of tourists visiting the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania has more than doubled from around 350,000 to over 700,000 (in 2019) with, at times, more than 250 vehicles entering the park every day. This is clearly unsustainable and completely defeats the original aims and principles of ecotourism as set out above. But with demand at this high level, and a contribution to the global economy of an estimated \$343 billion (per World Travel and Tourism Council), it seems likely that wildlife tourism in some form will continue for some time. However, Covid has had a major impact on this particular industry and safari lodges have

shut down, some conservation efforts have dried up, and many employees have lost their jobs.











Recognition, at international level, of both the importance and impact of ecotourism was given recently at the latest COP 28 held in the United Arab Emirates. Here the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) held a Side Event titled “Tourism United for Climate Action – Delivering on the Commitments of the Glasgow Declaration”. It sought to showcase the tourism sector’s capacity to enact concrete climate action, including measurement of tourism emissions, decarbonisation strategies, regenerative approaches for destinations, and innovative finance. How much of all these fine words will be taken up by governments, and translated into positive action by them and the tourism operating sector is yet to be seen.

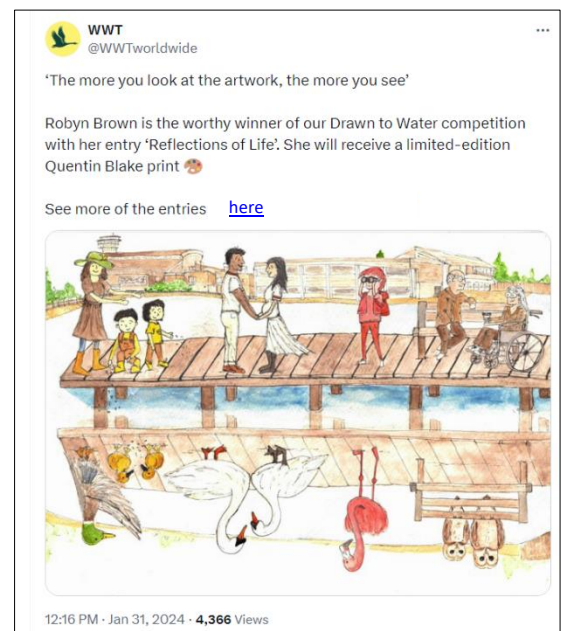
With the tourism sector employing more than 10% of the world’s working population, and producing almost 9% of total global carbon emissions, it is more important than ever that the industry finds a way of marketing and regulating holidays and holiday experiences that are truly eco-friendly and do not add to the global warming problems. It is also incumbent upon each one of us to consider carefully and research thoroughly before embarking on our ecotourist holiday.

Check This Out!

A few bits and bobs in the news this month ...



-  **“Another record year for UK Common Crane population”** from the [BirdGuides website](#) [02-Feb-24]
-  **“Sandeel fishing ban provides boost for seabirds”** from the [BirdGuides website](#) [01-Feb-24]
-  **“Norfolk wetland project gets £210k boost”** from the [BirdGuides website](#) [28-Feb-24]
-  **“Polar Bear dies from bird flu in Alaska”** from the [BirdGuides website](#) [13-Jan-24]
-  **“Red Kite poisoning investigated by police”** from the [BirdGuides website](#) [12-Jan-24]
-  **“Protected areas in The Wash should be extended to help Curlews”** from the [Rare Bird Alert website](#) [13-Feb-24]
-  **“Birdflu responsible for declines in at least three species of seabird”** from the [Rare Bird Alert website](#) [13-Feb-24]
-  **“Gulls moving plastic pollution around European wetlands”** from the [Rare Bird Alert website](#) [06-Feb-24]
-  **“Blue Tit population booms with moths on the menu”** from the [Rare Bird Alert website](#) [23-Jan-24]
-  **“Wicken Fen to expand to help save Cambridgeshire’s Turtle Doves”** from the [Rare Bird Alert website](#) [03-Jan-24]
-  **“Fifteen groups gather to look at curlew conservation”** from the [BBC website](#) [09-Feb-24]





What's That Song?



Many of us find it difficult learning or remembering bird song whilst others seem to have a natural knack for it, a bit like a foreign language or music skill. Can you recognise a bird from the description of its voice though? The descriptions come from three different books, but they all refer to the same bird – no

wonder it is so confusing! As you can see, some books go into more detail than others. Answers are on the last page of this newsletter, along with a link through to a website where you can listen to an audio excerpt and decide which description resonates best with you! Solution at the end of this newsletter.

