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# Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 1993



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# Norfolk Bird Report – 1993

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# Norfolk Mammal Report – 1993

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*Front cover painting:* Montagu's Harriers by J.C. Harrison  
(reproduced by courtesy T. Andrewartha).

*Back cover painting:* Common Seals & Fox cub by J. Reed

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# Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 1993

The printers very much regret that the following errors and omissions have occurred in the 1993 Report:

*Inside front cover:* Final line amend to read '*Back cover photographs: Common Seals and Fox cub by J. Reed*'

*Page 142:* Full page artwork is by Carl Donner

*Page 164: Montagu's Harrier:* Amend the table indicating totals of fledged young since 1986 as follows:

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
3	9	6	13	13	7	10	13

*Page 184: Long-tailed Skua:* Line 6 amend to read '*August 29th adult Holme*'.

*Page 189:* Sandwich Tern drawing is by R.A. Richardson.

*Page 206:* The caption bottom line amend to read '*Bottom: Oriental Pratincole. Gimingham, May (R.C. Wilson).*'





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# NORFOLK BIRD REPORT 1993

## Editorial

The Council of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society, in conjunction with Norfolk Ornithologists Association, presents the annual report on the birds of Norfolk.



*Shore Larks (R.A. Richardson)*

**ie birds of Norfolk:** Acceptance of the 1993 records of a quintet of globe-spanners: Oriental Pratincole, Pacific Swift, Lanceolated Warbler, Paddyfield Warbler and Desert Warbler has resulted in the County List totalling 400 full species (excluding Citril Finch).

Readers wishing to keep the Check-list published in the 1992 Norfolk Bird Report up-to-date may wish to note the following decisions made by the Records Committee of the British Ornithologists Union:

A **Baird's Sandpiper** supposedly obtained at Hunstanton 16th Sept 1903 has been deleted. The record is now considered unacceptable given its close association with the y figures in the 'Hastings Rarities' affair. This was previously the first British record. It now gives way to the official first: a juvenile on St. Kilda in 1911.

A **Citril Finch** formerly in category B on the basis of a 1904 record has been deleted from the British List following research by P.R. Allard. The individual taken at Wymouth on Jan 29th and now in the Booth Museum in Brighton has been re-identified as a Cape (or Yellow-crowned) Canary *S. canicollis*. This is an unlikely vagrant to Britain.

**Falcated Duck:** Identification accepted of examples at Welney 9th and 27th Dec 1986 and again, 20th Aug to 8th Oct 1987 and at Cley in 1988. Each added to category B.

**Baikal Teal:** Identification accepted of a drake taken at Wells Dec 20th 1929, but the likelihood of escape from captivity is high and the record is not accepted into any category.

**Northern Mockingbird:** Identification accepted of a bird at Blakeney Point Aug 19th-28th 1971, but considered a probable escape and the record is not admitted to any category.

An explanation of categories appears in the 1992 NBR page 498.

## Review of the Year:

**January** opened with freezing temperatures and an unexpected Richard's Pipit at C until the 3rd; a regular flock of 38 Shore Larks was much appreciated at Titchwell. long-staying immature Iceland Gull peromed splendidly at Sheringham and a dr Ring-necked Duck returned to Broadland. Over 5000 Bewick's Swans brightened up fenland landscape while 410 Bean Geese mingled with White-fronts in the Yare Valle

Unusual **February** birds included a Serin ringed at Garboldisham and at least Spoonbills in the Wash at Snettisham. Red-throated Divers became very numerous shore particularly off Paston and Sheringham. Great Northern and Black-throated Div were typically scarce although 2 of the latter favoured Filby/Rollesby Broads. Iceland Whooper Swans reached a new peak of 856 at Welney along with 2272 Pochard. Perhaps one of the most exciting events of the winter was the mass arrival of disoriented White-fronted Geese from the Continent during misty conditions and easterly winds up to 3000 were involved.

The over-wintering Yarmouth Ring-billed Gull lingered into **March**. Passerines created much interest with a pronounced Siskin passage at coastal sites and a huge westerly passage of Redwing on 20th producing 4500 at Sheringham and 15,000 at Titchwell. A few Great Grey Shrikes trickled through while the first expected Wheatears, Sand Martins, Garganey and Sandwich Terns were joined by particular early Quail on 12th, Swallow on 17th, Yellow Wagtail on 19th, Redstart on 27th and House Martin on 30th.

**April** is always a varied and exciting period as summer migrants surge northwards. This year there were additional bonuses when a number of early rarities arrived. Most notable a breeding-plumaged Sociable Plover at Cley/Holkham, Great White Egret at Cley, Purple Heron at Brancaster, Penduline Tit at Titchwell, Alpine Swift at Sheringham/Cromer, Subalpine Warbler at Sidestrand with a highly mobile Black Kite around the 20th-25th.

**May** invariably produces rarities, but three additions to the county list was beyond the wildest predictions: a long-staying Oriental Pratincole, singing and nest-building Desert Warbler (long hoped for in October, but never in May!) and Britain's first mainland Pacific Swift. A host of lesser rarities provided excellent birding including Ortolan and Rustic Buntings, Scarlet Rosefinch, Bluethroats, Icterine Warblers, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Spoonbills, Temminck's Stints and a heavy Black Tern passage.

By **June** with the breeding season well under way it became all too clear that recreational set-aside land would not provide a boost to such ground-nesting breeders as Meadow Pipits and Skylarks. Countless nests were lost because of the early date (May 1st) set for weed control operations such as cutting or ploughing to commence. Revised rules for 1994 onwards will hopefully remedy this catastrophe. The county once again hosted important breeding stocks of Marsh and Montagu's Harriers, Golden Oriole, Woodlarks and Stone Curlews. Among rarities was a long-staying Woodchat Shrike, Marsh Warblers, Great Reed Warbler, Purple Heron and Gull-billed Tern.

Both Blakeney Point and Scolt Head had good numbers of young Sandwich Terns. **July** joined for two weeks by a Lesser Crested Tern at the latter site. A number of Caspian Tern sightings included a bird once again favouring Hickling and Breydon. A Spotted Crake became a casualty under wires at Welney.

Waders often feature during **August** and 1993 saw a brief Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Cley, Black-winged Stilt at Snettisham (this bird lingering in the county into 1994) and Baird's Sandpiper at Snettisham. The south shore of the Wash held flocks of 20 Avocets and 3500 Black-tailed Godwits – both county records. Passerine movements were rather slack, but a Greenish Warbler appeared at Wells on 28th.



A memorable **September** commenced with Arctic Warbler on Blakeney Point on 1st followed by a huge fall of Continental drift-migrants during mid-month associated with high pressure system over Scandinavia. Coastal areas bulged with Wheatears, Redstarts, Pied Flycatchers and Whinchats together with many rare and semi-rare birds including both Little and Rustic Buntings. The same period saw a movement of Honey Buzzards which while not quite up to Bosphorus standards was the next best thing for ordered Norfolk listers. Incredibly two further species were added to the county list when the Sheringham area produced Paddyfield Warbler on 24th and Lanceolated Warbler on 29th, both long overdue. Sea-watching had its moments with massive passages of both Gannets and Fulmars off the north coast with a few rarities. A disappointing month for waders apart from a juvenile Broad-billed Sandpiper atrey/Blakeney harbour and a multiple arrival of Red-necked Phalaropes.

Good viewing continued throughout **October** when a very viewable Black-eared Wheatear graced Stiffkey and an Olive-backed Pipit crept amongst massed bird-watches. Brief Desert Wheatear and Black-throated Thrush were notable arrivals while a cluster of Pallas's Warblers delighted birders as they rapidly flitted through the canopy company with mobile tit flocks. Low cloud and north-east winds saw a countrywide movement of Eiders with a number of rare inland records in the county.

Early **November** saw both Dusky Warbler and Little Bunting in a field next to Blakeney village while a long-staying Desert Wheatear frequented the shore at Scaham/Hunstanton proving to be a very popular visitor. A Raven patrolled the Horsey sea remaining into 1994. As usual wildfowl dominated the scene and included up to 5 Bean Geese in the traditional haunts and an influx of Barnacle Geese.

By **December** huge numbers of Lapwings again flocked to Breydon. Over 60,000 Icelandic Pink-footed Geese were located at coastal roost-sites in north-west Norfolk and the sea off Hunstanton-Scolt Head held 220 Long-tailed Ducks. Among surprises was the returning Ring-necked Duck in Broadland, 3 Little Egrets on Stiffkey saltings and a Great White Egret wintering in drains near Feltham. A classic Norfolk year hopefully to be repeated in 1994. (*Summary by J.B. Kemp*)

**Recording:** With the exception of national/local rarities, records should be submitted to Michael J. Scago 33 Acacia Road, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PP by the end of January. It is regretted that some observers are still failing to comply with this deadline which is essential in meeting printing schedules. All observations should be prepared in order appearing in this issue of the *Norfolk Bird Report*. It will be appreciated that notes submitted in diary form cannot be considered. In order to minimise the work involved records will not normally be acknowledged, but names of all contributors will be published.

Records of national rarities considered by British Birds Rarities Committee should be sent in future to Giles Dunmore (49 The Avenues, Norwich NR2 3QR) the Secretary of the County Records Committee with full details as soon as possible after observation and not left until the year-end. There are omissions in this year's Classified List of national rarities as decisions are still awaited. Also some observations have been excluded as full details are still awaited by BBRC. Despite 3 reports of Short-toed Lark and 6 reports of Red-throated Pipit during 1993 it is very disappointing that not a single description of either species has been provided.

**County Records Committee:** The County Records Committee (Vernon Eve, Mick Sizer, Steve Harris, Dave Holman and Andy Stoddart) has undertaken a review for dealing with records of County rarities. This not only stems from the ever increasing number of observers submitting records either directly or indirectly via the Norfolk Bird Club/Birdline, but also from the declining number of species considered by the National Rarities Committee. Paramount in the Committee's thinking is that any published

records of birds rare in Norfolk should be supported by evidence.

Accordingly, *beginning with 1994 observations* records of the under-mentioned will only be published if accompanied by a description accepted by the Committee photographic evidence:

Cory's Shearwater	Tawny Pipit
Great Shearwater	<i>Flava</i> Wagtail Continental races
Storm Petrel	(excluding Blue-headed and Grey-headed)
Purple Heron	Bluethroat (White-spotted race)
White Stork	Savi's Warbler
Black Brant	Aquatic Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Marsh Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Melodious Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Dartford Warbler
Surf Scoter	Pallas's Warbler
Goshawk (away from Brecks)	Chiffchaff ( <i>Tristis</i> race)
Spotted Crake	Woodchat Shrike
Corncrake	Raven
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Serín
Sabine's Gull	Scarlet Rosefinch
Ring-billed Gull	Ortolan Bunting
Bee-eater	Little Bunting
Short-toed Lark	

Any observer finding one of the above-named birds is requested, as with national rarities, to submit a description to the Secretary as soon as possible. Where records of County rarities are not supported by a description the Secretary will seek details as a matter of course. This new procedure also applies to members of the Committee who obviously will not adjudicate on their own descriptions. This list will be monitored, and amended if necessary, annually.

In addition the Committee reserves the right to request additional information on other species including Black-throated Diver and Long-tailed Skua which can present particular identification problems, especially when the observer is unfamiliar to members of the Committee. Substantiating details may also be required for records of unusual species at atypical localities or on abnormal dates. (Giles Dunmore, Secretary, 49 The Avenues, Norwich NR2 3QR).

**Acknowledgements:** Thanks are due to the following artists and photographers: Arlott, J. Bhalerao, N. Borrow, S. Cale, C. Campbell, R. Chittenden, N.S. Clayton, M. Cornish, C. Donner, D.A. Dorling, J. Humble, B.W. Jarvis, P. Jones, C.R. Knights, the late J.M. Last, N. Murphy, R. Powley, M. Rains, J. Reed, the late R.A. Richardson, S. Votier, R.C. Wilson, J. Wright and S. Young.

Acknowledgement is also due to Birdline East Anglia, BTO, Cley Bird Club, English Nature, Gt. Yarmouth Bird Club, Nar Valley Ornithological Society, National Trust, Norfolk Bird Club, Norfolk Coast Project, Norfolk Naturalists Trust, North Sea Bird Club, Rare Bird Photographic Library, RSPB, Stanford Training Area Bird Club, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, P.R. Allard (county archivist), G.E. Dunmore (liaising with British Birds Rarities Committee and acting as Secretary of the County Records Committee), K.E. Arnold (proofs checker), Mrs M. Dorling, Mrs S.F. Seago and other contributors.

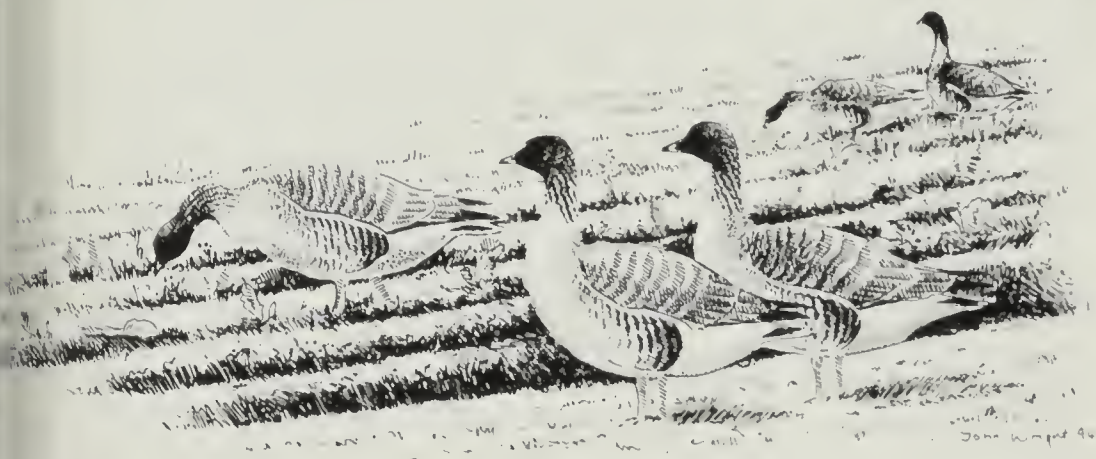


# The farmer and the Pink-feet can be friends?

*Edward Cross*

A flock of geese appears against a winter sky. The birdwatcher looks, the rambler thinks 'Ah, they're back', but the farmer says 'Oh no' (or words to that effect!).

Norfolk has internationally important flocks of geese, but they have a bad reputation among some who work the land. Geese can severely damage crops, but are there situations in which these spectacular visitors can live happily alongside farming? This report looks at the attempts at Abbey Farm, Flitcham to encourage Pink-footed Geese to feed on a crop waste (sugarbeet tops) while minimising damage to growing crops.



*(J. Wright)*

There are two distinct populations of Pink-footed Geese. One breeds in Spitzbergen and winters in the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium. It numbers about 30,000 (Madsen, 1987). The other population, which includes the geese that visit Norfolk, breeds in Greenland and Iceland and winters in Britain. The number in this group has increased rapidly since the 1960 total of 40,000. This had risen to 100,000 by the mid-70's and 232,000 in the 1991-92 winter.

Until a few years ago, up to 25,000 wintered in Norfolk, but more recently numbers have risen dramatically. Coordinated counts at the Snettisham, Scolt Head and Warham posts gave totals of 33,380 in 1992-93 and 68,560 in 1993-94 (about 27% of the world population and the highest number ever recorded in Norfolk).

**Pink-feet at Abbey Farm up to Spring 1993.** Abbey Farm, Flitcham lies about 9 miles east of the Wash and 11 miles south of the coast at Thornham. It is a tenanted farm

Publication of this feature has been subsidised by a donation from Mr. Christopher Adbury.

with 825 acres of arable land on chalky sandy soils and ranges from 75 to 260 feet above sea level.

Pink-footed Geese were first recorded at Flitcham in Dec 1978. The first flocks over 1000 were seen in 1983-84 and 1984-85. This number has been exceeded every winter since then (Table 1). We first used the goose management methods described below in 1992-93, the first winter with over 10,000 geese.

**Table 1.**  
*Maximum counts at Abbey Farm: October 1984 to February 1993.*

1984-85	1,000	1987-88	3,000	1990-91	7,5
1985-86	3,000	1988-89	3,800	1991-92	3,8
1986-87	2,750	1989-90	2,000	1992-93	12,1

**The 1993-94 winter:** The first Pink-feet were 250 on Oct 6th. There were 2000 on Oct 11th, but for the rest of the month they fed on a neighbouring farm. 2000 first fed on beet tops on Abbey Farm in early November. On Nov 5th they were disturbed twice by pheasant shooting and few visited the farm for the next four weeks.

On Dec 5th 2500 geese settled on an 80 acre field of beet on which harvesting had finished three days earlier. On most days until late January there were several thousand on the farm. The maximum was 14,030 on Dec 17th. There were no significant numbers after Jan 31st.

**Daily habits:** Most Pink-feet feeding at Flitcham roost on the saltmarshes or at the water's edge of the Wash and so arrive from the west. However, occasionally some arrive from the north – probably from Scolt Head. The geese start arriving at dawn and most stay on one beet field for a full day, but after a few hours some start moving on to nearby barley fields. The geese leave for their roost at dusk, but on moonlit nights stay late, sometimes remaining until the next morning.

**Feeding:** We measure the time geese spend at Abbey Farm in 'goose days'. A good day is equivalent of one goose spending 8 hours on a field. For instance, 1000 geese present for 2 hours equals 250 goose days.

In 1993-94 a total of about 308,000 goose days were spent at Abbey Farm. Over 97% of these were on beet fields (Table 2). Most of these were on 110 acres of beet land with light grazing on another 40 acres. The geese fed mostly on root crowns and unharvested roots, but also ate leaf stalks, beet leaves and weeds.

**Table 2.**  
*Total goose days on different field types in 1993-94 (and 1992-93).*

	No. of goose days	Percentage of total in 1993-94 (and 1992-93)	
Sugarbeet	299,905	97.3	(87.3)
Winter barley	5,170	1.7	(1.7)
Barley stubble	2,970	1.0	(1.0)
Set-aside ryegrass	100	<0.1	(0.1)
Total on all fields	308,145		

Field shape, size and position seem to be important factors in deciding where geese feed. They seem to prefer fields which give good all-round visibility, such as large, open

lds on hill tops. They left 70 acres of beet untouched in fields with poor all-round visibility. The age of the beet tops seems less important, since geese continue eating them to 2 months after harvest. They also tolerate traffic, provided vehicles don't stop arby.

The birds fed much less on set-aside ryegrass in 1993-94 than in 1992-93 (Table 2), though the same acreage was available. This is probably because in the first winter the op was young and tender but, after a further 12 months on infertile soils, it seemed ich coarser and may have been longer than geese like. Most grazing of barley stubble, ere food is the sprouting grains, was completed in October.

**Crop damage.** Geese never graze sugarbeet before it is harvested, so the only crop at Abbey Farm which is vulnerable to damage is winter barley. During the winter it is only ew inches high so is suitable for geese. In 93-94 we had 225 acres of winter barley, of ich 135 were grazed by geese at some time. As Table 2 shows only 1.7% of goose ding was on winter barley. This seems low, but for the farmer two important ques-ns remain:

**Are the geese causing economic damage?** The answer is: we don't know. Studies Patterson (1991) conclude that any substantial level of grazing results in loss of crop ld although predicting the amount of loss is difficult. This is due to variations in soil ve, weather and time of grazing. At Abbey Farm in 1993-94, the barley was (at least) porarily set back as we could still tell in mid-April which areas had been grazed. But barley plants had been killed (i.e. they were not completely grazed down), so perhaps potential for recovery is good. We are helped because the sandy soils at Flitcham do 'puddle' when geese walk on them (unlike some clay soils), so there is little damage trampling.

Accurately assessing the impact of goose grazing would require a full study. But we l the risk of serious economic damage is low, so we will continue to encourage geese o Abbey Farm.

**How much effort does it take to keep grazing on barley fields to a minimum?** veral methods have been employed:

- displaying plastic bag 'flags' to scare birds

- making a morning and afternoon visit daily when geese were present to frighten them off

- minimising disturbance to geese when they are feeding on beet tops. This includes scaring them off barley in a way that does not also frighten them off sugarbeet (e.g. never using shooting).

The only measure which significantly adds to the farm workload is making visits to ghten the geese. Checking 220 acres of barley sounds like a lot of work. Fortunately geese only move onto barley which is immediately next to the beet when a flock is ablished. This means only a few barley fields need visiting. Despite this, checking ce takes about an hour a day. Serious grazing of barley occurs if a visit is missed, ecially if the beet tops are running out or disturbance puts the geese off the beet. We l try to find a better method than flags to keep them off barley (one method in otland is to leave an old car in a vulnerable field). However, at present, visiting cereal lds is essential to minimise crop damage.

One fact which helps keep Pink-footed Geese off barley is that they are attracted to t tops. This may not be true for other species, so our management techniques could ll be ineffective with, for instance, Brent Geese.

**Other factors in goose management.**

Shooting. Goose shooting is becoming infrequent at Abbey Farm. If geese are shot ile flying in to feed on beet tops, they may move onto cereal crops. But if there is y a single shooting incident they may return to the beet within a few hours. On other



occasions they may avoid the farm several days.

ii) Supply of beet tops. In most years we grow about 200 acres of sugarbeet. Harvesting is from mid-September to mid-December. The 'tops' (the leaves and the top part of the root) are left on the field as waste after harvesting. On Abbey Farm they are not used for food for livestock, as they are elsewhere.

iii) Drilling spring barley. At Abbey Farm we follow sugarbeet with spring barley. Some farms now drill spring barley in November and December (2-3 months earlier than used to be sown). This can increase yields, particularly on fields which do not drain well or slope steeply and so may be hard to cultivate in January and February. Early drilling means that the beet tops must be ploughed in soon after harvest giving the geese little time to eat them. But at Abbey Farm the best geese fields drain well and are quite flat. So we are under less pressure to drill spring barley early and beet tops can be left long on the fields for geese.

**Conclusions.** There are very few species for which the British Isles are more important than the Pink-footed Goose as 85-90% of the world population winters here. The rise in numbers in Norfolk is mirrored by the increase at Fritcham. There are many reasons why geese like Abbey Farm. Some are not related to farm management:

- large fields with good all-round visibility,
- sandy soils which do not puddle,
- Pink-footed Geese like beet tops and can be kept off barley fields relatively easily,
- the farm is close to safe roost sites.