“Chief call is a loud ‘chirrup’ often given in flight or when it is alarmed. Song is a long pleasant liquid warbling, usually given in flight, but sometimes from a perch or from the ground.”
from RSPB Handbook of British Birds by Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves

“Call chirruping ‘chirrup’ invariably when flushed, thinner with height / distance; winter flocks give high, thin whistles. Song unbroken outpouring of fast trills.”
from WILDGuides BRITAIN'S BIRDS 2nd Edition - An identification guide to the birds of Britain and Ireland 2nd Edition by Hume, Still, Swash, Harrop and Tipling

“A variety of calls, all rather dry and rolling sounds eg: ‘prreet’, ‘prryh’, ‘prüt-üt’ and ‘preeh-e’. Sometimes, often when anxious, a more piping ‘p(r)eeh’. Sings from late winter until midsummer, from first light to evening. Song is an incessant outpour of rolling, chirruping and whistling notes at fast pace and for periods lasting 3-15 mins, some notes being repeated and varied, and with a few imitations)of eg: Green Sandpiper, Barn Swallow) woven in..”
from Collins BIRD GUIDE 3rd Edition by Mullarney, Svensson, Zetterström

Wordsearch



This month, we have the 21 species or races recorded in February 2023 for which we have just one, two, three or four records for each – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. Solution is at the end of this newsletter.

- Hen Harrier
- Little Gull
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Twite
- Yellow-legged Gull
- Bewick's Swan
- Goosander
- Green Sandpiper
- Knot
- Merlin
- Pintail
- Rock Pipit
- Caspian Gull
- Goldeneye
- Raven
- Dunlin
- Great Northern Diver
- Kittiwake
- Razorbill
- Redshank
- Velvet Scoter

N P K O O L G U D N D V U P E N Q P C B
F I X Y G J R W H Z Y L N O I F Q P Z J
K N A H S D E R T P N L M L I W L F Y M
N T T C E U A D R R E D N A S O O G A P
I A P I F S T I X T O U T B P R A O B R
V I U M L C N N A S D X H C B E W T X A
A L X K E Z O R U L B A H R J J W L T Z
H I G T J N R E J X R W O N R I I H O O
O O U L H X T D Z G R S R R T Z R N N R
M E S A G Y H B G T E F O E X B E A K B
T V N M P M E R V H P Y C T I N I W U I
A H A O Y V R E I L I M K O E Z R S B L
J H U I W S N A R L P L P C J H R S I L
R N V S Q J D S F U D L I S R Y A K K I
Y L E N A E I T X G N X P T D S H C C K
Y H I V B Q V E A E A F I E P J N I U J
S U Y V A K E D Q L S W T V F X E W H S
S F D L X R R M S T N Q S L O S H E C I
M M F L Q R J E W T E K V E S P B B P W
I K J U A T A R K I E W A V T Z S M J V
Y I V G U S Z G N L R O J H K W E B V C
D T D N V X I A F A G S R M W Y J N F T
J T I A E S A N L F M P G N E I E K V J
B I U I Q M P S U J O C M N O A C W E F
S W W P R S F E N K N W E L O Q S E W B
X A T S K B Q R P L G D A F K C S W U Z
V K B A X Z X E J X L A K D M D V Y A J
B E I C R B S C P O X G J U M E R L I N
B L L U G D E G G E L W O L L E Y N C A
Q M E W O P Q W A Z F X S F S T A E N R



All member comments are taken from the notes section of the website. We are getting a lot more detail on the birds and their activities these days which makes these summaries longer, but much richer, so please keep it up everyone!

Grey Partridge: "Flushed from rough ground east of the caravan when retrieving model glider" | David Billham | Weybourne Camp | 4th

Pheasant: "male. melanistic mutant. Field" | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 31st

Tundra Bean Goose: "On north side of loose Pink-foot flock. Took me three passes through the entire flock of Pink-feet before I finally found it. And then I could not relocate it, though I did find at least two Pink-feet with orange legs." | Andy Clarke | Weybourne Cliffs 17th

Mute Swan: "pair of adults & one first-winter on lake, but no geese, ducks, grebes, moorhens or Coots. Where have they all gone?" | Moss Taylor | Wolterton Park | 9th

Collared Dove: "Seem rather scarce recently, none in my garden to date, these were in the village" | Pauline Walton | Briston | 3rd

Turnstone: "Promenade west of museum, with red flagged JAA, JAC and metal ringed bird on right tarsus." [4th] and "East beach slipway area 09.30/10.45, red flagged JAC " [11th] and "East beach slipway area 32, + red flagged JAA" [27th] Peter Geary | Sheringham

Turnstone: "C.30, including one with white flag marked 'SKY' on its left tibia. This individual had been ringed at Alert, Nunavut, Canada (82°30'30.0"N 62°20'30.0"W) on 6th August 2023; ring number '1412-14730'. When trapped, it was sexed/aged as a male in at least its 2nd calendar year." | James Appleton | Walcott | 30th

Snipe: "Thirty plus individuals disturbed from water meadows to the north of the lake along with twenty plus Teal (could not determine what disturbed them), flew several circuits of the valley before returning to land" | Dave Billham | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 14th

Black-headed Gull: "With several feral pigeon, all hoping for a chip or two" | Andrew Gorton | Cromer | 4th

Black-headed Gull: "38x Mirrored in the glassy iced up lake, could have been double the number!" | Stella Baylis | Blickling Park | 21st

Mediterranean Gull: "Bathing with a small group of black headed gulls at the freshwater outlet on the beach near the slipway" | Ellie Farrow | East Runton (Coastwatch Station) | 27th

Common Gull: "Also a ringed racing pigeon accompanying the gulls and waders." | Ifor Jones | West Runton | 23rd
Fulmar: "Patrolling a length of the high cliffs. Skylarks singing along whole stretch of coast from end of golf course to Weybourne." | Peter & Sue Morrison | Weybourne Camp | 28th

Red Kite: "x36 15:45 -16:15 Max count at ROOST at Matlaske" | Lin Pateman | Little Barningham | 1st

Barn Owl: "Flew out of nest box, the first time it has been seen there since being erected." | Moss Taylor | Weybourne Camp | 17th

Kingfisher: "On the stick placed for it in our pond. 15th record since we've been here (exactly 20 years)" | Stephen Green & Clare Wilson | Erpingham | 31st

Kestrel: "I heard a bird noise and looked up to see a kestrel hovering above me over a rough area in Felbrigg woods near the closed dog walkers near the main entrance." | Suzanne Taylor | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 17th

Jackdaw: "Regularly appear in a small group and 'ram raid' my bird feeders." | David Hobart | Cromer | 17th

Carriion Crow: "Resident pair, one of whom dropped a potato almost on my head as they flew over, Bodham Wood (was it something I did?!)" | Julia Peters | Bodham | 19th

Great Tit: "Seemed to fly up to hub of windmill sails and disappear - nest site prospecting?" | Tony Pope | Weybourne | 29th

Woodlark: "First I've heard singing this year." | Geoff Snelson | Kelling Heath | 23rd

Blackbird: "x20 Feeding on ivy berries in hedge on southern edge of woods; presumably newly arrived from Europe as part of recent cold-weather influx" | Andy Clarke | Weybourne Heath NT | 14th

Song Thrush: "On meadow hunting worms and doing very well !!" | Anne Sims | Gresham | 12th

Robin: "Singing on fence and feeding on new seed feeder; later chased off 2 Blue Tits from the fatballs. Definitely very territorial this year." | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 25th

Chaffinch: "Seen from lounge window on feeding station. The same one with the huge right foot seen the other day" | Suzanne Taylor | Felbrigg Park | 3rd

Goldfinch: "One good reason not to cut back Buddleia until March - the Goldfinch spent around 15 minutes feeding on the seedheads." | Francis Farrow | Beeston Common | 27th



We are pleased to see that many of you are having a dabble on our new website with over 14,800 records being uploaded since launch on New Year's Eve. Here are a few of the queries that have cropped up and developments made since the last newsletter:

1. Gallery page filter

Since the last newsletter, BirdClub have implemented the option to filter on the Gallery page so you can now find photos of a particular species much more easily. You can type part or full species or family names eg: wood would get you all the woodpeckers but also the Woodpigeons and Wood Sandpipers so be as specific as you need to be.