Other reasons are related to management:

- the low level of shooting and other disturbance,
- a good supply of beet tops which are not ploughed in early or fed to livestock,
- we are prepared to take measures (flags and visits) which reduce the risk that geese will significantly damage barley, so we do not see the geese as a threat and can therefore welcome them.

The land at Abbey Farm is typical of much of north-west Norfolk. There must be many acres of beet in the area which would be suitable for geese. Therefore, on some farms small changes in management could provide geese with new feeding ground. Encouraging geese to use such areas may help attract them away from clay soil fields where puddling is a real problem. Set-aside may also offer food for geese.

Is there a practical way to encourage Pink-footed Geese onto a farm and keep crop damage so low that there is no significant economic impact? I cannot answer this with certainty. However, this report does indicate that, in the right conditions, farmers too can see the incoming skeins as a spectacle to enjoy rather than something to dread.

**Acknowledgments.** Thanks to Mr and Mrs Richard Cross, Diana Martin, Paul Fisher (RSPB), Dr Michael Petch, Jenny Gill (UEA) and Michael Seago, Peter Cranswick and Carl Mitchell at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, all the staff at C.E. Cross & Sons, Roy Norman and Russel Rout. The roost counts have been carried out by Colin Campbell (Scolt Head NNR), Ron Harold (Holkham NNR) and Paul Fisher (Snettisham RSPB Reserve).

**References.** Madsen, J., (1987) Danish Rev. Game Biol. 12: 1-76. Status and management of goose populations in Europe, with special reference to populations resting and breeding in Denmark.

Patterson, I.J., (1991) Ardea 79: 179-186. Conflict between geese and agriculture: do geese grazing cause damage to crops?

*C.E. Cross & Sons Farm was awarded first prize in the farmers category of Wildfowl & Wetland Trust 1993 Waterlands Campaign Awards for their work on wetlands at Abbey Farm.)*



# Autumn Roosting Marsh Harriers in West Norfolk 1983-1993

*Bob Image*

At least 25% of Britain's breeding Marsh Harriers now nest in arable crops, but the use of this habitat is not confined to the nesting season. Varying numbers have been roosting during the autumn in crops in west Norfolk in most recent years. The birds roost on the ground, in crops providing plenty of cover such as wheat and barley, but also potatoes and once in sugar-beet. A small reedbed has also been used although this tended to be after favoured cereal fields had been harvested. Up to 4 Montagu's have roosted with the Marsh Harriers in some years.



*(N. Arlott)*

Almost certainly most of the roosting birds have been local breeders and juveniles, the latter more numerous at roosts. Prior to entering they form a gathering on open ground near the site; one year 5 juveniles perched together in a small hawthorn bush. Much low flying over the site typifies pre-roost behaviour before birds alight and even when they frequently fly up again and change positions before activity quiets down for the night ahead. No calls have been heard from roosting birds although 'squeaks' have been heard from juvenile Marsh Harriers leaving the reedbed site in 1991.

Early arriving adult males at roosts are sometimes subjected to harassment by juveniles. But this behaviour does not appear to be aggressive. Even after alighting in the crop the males are not spared; uninvited juveniles continually intrude forcing the old birds to take wing and resulting in the process starting again. Only the onset of darkness and the juveniles going to roost themselves allows the males to finally settle, presumably in response to this behaviour males, particularly well marked birds, tend to arrive at roosts late and when the remainder have settled. This behaviour by juveniles is possibly connected with food-begging. Family groups are certainly present at roosts, although males have not been seen bringing food. In contrast adult females receive little

attention from juveniles.

The birds do not all roost in a single field. Up to three fields may be in use at any one time. Although such sites may be fairly close, they could be as much as a kilometre apart. During several mornings in 1991 when a reedbed roost was occupied by at least 36 birds they were observed departing at dawn. This substantial roost formed at the end of a very disappointing breeding season locally and must have attracted harriers from a wider area.

Interesting events through the years including the following:

**1983:** Up to 13 birds roosting in wheat at the end of August moved to sugar-beet after the field was harvested. Numbers then increased and 28 were still using the beet field on September 13th.

**1986:** Eight roosting in barley August 11th. Two evenings later the total increased to 19 occupying two barley fields. The next evening (14th) the main roost was being combined as the birds began arriving. Up to 10 settled in the crop only to be disturbed by approaching machines. Bewildered, all circled in the dust and roar of the machinery before attempting to settle again. Eventually most settled in the second field where they were still roosting August 27th.

**1987:** Six juveniles roosting in barley on August 6th – an unusually early date. By the 9th up to 13 were roosting in ten acres of standing wheat after combining had finished for the day. An early arriving male was greatly harassed by juveniles. Nine birds including an adult male roosting in wheat on 30th.

**1989:** On the evening of August 16th 5 juveniles including a very pale bird reared in Norfolk or Suffolk, roosted in wheat.

**1991:** This autumn saw the most impressive roost recorded over an eleven-year period despite the poorest breeding season in the area. Six, including 2 adult males, were already roosting together in wheat on August 17th. Two days later up to 10 circling low over the roost-site were joined by a Buzzard. The intruder after landing in a hawthorn was repeatedly mobbed by the Harriers. Not surprisingly it failed to enter the roost! This site contained 18 birds on the 21st (6 adult males, 2 females and 10 juveniles). Each male was in moult. Next evening the field had been harvested and after circling aimlessly a group of 14 birds headed for a small reedbed where all soon settled. Four more spent the night in a nearby wheat field. The next evening numbers were down to just six in the reeds and none in the wheat. However, there was a sudden increase to 21 birds on 25th occupying three sites: 8 in the reeds, 6 in wheat and 7 in nearby potatoes. During the next few evenings the reed site became more and more attractive and by the 28th it held at least 23 birds. None remained in crops. This total included 8 adult males, 3 adult females and 12 juveniles. The weather was warm and settled during this period. The roost held 26 birds on 30th including 10 males, the brighter plumaged individuals arriving well after sundown.

September 1st saw a peak of at least 36 at the reed site including 10 adult males. All settled during a 25 minute period. Two nights later numbers had declined to 26, but 10 males remained. A reduction in juveniles had accounted for the lower total. A further drop in numbers continued with 16 on 4th when just 4 males remained. Four dawn watches were kept at this time. Most birds left the roost over a one-hour period commencing well before sunrise. Males were not seen to be harassed by juveniles after departure. Immediately after leaving the roost some perched briefly in a hawthorn bush or on open ground. From September 9th until 25th numbers fluctuated between 6 and 9 birds including up to 3 males. By the month-end they were spending some 12 hours at the roost. Just 3 appeared on the evening of the 27th, but no males. The reedbed was then abandoned although 3 roosted in potatoes on October 1st. The last sighting was a juvenile entering the potatoes on 3rd.

992: Earliest observation was 6 in wheat August 8th increasing to 11 on 19th when a nighttail Hen Harrier entered the roost - without interference. Compared with the previous year very few adult male Marsh Harriers appeared. Up to 12 birds used the reed site and a few roosted in potatoes. But no males.

993: Surprisingly the reed site was abandoned, but up to 18 birds including 3 males entered two wheat fields August 28th. Two days later one had been harvested and the other partly cut. At dusk 13 birds roosting in the remaining standing crop had settled unusually close together with only a few metres separating them. An early arriving male received unwelcome attention from some juveniles. In addition 2 more juveniles roosted in nearby potatoes.



*Marsh Harrier (N. Arlott)*

## A diversity of conservation support schemes

*Michael Pollitt*

*Agricultural Editor, Eastern Daily Press*

It was almost 10 years ago that a pilot environmentally sensitive area scheme was launched in Norfolk.

The idea of a voluntary scheme, which compensated farmers and landowners in return for some agreed management restrictions, was greeted by considerable initial hostility.

A meeting at Acle in November 1984 to brief farmers about the proposed Broadland grazing marshes conservation scheme was noisy and critical.

Within a couple of years, there was broad agreement that the ESA concept was sensible. In exchange for reasonable payments, farmers accepted the need to maintain the traditional aspect of the Broadlands. The drive to plough the "Halvergate" marshes, which came as a national environmental and green campaign, went into reverse.

It seems that all sides – farmers, landowners, graziers and wildlife enthusiasts – joined from this effective compromise.

By 1994, the ESA concept spread throughout Britain with a total of 22 areas covering 3 million acres or virtually a tenth of the country.

The Broadlands, launched in 1987, was later joined by the Suffolk river valleys and



Breckland ESAs, one of the largest lowland areas.

The Broads ESA was extended in 1992 to include the Upper Wensum Valley and includes low-lying land beyond Fakenham to South Raynham, West Rudham, Fulmodeston and above Gressenhall, near Dereham. It covers some 88,000 acres qualifying for the voluntary management scheme including part of the Waveney Valley, near Diss.

The Ministry of Agriculture currently spends roughly £60 million a year on the ESA with 50 per cent paid by the European Union.

The payments, increased by 6.5 per cent in spring 1994, range from £54 an acre (£135 per hectare) to more than £125 an acre (£310ha) for managing grazing marshes.

The cocktail of management options includes the following schemes, some available through the Ministry of Agriculture, Countryside Commission, Norfolk County Council, the Department of Environment and, of course, the Forestry Authority, part of the Forestry Commission.

Grants for conservation and management agreements must not be confused with the European Union's compensation package for farmers. The arable area aid package, paid in December 1993 for the first time, makes up for lower grain support prices.

From 1994, arable farmers must set-aside on either a rotational or "non-rotational" basis fixed at least 15 per cent or 18 per cent for non-rotational. A maximum of 50 per cent of the eligible acreage can be set aside.

In December 1994, farmers will be paid £78.32 an acre for eligible cereal acreage and £127.55 for every acre of set-aside.

- Other grants can be made under the woodland grant scheme to encourage the expansion of private forestry. Planting or establishment grants depend on size. A plantation under 25 acres (9.9ha) qualifies for £1175ha (broadleaved) and £795ha (conifer). Management grants worth between £10 and £45ha are payable.

Planting on good arable or pasture land qualifies for an additional payment of £600 (broadleaved) or £400ha for conifers.

- Payments for SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) range from £3 to £80ha. The total sum available is around £5.8 million covering 55,000ha in England.

- Countryside stewardship is available for certain specific landscapes, outside other schemes, to maintain historic landscapes, lowland heath and meadow pasture. Annual cost runs about £7.8 million and rising. Some 30,000ha is covered by agreements.

- The hedgerow incentive scheme has some £3.5 million available for the first three years. It offers payments from £2 per metre for restoring hedges.

- Norfolk County Council and some district councils can provide grants for amenity tree planting and some restoration projects.

Prints of photographs including those featured in this Report may be obtained from:  
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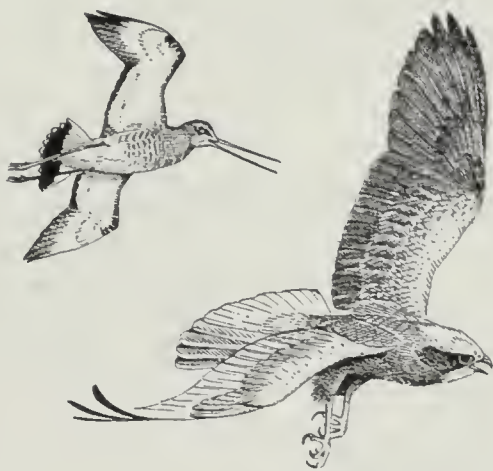


# Holkham Grazing Marshes N.N.R.

*Ron Harold*

Holkham National Nature Reserve is managed by English Nature under an agreement with the Holkham Estate. The reserve which stretches from Burnham Norton to Wakeney, occupies a key position within the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. Covering nearly 4000ha it is the third largest NNR in England and is of outstanding physiographic and ornithological importance. A composite site it comprises intertidal mud and sandflats, saltmarsh, dune systems, shingle spits and bars and islands. It also includes large areas of reclaimed saltmarsh and extensive conifer plantations and scrub. This tremendous variety of habitat is reflected by the wide range of animal and plant species found there.

As a key mainland location for passerine migrants and renowned as a rarity hot-spot, Holkham has long attracted birdwatchers. Until the latter half of the 1980's it's probable that many warranted the reclaimed saltmarsh, with its mix of dry grassland and arable land, worthy of little more than a cursory glance. That would be folly today. The changes in bird populations that have occurred here since high-water-table management was introduced in 1986 is phenomenal and has significantly enhanced the stature of the nature reserve, and indeed, the whole of the North Norfolk Coast in ornithological terms. Furthermore, the lessons learnt at Holkham may be applicable elsewhere along the coast.



*(R.A. Richardson)*

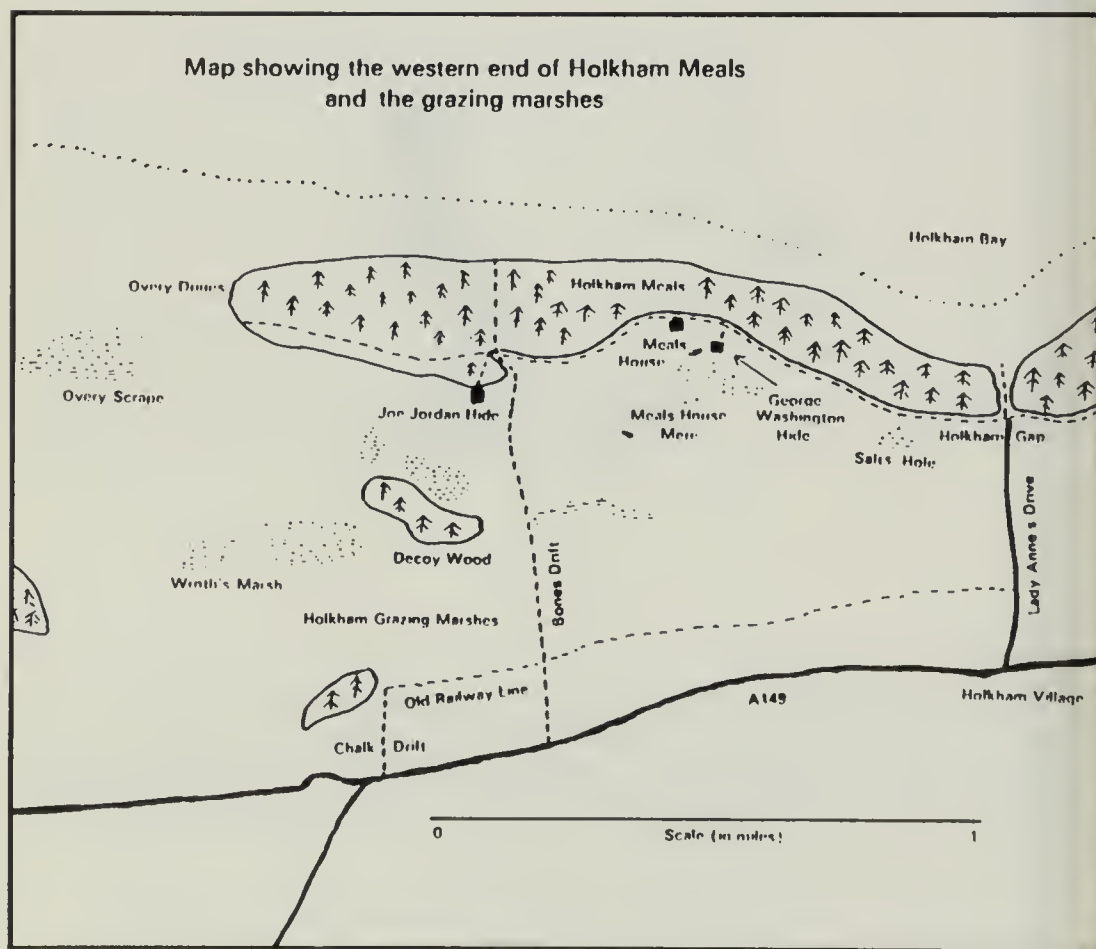
The history of the marshes shows that up to the beginning of the 17th century the area west of Wells consisted of an extensive saltmarsh protected on its seaward edge by a line of sand dunes. The first attempt at saltmarsh reclamation was undertaken in 1639 by John Parker who purchased the Overy Marshes from King Charles I and constructed a sea wall between Overy Staithe and the sand dunes. Later, in 1660 and 1720, the Coke

family constructed further embankments to the east. The reclamation was finally completed with the construction of the Wells sea wall in 1859.

The reclaimed marsh was used as pasture for cattle and sheep up to the Second World War, when some areas were utilised for arable crops. After the war the whole area reverted to pasture. The North Sea storm surge of 1953 which breached the Burnham Overy and Wells sea walls left sea-water on the land for eleven weeks. This brought about a major change in land management to aid soil recovery. In 1986 most of the arable was excluded from the nature reserve, primarily because the SSSI criteria could not be met. Needless to say these arable areas, especially the large block of land situated between Wells and Lady Anne's Drive, have considerable potential for conversion to wet grassland.

The wildlife interest of the permanent grassland was extremely limited with the main conservation interest largely confined to the dyke flora and fauna. By the mid 1980's prior to the introduction of high-water levels, the winter bird interest had already started to improve with an increasing number of Pink-footed Geese and Brent Geese using the grassland as a resting and feeding area. As might be expected breeding bird numbers were low at this time; only Lapwing being present in reasonable numbers (81 pairs in 1986).

Stimulated by a visit to Elmley Marshes in Kent and to other wet grassland sites, Ian Martin George and Martin Twyman Musgrave, NCC East Anglia, Regional Officer and Chief Warden respectively, lent support and encouragement to David Henshilwood, the reserve warden, in his efforts to establish a similar regime on the Holkham grassland.



the impending re-negotiation of the old nature reserve agreement combined with a mechanism (provided under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act) to pay compensation to owners and occupiers to maintain and enhance conservation interest, provided a good framework for negotiations with the Holkham Estate. Under the terms of the new nature reserve agreement, and with an agreed management policy for the grassland, adequate provision was given to implement the new scheme.

The inclusion of the Burnham Norton grassland in the new reserve agreement in 1988 was a tremendous bonus. We owe a debt of gratitude to Lord Coke who in the 1970's spurned suggestions that this important grassland should be ploughed to grow wheat.

A number of key objectives were identified to enhance the conservation interest over the 401.5ha (992 acres) of permanent grassland, principal among these were:

- To maintain a high water table, with water levels at or within 10cms of the surface throughout the year.

- Maintain stable high water levels in the dykes.

- Carry out rotational dyke cleaning on a 7 year cycle.

- Achieve partial flood conditions in winter and retain spring flood water for breeding waders and wildfowl.

- Confine the grazing season to the period 20th May to 15th October.

- Maintain disturbance-free areas during the winter months.

During the early 1980's David Henshilwood spent a great deal of time studying the existing waterflows and drainage patterns, in order to establish the correct siting of water control points. The first phase of works was under way by autumn 1986.

This involved installing a series of clay dams and piped water controls on Holkham marshes. Temporary sluice boards were inserted in the main outfall in the seawall at Burnham Norton. The result of these initial works was a rise in water level of up to 0.75 metre which achieved the winter/spring flooding objective. Work also commenced on the Meols House Scrape at this time and the hide was erected.

Spurred on by the early signs of increased interest by breeding birds including nesting by Gadwall, Shoveler and Teal for the first time, he pressed on with organising and supervising contractors. Works carried out in 1987/88 involved strengthening clay dams and constructing a new pile driven timber sluice at the main outfall at Burnham Norton. Meanwhile work commenced at Burnham Overy where two piped water control points were constructed to isolate the northern half of the marsh to accommodate high water table management. This work was necessary to enable the neighbouring arable farmer to evacuate water from his drainage system, via the south marsh, through the Burnham Overy seawall outfall. Other works during this period included doubling the size of the Meols House scrape.

The significant rise in water table caused low-lying gateways to flood. Between 1987-89 huge amounts of stone were transported to various locations to overcome this problem.

Real progress was being made and in 1988/89 further works that involved screening the Meols House Scrape, to ease disturbance to birds, and the excavation of the Burnham Overy scrape continued the programme of enhancement management. In an effort to ensure a good water supply to the new scrape a 400 metre plastic pipe was laid underground to link the scrape to the high level spring-fed dyke system on Holkham marshes.

By the time I took up post in late 1990 tremendous gains had already been made in the populations of breeding and wintering birds (see tables 1 and 2). A major concern at this time, however, was with water loss-particularly on the Holkham marshes where clay dams were leaking badly. Two drought years had taken their toll on the moisture in the



clay and inevitably this led to cracks appearing. This problem was overcome by installing timber dams, some complete with control sluices, but also by strengthening existing clay structures.

With funds available further excavation work was carried out on the Meols House scrape, nearly doubling the existing area. We relocated the hide on a new bank on the south side of the scrape. Unfortunately this did not impress some birdwatchers who complained at having to look into the sun! However, this action was justified given the regular disturbance to wildfowl, particularly Pink-footed Geese virtually ceased. Furthermore, other birds which were not known to breed on or near the scrape previously have since done so including Marsh Harrier and Avocet.

1992 saw a splendid new hide erected overlooking Holkham Fort and grazing marshes and almost immediately it became famous as *the* place in North Norfolk to view Peregrines.

By and large the objectives that were set regarding the height and control of water levels have been achieved. This is especially so at Burnham Norton and over most of Holkham Marshes where much of the bird potential has been realised. However, there is still scope for improvement on Burnham Overy marshes and to an extent on some fields at Holkham. The low water table requirements of the arable tenants are the constraint here.

Although many of the marsh dykes were excavated as drainage channels initially others are relicts of the old saltmarsh creeks. These predominantly shallower channels with their natural winding curves and bends bestow a distinctive character on the grazing marshes, especially at Burnham Norton. A seven year rotation for cleaning out dykes forms part of the management scheme. This rotation ensures that adjoining lengths are not disturbed in the same or following year, allowing colonisation by plants and invertebrates to take place from neighbouring un-managed lengths. In excess of 40 kilometres of dyke are managed as part of this rotation.