2. Member page filter

In another BirdClub development, there is also now the option to filter on the Member page by all or part of a person's name in order to catch up with another member.

Don't forget you have the option within the website to Message other members to discuss sightings, arrange lifts etc. If you have been messaged, you'll see a 'green blob' against the envelope at the top right of your screen and you can click there to respond.



3. Club Area border

We now have been able to formally set the club area border behind the scenes on the website. Please try and make sure you only add eligible records but if any are accidentally added that are beyond the NENBC area that will now be flagged as 'Outside Area' after you have saved them as per above. Please Delete (or Edit if you have the location wrong).

Out and About (nr. Wells-next-the-Sea)
Outside Area

4. Individual Member Statistics

BirdClub have been working on stats for members which is something we know a lot of you have been missing. So take a look at your Profile (or that of others) now and you will see the first of these have been added. As per the left image below, you have your profile pic (where you have uploaded one) or your auto-generated bird head image and any profile text you have written about yourself at the top left, your Recent Activity lower left and down the right, a series of boxes showing your summary stats for each year you have been a member. It gives an interesting stat we didn't have on the old website – a percentage showing whether you are up or down on species count compared to the previous year at this time. You can also click on 'View year list' to see your year lists, as per right image below, showing the 1st time you saw that species that year. If you see a green tick (right) by a species on your year list then that signifies the 1st time you have ever reported that species on our website, across years.

Getting Started

If you haven't yet, take a look at this short video clip on how to get started on the website so you know what to expect once you are in:

[NENBC on BirdClub](#)

If you haven't yet 'activated' yourselves on the new website by changing your password then you can do that by clicking this link and following the instructions

<https://www.bird.club/members/password/new>

Don't forget to use the email address for yourself that you had registered with the old NENBC website – if you reset your password and then try and log in using a different email address then it won't work.

If you are already a user of the BirdClub platform with another club or group, you shouldn't need to change your password and you can switch between your different clubs once you are logged in to any of them - click on the arrow by your name at the top right of your screen.

Do give the new website a go and please contact us if you are struggling, have questions or queries or want to provide some feedback - nenbc@aol.co.uk

NENBC
North East Norfolk Bird Club

Home Members Locations Records Calendar Gallery Settings

Carol Thornton
Joined on Jan 21, 2015

About
Hi folks! I am the NENBC club secretary and newsletter editor, so do give me a shout on anything related to that, and I also enjoy practical wildlife conservation volunteering with Felbeck Trust along with lots of other bird club members. I live in Lower Gresham with my husband Ken. I am never going to be a fantastic birder (so what!) but I absolutely love watching birds and other wildlife, common or rare, home or away. There is always something new to see, hear or learn.

Recent Activity

Gresham by Carol Thornton
Jan 28, 2024 at 11:20am

1 x Marsh Tit
1 x Brambling
RSPB GBW MAX
4 x Chaffinch

2024 Year List
74 compared to this time last year: 73 ↑ 1%

[View year list](#)

2023 Year List
107 compared to previous year: 120 ↓ 11%

[View year list](#)

2022 Year List
120 compared to previous year: 148 ↓ 18%

[View year list](#)

2021 Year List

NENBC
North East Norfolk Bird Club

Home Members Locations Records Calendar Gallery Settings

Carol Thornton 2024 Year List
Seen 74 birds this year

2024 Year List
74 compared to this time last year: 73 ↑ 1%

[View year list](#)

2023 Year List
107 compared to previous year: 120 ↓ 11%

[View year list](#)

2022 Year List
120 compared to previous year: 148 ↓ 18%

[View year list](#)

2021 Year List

1st January
Tawny Owl seen at Gresham.

1st January
Red-legged Partridge seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Blackbird seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Moorhen seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Mallard seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Grey Heron seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Tufted Duck seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Mute Swan seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Gadwall seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Canton Crow seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

1st January
Jackdaw seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

○ Stonechat seen at Dilham Canal .

● Long-eared Owl seen at Dilham Canal .

○ Robin seen at Spa Common.

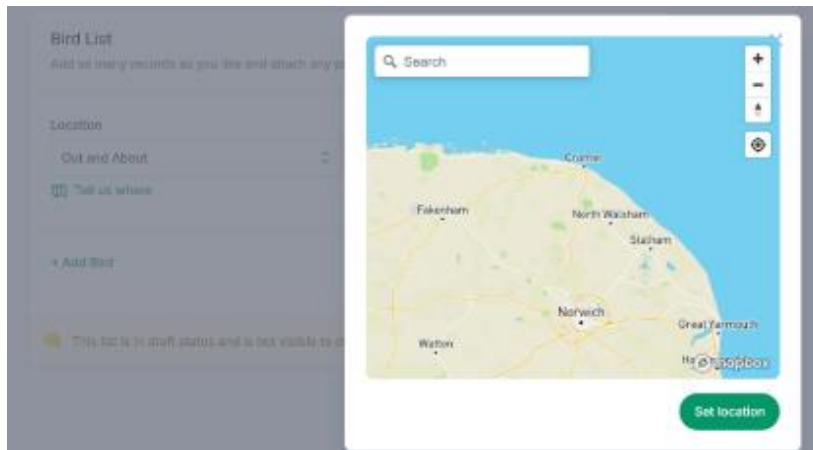
5. Profile image

Of the 240 odd memberships sitting on the website at the moment, a combination of households recording together and households recording individually, only 25 of us have uploaded a selfie and even fewer put any info in their profile about themselves. We fully appreciate that some members prefer not to have any personal images online or share info about themselves but it really helps us all to have a pic of folk if you are comfortable to do so as it makes it so much easier to put a face to a name and vice versa. Profile photos and text are only visible to other club members, not the general public. Please do have a go – and the 13 folk who have uploaded a profile pic of a lovely bird or other image, we'd love to be able to see you too!

6. Out and About

When adding records, there is an option near the top of the Locations list called 'Out and About – been somewhere off the grid?' but this hasn't been used much yet. There are 2 main uses for doing so: a) when you are somewhere that isn't listed as a location; or b) you are somewhere that you do not wish to disclose the site of. There are a couple of protocols when using this we would like you to follow...

- a) If you are simply **adding records of sightings where there the location is not listed** on our site, then please click on the 'Tell us where' option after you have selected the 'Out and About' location. A map will pop up which allows you to zoom in and click on the spot where you observed the bird. Behind the scenes this will then give us a latitude and longitude for the spot which we can use in our reporting. If there is any text in Notes that you can make that would be useful to other members to find the location if it is an unusual sighting, that would be great.



- b) If you **do not wish to disclose the site** then don't follow the above protocol. It may be because you are near a nest site and don't want to publicise the location to avoid disturbance to a breeding bird, particularly in relation to Schedule 1 species, or because you are on a private site and it isn't appropriate to publish the exact location. In either of these instances it would be helpful if you briefly stated why in Notes when adding your record.

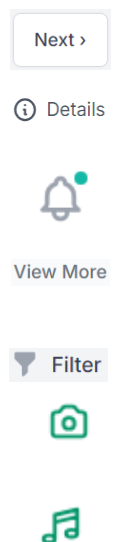
7. At Home

There is another option when adding records of 'At Home'. Great to see so many of you are reporting birds from your garden. Behind the scenes and for other website users, we don't get any extra info on where 'Home' is for each of you. In the general run of things this isn't an issue for forwarding our data on to County Recorders (Admins can manually link a record to your home town afterwards) but if you see something unusual and the general area that it was sighted in could be of use to other members, then please do add in Notes about where you are – not your full address obviously! An example that springs to mind is when there is a mobile flock of something that other folk are tracking like Waxwing or a fly over eagle if you are really lucky!

8. Accessing birding sessions of other members

Currently there are three ways you can see the details for the records of other members:

- a) **From Home** – Either sort by 'Most Recent' for all sessions or 'Most Relevant' for sessions that include an 'interesting' bird. Both options will have the most recent session at the top. You can use the 'Next' option at the bottom of the screen to go to the next set of sessions. When you get to the session you want, click on the 'Details' icon at the bottom of any session to view the records.
- b) **From Notifications** – At the top right of your screen click on the bell icon for Notifications which lists recent sessions. You can click on 'View More' to see further sessions and press 'Next' to get to older pages. Click on any session you want to see the detail of.
- c) **From Records** – As outlined last month, you can use the 'Filter' option on the records page to drill down to specific records / sessions. At the moment, you can't generally access the detail of any session from this screen. However, as an interim fix, if any of the records in the session have a 'Photo' or 'Singing' icon on them, you can click on the icon and it will take you into the detail of the session.