Grazing whether by cattle or sheep is fundamental to the success of the management scheme. On balance cattle are preferred and at the present time the vast majority of fields are grazed in this way. Sheep have been used successfully on Wroths Marsh, for example, since 1991 and consequently the desired sward length has been achieved by the autumn in each year. The only concern with sheep, apart from their natural ability to escape, is the multitude of extra feet available to trample nests and eggs, an alarming fact if you stop to consider one cow equates to six sheep as a grazing unit. To alleviate trampling the grazing season is delayed until 20th May and continues through to 15th October, but this is not a rigid time-table. It is beneficial to build up long term working relationships with individual graziers and to be aware of their needs and problems particularly when most desire an early turnout in the spring. Where possible we endeavour to accommodate this requirement if it does not harm the prospects of nesting birds, indeed other fauna and flora. Similarly if grass is still available in mid-October the season can be extended.

As a guideline the agreed management policy states the stocking rate to be within the range 0.5 - 1.5 units per acre. Analysis of the weekly stock counts would probably show an average of about 1 unit per acre is sufficient to achieve a sward length of about 8cms. This suits Wigeon, Brent Geese and Pink-footed Geese, but of course this depends on the growing season.

Haymaking carried out after the 1st July – and despite its harmful effect on nesting birds silage cutting earlier in the season – followed by aftermath grazing are also very effective methods of managing the grassland for winter birds. Much of Burnham Overy marshes are managed in this way and they provide prime goose pasture. The hordes of geese that gather here including the regular flock of up to 350 White-fronted Geese and



The use of fertiliser and herbicides is limited nowadays on the grazing marshes under the terms of the agreed management policy. Some graziers no longer apply nitrogen. The control of thistles and other troublesome weeds is carried out by topping where this is feasible rather than by spraying with herbicide. In the long term this could be extremely beneficial and lead to an improvement in the grassland flora.

Table 1

# Holkham NNR Grazing Marshes Breeding Birds 1986-1993

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Little Grebe prs	—	5	8	20	38	40	39	43
Pattern prs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Meron prs	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4-5
White Swan prs	2	4	5	6	4	9	4	8
Grey-lag Goose prs	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	17
Canada Goose prs	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	3
Field-duck B	—	—	1	2	14	5	9	10
Adwall B	—	1	3	8	9	12	15	12
Ballard B	12	19	23	36	48	61	68	82
Arganey prs	—	—	—	—	1	2-3	1	1
Noveler B	—	2	5	13	16	17	15	16
Bochard B	—	—	2	3	8	11	9	14
Lifted Duck B	—	2	6	12	8	11	9	13
Marsh Harrier N	1	1	1	2	5	5	7	8
Foot N	5	31	36	50	89	109	111	175
Oystercatcher prs	—	2	6	5	10	17	20	22
Vocet prs	—	—	—	1	6	15	27	28
Little Ringed Plover prs	—	—	—	—	—	2-3	3	3
Apwing prs	81	73	84	112	148	178	201	240
Pipe D	5	8	18	25	27	28	27	26
Redshank prs	8	8	18	26	39	51	50	56
Hearded Tit prs	P	P	P	P	2	4	6-7	6
Yellow Wagtail prs	5	9	10+	13	22	23	21	21
Black-tailed Godwit pr	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—

ey:

= Brood  
= Drummer

Prs = Pairs  
N = Nests

P = Present  
NC = Not Censused

tenants and grazing licensees has been instrumental in the success gained. The mosaic grass fields, reedbeds, scrapes, flashes, dykes and broadwaters situated as they are in prime location has proved irresistible to birds and results have exceeded all expectations. The importance of these marshes are highlighted by the fact that of the 22 breeding species censused annually 7 are afforded special protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and 15 are Red Data Book birds.

The first breeding bird survey was carried out in 1986 prior to implementation of the management scheme. By 1988 Snipe, Redshank and Yellow Wagtails had doubled populations and Pochard were nesting for the first time (Table 1). Year by year the management was developed and many species of wildfowl and waders increased accordingly. During a period when the decline in breeding populations of wet grassland waders such as Lapwing, Redshank and Snipe was causing alarm nationally the marked rise in the birds at Holkham provided some comfort. Snipe appear to have levelled out since 1986 (26-28 drummers), but numbers of Redshank and Lapwing continue to increase. However, with the latter species nesting in densities of up to 2.5 prs per ha on Holkham marshes the carrying capacity of some fields has probably peaked.

By 1989 rarer breeding waders were showing interest. In that year a pair of Avocets attempted to nest at Burnham Norton and in 1990 six pairs nested at Wrotham Marsh. Numbers have since risen to 28 pairs and breeding success has been good (50 young fledged in 1993). A single pair of Black-tailed Godwits generated tremendous excitement among the reserve staff when they nested in 1990 but unfortunately this effort was thwarted by a Fox. Hopes were high that regular breeding would occur. But even though display has been noted since, breeding was not suspected. Little Ringed Plover was added to the breeding list in 1991 when 2-3 prs nested and they have maintained a presence at this level.

Only Mute Swan and Mallard among the wildfowl appear to have been regular breeding birds pre 1986. Table 1 shows the range of wildfowl nesting since this time. Principal species are Garganey (usually only one pair), and Pochard (18-20 prs in 1993, probably representing around 5% of the British breeding population). Nesting ducks have proved difficult to survey accurately and until 1991 broods of ducklings were used to determine the minimum number of pairs. Subsequently, an effort has been made to census actual pairs although it is accepted that some may be non-breeders. This work produced the following figures in 1993: Shoveler 34 prs, Gadwall 20-25 prs, Mallard 100+ prs and Tufted Duck 21-25 prs. Also worthy of mention is the performance of Little Grebe: 43 prs and Coot: 175 prs in 1993. Remarkably neither was recorded nesting before 1987.

Reedbed birds also benefitted from the rise in water table. Compared to such illustrious reedbeds as those at Cley, Minsmere and Walberswick the Holkham reedbeds only qualify as postage stamps. But despite size limitation Bittern, Bearded Tit, Marsh Harrier and Water Rail have all nested successfully. In the case of Marsh Harrier it is difficult to visualise any further increase on 8 nests (1993) as all available territories appear to be taken up.

Nest predation, especially by Foxes and Carrion Crows, was identified as a major problem by 1990. The effect on some species was virtually impossible to measure but the effect on Lapwing, whose nests are relatively easy to observe, is used as an indicator. It suggests predation was high in many species. 1990 proved a disastrous season for Lapwings with only 15 young fledging from 148 prs. Recognising the emotive nature of the subject there was much soul searching before a decision was finally taken to set up a pest control programme. This was implemented in 1991 and targeted Foxes, Carrion Crows and Magpies.

The method currently employed to cull foxes is lamping and shooting. Fortunately

grazing marshes being wide open spaces are eminently suitable to employ this method which is efficient and humane. The Larsen trap is used to lure crows. These devices are in use from the end of March to June and they are checked regularly so that natives may be dispatched promptly.

Table 2

## Holkham NNR Peak Numbers of Winter Wildfowl 1983-1993

	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	93
Pink-footed Goose	825	1000	1600	2700	2130	3157	4500	16000	3030	6600	6515
White-fronted Goose	280	247	326	232	290	281	246	220	259	345	260
Brent Goose	x	x	x	4700	1850	3050	2800	7000	7000	6000	4107
Wigeon +	40	50	70	320	370	1500	2300	5810	7700	7020	9185
W. Gull	70	80	120	150	220	831	1000	917	1506	979	1279

Wigeon data from Norton Marshes not available

Wigeon figures 1983-88/89 Holkham Marshes only; 1988/89-93 include Burnham Overy/Burnham Norton

To date this campaign has proved a success and we have noted a marked improvement in recruitment of young birds among many wader and wildfowl species. If Wigeon is used as the indicator species to measure the success rate achieved since 1991 the results lend conviction to the argument to justify this approach to protect rare and vulnerable birds. In 1991, 91-110 young fledged (178prs); 1992, 130+ young (201prs); and in 1993, 150+ fledged (240prs).

Looking back to 1980/81 when Pink-footed Geese returned to Holkham on a regular basis is who could have forecast the vast numbers that would eventually invade the North Norfolk marshes and fields. The 1930's Warham/Wells peak roost count (5-8,000) has been surpassed on many occasions in recent years, but was totally eclipsed by the massive assemblage of 26760 birds that left the roost on 20th December 1993. Apart from providing surface water for bathing, raising the water levels has probably exerted little influence on this species and the Brent and White-fronted Geese that feed and rest on the marshes, but they have benefitted from:-

- extension of the no-shooting area.

- reduced disturbance due to the closure of Bone's Drove between mid-November and mid-March and re-siting of the Meols House Hide.

- controlled grazing to ensure grass is a suitable length.

The value of Holkham for geese is undoubted, both Pinkfeet and Brents occur in internationally important numbers with White-fronts present in nationally important numbers.

The Wigeon population has also risen spectacularly to the brink of international importance. A combination of a short sward, dykes and flashes has proved a tremendous draw.

I am confident the recent record count of 9185 will be exceeded in the next year or so. Other dabbling ducks have also increased, especially Teal, Shoveler and Gadwall.

Previously significant by their absence, now winter regularly (Tables 2/3). Diving ducks, however, remain scarce in winter.



Winter waders have also taken advantage of wetter conditions and increased accordingly, but the response has not been as dramatic as wildfowl (Table 3).

Finally, no account of Holkham marshes would be complete without mention of raptors and of course rare birds. Any visit in the winter, is tinged with anticipation that a day may conjure up a variety of predators. These might include Hen Harrier, Sparrowhawk, Peregrine, Merlin, and Buzzard. An exceptional day may also produce a Red Kite. Rare birds setting the pulse racing in recent years have included Marsh, Terek, Pectoral and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Sociable Plover, Oriental Pratincole, Little Bittern, Great White Egret and Snowy Owl.

Table 3

## Holkham NNR Peak Numbers of Selected Wildfowl and Waders 1989-1993

	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93
Mallard	205	413	254	376
Pintail	1	8	16	32
Shoveler	35	75	64	84
Gadwall	32	64	40	55
Coot	96	318	136	253
Oystercatcher	25	37	116	220
Golden Plover	—	865	1292	2120
Lapwing	600	1200	1416	2513
Dunlin	6	37	195	257
Snipe	12	85	39	100
Curlew	72	119	117	258
Redshank	6	27	71	83

**Acknowledgments:** Many thanks to David Henshilwood for implementing the grazing marshes scheme and to the summer wardens since 1986: Mark Cocker (1986) Verity Eve (1990-1993), Sam Mariner (1993), Michael Rooney (1988-1992) Jonathan Taylor (1993) and Barry Scampion (1987-1989) whose fieldwork, results and reports form the basis of this article.

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# The Oriental Pratincole in Norfolk

*Steve Gantlett, Dave Holman & Richard Millington*

On May 18th Norfolk birder David Nicholson received a telephone call from local farmer Chris Payne who had been collecting manure from Roseacre Riding Stables at Gimmingham. He had noticed a strange bird which, after looking at a field guide, he felt there was a pratincole. DN then joined CP on a return visit to the stables, but despite searching for some time they were unable to find the bird. They settled for alerting local birdwatchers to the possibility of a pratincole in the area.

DN returned to the site with Dave Holman early next morning and fortunately, despite steady rain, the bird was found about 7.00am. Quite obviously a pratincole, it initially appeared likely to be a Collared Pratincole, but flight views soon confirmed the identity as Britain's third (and Norfolk's first) Oriental Pratincole. After discussions with the landowners, the news was very soon on Birdline. It subsequently transpired that the Self, owner of the riding stables, had been seeing the stranger in her paddocks since May 14th and had been intrigued by its behaviour. The narrow lanes in the area meant that there was a potentially difficult access, but thanks to the generous hospitality of the Self and the consideration of the farmer, Alan Cargill, who consented to the adjacent field being used as a car park, many visiting birders were able to enjoy this exciting site.

The bird remained in the area until mid-day on June 3rd although it was rather elusive towards the end of its stay. Just an hour later a pratincole was reported heading west at Eybourne. And on June 4th it was watched for over two hours among the sea-pinks by Halfway House along Blakeney Point before flying off west at 10.15am. Fortunately the story continues. The bird was discovered at Burnham Norton June 5th. Here it was observed until the 21st and again from July 13th until August 13th. The next day it was well honoured and it stayed here until the 17th occasionally visiting Thornham Marsh. Presumably the same individual appeared at Pevensey Levels in East Sussex August 29th/30th and on Havergate Island on the Suffolk coast September 4th and 19th.

Twelve years ago the identification of Britain's first Oriental Pratincole was problematic. Largely due to that bird, which by a remarkable coincidence was also identified by DH, the species' field characters are now much better known.

The Oriental Pratincole breeds from the Indian sub-continent eastwards to north-eastern China with eastern populations wintering south to north-western Australia. Certainly an unlikely vagrant to Britain but there are two previous records in south-east England:

1981: Dunwich, Suffolk, from June 22nd until July 8th and presumed the same bird at Old Hall Marshes, Essex, from about August 6th until about October 11th.

1988: Elmley, Kent, from June 21st or 22nd until October 3rd.

More remarkably, there were no other European records until less than a month before the Norfolk bird when one was found in company with a single Black-winged Pratincole and 15 Collared Pratincoles in Cyprus on April 23rd 1993.

During the first five days following the announcement on Birdline some 2000 visitors arrived at Gimmingham and over £1200 was collected for charities. Observers enjoyed splendid views of this long distance vagrant. It often soared after aerial prey followed by a succession of rapid twists and turns just above the meadow. At other times when feeding on the ground it would leap into the air with wings poised above its back.

# Desert Warbler - a first for Norfolk

Mark Golley

The 27th was one of those frustrating late May days. I was desperate to be in the field but had woken to the sound of rain and it continued until about 4pm. However, I was determined to make something of a dreary day. Having spent 20 minutes or so poring over a dubious looking *acrocephalus* warbler behind Dauke's Hide I began looking at some waders. No sooner was I in the Hide than I was told of 2 Icterine Warblers at Blakeney Point. An appealing prospect reinforced by news of a Scarlet Rosefinch by the tearooms. My mind was made up. As the sky brightened so did my prospects...

An uneventful half-hour passed: just a few common migrants. By 6.15pm I had reached The Hood where the first Icterine was meant to be. But my thoughts had switched to bigger and better things. I was dreaming of finding a Black Lark! After all there was a recent Swedish sighting. With no other birders in sight I headed towards Blakeney Point, but as I took my first steps I turned left and not straight on. Fate had dealt me a very big card... I momentarily caught sight of a very pale warbler type flicking across the path 20 or so yards away. Within a moment I had seen where the mystery bird had landed and my trusty Leitz were focused, but not before it dropped out of sight. As it did so the paleness of the underparts became all too apparent as did the orangey upperparts and central tail feathers and the straw-yellow legs. This was a Desert Warbler!

I immediately reached for my radio to alert Bernard Bishop. No answer! I then contacted the Blakeney Point staff. Just in front of me was Norfolk's first Desert Warbler actively feeding within a few feet. But I knew someone else had to see it. Finally two breathless figures appeared. The bird had moved a hundred yards or so from where it was found but I had great delight in quickly pointing it out to an incredulous Mark Elliott. As the skies cleared and the sun returned the Cley contingent appeared. After stunning views with the prize only two feet away I departed to see the Icterine Warbler and floated back to Cley.

Next morning the bird was singing, holding territory and nest-building! Many hundreds of birders ventured along the Point over the next few days and Norfolk was the hotspot over the Bank Holiday. The warbler remained until 1st June. It presented few identification problems. A small rotund *sylvia* showing a milky tea coloured head and mantle which could look greyish or orangey tinged depending on the light. The wings were heavily abraded - particularly the scapulars and tertials. The general tone of the wings was warm buff-brown with darker primary coverts and alula. The orange central tail was also heavily worn. There were just enough feathers to see the orange edge of blackish central ones and the white outsers. Underparts were creamy off-white. Back parts showed a vivid, piercing, lemon-yellow iris, straw-yellow legs and feet and a fleshy pink bill with dark culmen and tip to the upper mandible. The song was a typically scratchy *sylvia* affair - most closely likened to the Whitethroat.

This was the tenth record for Britain and the first spring occurrence. The bird's behaviour (including nest-building) closely mirrors a recent German spring report.



# Pacific Swift at Cley – New to Norfolk

Steve Gantlett

10.45am on 30th May 1993 I arrived back at Cley Coastguards' car-park after an early morning sojourn on Blakeney Point to enjoy once again the Desert Warbler there. In Brown was in the car-park talking to Jackie and David Bridges about a strange bird he had just seen over the adjacent Cley Reserve.

I joined them and Alan explained that he had just been in the North Hide and had spent ten minutes watching an odd swift with a white rump. Mindful of the relative frequency of partial albino Common Swifts he felt quite sure that it was no more than that. Jackie and David set out for Blakeney Point and the Desert Warbler. I was anxious to see the bird, however, and accompanied by Alan I hurried down to the North Hide in case it was still there. It was indeed flying around over the North Scrape with Common Swifts. But its very clearly demarcated white rump instantly suggested that this was more than just a Common Swift exhibiting partial albinism. It was certainly very close to the Common Swifts in size, but its wings were considerably more scythe-shaped and its tail was noticeably longer and more deeply forked. This was clearly very interesting indeed!

I called Richard Millington and suggested that he hasten to the North Hide; Alan returned back to the car-park to alert other birders. There were really only two possibilities for the bird's identity. It had to be either a White-rumped Swift or a Pacific Swift even though the former is not on the British List and the latter has not occurred naturally in Britain. It was very slightly larger than the Common Swifts so that seemed to rule out the former, but Pacific Swift should show indistinct greyish feather-edgings to the body feathers. Although I knew that these greyish scaly markings were very difficult to see they were not visible even though the bird was often no more than 80 yards away in its good light.

Within a minute or two the bird obligingly did a fly-past just 25 yards in front of the North Hide. It was clear that it *did* have faint grey sealing on both the upperbody and the underbody. It was a Pacific Swift!

The news was on Birdline by 11am and birders from all over the country were converging on Cley Norfolk Naturalists Trust Reserve! The bird remained flying around the North Hide with Common Swifts until about 4.10pm when it disappeared. By this time several hundred observers had seen it. Other less fortunate ones were still arriving from further afield well into the evening. It was not seen again.

## Description

*Size and structure* Superficially similar to Common Swift, but very slightly larger and more robust, with distinctly more swept back, scythe-shaped wings, with less obvious angle at the carpal joint. Tail noticeably longer, more pointed and more deeply forked than Common Swift: forked even when fanned.

*Head and upperparts* Dark brownish-black, with greyer head, pale throat and narrow grey lines to feathers producing scaly appearance to nape and mantle, but only visible at very close range in favourable light. Off-white rump patch quite sharply defined and wrapping around sides of tail-base, and very obvious even at ranges of up to half a mile.

*Wings* Dark brownish-black, darkest on underwing coverts, and very slightly paler on upperwing coverts. Undersides of remiges dark, slightly silvery, grey. Upperside of remiges similar but darker, and contrasting rather less with upperwing coverts.

*Tail* Dark brownish-black.

*Underparts* Dark greyish-black, slightly paler than upperbody, with narrow grey tips to

feathers producing scaly appearance to whole underbody only visible at very close range favourable light (but more obvious and distinct than on upperparts).

The Pacific Swift breeds from Siberia eastwards to Kamchatka and Japan and south to south-east Asia. Northern populations winter from Malaysia to Australia. Only other European record of a Pacific Swift is an exhausted bird caught on a gas platform 10 miles off Happisburgh on 19th June 1981. It was flown by helicopter to Beccles, Suffolk, where it was released the same evening.

## Paddyfield Warbler - A First Record for Norfolk

*Kevin Shepherd & Steve Votier*

On September 24th KBS found a very strange looking *acrocephalus* warbler at Deadman's Wood Sheringham. Initial brief views strongly suggested Paddyfield Warbler, but more careful scrutiny revealed a number of apparently anomalous features. He called SV and the bird was promptly trapped. Following careful examination in the hand and reference to Svensson's *Identification Guide to European Passerines* (1993) and Lewington's *Field Guide to the Rare Birds of Britain & Europe* (1991) the bird was clearly either Paddyfield Warbler or Blyth's Reed warbler. More features seemed to point to the latter and the bird was identified as Blyth's Reed.

After arrangements were made with Young's Farm for access to the site the next day the bird was released. A significant proportion of the large number of birders who arrived were seriously questioning the identification, suggesting that the bird showed a number of features much more akin to Paddyfield Warbler rather than to Blyth's Reed Warbler. Full credit must be given to Clive Byers and Craig Robson who, following careful scrutiny of all the features, stated categorically that the vagrant was indeed a Paddyfield Warbler. Fortunately it had been photographed in the hand and a detailed description with thorough biometrics taken to enable any doubts to be totally eradicated. The bird performed well to all comers for the entire afternoon and evening. But following a moonlit night searches next morning were unsuccessful.

Main points used to confirm the identification were as follows: Short wings (wing length 61.5mm) with a very short primary extension, the primaries being equal to approximately only a quarter of the length of the exposed tertials or only extending just beyond the long uppertail coverts. Tertials with contrastingly darker centres. Striking head pattern consisting of broad white supercilium, widest in front of the eye, with a subtly darker upper border. Both these features varied in appearance according to light conditions and the bird's posture. Distinct paler grey patch to sides of the neck forming a 'shawl' effect. Sandy/olive upperparts, slightly warmer on the rump and uppertail coverts (although this individual atypical for Paddyfield showed no rufous tones). Very long tail, being distinctly rounded (the difference between the shortest and longest tail feathers was 8.45mm). Tail frequently cocked almost-Wren-like in the field. Wing formula and biometrics: Primaries emarginated on 3rd, 4th and 5th (slightly); 2nd primary = primary no 6; notch on the 2nd primary = 3-8mm < secondaries; 1st primary = 3.45mm > primary coverts and bill to skull = 15.8mm.

This is the first record for Norfolk although long predicted given the increased records during recent years. There are 21 previous occurrences in Britain. Paddyfield Warblers breed in southern Russia and Asia, wintering in south-west Asia and India.



# Lanceolated Warbler - New for Norfolk

Kevin Shepherd & Steve Votier

Like so many early mornings during the exceptional autumn of 1993, it was most exciting to watch Dead Man's Wood at Sheringham again working like a dream during the first glimmer of dawn twilight on 29th September. A substantial landfall of migrants freshly in from northern Europe was in progress with numerous small dark silhouettes hooting in from a great height into the isolated oasis of habitat amidst a desert of agricultural fields. Most were *tsipping* Song Thrushes, but the occasional *tick* of a Robin and soft *hweet* of a Chiffchaff indicated that a variety of species were involved.

Expecting such an arrival in promising meteorological conditions, we had erected a full complement of mist-nets much earlier by torchlight. Everything was ready and waiting for another great day! Separating to cover the site more effectively, SCV departed for a clifftop seawatch leaving KBS in charge of nets. We were entertaining a fellow singer from the north-west, Dave Riley about to enjoy the delights of a Norfolk 'fall' on his first visit.

As expected, first net-round was extremely hectic and included a pleasant surprise: a *Locustella* warbler extracted by DR. It was caught in the bottom panel of a net running through a narrow belt of rough grass fringing the seaward edge of the Wood. He naturally assumed it was a Grasshopper Warbler, but commented on its smallness before it was quickly bagged. KBS and DR then returned to the ringing laboratory to find an excited SCV announcing the presence of a Hoopoe well settled on the clifftop. He was keen to rejoin it, but paused to have a quick look at the *Locustella*. He too was immediately impressed by its small size and very streaky overall appearance. To find out just how small it really was we instantly took a wing-length and briefly consulted Svensson (1992) to find it well outside the range of Grasshopper Warbler and well within the range of Lanceolated Warbler!

With the emotion and confusion surrounding our misidentification of the Paddyfield Warbler at the site only five days previously still fresh in our minds, there was great pressure to make sure we got this one absolutely spot-on! We divided the workload, SCV carefully processing the *Locustella* whilst KBS and DR dealt with the remainder of the catch. The Hoopoe became irrelevant as all fell silent. The anticipated outcome seemed pure fantasy, but as DR released the last Robin SCV confidently declared "It's a definite Lancey!" Struggling to maintain composure, we stared in total disbelief. One of Europe's most sought after vagrants was before our very eyes - here in Norfolk for the first time!

Being familiar with the species extremely skulking habits, it was obvious that were we to release it in the Wood, it would never be seen again. We therefore decided to release it in a large area of suitable habitat on the clifftop where at least there was an outside chance that others would see it. Upon release it disappeared completely and we were convinced it had gone for ever. Miraculously however as soon as the first birders arrived it reappeared right beside the clifftop footpath near to where it was to remain faithful for the rest of the day. Although at times very skulking, it performed splendidly when observers remained patient. Everyone who arrived in time saw it well. It stayed until dusk when it was seen to go to roost, but after a starlit night there was no sign of it the following morning despite an extensive search.



*Description:* A streaked *Locustella* warbler showing the diagnostic features of the genus. Long under-tail covers almost reaching the tip of the tail. Very pale and convex second primary accentuating the rounded looking wings. Large bright pink legs and feet. Long, broad and well graduated tail. Very similar in appearance to Grasshopper Warbler, but it could be separated by a combination of plumage and structural features. Size: A very small warbler smaller than Grasshopper. Wing length only 56mm, a full 5mm shorter than the smallest Grasshopper Warbler recorded in Svensson (1992). This feature was also apparent in the field, the bird looking tiny as it scurried about, mouse-like, in the grass. Structure: The wing appeared very short in comparison to the tail, much more so than usually shown by the genus. Plumage: Generally much more heavily marked than the other streaked *Locustella* warblers. The most relevant features are shown in the illustration.

Although there are 57 previous records for Britain (none yet in Ireland) the species is an extreme rarity away from Shetland with only four previous occurrences to the south of Fair Isle. One was shot at North Cotes in Lincolnshire 18th November 1909 and there were singles at Damerham, Hampshire, 23rd September 1980, Prior's Park, Tyne & Wear, 13th November 1984 and on the Isle of May 2nd October 1987. Like the Sheringham bird, the 1980 and 1984 examples were also previously unseen until discovered in mist-nets. Lanceolated Warblers breed from Central Russia eastwards, wintering in south-east Asia.

## Ringling Report

*Allan Hale*

Norfolk ringers experienced a vintage year so far as rare birds were concerned. Amongst the total was a Serin at Garboldisham, whilst amazingly near Sheringham, local ringers caught Black-throated Thrush, Lanceolated Warbler, Paddyfield Warbler, Pallas' Warbler and Scarlet Rosefinch. The total number of birds ringed in the county was record 35,469.

Thanks are extended to all Norfolk ringers for submitting the data from which this report was compiled. Particular thanks again to Steve and Alison Wakeham for supplying Wash Wader Ringing Group recoveries and their interpretation.

Readers are requested to consult the 1992 Ringing Report for interpretation of the codes used.

### NORFOLK RECOVERIES NOTIFIED DURING 1993

**Gannet:** Geriatric, but still two years short of a longevity record!

1	17.05.70	Bass Rock, Lothian, Scotland	
X	17.10.93	Scolt Head Island, Brancaster	260 km S

**Bewick's Swan:** A bird with a numbered collar was noted at Welney on 22.12.92. It was re-located amongst the Waxham flock during the early part of 1993. It had been ringed as a yearling male as part of a group of moulting non-breeders on 10.08.92 at the northern Pechora Delta in Russia.

Another pair of non-breeders (also ringed in the Pechora Delta, and only seven days earlier than the bird above) moved to The Netherlands and stayed there until 22.11.9 before being seen, still together, at Haddiscoe in mid January.

**ink-footed Goose:** Only the tenth British recovery from Greenland (unfortunately not). Two other birds from the same catch were shot in Tayside (1988) and Lancashire (1990).

M	26.07.88	Badlanddal, Hold with Hope, Greenland	
	14.01.92	Brancaster	2,517 km SSE

**Wigeon:** The furthest east British Wigeon for the year, and the 17th to Italy are published.

M	25.10.84	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
	27.07.88	River Yenisey, Igarka, Russia	4,890 km E

M	01.02.92	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
	19.12.92	Valle Cavallino, Venezia, Italy	1,174 km SE

**tufted Duck:** The last British recovery from Iceland (the ninth), was as long ago as 1986. The bird in Tyumen was the furthest east of the six from Britain during the year.

M	20.11.82	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
	14.08.90	Myvatn, Sudar Thingeyjar, Iceland	1,738 km NW

M	23.09.83	Pensthorpe, Fakenham	
	25.05.91	Salekhard, Tyumen, Russia	3,932 km ENE

**Oystercatcher:** This details the sixth Oystercatcher to be recovered in Russia (the second from this particular region) and represents the most north-easterly British-ringed oystercatcher.

During 1993 The Wash longevity record was beaten by a bird of 25 years and 7 months.

	28.03.82	Terrington, King's Lynn	
	14.05.91	Leshukonskoye, Arkhangel'sk, Russia	2,907 km ENE

**Avocet:** Although insufficient information is available for the preferred reporting format, there is a fascinating series of records relating to an Avocet at Cley-next-the-Sea during February 1992. It had been ringed as an adult female during May 1991 in Schleswig-Holstein (northern Germany). In August of the same year it was moulting in Denmark, before being sighted at Cley the following February. A month later, during March and April 1992, it was back at its ringing site in Germany, before returning once again to Denmark during December 1992.

**Ringed Plover:** A rapid movement by a recently fledged bird. British-bred Ringed plovers are resident or short-distance migrants, with dispersal not normally expected before September.

	29.05.93	Holme-next-the Sea	
	31.07.93	Teesmouth, Cleveland	210 km NNW

**Knot:** The majority of knot occurring on The Wash breed in Greenland and north-east Canada, with the remainder being from the Siberian population. The main influx of these birds is during August when they arrive to moult, after which some birds remain to winter whilst others disperse to other estuaries in Britain and western Europe. Not many knot occur on estuaries away from the North Sea/Atlantic coasts, and this is only the fourth Polish-ringed Knot to be caught in Britain (the third on the Wash). All three

Wash birds were ringed as juveniles in August or September. We cannot be sure of the origins of these birds.

3	12.09.91	Ujście Wisły K Swibna, Gdansk, Poland	
R	01.09.92	Terrington, King's Lynn	1,243 km V

**Curlew Sandpiper:** The first record of a British-ringed Curlew Sandpiper to be recovered in Italy (made even better by the fact that it was not shot!). It is also one of the first to be recovered anywhere on spring passage. Curlew Sandpiper numbers in autumn chiefly involve juvenile birds. Subsequent spring and adult migration invariably occur further east in Europe. This example conforms to this pattern – caught as a juvenile in autumn 1991 and caught on spring northward passage inland north of Naples in March 1993.

3	07.09.91	Terrington, King's Lynn	
R	09.05.93	Regi Lagni, Marcianise, Italy	1,682 km S

**Dunlin:** The first two are examples of the *alpina* population which breeds in northern Scandinavia and north-west Russia. Most of this race arrive from late July onwards, moult on The Wash, with some moving on to other estuaries further south to winter. The Norwegian bird was ringed almost as far north-east as it is possible to go in Norway whilst the majority of Dunlin bearing Russian rings hail from Great Aynov Island, not far across the border.

Also shown is a noteworthy record which helps to illustrate Dunlin's apparent preference to use west coast estuaries during spring migration, plus a Swedish-ringed bird returning to its place of ringing.

3	13.08.75	Nesseby, Finnmark, Norway	
R	26.09.88	Terrington, King's Lynn	2,423 km S
4	24.07.85	Great Aynov Island, Murmansk, Russia	
R	24.01.92	Terrington, King's Lynn	2,492 km S
6	19.04.84	Collister Pill, Newport, Gwent	
R	22.07.89	Terrington, King's Lynn	252 km N
R	03.05.93	Battlehill, Annan, Dumfries & Galloway	335 km N
4	28.07.71	Ottenby, Oland, Sweden	
R	11.08.75	Terrington, King's Lynn	1,108 km WS
R	26.07.88	Ottenby, Oland, Sweden	1,108 km EN

**Greenshank:** Only 80 Greenshank have been ringed by the Wash Wader Ringing Group since operations started in 1959 so recoveries are few and far between. This is the fourth recovery, the second to France, with the others coming from Denmark and Morocco.

4	13.07.91	Terrington, King's Lynn	
+	21.07.92	Baie des Veys, Manche, France	401 km SS

**Black-headed Gull:** A nestling ringed in Lithuania, June 1989, was caught again in the Netherlands during August of the same year. It was finally found dead near Cromer in October 1991.

An adult ringed in Norwich during January 1987 was seen in Sjaelland, Denmark, both July 1992 and March 1993.



An even more complete history concerns a bird ringed in Kobenhavn, Denmark in oril 1986, before being seen there again in April 1988. It was subsequently seen in armouth during the winters of 1989, 1990, 1992 and 1993 before returning yet again to obenhavn in March 1993.

**Common Gull:** Two birds from Finland (both ringed as nestlings) were found in the instanton area during the search for Redshank corpses following the cold weather mortality in 1991.

\* Norfolk winter birds were subsequently found in both The Netherlands and in ermany.

**Common Tern:** There is a spread of Common Tern recoveries all around the north-westfrican coast.

27.06.92	Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth	
24.11.92	At sea off Nouadhibou, Western Sahara	3,804 km SSW

**Little Tern:** Little Terns often breed at great distances from their natal area. The first own below also represents a new national longevity record, whilst the second was und mid-way between the breeding areas on the Mediterranean coast and the upper ver Loire.

29.06.76	Waxham, Stalham, Norfolk	
22.05.93	Norderney, Ostfriesische Inseln, Germany	382 km ENE
28.06.90	Great Yarmouth	
16.07.92	Queyras, Hautes-Alpes, France	951 km SSE

**Barn Owl:** The longest movement of the year is shown, although there were others of and 53 km. Norfolk Barn Owls are generally more sedentary than these would sug- st (there were six movements of less than 10 km and three between 10 and 20 km).

08.07.91	Burnham Market	
13.11.93	Barking, Stowmarket, Suffolk	92 km SSE

**Long-eared owl:** Recoveries of Long-eared Owls are a rarity in this report. This grant is particularly interesting, although we have only an approximate idea of its ori- 1.

02.04.89	Helgoland, Germany	
17.03.92	Beighton, Norwich	460km WSW

**Puffin:** A recorded movement of only two kilometres, but this 14 year old bird must have velled tens of thousands more during its long life.

16.07.80	Earlham, Norwich	
19.05.93	near Eaton, Norwich	2 km E

**Sand Martin:** Birds trapped at an Ickburgh (near Mundford) breeding colony, came om South Acre (also breeding) and Isle of Grain (migrating).

At an autumn roost near King's Lynn, two birds subsequently bred in Lancashire, whilst another was trapped on migration at Dungeness, Kent, only five days later.

The movement shown in full details one of the now regular Sand Martins from itain to Djoudj, Senegal.

26.07.91	Hempton, Fakenham
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R	28.11.92	Pare National Oiseaux du Djoudj, Senegal	4,317 km SSW
<b>Blackbird:</b> Shown below are the most southerly, easterly and northerly birds of the year.			
5	19.01.91	Hevingham, Aylsham	
X	20.02.92	Gennes sur Glaize, Mayenne, France	558 km SSW
4F	31.10.92	Garboldisham, Diss	
X	02.05.93	Gustrow, Schwerin, Germany	780 km ENE
3M	21.12.90	Ditchingham, Bungay	
//	01.11.92	Nordfjordeid, Sogn og Fjordane, Norway	1,083 km NNE

**Fieldfare:** An interesting multiple movement from the only Fieldfare ever to be trapped in this particular ringer's garden!

5M	11.02.91	Burnham Market	
R	25.06.92	Hallestad, Sweden	1,122 km NE
X	22.02.93	Kolding, Denmark	639 km ENE

**Redwing:** As there were only three weeks between the two trappings, perhaps it indicates a preference for north midland birds to head for the narrower part of the North Sea before crossing to the Continent.

3	12.03.93	Swanwick, Derbyshire	
R	02.04.93	Garboldisham, Diss	174 km SE

**Reed Warbler:** The fourth Norfolk Reed Warbler to Djoudji in three years. As usual the passage through Senegal occurred during late March/early April (significantly later than the Sedge Warblers).

4	14.06.92	Cantley B.F., Norwich	
R	28.03.93	Pare National Oiseaux du Djoudj, Senegal	4,315km SSW

**Lesser Whitethroat:** Unusually this is the second time that Lesser Whitethroat has appeared in this section of the report in four years.

3	01.08.93	Boughton Fen, Stoke Ferry	
R	12.09.93	Trimley St Mary, Felixstowe, Suffolk	88km SE

**Goldcrest:** This is one of six international movements concerning Britain during the year (five incoming and one outgoing).

3M	14.10.91	Store Fjaderagg, Holmon, Vasterbotten, Sweden	
R	25.10.91	Wells-next-the Sea	1,675 km SW

**Spotted Flycatcher:** Rather than build up large quantities of fat followed by a lengthy migration flight, Spotted Flycatchers tend to feed little and often en route. This recovery therefore, is typical of what might be expected.

3	01.09.92	Banningham, Aylsham	
X	30.09.92	Agoncillo, Logrono, Spain	1,182 km SSW

**Golden Oriole:** Just six Golden Orioles were ringed in Norfolk during 1993, amazingly leading to two recoveries. Both were ringed as nestlings in the west of the county on 22nd June. They travelled to Dunwich (30.08.93) and Ipswich (24.08.93) respectively.

he Dunwich bird was trapped by another ringer, whilst the Ipswich bird hit a window and is currently mounted in the town museum.

**erlin:** Sadly, the first Serin to be ringed in the county perished after hitting a window only five days later. The unseasonal dates were 10th and 15th February.

**reenfinch:** This represents only the third British-ringed Greenfinch to be recovered in Germany. It does however, fit in nicely with the increasing regularity of movements to and from Norway (see 1992 report for further details).

The second shown is developing quite a history, and since it was trapped by ringers on all occasions, perhaps there is more to come.

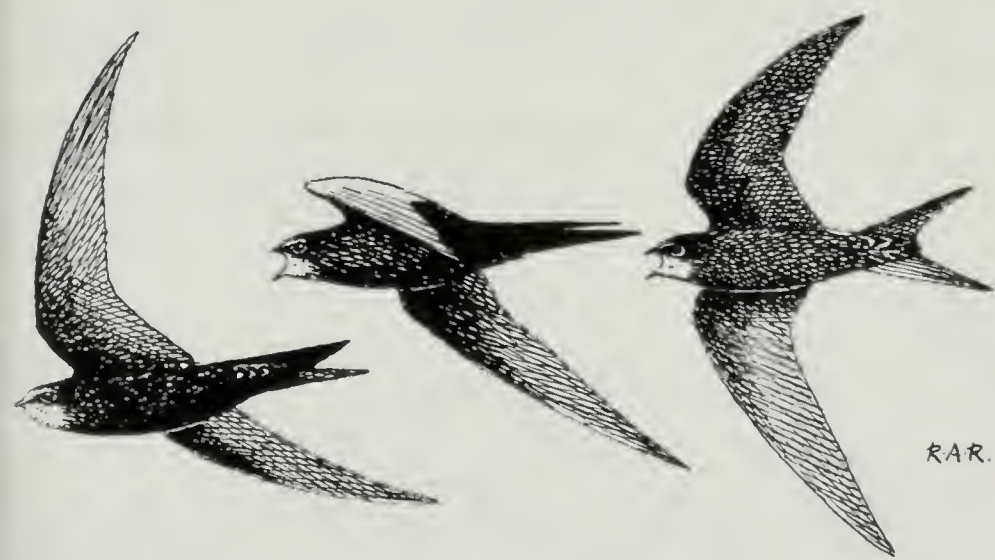
M	09.12.91	Shimpling, Diss	
	04.03.92	Shimpling, Diss	
	27.04.92	Danschendorf, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	696 km ENE
M	16.04.91	Garboldisham, Diss	
	28.11.92	Langton Herring, Dorset	311 km SW
	07.11.93	Abberton Reservoir, Essex	300 km ENE

**skin:** A cat was responsible for this recovery in central Sweden. Presumably the bird was on its breeding ground – as doubtless was the cat!.

7	05.12.92	Banningham, Aylsham	
	23.06.93	Hackas, Jamtland, Sweden	1,363 km NE

**ow Bunting:** Two more birds showing a NNW/SSE movement to add to four previous examples.

M	19.01.93	Titchwell, Hunstanton	
V	01.03.93	near Braemar, Grampian	503 km NNW
	19.01.93	Titchwell, Hunstanton	
	06.05.93	Redcar, Cleveland	213 km NNW



RAR.

(R.A. Richardson)



# Classified List



Internationally important numbers of waders including Avocets and Grey Plovers assemble on the Wash in early autumn (C.R. Knight)







This long staying first-winter Iceland Gull patrolled Sheringham for weeks (Above, *D.A. Dorling*; below, *J. Bhalerao*)







Stone Curlew in spectacular threat display (*C.R. Knights*). Woodlarks continue increasing with 82 singing males in the Norfolk Brecks (*R. Powley*)







Common Terns fishing in Blakeney harbour. An impressive 3000 pairs of Sandwich Terns nested on Blakeney Point (*J. Reed*)



The order used follows the sixth edition of the Checklist of Birds of Britain & Ireland published by the BOU in 1992. The English names which are most familiar have been retained. Observations refer to 1993, unless otherwise stated. To save space, all but the most essential initials have been omitted. Records are of single birds unless otherwise stated.

### **Gold-throated Diver**

*Gavia stellata*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in increasing numbers; rare in summer.*

Regularly offshore until May 10th and from Aug 17th with out-of-season records from Holme May 20th, Weybourne June 1st, Sheringham June 4th, Brancaster July 10th, Sheringham on 12th and Holme on 29th. Typically largest numbers reported along north coast between Blakeney Point and Walcott Jan to early March and again in Dec including 100-120 regularly Cley to Sheringham Jan 1st to 25th, 250 regularly Sheringham Feb 16th to 19th, 110 Paston Feb 21st, 160 Sheringham March 5th, 100 Overstrand March 6th, 240 Sheringham March 8th, 268 Paston Dec 25th, 295 Paston on 28th, 300 Sheringham on 28th and 400+ Sheringham on 30th.

Away from this area only reports of more than 20 birds were 45 east Holkham Jan 4th and 66 west Holme Dec 31st. Smaller numbers during remainder of year with peak monthly counts 15 Sheringham April 13th, only 5 reports of singles in early May, only ones and twos in Aug, 31 Sheringham Sept 4th where 90 Sept 26th, 46 Oct 14th and 65 Nov 23rd.

As always the vast majority of sightings were of birds flying by rather than on sea and these movements continue to be difficult to decipher. Some are presumably migratory movements, but most are thought to be daily feeding excursions – though puzzling since relatively few are actually seen feeding offshore and passages are often haphazard; lots of birds moving one day, very few the next. Direction often varies and large morning movements are rarely followed by reverse ones later in the day. A possible explanation is that birds (perhaps very large numbers) are feeding mainly far offshore beyond the range of vision, occasionally coming closer inshore in certain weather conditions. Whatever the case waters around Norfolk are of great conservation importance for this species and more detailed surveys to assess the real situation are needed.

As well as occasional sightings of singles (at least some sick and/or oiled) on coastal pools close to high-water mark, birds turned up inland at Breydon and Thompson Water on 14th, Ranworth Broad on 17th, Felbrigg on 26th, Pentney GP Feb 14th, Colney GP March 4th-6th and Blickling Dec 4th.

### **Black-throated Diver**

*Gavia arctica*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant usually in small numbers but exceptional autumn movement in 1989.*

Typically very scarce during early part of year with singles at Cley (PAG) and Waxham (KJB PFF) Jan 1st; 2 at Winterton Jan 3rd; singles Lynn Point Jan 6th/8th; Holkham Bay on 10th (MR); Weybourne to Cley 17th/18th (APB MPT); Overstrand on 28th and single Sheringham Feb 19th. Two arrived Filby/Rollesby Broads Feb 14th-16th, one remaining until March 8th.

In spring singles (perhaps the same bird) at Holme on 11 dates between March 10th and April 12th with another there May 16th.

In autumn early birds at Cley and Horsey Gap Sept 4th/5th (ADB DGN) followed by an average showing between Sept 22nd and Dec 5th. Edge of the Wash between Hunstanton and Titchwell held most birds: one Sept 22nd, 5 present Oct 1st-6th, up to 3 daily Oct 7th-31st and singles irregularly during Nov. Elsewhere 2 at Cley Oct 2nd, 2 Sheringham Oct 10th, singles at Sheringham Oct 14th and 24th, Yarmouth Oct 24th.