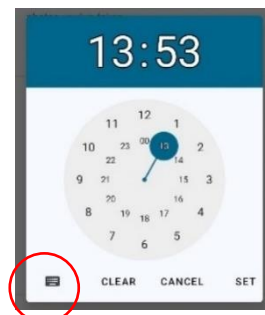


9. Time

When you add a record, you are asked to add the time at the same point you are selecting the location. This can be the time of an individual sighting if you are just adding one record, or the start time of a birding session. At the moment, you can only see the time of another member's record if you are in the details screen of their session (see 'Accessing birding sessions of other members' above). If you are adding a record where the exact timing of the sighting is likely to be important to other birders trying to see that particular bird / flock, we suggest entering the exact time in Notes when you add your record. This can then be seen by others whilst searching records without them needing to go to the details of the session.

Whilst on the subject of time, if you are finding the clock face method for recording the time of your sightings on your phone a bit fiddly, you can click the keyboard symbol next to it which allows you to input the numbers rather than spinning the clock hands – much easier if you have clumsy fingers like me!

Don't forget too that we have a WhatsApp group for NENBC Alerts that is open to all members so if getting a real-time feed of the more interesting sightings in the club area by club members, then please get in touch to join in.



10. Weather

The weather at the time of your observation is automatically generated and saved when you upload a record where you have also included the time. The data is saved and you can see it on your own records easily. At the moment, you can only see the weather conditions of another member's record if you are in the details screen of their session (see 'Accessing birding sessions of other members' above).

Data, Records, Posts and Tweets



No new rare bird records have been 'Accepted' by the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since the last newsletter. You can view their current '**NRC work in progress**' file on their website [27th Sep]

The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [27th Dec].

Here are some bits and bobs from our website and social media...

NENBC Website



# species	birder name
124	Phil Borley
115	Mark Clements
108	Moss Taylor
104	Trevor Williams
100	Tony Forster
90	Valerie Stubbs
88	David Billham
87	Philip Hall
85	Stella Baylis
81	Thomas Wright

for January was Blackbird and the location with the most records overall was Weybourne. Also, 32 of you are using the 'At Home' feature on the new website to record your garden birds and 5 the 'Out and About' one. Do take a look at the notes in the [Website Q&A](#) above on use of these for a little additional guidance.

A huge thanks to the **93** of you who uploaded records to our new website this year from over 100 locations. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports.

So far this year we have collectively recorded 146 species across the NENBC area. Congratulations to **Phil Borley** for managing to record 124 of these already! Mark, Moss, Trevor and Tony have all managed over 100 too. Don't forget that 100 species will earn you a Bronze Star badge from the club so do get out there recording yourself. Most recorded species

Top 10 Locations January (number of records uploaded)	
Weybourne	1,316
Felbrigg Park & Lake	1,079
Sheringham	818
Weybourne Camp	787
Bodham	647
Beeston Common	477
Weybourne Cliffs - Coastal Path	363
Selbrigg Pond (Lower Bodham)	345
West Runton	197
Beeston Regis	173

Top 10 Species January (number of records uploaded)	
Blackbird	454
Robin	403
Blue Tit	396
Woodpigeon	391
Black-headed Gull	364
Herring Gull	301
Magpie	290
Carriion Crow	277
Jackdaw	268
Chaffinch	262

NENBC Twitterings from (the platform formerly known as) Twitter



We very much welcome users tagging us @NENBC_info to keep us posted and so we can Retweet them but please refrain from posting any discussion that could be construed as abusive, derogatory or inflammatory to or by other users – thank you!

Please continue to tag us @NENBC_info in your own Tweets as we'll be doing more Re-tweeting of local, regional and national bird news. It is always great to see you sharing your outings, your photos, your questions, even your disappointments! We'd love to see you posting about club events, and your thoughts on them, with photos of birds or members (with their permission of course!) and expect to start getting reminders about club events direct from us with a brief write up of how they went.

1,728
followers

Here are some highlights from the last month ...



Here's a list of the members who we know have a Twitter account they use for bird sightings, although not all are NENBC area residents - let us know if you're not on here!