Brancaster Oct 29th, Salhouse Nov 1st, Winterton Nov 4th and Sheringham Nov 6th, 2 at Horsey Nov 7th, singles Holkham Nov 9th, Cley Nov 19th and 26th, Blakeney harbour and Sheringham Dec 5th and Horsey Dec 27th.

**Great Northern Diver**

*Gavia immer*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers; exceptional in summer.*

Only sightings during the early year were singles Weybourne Jan 3rd, Holkham Bay Jan 10th and 23rd, commuting between Cley and Sheringham Jan 10th-18th, at Holme Feb 10th and Weybourne Feb 19th. One Holme/Titchwell on most dates March 10th to April 10th with 2 March 14th and another in full summer plumage off Cley May 9th.

In comparison with recent years unusually scarce in autumn: singles Hunstanton Sep 21st and Cley on 25th/26th and Waxham on 26th, singles (perhaps the same bird) on most dates at Holme/Titchwell/Brancaster Oct 16th to Nov 27th, singles at Horsey, Holkham and Sheringham all Nov 6th and singles east at Sheringham Nov 15th and 21st were the only Oct/Nov occurrences.

A few more appeared in Dec including 2 at Holme on 1st, singles at Brancaster on 3rd, Holme on 12th and Paston on 14th when 3 at Horsey and different singles at Sheringham on 20th and 21st.

**Little Grebe**

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

*Resident breeder, moving to Broads and sheltered coastal waters in winter; also passage migrant.*

Breeding records (numbers of pairs in brackets) at Blakeney Freshes (1), Brancaster Fresh marsh (2), Breydon/Berney (15-20), Cockley Cley (1), Flitcham (1), Holkham NNR (43), Holkham Park Lake (10), Holme (3), Pentney GP (1), Sennowe Park (1), Snettisham Park Farm (1), Titchwell (1), Tottenhill GP (1) and West Mere (1). Monthly totals recorded at selected sites as follows:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Hickling	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Cley	-	-	5	-	-	-	13
Blakeney Harbour	9	11	-	-	-	-	4
Wells Harbour	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Holkham Park Lake	-	-	-	21	36	15	-
Holme Broadwater	2	2	6	1	8	10	10
Snettisham Pits	40	53	32	21	42	55	109

A single record of a bird at sea: off Titchwell April 2nd.

**Great Crested Grebe**

*Podiceps cristatus*

*Breeds on most suitable waters. Majority move in autumn to coastal waters; the Wash and at time Breydon holding the largest concentrations.*

Breeding records (numbers of pairs in brackets): Broom Heath (2), Filby (8), Gunton Park (2), Holkham Park (3), Horning (1), Narborough (1), Norwich City centre (1), Sparham GP (4), Thetford Nunnery (4), Thompson (1), Welney (7) and Wroxham (4).

Early nesters at Broom Heath where both pairs incubating Feb 13th and at Horning where young Feb 27th.

Monthly totals recorded at main sites as follows:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Weydon	-	-	3	1	48	54	19	25	16	3
Holkham Bay	21	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	19	8
Titchwell	17	-	-	-	-	-	5	10	25	20
Holme (sea)	14	15	9	8	8	11	58	62	24	12
Hunstanton	-	-	-	25	-	-	25	24	22	-
Snettisham (sea)	19	-	-	-	-	92	27	-	-	-
Snettisham (pits)	-	-	-	-	12	13	-	-	-	-
Blakeney	-	-	10	27	-	-	-	-	-	-

Worthy movements: 33 east and 6 west Holme Oct 14th and 10 west and 7 east Sheringham 15th.

### 1-necked Grebe

*Podiceps grisegena*

*passage migrant and a winter visitor especially following severe conditions.*

During the first 2 months of the year singles at Holme Jan 3rd (possibly the same bird intermittently between Weybourne and West Runton Jan 16th-30th), at Overstrand Jan 4th, Hunstanton Jan 30th, Holme and Paston Feb 10th and Holme and Wells harbour 13th.

Spring birds at Holme March 10th-12th, 21st and 29th; Holkham Bay March 14th; Paston March 18th; Brancaster April 6th and Blakeney Harbour April 11th.

Despite ideal conditions for sea-watching at optimum periods, the species was mysteriously scarce in autumn. Following the first at Sheringham Aug 18th, reports of 8 birds Aug, at least 17 in Sept, about 17 in Oct and about 10 in Nov. All singles apart from 2 at Holme Sept 4th, 2 Titchwell Sept 23rd increasing to 3 on 24th to 26th, 4 Holme 5th, 2 Brancaster Oct 7th, 2 west Holme Oct 14th, 2 Holme Oct 30th and 2 Holkham Bay Nov 12th. As usual most reports between the Wash and Paston, excepting singles at Waxham Aug 22nd, Eccles Sept 1st, Winterton Sept 2nd, Horsey Sept 26th Hemsby Oct 14th.

Dec sightings involved singles at Titchwell on 2nd, Holkham Bay on 5th, Lynn Point 6th and Snettisham Pits 18th-21st. Only 2 inland occurrences: Cockshoot Broad Oct 4th and Denver Sluice Nov 4th-6th.

### Long-tailed Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

*winter visitor and passage migrant particularly in autumn with Holkham Bay usually acting largest numbers.*

Local records until May 2nd and from Sept 26th and, as usual, the edge of the Wash between Hunstanton and Titchwell was most favoured with up to 2 in Jan/Feb, 6 in March (including 2 summer-plumaged birds displaying on 31st), 2 in April, 2 in Sept, 5 Oct, 7 in Nov and 4 in Dec.

Numerous reports from elsewhere in the Wash and along the North coast including a g-staying and much admired bird on Blakeney Freshes March 9th-May 2nd and 5 in Holkham Bay Oct 19th.

Other than one at Breydon Nov 6th-8th, no reports below Paston. Inland: Singles at Paston Morley GP/Sparham Pools Jan 17th-March 27th, Hickling Jan 23rd-Feb 4th, Cockland Broad Oct 25th and the Wensum at Fakenham Nov 23rd.

### **Black-necked Grebe**

*Podiceps nigricollis*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor; scarcest of the regular grebes. Summer plumage examples in most years.*

A single record in opening months: Holme March 14th (GFH) followed by one in summer plumage at Welney April 10th (JBK MR) and singles at Hunstanton Nov 1st (M) and Pentney GP Dec 3rd moving to Tottenhill GP next day (SB JBK JRW).

### **Fulmar**

*Fulmaris glacialis*

*Breeding birds at colonies almost throughout year. Also impressive coasting and storm movements. Darker coloured blue phase examples almost annual in very small numbers.*

Whilst the Hunstanton colony continued to thrive with 87 young counted Aug 12 (MR), the monitored breeding population between Weybourne and Sheringham declined still further to only 6 young fledged. Continued heavy Fox predation is probably the main reason for the decline although some Rat predation and the loss of nesting sites on-shore storms in winter played a part (KBS *et al*). No breeding data received from elsewhere.

More notable movements included 100 west Holme June 13th, 330 east Sheringham Aug 22nd, 40 west Holme Dec 10th and 40 west/25 east Sheringham Dec 24th with colossal passage all along the North coast Sept 14th (strong easterly wind and driving rain, when 7600 east Sheringham and 4364 east in 6 hours Paston. The latter included complete albino detected at Paston, Sheringham and Cley. Blue-phase birds at Sheringham in the colony March 15th to June 20th; also 6 east Sept 14th, one west Oct 13th, one east Oct 23rd, one east Dec 14th, one west and one east Dec 24th and 3 east Dec 26th. Blue-phase also at Paston where one west Sept 12th and one east on 14th. One at Breydon Sept 12th was the only non-coastal record.

### **Cory's Shearwater**

*Calonectris diomedea*

*Vagrant from the Mediterranean/North Atlantic; occurs almost annually in autumn*

A record year for this highly elusive wanderer (8+ records of singles and one or two together) commencing Aug 22nd when 2 singles east at Cley (DPA CEW) were seen 10 minutes later passing Sheringham (JRL KBS SCV *et al*) and one east at Mundesley (MF) was probably one of these birds. On Aug 27th one east at Holkham Bay (MR) was radioed through to Blakeney Point where it was spotted continuing east short while later (DM). Also 2 together east at Mundesley Sept 4th (CA JRA MF); one south at Horsey Gap Sept 15th (PRA KRK); one east at Sheringham Oct 14th (PJH MPL *et al*); one west at Sheringham Oct 23rd (MPL KBS SCV *et al*) and one west at Sheringham Oct 25th (KBS).

### **Cory's/Great Shearwater**

Two records received of unidentified 'large' shearwaters. A very distant bird east of Sheringham Sept 3rd had a typical Cory's mode of flight, but was at too great a range to discern plumage detail (DJH KBS *et al*). Amazingly a pure albino flying east of Sheringham Sept 26th was engaged in a mode of flight much more akin to Great Cory's Shearwater (PJH MPL KBS SCV *et al*). Being pure white all over it was impossible to eliminate Cory's (or even rarer species) with certainty!

### **Sooty Shearwater**

*Puffinus griseus*

*Autumn passage migrant, occasionally in large numbers during northerly gales. Rare in spring.*

Due to the problems of duplication of sightings as birds pass along the coast, records



summarised according to date and maximum count at any one site (singles only recorded no count given). Along the North coast between Hunstanton and Walcott recorded on dates between Aug 22nd and Oct 23rd; on Aug 22nd (5), 24th (2), 27th (3), 28th and 31st (8 Mundesley), Sept 3rd, 4th (7), 5th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th (14 Sheringham), 15th, 16th (3), 26th (8 Holme) and 27th (2) and Oct 13th (28 Sheringham), 14th (23 Mundesley) 21st (5), 22nd (2) and 23rd.

Along the East coast 1-5 between Winterton and Horsey on 7 dates Aug 28th to Sept 1st with one off Yarmouth Sept 14th.

#### **Pomarine Skua**

*Puffinus puffinus*

*Passage migrant, largest numbers observed during autumn storms when examples recorded far inland suggest overland passage to the North Sea.*

Very rarely recorded in the county in early spring, so 3 west at Holme March 12th was interesting (NL). More typical summer and autumn occurrences between May 29th and Oct 21st, but numbers very small. In fact double figures were attained on only 4 dates including 12 Titchwell June 13th, 90 Sheringham Aug 22nd and 40 Cley Sept 14th. As always, most recorded along the North coast, fewer off the East coast. One at Breydon Oct 10th (PRA SS) was the only non-coastal report.

#### **Mediterranean Shearwater**

*Puffinus yelkouan*

*Annual in very small numbers, mainly during early autumn.*

Earliest 2 east Cley June 27th (MAG) followed by 2 east Mundesley Aug 22nd (MF). At Sheringham one west Aug 23rd (KBS SCV *et al*), one west Aug 26th (DPA KBS *et al*), one west Sept 3rd (KBS *et al*) and one east Sept 14th (RM KBS SCV *et al*). Also 2 east Holme Sept 4th (NL).

#### **Storm Petrel**

*Hydrobates pelagicus*

*Almost annual late autumn visitor in very small numbers, often during stormy weather.*

Mundesley heading east Sept 27th (MF) the sole record for the year.



*Leach's Petrels (N. Arlott)*

**Leach's Petrel***Oceanodroma leucorhoa**An autumn gale-blown visitor to coastal waters; rare in spring.*

Details of all sightings (singles unless otherwise stated) as follows:

Sheringham Aug 24th; Cley/Blakeney Point Aug 30th; Sheringham Sept 3rd; Holme (3) Cley, Weybourne, Sheringham (2) and East Runton Sept 4th; Cley (2) Sept 5th; Holme Brancaster, Holkham Bay, Wells (3), Blakeney Point (2), Cley (4), Sheringham (2) and Overstrand Sept 14th; Holme (2), Blakeney Point and Sheringham (3) Sept 26th; Sheringham (3) Sept 29th; Sheringham Oct 14th; Holkham Bay and Sheringham (2) Oct 21st and Titchwell Oct 30th. An average year.

**Gannet***Sula bassana**A passage migrant, most abundant during autumn storms.*

Recorded regularly throughout the year. Peak monthly counts: 23 Holkham Jan 25th; 8 Sheringham Feb 21st; 20 Sheringham April 10th; 110 Scolt Head May 26th; 100 Cley June 27th; 210 Sheringham July 20th; 280 Sheringham Aug 23rd; 1480 east Mundesley Sept 14th; 470 Sheringham Oct 21st; 8 Sheringham Nov 6th and 32 Mundesley Dec 24th.

**Cormorant***Phalacrocorax carbo*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in increasing numbers; also non-breeder throughout the summer. Has nested. Continental race sinensis (ringed in Holland) identified in spring.*

Peak monthly counts from main sites:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Breydon	89	71	117	59	36	61	87	124	109	86	87
Ranworth	256	228	267	-	-	-	-	97	194	175	167
Holkham Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	360	301	156	110
Scolt Head	-	-	-	-	-	32	-	-	-	-	-
Titchwell	-	-	-	-	19	24	-	210	-	-	-
Holme	12	6	5	6	12	4	8	25	16	9	4
Snettisham	47	34	34	15	33	29	41	105	113	96	55
Welney	248	211	237	112	60	22	34	111	121	217	176

**Shag***Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

*Tidal waters visitor in small numbers, usually during autumn and winter. "Wrecked" birds inland periodically.*

1993 was an excellent year with good numbers and many lingered over prolonged periods. For Jan/Feb and from Sept onwards records are summarised giving monthly maxima at main sites holding lingering birds:

	Jan	Feb	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sheringham	2	2	5	6	4	
Wells Harbour	2	1	1	4	4	
Brancaster Harbour	-	-	3	24	40	1
Hunstanton	4	-	11	21	20	

Additional reports of smaller numbers staying briefly were numerous and widespread along the North coast, many probably relating to birds dispersing from roost-sites. On

ports south of Happisburgh: Yarmouth Feb 9th and Oct 15th and Horsey/Waxham 2  
pt 17th, Sept 26th and Oct 15th/16th.

Only small numbers March and Aug whilst April to July records consisted of Paston  
April 2nd; 2 Hunstanton until April 19th; Snettisham May 16th; Brancaster June 5th;  
Sheringham July 20th; Salthouse July 28th and Sheringham area 3 July 21st to 31st.

Inland: Pentney GP Jan 26th and March 30th; Ten Mile Bank Feb 10th and June  
th; Wayford Bridge Aug 5th; Magdalen Bridge Sept 18th; Welney swimming over the  
dredged A1101 Oct 18th and Stowbridge Nov 21st.

**Winter Wren** *Botaurus stellaris*  
*county breeding population (which peaked 1954) remains at a dangerously low level*  
*Broads. Situation less critical along North coast. Continues to be a winter visitor in*  
*all numbers.*

North coast occasional sightings at Cley and Holkham Jan to March. In spring boomers  
Weybourne, Cley (2 and young seen on 2 occasions), Blakeney Freshes and Burnham  
Orton. Also 9 sightings Titchwell Jan to May, but no evidence of breeding and Holme  
April 4th and May 27th. Occasional reports at above-named localities during  
autumn/early winter especially at Titchwell.

At Snettisham a wintering bird until March 10th, another in off sea Sept 19th and  
Nov 8th-19th.

Broads boomers at Martham where bred successfully, Horsey and Strumpshaw (July  
only). Also glimpsed from time to time at Catfield Fen, How Hill, Ormesby,  
Snettisham, Rollesby and Woodbastwick. At Hickling (a former breeding stronghold)  
more regularly seen especially during Dec when at least 4 present.

Elsewhere an exhausted bird at Waxham dunes Jan 16th (newly arrived?); one with a  
broken leg on a gas platform 35 miles north-east of Yarmouth and taken into care and  
released in Brecks at Thompson Water Dec 13th.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
*grant now almost annual in appearance with birds increasingly remaining in one*  
*area for long periods.*

Following singles at Holkham May 14th and Welney June 30th numerous records from  
onwards forming part of a major arrival into southern England. It is difficult to  
give numbers of birds involved as many sightings referred to flyovers and one/two  
birds were obviously wandering to a selection of feeding localities along the North  
coast.

During Aug at Holme noted 15th-17th with another east on 16th which then appeared  
at Cley, Blakeney harbour, Titchwell, Thornham and Holme during 17th to 19th; Cley  
1 Titchwell 21st; Lynn Point 24th; Cley again 25th/26th and Terrington Marsh 26th.  
Sept up to 4 in the Wash (Ongar Hill area) on several dates; Brancaster/  
Titchwell/Holme area 5th to 13th; Cley 6th to 8th; Breydon 13th where remaining until  
14th and Cley/Blakeney harbour 15th to 21st.

Occasional sightings continued into Oct: Holme and Stiffkey 4th; Snettisham 8th to  
10th; Cley 10th; Blakeney/Morston 16th; Lynn Point 17th; Brancaster 20th and Stiffkey  
21st. Only 5 records in Nov: Holme 7th and 22nd; Wells 9th; Brancaster 11th and  
Holkham 13th. After Dec 3rd two regularly at Stiffkey saltings until the year-end with 3  
seen on 30th.

**Great White Egret** *Egretta alba*  
*grant from the Continent added to the county list 1979.*

adult at Cley April 26th to May 2nd (MAG *et al*) when it headed west landing



briefly at Blakeney Freshes and Holkham before flying over Brancaster, Titchwell and Holme. It had returned to Cley next day, but left again in the afternoon. Also Feltwell Anchor Dec 22nd-31st (JBK). Previously 5 records in the county 1979 to 1989 with sightings in 1990 possibly relating to just one individual.

### Grey Heron

*Ardea cinerea*

*A resident and autumn immigrant from Scandinavia. Marked decline in numbers occupying Broadland heronries.*

The following heronry counts received: Barton 7, Burgh Castle 12, Catfield Dyke Colney GP 14, Didlington 10, Feltwell (Black Dyke) 21, Filby 1, Fleggburgh Common 2, Great Witchingham 42, Heckingham 2, Hickling 9, Hilgay 47, Holkham Freshes 4 (new site – Holkham Park deserted), How Hill 1 (also a new site), Islington 67, Narford 6, North Elmham 7-8, Quidenham 12, Old Hunstanton 4, Ranworth 1, Snettisham 5, Sturston 5, Surlingham 2, Wiveton Hall 4 and Woodbastwick Fen 2.

Summer/autumn coastal movements included 6 in off sea at Holme June 21st; 1 west Scolt Head June 24th; 12 west Holme Aug 2nd; 13 in off sea at Holme Aug 15th; 1 in off sea Waxham Aug 15th; 5 off sea Cley Aug 28th where 7 west offshore Sept 20th and 15 west Holme Sept 30th.



*Purple Heron (N. Borrow)*

### Purple Heron

*Ardea purpurea*

*Almost annual spring and autumn vagrant from the Continent.*

An often elusive adult at Brancaster Freshmarsh April 20th to May 13th (RK *et al*) occasionally wandering as far as Titchwell and Thornham. Presumably same bird at Holkham in flight with a Little Egret May 14th (GPD *et al*). Another south over Snettisham June 27th seen to land at Wootton (RA1).

### Glossy Ibis

*Plegadis falcinellus*

*Vagrant from south-east Europe. Formerly more frequent.*

Additional 1992: Burgh St. Peter May 8th (TWF *per* PRA) same as one at Carlton Marshes (Suffolk) May 6th-8th.

## poonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*

*on-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant from Netherlands. Rarity in winter.*

t Snettisham in Feb 2 on 7th, one on 8th and 2 again 9th-11th; probably 3 birds involved. No further records until April 24th when 2 south at Hickling and one east at Cley followed by a considerable number of sightings until end of May with birds virtually daily at one or more coastal localities from Breydon round to Snettisham and also at Orsey/Hickling. Birds generally very mobile and not possible to determine numbers. Records of 3 or more as follows during May: 3 east Brancaster and Cley on 3rd; 3 west Cley and then Titchwell on 4th; 5 Titchwell 18th then east on 19th over Blakeney harbour; 6 Horsey May 20th/21st; 4 west Holkham 22nd then Titchwell 22nd/23rd; 4 west Orsey 30th and 6 there on 31st. Also one Welney May 22nd/23rd.

Subsequently far fewer records; 3 Breydon June 7th; 3 Horsey June 10th-12th; 2 Hickling June 19th/20th, 2 Cley/Salthouse June 22nd-July 3rd and a sub-adult Welney Sept 21st which headed north-east and was reported heading east at Cley 1½ hours later.

## mute Swan

*Cygnus olor*

*resident. The Ouse Washes attracts the most important winter concentration.*

Welney monthly counts: Jan 255, Feb 248, March 197, April 178, Oct 220, Nov 272, and Dec 233. Twenty pairs nested there but 5 nests predated by foxes which also attacked large cygnets. During July 61 at Welney including 12 juveniles one of which as a 'Polish' type; 9 casualties there striking overhead wires during 1992/3 winter.

Highest counts elsewhere: 151 Breydon, 86 Ludham and 81 West Caister all Jan. Also 48 Hickling and 61 Rockland both May; 32 Sennowe Park July; 33 Wroxham and 4 Wissington Sept; 35 Wensum Valley Nov and 65 Hoveton Dec.

## ewick's Swan

*Cygnus columbianus*

*passage migrant and winter visitor From Yamal Peninsular and tundra bordering the Kara Sea. Internationally important numbers here each winter.*

largest concentration as usual at Welney where monthly totals as follows: Jan 2067 over 5000 on entire length of Ouse Washes but main arable feeding areas often in the Hristchurch/March areas and roosting birds selected nearest roost-sites). Feb 2004, March 410, Oct 1122, Nov 2864 and Dec 2593. Winter flocks held 7.25% young, an improvement on 1992/3. A complete Ouse Washes total of 5100 was recorded in Feb. Extreme dates at Welney May 11th and Oct 15th: 2 injured adults summered there.

Only other notable counts: 143 Breydon/Berney/Halvergate Jan; 240 Feb and 268 March; 190 Catfield Dec; 170 Horsey/Waxham Jan, 350 Feb and 135 Dec; 168 Adham/St. Benets/Catfield Jan, 253 Feb, 150 Nov and 190 Dec. An adult, apparently injured summered at Cley/Salthouse/Kelling until Oct 17th.

At Welney 129 colour-ringed birds observed in 1992/3 winter had been ringed in Holland (10), Russia (30), Slimbridge (39), Martin Mere (33), Welney (16) and Aclaverock (1). Elsewhere birds carrying neck-collars at Horsey Nov 24th, Addiscombe/St. Olaves Nov 3rd with 3 Dec 13th – all originated from the Zavarot Peninsular north of the Pechora River Delta in Russia.

## whooper Swan

*Cygnus cygnus*

*increasing winter visitor from Iceland and in internationally important numbers.*

Monthly totals at Welney included 770 Jan, 856 Feb (a new Reserve and county peak and all feeding on waste potatoes), 532 March, 62 April, 320 Oct, 460 Nov and 560 Dec. Autumn flocks there held 13% young, slightly down on 1992/3. Extreme Welney dates April 11th and Sept 27th although an injured bird summered.

Elsewhere the regular Horsey/Waxham herd peaked at 80 in Jan with 60 March, 18 Oct, 80 Nov and 42 Dec. Short-stayers at Halvergate where 36 Jan, Smallburgh 34 Feb Breydon 14 Nov, Martham Broad 20 Nov and Ongar Hill 59 Dec.

At Welney 65 colour-ringed birds observed in 1992/3 winter had been ringed in Iceland (41), Caerlaverock (14), Martin Mere (1) and Welney (9).

### Bean Goose

*Anser fabalis*

*Winter visitor from central Sweden to the Yare Valley, the only regular wintering locality in England of the race fabalis. Small numbers of rossicus usually associated with cold spells.*

The Yare Valley *fabalis* Western race flock remained at 410 in Jan from the previous year, reducing to 150 in Feb as birds began returning to Jutland. The last departed Feb 16th.

On Nov 14th 105 returned increasing to 321 by 21st and peaking at 475 by 30th following snowfalls over Denmark. The company included a blue neck-banded bird normally wintering in Denmark. At the year-end 423 present 9 of which carried Swedish neck collars. These marked birds first arrived here in the 1987/8 winter. The purchase of Buckenham, Haddingham and Cantley Levels by RSPB is most welcome. Sympathetic management should encourage the Bean Geese to remain on the north side of the Yare thus avoiding the risk of being 'accidentally' shot.

Numbers of Bean Geese appeared at various localities during the mid-Feb influx of grey geese along Britain's eastern seaboard including these larger groups: 104 Heigham Holmes, 39 Berney/Breydon and 24 Somerton/Horsey/Waxham. Many were considered to be of the Russian *rossicus* race.

Latest Bean Goose spring dates included Holkham March 18th (apart from 2 April 14th with one till 30th). First return in autumn Repps Oct 16th. *Rossicus* again featured during late autumn including 11 Repps/Billockby Oct 16th and 11 (? the same) at Waxham Nov 12th; up to 14 at Welney Nov 19th to Dec 31st and 6 Cantley Dec 18th to 23rd.

### Pink-footed Goose

*Anser brachyrhynchus*

*Winter visitor from Iceland and East Greenland in increasing numbers using well established roosts. Distribution varies through the winter.*

Co-ordinated roost counts of the north-west Norfolk population roosting at Snettisham, Scolt Head and Warham gave the following impressive monthly peaks: Jan 23,875, Feb 25,170, Oct 7220, Nov 21,722 and Dec 60,080. The Dec figure considerably exceeds the previous record total, but was itself eclipsed on Jan 10th 1994 with a combined count of 68,560.

The Heigham Holmes/Horsey group peaked at 70 Jan, 250 Feb (doubtless increased by the mid-month influx of grey geese), 200 March and 200 Dec. Last spring birds: Holkham May 9th. Autumn return noted at Docking Sept 14th, Snettisham on 18th and Paston on 19th.

According to The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust the increases in Pink-feet numbers in Norfolk is almost certainly due to two factors: The increase in the British population to over 200,000 in recent years. This total cannot be contained on the traditional haunts in Scotland so increases have occurred in the south of the winter range. This is the reverse of 'short-stopping' which took place in the 1960s when birds stopped in Scotland as suitable habitats became available there rather than flying further south. Secondly, an increase in disturbance and shooting in some of the Scottish areas. Farmers have become increasingly concerned about the damage the geese are perceived to cause to their crops and are making greater efforts to disperse the flocks. Shooting pressure on geese in cen-



al Scotland had also increased in recent years, largely due to the expansion of organised shoots led by professional guides catering for foreign shooters.

### **White-fronted Goose**

*Anser albifrons*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant from the Siberian tundra.*

January totals at traditional localities: 352 Buckenham/Cantley (declining to 180 by month-end but increasing to 355 Feb 5th); 28 Heigham Holmes; 30 Cley and 130 Holkham.

A massive influx into the county mid-Feb with good numbers lingering well into March commenced on the night of 13th/14th when presumably lost birds were heard over Yarmouth. It is thought east winds and dense fog over the North Sea disorientated numbers of continental geese moving at the time. This led to the following peak counts between mid-Feb and mid-March. Doubtless some birds moved from one locality to another during their stay: 590 Breydon/Burgh Castle, 150 Langley/Rockland, 230 Cantley/Buckenham, 20 Rollesby Broad, 600 Heigham Holmes, 155 Paston, 40 Melbrigg, 15 Sheringham, 400 Salthouse/Cley/Blakeney Freshes, 350 Holkham NNR, 35 Hitchwell, 41 Holme, 8 Colney GP, 10 Pentney GP and 100 Welney. Despite movements a remarkable total approaching 3000 considered present in the county during the first week in Feb. As usual a rapid departure during second half of March. Latest: Buckenham/Cantley March 28th. No April records, but 12 at Cley May 2nd.

First autumn return 3 Holkham Oct 27th followed by 5 Pentney GP and 5 Holkham Nov 5th and 20 Breydon, 9 Horsey and 12 Welney all Nov 6th. By the year-end following totals at regular sites: 307 Buckenham/Cantley, 120 Heigham Holmes area, 280 Holkham NNR and 109 Welney.

### **Lesser White-fronted Goose**

*Anser erythropus*

*Former vagrant from northern Scandinavia. Occurrences in recent years either of feral origin or from a re-introduction programme.*

A captive-bred bird from the Swedish re-introduction scheme remained at Buckenham/Cantley Nov 17th until the year-end. According to *Birding World* the scheme began in 1981 and 208 young have been released. All were captive-bred (using Barnacle Geese as foster parents) at a zoo near Stockholm. A small population has become established with several pairs breeding successfully in the wild and many of the birds wintering, as hoped, in Holland. Many, but not all, are colour-ringed.

### **Greylag Goose**

*Anser anser*

*Long established feral population complicates the identity of any genuine wild birds.*

Monthly highest counts: Jan 398 Holkham, 356 Snettisham and 160 Gunton Park; Feb 94 Holkham, 100 Snettisham and 85 Breydon; March 250 Heigham Holmes, 162 Holkham and 70 Breydon; April 46 Breydon, 19 Welney and 18 Holme; May 238 Hickling, 49 Breydon, 46 Wroxham; June 244 Sennowe Park, 49 Breydon, 40 Snettisham and 21 Holme; July 100 Burnham Norton, 100 Repps and 57 Breydon; Aug 20 Holkham, 350 Hickling and 264 Snettisham; Sept 700 Heigham Holmes, 700 Holkham and 311 Snettisham; Oct 567 Holkham, 400 Surlingham and 229 Welney; Nov 50 Wroxham, 380 Snettisham and 375 Holkham and Dec 500 Wroxham, 410 Snettisham and 407 Holkham.

Coinciding with the mid-Feb influx of grey geese, 2 considered to be of the eastern race *rubrirostris* at Sheringham Feb 18th-20th and 3 at Brundall April 8th.

## Canada Goose

*Branta canadensis*

### *An abundant introduced resident.*

Monthly totals: Jan 115 Blickling, Feb 138 Blickling, March 78 Theford Nunnery, May 100 Titchwell, June 348 Titchwell and an interesting record of 75 on the sea of Weybourne on 7th, July 218 Titchwell, Aug 123 Holme, Sept 175 Thetford Nunnery Oct 379 Blickling, Nov 293 Blickling and Dec 197 Pentney.

## Barnacle Goose

*Branta leucopsis*

### *Autumn passage migrant from Spitzbergen and hard-weather visitor from western Siberia. Feral flocks cause great confusion.*

Feral birds make it impossible to assess the origins of singles, or even larger groups. However, two influxes did take place: in Feb and in Nov/Dec involving wild birds. During Feb 68 at Heigham Holmes on 4th; 5 Overy Marshes on 5th; 48 Eccles on 14th; 6 Holkham on 16th two of which carried coloured rings and were Russian breeding birds normally wintering in Holland; 2 Belton on 18th-20th and 15 West Somerton/Heigham Holmes on 20th.

A further influx began Nov 1st when 11 arrived at Cley/Salthouse increasing to 29 from 12th to 26th; also 3 Sheringham on 2nd; with singles at Titchwell on 5th and 7th; 22 Breydon/Berney on 6th increasing to 48 on 8th; also on 6th at Horsey, 9 east Paston; 5 Lynn Point and 4 Denver Sluice. At Welney 47 arrived Nov 7th decreasing to 17 on 9th with 11 from 10th to 15th; 11 Snettisham on 19th with 12 on 28th; 6 arrived at Holkham on 20th increasing to 13 on 27th. Sightings continued into Dec when 78 at Postwick/Buckenham/Cantley, 63 Horsey/Hickling; 34 Cley/Salthouse, 27 Holkham and 29 Holme.

## Brent Goose

*Branta bernicla*

### *Dark-bellied race bernicla, which breeds in fluctuating numbers in northern Siberia, is a passage migrant and winter visitor, present nowadays each month of the year. Pale-bellied race hrota from Spitzbergen appears annually in small numbers. The Black Brant nigricans has been almost annual since 1982.*

North coast counts between Salthouse and Holme: 8650 Jan 10th, 9318 Feb 7th and 5300 March 14th. Slow departure during April with up to 500 lingering at Blakeney; 240 Brancaster, 150 Titchwell, 144 Holme and 200 Snettisham. Most remaining birds had departed by the end of May. Summering individuals at Blakeney, Brancaster and Snettisham throughout June. During July/Aug 8 at Blakeney and 15 at Scolt; others at Burnham Norton, Titchwell and Holme.

First autumn arrivals 20 at Blakeney Point Sept 2nd with main arrival by the month-end when 354 west at Paston Sept 27th, 1200 west at Holme on 29th and 300 west/400 east off Sheringham on 30th. Also on latter date 1500 at Blakeney, 1800 at Wells and 725 at Brancaster. A much higher breeding success this year, initial counts indicating up to 30% juveniles present.

During autumn largest movement Oct 14th when 1670 west in 4 hours off Happisburgh, 1750 west in 4½ hours Paston, 5500 west Sheringham and 1200 west Holme. Highest Nov counts 10,365 Salthouse to Holme and 4000 Lynn Point. During Dec 13,061 Salthouse to Holme, 600 Snettisham and 640 Lynn Point.

Elsewhere 37 at Breydon Jan. Welney attracted 2 Feb 13th and 3 on 16th during the White-fronted Goose influx also one Nov 7th and 2 on 8th coinciding with Barnacle Goose arrival. Also ones and twos at Pentney GP and Lyng with 6 at Halvergate Feb 16th.

Examples of the pale-bellied race *hrota* at Holkham where 11 all Feb with 2 March 10th and a single on 13th; Salthouse Jan 27th; Burnham Norton Feb 27th; Blakeney



Freshmarsh 2 March 14th; Lynn Point March 14th, Oct 22nd and 31st; Burnham Overy March 16th; Holme May 1st/2nd and Dec 4th/5th; Wells Sept 30th and Dec 12th and Sheringham 2 Dec 6th.

A single bird of the North American race *nigricans* (the Black Brant) at Burnham Overy/Burnham Norton Feb 3rd to March 6th (RR *et al*) and another Lynn Point Feb 4th (CD). Additional 1990 *nigricans* Salthouse Jan 27th/28th (KV).

### **Egyptian Goose**

*Alopochen aegyptiacus*

**Long established feral population.**

Highest totals: 27 Filby Broad Jan 1st; 26 Coltishall Feb 18th; 30 Cley May 23rd; 150 Holkham June; 53 there in July and 70 in Aug; 26 How Hill July; 43 there in Aug and 4 Oct; 48 Sennow Park Aug/Sept; 47 Sparham Aug and 75 Sept; 34 Wroxham Broad Sept and 21 Oct; 50 Pentney GP Sept 30th; 20 Flitcham Oct 11th and 26 Blickling Hall Oct 24th.

Breeding birds at Felbrigg 2 pairs; Holkham Park 12 pairs, Pentney GP 3 pairs, Wroxham 3 pairs and single pairs at Cley, Holme, Snettisham, Strumpshaw and Buckenham.

### **Walden Duck**

*Tadorna tadorna*

**Widespread breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor. Majority undertake a moult migration to north-west Germany; others moult on the Wash.**

Peak counts at Ousemouth where 2588 March and 2930 Sept. At Snettisham 800 Jan, 300 Feb, 548 March, 152 May, 555 June, 200 July, 782 Sept, 500 Oct, 700 Nov/Dec. Decreasing in Breydon area where peaks of 493 April and 303 Dec. Elsewhere: Blakeney harbour 154 Feb and 291 Dec; Warham 250 Jan and 200 Nov; Wells harbour 39 Nov; Holkham 193 March; Brancaster harbour 311 Jan and 340 Nov; Titchwell 122 Feb; Thornham/Holme 118 Jan and 146 Dec and Welney 191 Feb and 151 March.

Coastal breeding information from Breydon where a few pairs; Cley 19 broods; Blakeney Freshmarsh; Blakeney Point 20 pairs but no young raised and predation by Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls considered the main reason; Holkham NNR 11 broods; Brancaster/Scolt Head 10 broods, Titchwell 8 young; Holme 4 broods; Snettisham 15 pairs raised 20 young and Wash Trial Bank 2 pairs.

Away from coast Wroxham Broad 1 brood; Filby Broad 2-3 broods; Hickling 5 broods; Buckenham; Gunton Park 32 young; Seamere 1 brood; Stanford Water 1 brood; Velney 4 broods; Flitcham 2 broods; Pensthorpe 5-7 pairs bred; Pentney GP 1 brood and King's Lynn BF 1 brood.

Moult migrants noted passing Holme including 94 June 29th, 50 July 2nd, 82 on 6th, 10 on 21st and 76 on 22nd.

Largest autumn movements: Holme 220 west and Sheringham 310 west and both Oct 5th; Sheringham 420 west Nov 15th, 150 west Nov 21st and 220 west Nov 23rd.

### **Mandarin**

*Aix galericulata*

**Feral wanderer. Sandringham is breeding stronghold.**

Apart from Sandringham where 2 broods and a population of 100, single broods at Flitcham and Castle Rising. According to the head keeper the Sandringham colony was introduced from Windsor in 1973.

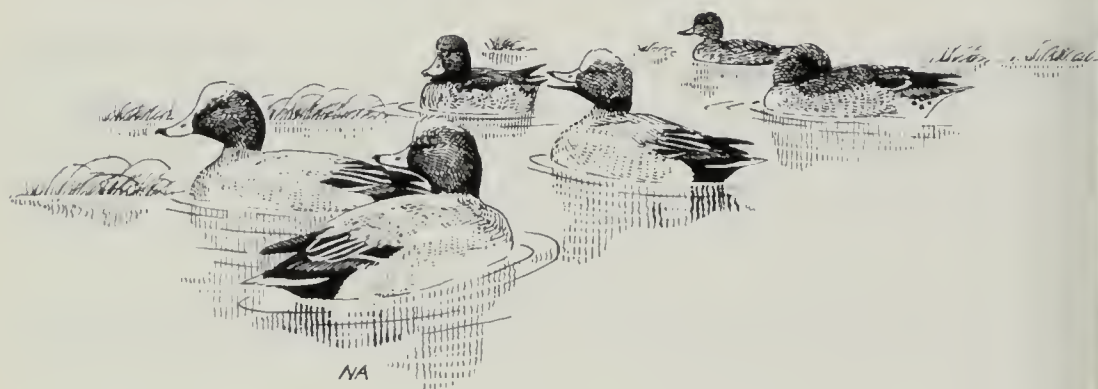
In addition ones and twos at Bayfield, Cley, Coston, Glandford, Hardley Flood, King's Lynn Walks, Narford, Sparham and Welney.



## Wigeon

*Anas penelope*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Internationally important numbers on Ouse Washes, North coast marshes and in Yare Valley.*



Wigeon (N. Arlott)

Peak monthly counts at main localities appear below. Birds wintering on the Ouse Washes are greatly influenced by water levels; hence the disappointing figures reflect frequent deep flooding:

	Jan	Feb	March	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Breydon/Berney	3200	1400	800	700	700	3400	4200
Buckenham/Cantley	4500	5400	6000	—	—	8000	10,000
Cley	1840	997	393	780	421	167	660
Holkham NNR	7020	4900	4240	935	3625	7053	9185
Holme	1500	750	1200	—	655	1200	1725
Welney	7280	6000	3624	1800	3440	7964	6510

Elsewhere impressive counts of 950 Snettisham and 1100 Ranworth in Jan; 970 Blakeney harbour and 2000 Scolt/Brancaster harbour Oct-Nov and 1400 in Blakeney harbour in Dec all reflect the large numbers wintering in the county.

First in autumn Welney Aug 7th with early westerly movements at the month-end when 20 Blakeney Point on 24th, 30 Sheringham on 26th and 33 Paston on 31st.

## Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Highest counts: 110 Stanford Water Jan 14th; 166 Welney Feb 16th and 172 March 15th; 105 Cley Aug 26th; 200 Hardly Flood Aug 30th; 186 Gunton Park Sept 12th; 220 Stanford Water Sept 13th, 104 Colney GP Sept 30th, 102 Hickling Nov 16th and 8 Snettisham Dec 21st. Small-scale coastal movements included 10 east Sheringham Aug 14th and 13 Holme Oct 14th.

Breeding recorded at Cley 16 pairs; Blakeney Freshmarsh 1 pair; Holkham NNR 1 broods; Holkham Park lake 8 broods; Titchwell 5+broods; Holme 3 broods; Snettisham 1 pair; Gunton Park 3 pairs; Welney 9 broods produced 60 flying young; Hilgay 2 pairs; Flitcham; Cockley Cley and West Acre.

At Holme an increase possibly associated with larger numbers of Coots. This link has

so been noted at Welney, the Gadwall often feeding on vegetation brought to the surface by diving Coots.

## Teal

*Anas crecca*

**passage migrant and winter visitor, breeding in very small numbers.**

Only breeding records at Welney where 2 broods in July and at Holme – one brood in August.

At Welney spells of high flooding in both winter periods reduced counts to well below expected totals; totals of 1140 Feb 16th and 1205 Nov 15th were the highest obtained. Largest gatherings elsewhere: 450 Stiffkey and 875 Holkham NNR in Jan; 1000 Cantley in March; 515 Cley in Oct; 650 How Hill Nov 13th when 525 at nearby Reedham Water; 700 Buckenham, 380 Tottenhill GP and 1279 Holkham NNR all Nov; 100 Cantley BF, 931 Holkham NNR, 792 Snettisham and 635 Berney all Dec.

Heaviest coastal movements: 630 west Sheringham Aug 26th, 228 west Paston Aug 30th and 420 west Sheringham and 300 west Holme Sept 14th.

A drake of the Nearctic race *carolinensis* (the Green-winged Teal) at Welney April 1st to May 3rd – the 21st county occurrence.

## Gallard

*Anas platyrhynchos*

**Widespread resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Welney monthly totals: Jan 1778, Feb 1445, March 670, April 343, July 260, Aug 850, Sept 1126, Oct 1586, Nov 1849 and Dec 1426. Many broods at Welney, a late May survey found 159 drakes and 61 ducks on the Reserve. An interesting record there is of a duck nesting at a height of 45 feet in an old Carrion Crow's nest to the annoyance of a pair of Kestrels which had intended using it.

Selected counts elsewhere: 352 Breydon, 213 Blickling, 200 Cley and 376 Holkham NNR in Jan; 244 Pensthorpe and 279 Thetford Nunnery Lake in Feb; 100 Colney GP, 166 Snettisham and 300 Lynn Point in Aug; 705 Snettisham and 100 Stanford Water in Sept; 182 Hickling, 143 Blakeney Harbour, 163 Blakeney Freshmarsh and 208 Holt/Brancaster harbour in Oct; 140 Sennowe Park, 249 Holme, 400 Snettisham and 100 Terrington Marsh in Nov and 277 Hickling, 143 Gunton Park and 934 Snettisham in Dec.

Largest breeding counts: Blakeney Freshmarsh 20 broods, Holkham 82 broods and Pensthorpe 60 pairs.

## Wentail

*Anas acuta*

**passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.**

Peak monthly counts at main sites:

	Jan	Feb	March	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Breydon	161	132	55	13	55	101	156
Cley/Blakeney harbour	325	322	41	137	650	420	840
Tottenhill GP	300	—	—	350	300	—	45
Colney	650	551	192	636	866	500	250

Single breeding record: at Cley 2 young raised. Main westerly coastal movement Sept 14th when 54 off Paston and 185 off Holme.

## Warganey

*Anas querquedula*

**Very scarce breeding summer visitor; also passage migrant. Exceptional in winter.**

Earliest spring arrivals Cley March 13th, Cantley on 14th, Brancaster and Welney 5 on 14th, Berney and Salthouse on 16th. One to 4 also recorded at Breydon, Buckenham,

Burnham Norton, Flitcham, Hickling, Holme, Kelling Quags, King's Lynn BF, Lakenheath Flashes, North Creake, Pentney GP, Ranworth, Strumpshaw, Surlingham Titchwell and Wissingham BF. In addition 7 (5 drakes) at Cley in May and again 7 Jul 11th and 5 at Welney in May/June with 6 there Aug 10th.

No successful breeding recorded at Welney, doubtless due to June flooding. A pair bred at Cley rearing 3 young and a second pair nested close to the Reserve fledging young. Juveniles also noted at Breydon, Hickling and Kelling Quags in July. Latest 2 at Welney Oct 1st.

### Shoveler

*Anas clypeata*

**Passage migrant, summer and winter visitor.**

Welney monthly totals: Jan 150, Feb 257, March 145, Sept 154, Oct 236, Nov 268 and Dec 256. Here, numbers are greatly influenced by flood levels and peak counts mask the considerable fluctuations in numbers.

Highest numbers elsewhere: 107 Breydon/Berney Feb; 100 Hardley Flood Aug; 15 Hickling, 99 Holkham and 50 Titchwell all Nov and 53 Cley Dec.