James Appleton	Colin Blaxill	Tracy Brighten	Emma Buck	Stu Buck	Ben Clark	Sally Clark	Mark Clements
Jane Crossen	James Emerson	Ian Gordon	Andy Hale	Sarah Hanson	Emma Hurrell	Russ Malin	Louis Parkerson
Lin Pateman	Carl Sayer	Steve Stansfield	Val Stubbs	Alan Stevens	Carol Thornton	Ken Thornton	Pauline Walton
Lizzie Wallis	Trevor Williams	Riley Woodhouse					

Don't forget that you don't have to have a Twitter account to peruse Twitter pages – take a look at our feed on your computer / laptop / phone etc: www.twitter.com/NENBC_Info

Cultural Birds – Ivy Feast

By David North

In late winter ivy berries become a vital source of food for birds, especially woodpigeons and blackbirds. Woodpigeons cling to the ivy with spread wings and gorge themselves on the berries.

Ivy Feast

Have you heard?
It's an ivy berry feast.
Wood pigeons hang like parrots,
Spread-wing gluttons
at the hedgerow banquet.
Blackbirds feast on black berries
stabbing with yellow beak daggers.
Late winter trees bare-branched,
larders empty, autumn fruits gone.
But here the party's on.
Shiny green leaves edged silver with the night's frost.
No invitations required at this berry free for all.
All welcome at nature's take-away.



John Taylor



Doug Cullern

What's That Song?

The bird voice variously described was that of a Skylark. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the BTO BirdFacts: Skylark page. There are a couple of BTO Bird ID Videos featuring Skylark this month: Identifying Meadow Pipit, Tree Pipit and Skylark and Identifying Skylark and Woodlark.

Photos courtesy of:
Mark Clements [1 & 2]
Jane Crossen [3]
Alan Stevens [4]

This month's **Wordsearch Solution:**

BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN FEBRUARY 2023

N	P	K	O	O	L	G	U	D	N	D	V	U	P	E	N	Q	P	C	B
F	I	X	Y	G	J	R	W	H	Z	Y	L	N	O	I	F	Q	P	Z	J
K	N	A	H	S	D	E	R	T	P	N	L	M	L	I	W	L	F	Y	M
N	T	T	C	E	U	A	D	R	R	E	D	N	A	S	O	O	G	A	P
I	A	P	I	F	S	T	I	X	T	O	U	T	B	P	R	A	O	B	R
V	I	U	M	L	C	N	N	A	S	D	X	H	C	B	E	W	T	X	A
A	L	X	K	E	Z	O	R	U	L	B	A	H	R	J	J	W	L	T	Z
H	I	G	T	J	N	R	E	J	X	R	W	O	N	R	I	I	H	O	O
O	O	U	L	H	X	T	D	Z	G	R	S	R	R	T	Z	R	N	N	R
M	E	S	A	G	Y	H	B	G	T	E	F	O	E	X	B	E	A	K	B
T	V	N	M	P	M	E	R	V	H	P	Y	C	T	I	N	I	W	U	I
A	H	A	O	Y	V	R	E	I	L	I	M	K	O	E	Z	R	S	B	L
J	H	U	I	W	S	N	A	R	L	P	L	P	C	J	H	R	S	I	L
R	N	V	S	Q	J	D	S	F	U	D	L	I	S	R	Y	A	K	K	I
Y	L	E	N	A	E	I	T	X	G	N	X	P	T	D	S	H	C	C	K
Y	H	I	V	B	Q	V	E	A	E	A	F	I	E	P	J	N	I	U	J
S	U	Y	V	A	K	E	D	Q	L	S	W	T	V	F	X	E	W	H	S
S	F	D	L	X	R	R	M	S	T	N	Q	S	L	O	S	H	E	C	I
M	M	F	L	Q	R	J	E	W	T	E	K	V	E	S	P	B	B	P	W
I	K	J	U	A	T	A	R	K	I	E	W	A	V	T	Z	S	M	J	V
Y	I	V	G	U	S	Z	G	N	L	R	O	J	H	K	W	E	B	V	C
D	T	D	N	V	X	I	A	F	A	G	S	R	M	W	Y	J	N	F	T
J	T	I	A	E	S	A	N	L	F	M	P	G	N	E	I	E	K	V	J
B	I	U	I	Q	M	P	S	U	J	O	C	M	N	O	A	C	W	E	F
S	W	W	P	R	S	F	E	N	K	N	W	E	L	O	Q	S	E	W	B
X	A	T	S	K	B	Q	R	P	L	G	D	A	F	K	C	S	W	U	Z
V	K	B	A	X	Z	X	E	J	X	L	A	K	D	M	D	V	Y	A	J
B	E	I	C	R	B	S	C	P	O	X	G	J	U	M	E	R	L	I	N