Breeding at Brancaster 1 brood; Cley 10+ broods; Holkham NNR 16 broods; Pensthorpe 4+ pairs; Titchwell 5+ broods and Welney 60 fledged young.

### Red-crested Pochard

*Netta rufina*

**An escape but with the possibility of genuine vagrants following a westward spread across Europe.**

Ones and twos at Cley, Diss, Flitcham, Gunton, Hardley Flood, Hellesdon, Hickling, Kelling, Potter Heigham, Sennowe, Thorpe and Welney. Also 17 (8 drakes) at Oulton early Nov and 13 (7 drakes) at Melton Constable Nov 21st. Most, if not all, observations probably originate from feral populations or wildfowl collections.

### Pochard

*Aythya ferina*

**Summer visitor breeding in small numbers; also passage migrant and winter visitor. Largest wintering group on Onse Washes.**

Breeding birds at Brancaster, Cantley BF 2 broods, Filby Broad 4-5 pairs, Hoe Land Dereham, Holkham NNR 14 broods, Holkham Park Lake, Pensthorpe 10-13 pairs, West Mere, West Tofts Mere and Wroxham Broad.

Counts at two main wintering sites reveal record totals at Welney:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
Snettisham	147	105	90	61	120	12
Welney	2052	2272	1100	663	1248	140

Notable gatherings elsewhere included 165 Ranworth Jan; 235 Barton and 124 Pentney GP Nov and 153 Hickling and 90 Tottenhill GP Dec.

### Ring-necked Duck

*Aythya collaris*

**Vagrant from North America. Birds may remain at the same locality for many weeks returning in successive winters.**

The drake spending its third winter in Broadland was ever elusive briefly appearing at Wroxham Broad Jan 8th, 9th, 23rd, 24th, 29th and Feb 14th. It was equally frustrating during visits to Strumpshaw Fen March 3rd to 26th, returning to Wroxham briefly on 21st. A return to Wroxham Broad was noted Dec 1st for the fourth successive winter.



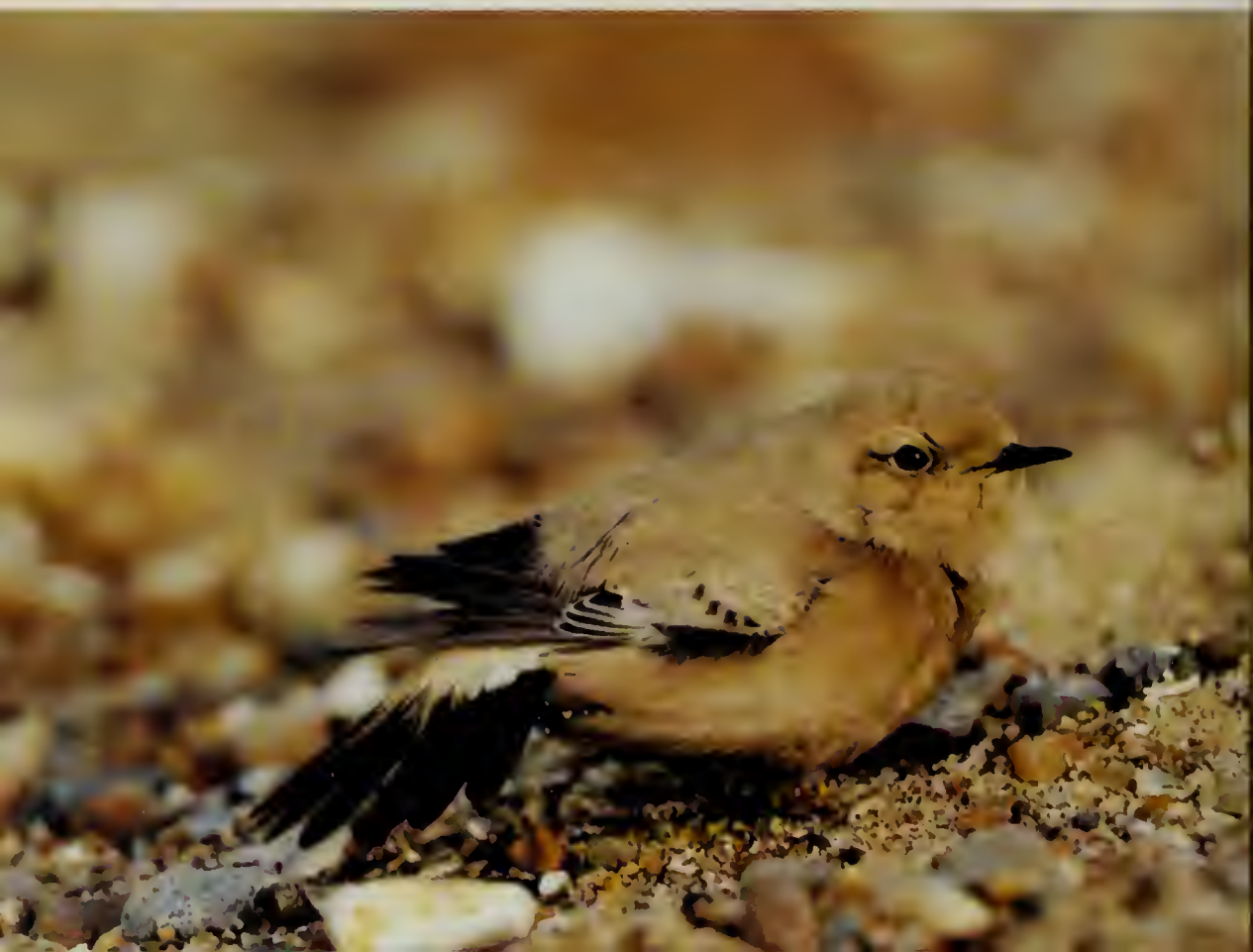


The Black-eared Wheatear which attracted many birders to Stiffkey/Warham during nine days in October (*R. C. Wilson*)





This well-watched Desert Wheatear held court at Hunstanton and then Heacham 16th November to 7th December (Above, *B. W. Jarvis*; below, *R. C. Wilson*)







This confiding Olive-backed Pipit remained ten days at Holkham Meals. (*S. Young*)  
The Saxlingham Nethergate Hoopoe during September provided a splendid portrait  
(*W. Jarvis*)





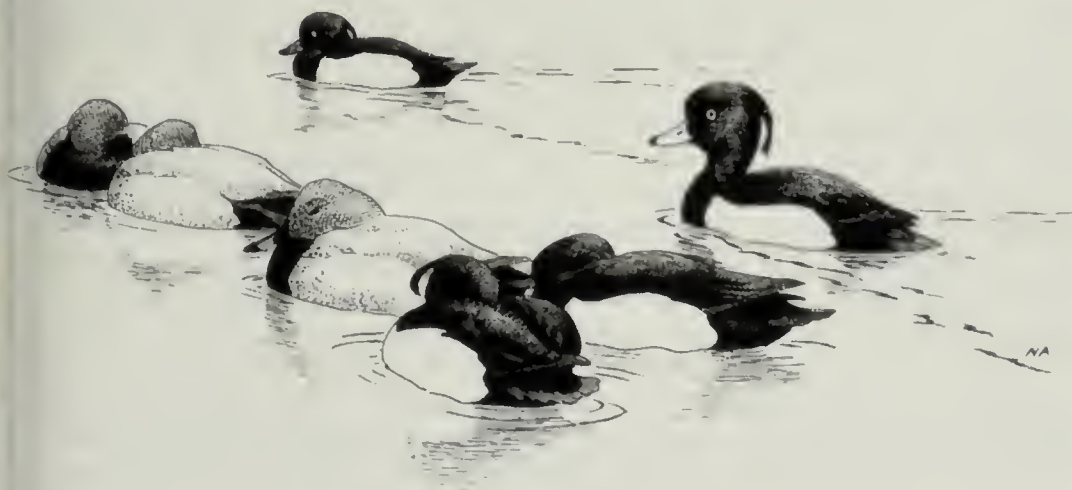


Following the felling of Suffolk's largest and most important nesting site, half East Anglia's summering Golden Orioles are now in Norfolk (Above, *C. R. Knights*; below, *M. Rains*)



ith repeat sightings on 28th and 31st. When absent from Wroxham much of its time  
obably spent at nearby Hoveton Great Broad where it was in fact discovered Dec 28th.  
Another drake at Welney April 13th and 16th and at Titchwell April 25th.

**erruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*  
*agrant. Some records doubtless relate to wanderers from collections.*  
ngles recorded for the second year in succession at Holkham NNR on March 12th,  
ay 6th, June 25th, July 5th and 24th/25th and Aug 2nd. Also 2 at Longlands Farm,  
olkham Park, Aug 20th which appeared very wary despite the unlikely location.



*Pochard and Tufted Duck (N. Arlott)*

**ufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*  
*migratory breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.*  
ak monthly counts at selected wintering sites:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
roxham Broad	96	107	–	–	68	83
ckling Broad	–	–	–	92	226	235
ilney GP	135	90	–	–	76	–
ettisham	144	46	38	111	155	152
ntney GP	141	–	–	–	62	80
elney	292	249	239	115	168	126

oods reported at Burnham Norton 2, Cantley BF 3, Cley 8, Flitcham 1, Holkham  
NR 12, Holkham Park Lake 3, Holme 1, Sandringham 1, Snettisham 3, Thetford  
nnery Lakes 4, Titchwell 2, Welney 1, West Mere 3 and Wissington BF 1. Single  
irs reported nesting at Gunton Park, Lyng Easthaugh GP and Whitlington GP, togeth-  
with 60 pairs (all wild) at Pensthorpe.



## **Scaup**

*Aythya marila*

*Winter visitor, most abundant during severe winters. Exceptional inland. Occasional in summer.*

Between Jan and April and from late Sept reports of 1-5 at coastal sites. In addition marked movement Jan 3rd (13 east Holme and 7 west at Sheringham), 4th (165 east Hunstanton) and 5th (14 at Cley). Usual ones and twos June to Aug. At Snettisham 7 Nov 9th-18th and 11 Dec 11th with 3 to year-end.

Unusual numbers inland. At Welney Oct 18th followed by 3 Oct 31st, 2 Nov 25-30th, 3 Dec 1st, single Dec 4th and peak of 8 Dec 5th with the last 2 27th-30th. at Thetford Nunnery Lakes Nov 1st-5th. At Breydon 4 Nov 6th, 6 on 8th., 8 on 11th, 10 on 16th and 11 on 24th until Dec 26th with an additional 8 Nov 27th. At Wroxham Broad single Dec 24th.

## **Eider**

*Somateria mollissima*

*Non-breeders in variable numbers throughout the year; highest totals in winter and early spring.*

Most impressive totals at Holme/Hunstanton where 1300 Jan, 1090 Feb, 65 March, April, 155 May, 205 June, 215 July, 132 Aug, 120 Sept, 45 Oct, 41 Nov and 145 Dec.

A remarkable country-wide influx developed from Oct 30th, particularly in the Midlands where a total of 133 included parties of 31, 28 and 26 on flooded pits and reservoirs. Strong north-to north-east winds over Denmark and days of extensive low cloud across much of England and the North Sea appeared to disorientate birds when returning from Baltic moulting areas and resulting in them overshooting our coast.

Unusually high totals appeared on the East Norfolk coast from early Nov including 28 Winterton on 4th followed by 40 Horsey, 19 Waxham, 15 Happisburgh and 11 Scratby. These arrivals coincided with exceptional numbers inland and elsewhere at Surlingham/Strumpshaw/Rockland Broad/Buckenham Oct 30th-Nov 5th; Colney GP Oct 31st and one Nov 5th; Lyng Easthaugh GP 2 Oct 31st; Wells Boating Lake Oct 31st; Holkham Meals Pond Oct 31st-Nov 4th; Pentney GP 2 Nov 2nd-7th; Ousebridge (between Denver Sluice and Ten-mile Bank) Nov 17th-20th; King's Lynn Docks Dec 5th and Welney 4 Oct 31st. In addition record numbers at Breydon where 18 arrived Nov 1st decreasing to 12 on 6th, 5 on 9th, 4 on 24th, 3 on 25th and 2 Dec 2nd to 27th.

## **Long-tailed Duck**

*Clangula hyemalis*

*Winter visitor especially to north-west Norfolk coastal waters. Almost annual inland.*

Monthly peaks at Holme/Hunstanton stronghold Jan 46, Feb 18, March 83, April 48, Oct 10, Nov 42 and Dec 120. A county-wide sea-duck survey Dec 5th produced a total of 220 Long-tails between Scolt Head and Hunstanton. Extreme dates May 31st (Sheringham) and Oct 11th (Holme).

Only recorded off East coast in second winter period when one at Yarmouth Oct 18th; 7 Waxham Nov 5th; Paston Nov 7th; Caister 2 Dec 5th and presumably the same 2 Scratby on 12th.

Inland: Tottenhill GP Jan 23rd; Breydon Oct 29th; Hickling/Heigham Sounds Nov 12th, 16th, 28th and Dec 12th.

## **Common Scoter**

*Melanitta nigra*

*Most abundant in winter, but numbers and localities fluctuate. Non-breeders over-summer. Inland spring records almost annual.*

Few impressive numbers. Largest 200 Cley Jan 21st-25th; 300 Titchwell March 17th; 400 Holme March 26th and 700 Dec 30th; 600 Holkham/Overy in May; 240



Sheringham July 12th and 250 Oct 23rd and 1000 Horsey/Winterton Nov 6th-16th. Movements included 480 west at Sheringham July 12th and 320 west and 80 east Oct 1st; also 450 west Holme Oct 14th and 630 west Dec 5th. Inland: Breydon June 30th-July 1st; Horsey Mere Nov 17th and Welney 2 Dec 18th.

#### **Wet Scoter**

*Melanitta fusca*

*Winter visitor, but numbers fluctuate markedly.*

Start from Hunstanton where up to 50 in Jan, 46 in Feb and 25 in March only notable numbers off Horsey/Waxham where up to 11 Nov 9th-17th and up to 40 Dec 13th-20th. Otherwise 1-5 at coastal sites and peaks of 9 Titchwell Dec 12th and 20 Weybourne on 14th.

Coastal movements included 10 west Paston Oct 14th; 11 west Holme Oct 15th; 35 west Sheringham Nov 26th and 36 west Dec 20th. Extreme dates May 15th (Cley) and 20th (Titchwell). A single inland record: Wroxham Broad Nov 30th.

#### **Goldeneye**

*Bucephala clangula*

*Message migrant and winter visitor*

Monthly peaks at Snettisham Pits: 73 Jan, 74 Feb, 25 March, 20 Oct, 75 Nov and 78 Dec. Good numbers on North coast: Blakeney harbour 23 Jan, 19 Feb and Nov and 50 Dec; Wells boating lake 18 Dec; Holkham Lake 15 Jan, 30 Feb, 37 March and 17 Dec; Lancaster harbour 36 Jan, 26 Feb, 17 March, 51 Nov and 30 Dec and Titchwell 18 Jan, 19 Feb and 11 March. Largest westerly movement 35 Sheringham and 25 Holme both on 14th.

Highest totals elsewhere: 22 Hickling Dec 12th; 17 Pensthorpe Jan, 12 Magdalen River Channel Jan 3rd-11th; 12 Tottenhill GP March 23rd and 10 Welney March 7th. Extreme dates May 3rd (Colney GP) and Sept 4th (Brancaster and Holme).

#### **Wigeon**

*Mergus albellus*

*Winter visitor only appearing in numbers during severe winters.*

Majority of records during second-winter period and all red-heads except a single adult male; Cley 2 Jan 5th, Dec 10th-15th, 21st/22nd and 31st; Welney Jan 8th, Nov 24th and 25th, Dec 5th and 11th; Rollesby Feb 19th-21st and Dec 30th; Lyng Easthaugh GP the only drake Feb 28th; Sheringham 2 west Nov 23rd and one east Dec 29th; Snettisham 1 west 27th/28th, Dec 1st-29th with 2 on 30th/31st; Yarmouth Bure Park Dec 7th; Lound 1 west 13th-30th with 2 on 24th; Wells boating lake Dec 13th-26th; Stow Bardolph 4 Dec 13th-31st; Holkham Park Dec 21st; Holkham Dec 26th/27th and 29th; Breydon Dec 13th/27th and Hickling Dec 27th.

#### **Red-breasted Merganser**

*Mergus serrator*

*Message migrant and winter visitor.*

Numbers in first-winter period rather low, but included the following: Blakeney harbour 1 Jan and 17 Feb; Holkham Bay 20 Jan; Titchwell 13 April; Holme 21 Jan, 24 March and 26 April; Hunstanton 50 March; Heacham 18 Jan and Snettisham 25 Jan, 10 Feb, 15 March and 12 April. Largest numbers inland 8 Ten-mile Bank Feb 22nd and 7 Denver Ice March 3rd.

Summer records of 1-3 and once 5 off North coast June-July.

More impressive numbers during second-winter period: Blakeney harbour 50 Nov and 41 Dec; Titchwell 37 Nov and 33 Dec; Holme 39 Dec; Hunstanton 30 Nov; Heacham 50 Nov and Snettisham 48 Oct, 88 Nov and 67 Dec.

## Goosander

*Mergus merganser*

*Winter visitor, most abundant in severe winters.*

Recorded at 32 localities, mainly ones, twos and threes exceptions being Denver Sluice 5 Jan 1st with 6 on 17th/20th; Titchwell 5 west Jan 17th; Cley 4 west Jan 23rd; Lynnhill 4 Eastthigh GP 4 Feb 28th; Holme 4 west March 4th and 4 Nov 5th; Sheringham 8 east Oct 30th; 4 west and one east Nov 17th and 4 west Dec 21st; Pentney GP 4 Nov 24th; Antingham Lake 7 Dec 18th and 9 from 27th to 31st; Welney 8 Dec 19th and Stanford Battle Area 4 Dec 26th.

A single mid-summer record: Hickling July 10th.

## Ruddy Duck

*Oxyura jamaicensis*

*Increasing feral wanderer since 1977.*

Ones, twos and occasionally threes at Barton, Colney GP, Denver Sluice, Ditchingham GP, Gunton Park, Hardley Flood, Hickling, How Hill, Ormesby, Pentney GP, Ranworth, Rockland, Strumpshaw, UEA Broad and Wroxham.

At Welney peaks of 16 in Feb and 15 in Dec (probably from Tottenhill); Lyng, Colney up to 5 mid Oct; Tottenhill GP a county record total of 22 Nov 15th and Hickling 4 Dec 12th.

Breeding was first confirmed in the county in 1988 (at Stanford) following the escape of 70 juveniles from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge between 1956 and 1963.

## Honey Buzzard

*Pernis apivorus*

*Passage migrant and summer visitor from tropical Africa.*

First spring migrant south over Hunstanton cliffs May 2nd followed by birds at Holkham Park May 16th, Thetford Nunnery May 21st, Bacton May 31st and Cley June 4th.

The usual breeding pair had returned to Swanton Novers Great Wood by May 18th and were then regularly displaying. Two young fledged (one pale, one dark phase). The breeding pair were joined by an additional female in early July and from Aug 17th. An additional male present on at least Aug 28th when 6 birds on show. Last date, a juvenile Sept 7th. A number of local sightings during July until early Sept presumably relate to wandering birds from the nesting area.

Autumn passage both impressive and unprecedented. Migrants in Aug at Wootton Marsh on 21st and Holt Lowes on 28th. A coasting bird south over Waxham Sept 5th was the vanguard for an abundance of records in mid-month when continental migrants crossing the North Sea in large numbers including impressive totals of raptors. At the time Honey Buzzards at Swanton Hill (North Walsham) Sept 12th/13th; Wellfleet Weybourne 2 on 13th; Egmore, Wells East Hills 3 and Yarmouth cemetery on 14th with a different bird over latter site on 15th when also at Winterton and Waxham; Cromer on 16th; Barnhamcross Common on 18th; another passing inland Cromer on 25th and casualty photographed at Ormesby on 29th. At least 10 different birds involved in the movement which was mirrored in East Suffolk where 2 Black Kites moved south with good numbers of both Common and Honey Buzzards.

## Black Kite

*Milvus migrans*

*Vagrant added to the County List in 1966.*

A fine series of spring records involving close tracking of at least 2 ever wandering individuals.

Sightings began with one over Blakeney April 20th then at High Kelling on 22nd with doubtless the same bird heading westwards along the North coast on 23rd and passing

Wells (ES), Burnham Norton, Burnham Deepdale (VE) before being relocated near at Snoring (DB HM MR RW) on 25th finally heading south-west over Pensthorpe (JRW).

A second bird at Wells/Holkham May 16th (AIB SM GW) later appeared at Burnham Norton, Brancaster (JM), Titchwell, Sedgeford and Ringstead. It or another present in the area all day on 17th (DAB SB) and again early next morning before heading south over Wolferton (HM).

This elusive raptor is notoriously difficult to see in Britain rarely lingering at any station. The county total advances to 19+.

**Kite** *Milvus milvus*  
*Wing-tagged birds form part of re-introduction projects in Scotland and land start in 1989.*

Traditionally, local records of this splendid raptor were considered to be of continental origin and mainly restricted to the Nov to March period. However with the successful release of introduced birds supplementing an ever-strengthening Welsh population wandering Red Kites can be expected here nowadays at almost anytime. All records are listed: Wells March 28th and presumably the same bird over Winterton, Caister, Yarmouth and Banningham next day. Another over Trunch and Winterton April 17th.

Four records in May may relate to a single wanderer: Wroxham on 14th, several sites between Salthouse and Stiffkey 16th to 18th, near Lound on 20th and Breydon/Burgh Marsh on 29th.

In autumn at South Walsham/Plumstead Green Sept 1st (marked with pale blue wing-tag carrying the letter H); this bird was relocated in the Saxthorpe/Mossymere Wood/Little Barningham area on 4th remaining until 6th. Another Burnham Norton Nov 1st; Holkham area Dec 4th staying to 6th (and roosting in Holkham Park one night); Selsey and Bodney Dec 15th and Holt/Cley on 29th.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
*recolonised Broadland after an almost complete absence as a breeder between 1960 and 1971; also breeds in coastal reedbeds and in cereals elsewhere in the county. Many move south in winter when those remaining roost communally. Also a passage migrant.*

Post-winter period combined counts from two Broadland roosts: 7 Jan/Feb, 6 March and April. Spring return began in mid-March becoming widespread by the month-end when many occupying breeding territories making migrants difficult to separate. Another good nesting season resulted in 105 young being reared from 45 nests including 25 nests in arable crops – all successful. In west Norfolk a male again mated to three females reared a total of 12 young!