Back Page Club Info



NENBC Annual Bird Reports are compiled from the records and photographs added to the club website by members since we were established in January 2015 and complemented by articles on club activities. Member price for most recent report is £3 and back-copies £2 (postage extra).

The Birds of Felbrigg Park is a systematic review of the records of all 220 species seen in and around the park over the past 50 years, indicating their current status and highlighting, for the rarer species, every recorded sighting. The publication includes photographs and artwork from local artists. The book is now reduced to £5.00 (postage extra) and all profits from the sale of this book go to Felbeck Trust, our local wildlife conservation charity:

www.felbecktrust.org.uk

My Birding Life by Club President Moss Taylor. Moss has been watching birds and keeping records of his sightings since 1953, as well as ringing and photographing birds for over 50 years. Although only a hobby, birding has really taken over his life, especially during the last 25 years since he retired from general practice. Since 1969 he has lived in Norfolk and much of the action in this book takes place there. All profits from the sale of this book will be going to his charity Love for Leo. See below for more details on this charity and contact details for Moss. £20 (or £18 if collected from Sheringham when restrictions permit).

Rare and Scarce Birds in North-east Norfolk This book by Moss Taylor presents all the records of rare and scarce birds that have been recorded in the NENBC area up to the formation of the Club in 2014. There is a Classified List and a chapter on the historic habitats and birding activities in the area plus all additional rarity records from 2015 to 2018. It is also illustrated with 78 colour photographs and runs to 104 pages. Now out of print, but there is an electronic version on our website.

For Annual Reports or **The Birds of Felbrigg Park**, contact Carol on nenbc@aol.co.uk. For **My Birding Life**, or emailable recent Annual Summaries of the Bird Life at Weybourne Camp, contact Moss Taylor, 4 Heath Road, Sheringham, NR26 8JH, phone 01263-823637 or email: moss.taylor@btinternet.com

Club Sponsor: A 5% discount on Bird Ventures branded wild bird food is available to NENBC members at their shop in Holt all year on production of a current NENBC Membership Card. Have a look at the [Bird Ventures website](http://www.birdventures.co.uk) as they also supply feeders and much more with good advice and help for garden bird enthusiasts. **Bird Ventures, The Wildlife Shop, 9B Chapel Yard, Albert Street, Holt, Norfolk NR25 6HG, Telephone 01263 710203, Email salesbirdventures@aol.com**



The NENBC objectives:

- Encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching in North East Norfolk with people of all abilities and experience.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all its activities.
- Gather and collate data on birds in the recording area.
- Share information between members.
- Participate in regional and national surveys incorporating the recording area.
- Administer the Club in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Promote the conservation of birds and wildlife within Norfolk.
- Liaise with other conservation groups within the local area and more widely.
- Hold regular indoor and field meetings and social events throughout the year.
- Put the interests of birds first and respect other people, whether or not they are interested in birds, in line with the birdwatchers' code.

Monthly mid-week bird walks around Felbrigg Park on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from September to July / Varied **monthly weekend bird walks** to a range of local birding hotspots from September to July / **Occasional evening walks** in the spring and summer / **Monthly evening talks** on the last Thursday of the month from September to November and January to April - refreshments provided / An annual **Big Sit** birding event at a number of locations across the club area in May, recording the total number of species seen from one spot between dawn and dusk / Autumn **Global Big Day** birding challenge / Annual **Coordinated Seawatch** event along the coast in the autumn recording visible migration / A **Birding for Beginners** workshop series combining practical and theoretical elements of birdwatching / **New Year's Day Birding Challenge** / **Occasional master-classes, lectures, workshops and conferences** to develop better skills and understanding of the birding world / A combined **Christmas Social and AGM Evening** in December