The continued encouraging breeding results are shown below in totals of fledged young:

1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
33	36	43	60	82	88	90	75	114	105

Autumn dispersal on a broad front with many records away from traditional strongholds. For example a total of 10 passed through Welney including 3 Aug 30th when a male passing offshore at Cley was mobbed by a Great Skua. Three Aug records from Breckland. Another female picked up starving near Titchwell Sept 2nd later died in care.



Over-wintering birds in second winter period again observed at two roosts producing monthly totals of 7 Oct, 11 Nov/Dec.

### Hen Harrier

*Circus cyaneus*

**Passage migrant and winter visitor forming communal roosts. Former breeder now exceptional in summer.**

Traditional roosts (at 5 sites) produced first-winter period combined totals of 21 Jan, Feb, 13 March and 8 April despite birds being rather elusive during daylight hours. One sighting away from regular localities at Fring Jan 17th and at 4 Brecks haunts. A winter-tagged bird at Horsey April 15th had been ringed as a nestling at Pitlochry, Perthshire. May records from Paston on 2nd, in from sea at Titchwell on 10th, Winterton on 12th and Cley on 31st.

First returning bird at Wootton Marsh Aug 28th with main arrival commencing mid-Sept. Again few records away from usual areas, notably Sporle Oct 23rd, Massingham Heath Dec 21st and again 4 Brecks sites.

Combined roost counts (5 sites) during second winter period: 9 Sept, 16 Oct, 21 Nov and 23 Dec.

### Montagu's Harrier

*Circus pygargus*

**Passage migrant and summer visitor breeding in cereals. Former Broadland breeder.**

First spring migrant Surlingham/Brundall April 19th followed by a male over breeding grounds next day. The first female arrived there on 21st when another female at Thompson Water. Additional spring records: Waxham April 24th, Holme May 15th and 28th, Swanton Novers June 3rd, Blakeney Point June 6th, Overy Dunes June 13th, Cley/Morston June 17th and Holme June 19th.

In north-west Norfolk a total of 3 males paired with 4 females to raise a total of 11 young – all from nests in arable crops. Co-operation again received from host land-owners. An extra male present in nesting area July 27th-Aug 8th. Also a male lingered at Broadland site May 2nd-26th but failed to attract a mate.

Totals of fledged young since 1986:

1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
49	33	36	43	60	82	88	90	75	114	105

Autumn dispersal from Aug 8th when a juvenile at Snettisham. Further Aug records away from breeding area at Burnham Norton 13th, Breydon 18th, 2 Snettisham 21st and Welney 22nd. Sept occurrences at Horsey 18th and at Hickling 19th.

### Goshawk

*Accipiter gentilis*

**Rare breeder. Also a vagrant with sightings perhaps relating to falconers' escapes and often as to migrants.**

A pair raised 2 young at a traditional site with displaying birds at a further 10 sites including 6 possible breeding pairs.

In addition scattered autumn records from coastal localities which refer to migrants together with further winter records including some away from traditional sites.

### Sparrowhawk

*Accipiter nisus*

**Breeding population fully recovered from pesticide-related decline of the early 1960s. Also passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Indications of spring migration included 6 Winterton March 13th with 4 there April 3rd

olme April 20th with 2 west there on 29th and another in from sea May 5th. Breeding confirmed from 12 sites only. However, frequency and localities of observations indicate complete recovery. Indeed figures compiled in an ongoing RSPB aside Survey indicate the bird is more numerous than Kestrel on each of ten farms surveyed in the county.



*Sparrowhawk pursuing Collared Dove (J. Wright)*

In autumn coastal gatherings of 4 Wells East Hills Sept 16th; one in from sea West anton Oct 18th and 4 at Holme Nov 3rd. A wide selection of prey items listed: Edstart (exhausted migrants at Wells East Hills attracted 4 Sparrowhawks), Greenfinch, Collared Dove (5), House Sparrow (2), Blackbird (3), Brambling, Songrush (3), Grey Partridge, Common Snipe (2) and Green Woodpecker. The habit of lying on Snipe at Welney is similar to harrier-type quartering. The hunter's flight is slow and low just a few feet above the ground with prey being taken as it leaps into the air on take-off before any acceleration achieved.

A possible communal roost-site discovered in north Norfolk where 4 birds entered a stable wood within a ten minute period at dusk Nov 8th.

## **Buzzard**

*Buteo buteo*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Breeding recorded 1992, but status undoubtedly distorted following local releases from Birds of Prey centres.*

Winter records from Massingham Heath Jan 8th, Hickling on 17th, Horsey on 28th and Sandall Feb 22nd followed by usual upturn in spring observations when noted at Roseley March 27th, Waxham April 8th, Docking April 10th, Martham April 12th, Wakeney Freshes April 20th, Sheringham April 21st, Swanton Novers May 2nd and 2 at Swanton May 9th.

Breeding has been suspected in recent years on more than one occasion. Confirmation has now been received that 2 young were raised by a pair in 1992. This was for a single young raised at the same site; breeding also took place at a further 2 localities with 2 and 3 young raised respectively. Pairs (or at least 2 birds) summered at two additional sites where nesting was not confirmed. The origin of some of these birds is questionable, but a tentative foothold is suggested within the county.

Additional mid-summer records at Lingwood June 25th and Breydon July 7th.

Widespread autumn observations commencing at Swaffham Aug 26th, Welney and Wighton on 29th and one in off sea Holme on 31st. In Sept Titchwell 7th, Gunton Park 14th, Thurgarton 13th, 2 Swanton Hill (North Walsham) 18th, Thornham/Titchwell

21st, Lingwood 23rd, Burnham Deepdale/Burnham Market 30th. Fewer in Nov when Cromer 5th, Ormesby 5th-9th and 16th, Stalham 20th. During Dec Heydon 6th, Belton 12th and 2 Swanton Hill 31st.

### **Rough-legged Buzzard**

*Buteo lagopus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor from the tundra. Periodic large-scale influxes.*

An elusive over-wintering bird at Aldeby until Feb 11th and doubtless the same at Belton/Burgh Castle Feb 19th. Only other record in this period at Hickling March 19th. An immature south at Waxham on the unusual date of June 8th.

In autumn sightings at Wereham Sept 14th, Welney Sept 19th and West Acre Oct 6th may all relate to one wanderer. Not since the 1985/6 winter has there been a sizeable influx.

### **Osprey**

*Pandion haliaetus*

*Passage migrant.*

An early migrant over Cley March 26th was the first of a spring total of 37 reports; the last, over Norwich, July 2nd. Few linger in spring, one at Narborough May 11th/12th being the exception. However one at Brundall May 18th was apparently the same as one at Surlingham Broad on 22nd which over-summered in the mid-Yare valley wandering to Cantley/Surlingham, Strumpshaw/Wheatfen and up-river as far as Thorpe St Andrew where it was last seen Sept 4th. No previous county instances of such an extended stay.

Autumn migrants recorded at 28+ sites; extreme dates July 23rd (Docking/Holme) and Oct 11th (Egmere). A few examples lingered as at Breydon Aug 7th/8th, Watton/Thompson Water Sept 13th-15th, 2 Rollesby Broad/Barton Sept 14th-16th with one to 18th, another Rollesby Broad Oct 2nd/3rd and West Acre trout farm Oct 7th-14th.

### **Falcon sp.**

A large unidentified falcon in from the sea Overy Dunes Aug 7th was thought to be a Saker hybrid. Possibly the same bird at Scolt Head on 13th. A probable Saker at Blakeney mid-Nov and numerous records of a large brown-backed falcon in the Fritcham area from mid-Nov. These records may all relate to the same bird.

### **Kestrel**

*Falco tinnunculus*

*Resident and autumn passage migrant; at times an impressive build-up along the Wash sea walls.*

Spring movement noted at Holme where 4 west in March and 4 west April 20th. Interesting breeding information from Stanford Battle Area where 48 young fledged from 15 nests (10 in boxes, 3 in trees and 2 in churches). Only post-breeding gathering 15-20 Horsey Aug 13th/14th.

Prey items included Avocets (Titchwell), Little Terns (Blakeney Point and Yarmouth), Little Ringed Plovers (Cley) and a selection of wader chicks (Welney).

### **Red-footed Falcon**

*Falco vespertinus*

*Vagrant, more often in spring, wintering in southern Africa. Exceptional influx 1992.*

Following the unprecedented influx in 1992, to expect more than the single record of a female over Dersingham and Wolferton June 11th (PF) was tempting fate!

### **Merlin**

*Falco columbarius*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Occupies communal roosts. Exceptional in*



**number.**  
 combined monthly totals at winter roosts in first winter period: 14 Jan (4 roost-sites), 9  
 (4), 7 March (3) and 4 April (2). The Delph roost at Welney previously disturbed by  
 roosting remains abandoned. Widespread mainly coastal records usually of singles, but  
 at Holkham. Spring coastal migrants in evidence well into May including Sheringham  
 Blakeney Point on 6 dates to 22nd and Burnham Overy/Burnham Norton 10th/11th  
 Breydon on 14th.

An early male Burnham Norton July 21st followed by another at Cley Aug 13th, a  
 juvenile Welney on 23rd and yet another Cley Aug 26th/27th before becoming wide-  
 spread at coastal and Broads locations with 2 Welney Oct 5th, 2 Scolt Head several  
 sites in Oct, 2 Sheringham Oct 14th and 3 Morston Nov 2nd. One wintered in mid-Yare  
 Cley Nov 6th onwards.

During second winter period combined monthly roosting totals: 2 Sept (single roost-  
 site), 11 Oct (5), 12 Nov (4) and 11 Dec (4). Again mainly restricted to coastal and  
 Broads sites, but observed also at 12 inland sites.

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*  
*large migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Spring arrival from April 20th (Blakeney) followed by Holkham 22nd, Titchwell and  
 Cley/Blakeney 24th, Brancaster 26th and inland at Buxton Heath 27th and Colney GP  
 30th. During May 31+ records from widespread sites with 32 during June and 30 in July.

The increase in breeding numbers has become a feature of recent summers, this year  
 being no exception. At least 6 pairs bred, another summered and additional pairs were  
 displaying or carrying prey at a further 3 sites. Fledging success difficult to assess, but  
 14+ young fledged from 3 nests. Traditional heathland sites are no longer the only  
 places to seek nesting Hobbies.

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
13	2	2	1	2	4	7	6

*Breeding pairs of Hobbies since nesting recommenced in Norfolk*

Autumn records involved 41 birds at 18 sites away from breeding areas. At Winterton 2  
 from sea Aug 29th. In Sept a decrease to 28 records at 22 sites with another in from  
 sea at Sheringham on 14th. Oct records much fewer: Brancaster 2nd, Thorpe St Andrew  
 5th, a confiding juvenile at Titchwell 5th-12th, Morston 6th, Horsey 7th, Thornham 8th,  
 Cley 9th, Happisburgh 11th and Brundall 16th.

Prey items included hirundines, Swifts, Green Sandpiper; also other small waders at  
 numerous sites; migrant Wheatears over the sea together with Dragon/Damselflies  
 including Migrant Hawkers. It has long been recognised that dragonflies are a special  
 attraction to Hobbies as prey and it has been suggested that the increased abundance of  
 Common Darters and Migrant Hawkers during Aug and Sept has contributed directly to  
 their increasing post-fledgling survival (*British Wildlife* Vol 4 341-346).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*  
*passage migrant and winter visitor. Formerly bred Hunstanton cliffs.*  
 With a breeding population in Britain 20% or more higher than the pre-second world  
 war level, this magnificent falcon has become an increasingly regular visitor.

A female roosted at Wells from Jan 1st to at least March 14th and at the same time an  
 adult male wintered at Holkham Freshes, being last noted April 5th. This bird was seen  
 wing-drying after bathing in the manner of a Cormorant. Records from Burnham Overy

and Burnham Norton doubtless relate to one of these visitors. Also recorded 11 dates Welney Feb 8th to April 14th. Additional records during first-winter period from Snettisham Jan 1st and 12th and March 21st; Blakeney Jan 12th; Langley Street on 18th Paston on 26th; Sheringham Feb 3rd and 17th; Titchwell Feb 4th and 14th; Kellin Quags on 17th (the Sheringham bird) and Wissington March 6th.

Spring migrants appeared in Breydon area March 21st to April 5th; Cley April 12th and 20th; Holkham April 13th; Holme May 1st/2nd and May 14th; Norwich City cent. stooping at feral Pigeons May 14th and Burnham Norton May 19th.

In autumn an unusual number of early (Aug) records from 8th when a male mobbin a Marsh Harrier over Holkham Park and a Hobby mobbing a sub-adult male Peregrine Wootton Marsh. One roosted among Cormorants at Welney Aug 13th and 16th when another at Breydon. Additional Aug records from Morston 26th, Cley/Blakeney Point 29th and Titchwell 31st. During Sept at Holme 3rd/4th; 2 Overy Dunes 6th; Blakeney Point 8th; Trimmingham 14th; Welney 16th; Titchwell 16th and 24th-29th; Cley/Blakeney Point 18th-23rd; Holme 18th-19th and 25th. In Oct passage declined but noted Holme on 7th; Cley on 9th; Lynn Point on 21st and Stiffkey on 26th.

At least 4 over-wintered in second-winter period: Wells presumed returning female Oct 15th to year-end; Holkham presumed returning male Oct 24th to year-end; Breydon and Yare valley upstream to Buckenham Nov 7th to Dec 12th and Babingley river where 1-2 over a wide area Nov 8th to Dec 21st at least. Maybe some west Norfolk sightings relate to the unidentified brown-backed falcon regularly chasing Woodpigeons.

### Red-legged Partridge

*Alectoris rufa*

#### *Introduced resident.*

Springtime counts from 30 estates covering 53,823 acres produced a total of 2,224 pairs (compared with 2,631 pairs in 1992). The highest density in this total was 577 pairs on the same estate mentioned under Grey Partridge compared with 429 pairs there in 1992 (*Norfolk Partridge Group/Game Conservancy Trust*).



*Grey Partridge family (N. Arlott)*

### Grey Partridge

*Perdix perdix*

#### *Generally decreasing resident.*

Spring counts from 30 estates covering 53,823 acres produced 1,881 pairs (compared with 1,807 pairs in 1992). The highest density in this total was 724 pairs on the largest estate compared with 355 pairs there the previous year.

Sizeable autumn/winter coveys at Burnham Market 24 Nov and 30 Dec; Warham 72 coveys) Sept; Melton Constable 19 Nov and 20 Dec; Swanton Morley 28 Oct; Wannington 24 Dec and Thetford Nunnery 30 Sept;  
 Norfolk has the highest density of this species in the country.

## Rail

*Coturnix coturnix*

**Summer visitor in very variable numbers; sporadic breeder.**

total of 34+ spring migrants, but secretive habits doubtless mask true status: An early record at Sheringham March 12th followed by April records at Burnham Norton 22nd and Sheringham 24th. As expected, most arrived mid-May to mid-June when birds at a further 15 sites including 3 calling Choseley, 2 Cley, 2 Gimingham and singles elsewhere. At Welney 2 calling for a single day in Aug when 5 calling in Haveringland area.

## Pheasant

*Phasianus colchicus*

**Introduced resident.**

Population dominated by large-scale releases into the wild each year of artificially reared birds for sporting puposes.

## Golden Pheasant

*Chrysolophus pictus*

**Introduced resident to Breckland and Sandringham area.**

Becoming increasingly elusive away from Breckland stronghold. Highest numbers at each site: Brettenham Heath 7, Croxton Heath 2, Downham Market, East Wretham 13, Doe Rough 2, Swaffham, Thetford 3, Wayland Wood 28, West Harling Heath 7 and Wolferton/Sandringham 3.

## Water Rail

*Rallus aquaticus*

**Decreasing summer resident; also passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Moderate numbers during first-winter period, mainly at coastal and Broads locations, with multiple sightings at Burnham Norton 2, Cley 6, Holme 2, Snettisham 5 and Titchwell 4.

During breeding season squealing calls usually only indication of presence. In fact chicks seen only at Martham Broad, Surlingham Church Marsh, Welney (a downy chick at the very late date of Sept 19th) and Weybourne. Additional summering birds at Orsey, Strumpshaw, Woodbastwick and Titchwell.

In second-winter period some totals impressive: Burnham Norton 2, Burnham Overy, Catthe 2, Catfield Fen 6 (one became a Marsh Harrier victim), Holkham 2, Holme 23, Orsey 6, How Hill 3, Ranworth 3, Snettisham 5, Swanton Morley GP 2, Titchwell 10; also singles elsewhere. Holme counts were obtained with the aid of a tape lure during a survey in Nov. Do other reedbeds hold such surprises?

Also recorded at the following inland sites (away from Broads and Fens): Briston, Colney GP, Corpusty, Felbrigg Lake, West Acre and in Brecks at Santon Downham, Thetford Nunnery lakes and Thompson Water.

## Booted Crake

*Porzana porzana*

**Passage migrant and winter visitor. Formerly a summer visitor.**

A casualty beneath wires at Welney July 22nd has been preserved. The sole record of a bird becoming decidedly scarce with only 2 occurrences since 1989.



## Moorhen

*Gallinula chloropus*

***Widespread and abundant resident. Immigrants in autumn.***

Only breeding totals received were Blakeney Freshes 32 pairs and Cley 48 pairs.

Concentrations at Thetford Nunnery 20 Jan; Wiveton-Glandford (river Glaven) 5 Feb; Flitcham 30 Aug; Blakeney 25; Burnham Norton 24 and Salthouse 35 all Nov; Blickling Lake 23; Holkham Park Lake 50; Holkham NNR 107; Salthouse 61 and Welney 55 all Dec.

## Coot

*Fulica atra*

***Resident and winter visitor.***

Counts exceeding 100 are listed:

In first-winter period Cantley BF 140 Jan; Carrow (Norwich) 107 Jan; Holkham Park 171 Jan and 120 Feb; Holkham NNR 253 Jan, 176 Feb and 163 March; Sennowe Park 240 Jan; Titchwell 100 Jan; Welney 973 Jan, 1044 Feb, 757 March and 390 April.

Breeding numbers at Cley 26 pairs; at Holkham NNR 175 pairs; at Titchwell 10 pairs and at Welney 40+ pairs.

Autumn totals impressive including Hardley Flood 600 Aug; Hickling 141 Oct, 19 Nov and 190 Dec; Martham Broad 100 Dec; Holkham Park 245 Aug, 406 Sept, 386 Oct, 221 Nov and 450 Dec; Holme 127 Nov; Snettisham 180 Oct, 219 Nov and 154 Dec; Sennowe Park 290 Sept and 355 Oct; Swanton Morley GP 120 Nov; Pentney GP 36 Oct and 460 Dec; Tottenthill GP 284 Sept and Welney 110 July, 103 Aug, 112 Sept, 44 Oct, 859 Nov and 869 Dec.

Long gone are the days when 2500+ Coots regularly wintered at Hickling; in fact on 7th Jan 1942 eight guns killed 1000 in three hours.

## Crane

*Grus grus*

***Former vagrant. A colony has been resident in Broadland since 1979.***

The Broadland group of 7 present since mid-Oct 1992 increased to 8 from Jan 23rd and may have included one over Cley Jan 11th and later at Field Dalling 12th-14th. A single group of 9 formed from Oct 30th onwards.

## Oystercatcher

*Haemaphysalis ostralegus*

***Widespread breeder both along coast and inland. Also passage migrant and winter visitor with largest gatherings on the Wash.***

Low numbers in first winter period associated with depleted cockle and mussel stocks in the Wash resulted in some mortality. An increase in grassland feeding and counts of 59 Sheringham GC, 220 Holkham NNR fresh marshes, 210 Hunstanton Pitch & Putt and 500 Ken Hill grazing marsh. Sample catches of birds by the Wash Wader Ringing Group in late March/April found 50% of birds in arrested moult and with low body weights. There appeared to be some recovery in numbers during the second winter period.

Monthly maxima at Snettisham 2500 Jan (the lowest Jan count since 1972), 3350 Feb, 2950 March, 2100 April, 1320 May, 952 June, 2890 July, 8000 Aug, 9200 Sept, 6530 Oct, 8000 Nov and 6520 Dec. Albino individual(s) again recorded at Snettisham and Hunstanton. Other substantial gatherings at Breydon 376 March and 372 July, Blakeney Harbour 900 Sept, Warham 1061 Sept, Wells 351 Jan and Gore Point 2550 Feb.

A country breeding total of 608 pairs, the vast majority along the coastal strip, but including 48+ pairs at inland sites. Largest concentrations of breeders at Blakeney Point (178 pairs), Scolt Head Island (59 pairs) and the Wash Trial Bund (39 pairs). An

venturous pair at Breydon nested on the top of a post marking the main channel.



*Black-winged Stilt (N. Borrow)*

### Black-winged Stilt

*Himantopus himantopus*

**Transient mostly in late spring/summer. Bred at Holme 1987.**

Wardley Flood May 4th (DL MB) followed by a long staying, well observed, individual initially at Snettisham Pits Aug 18th-21st (PF *et al* ), but spending from Sept 16th to Dec 31st at Titchwell/Thornham with brief appearances at Hunstanton Aug 26th-27th, Scolt Head first half Sept and Oct 10th, Holme Sept 18th and Oct 14th-18th. An almost unique occurrence although this elegant wader overwintered in Lincs in 1968/9.

### Avocet

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

**Summer visitor breeding since 1977. Scarce but increasing in winter.**

Small numbers in the winter months when 1-4 Breydon (Jan, Feb and Dec), 1-6 Cley (Jan, Feb), Titchwell (Jan, Feb), 1-4 Snettisham (Jan, Feb and Dec ) and Ousemouth 24 Feb 27th.

A minimum of 174 pairs on territory. Results not available from all sites, but at Walthouse Foxes predated all chicks; 48 pairs at Cley reared 42 young; 28 pairs at Wolkham; 30 pairs Titchwell reared 35 young and 5 pairs Holme reared 18 young. Largest spring gatherings: 134 Cley Marsh 28th and 80-90 Ousemouth March 14th-28th.

Post-breeding assemblies included 80 at Titchwell in July. The Terrington Marsh/Ousemouth/Wootton area again attracted large numbers on the tidal flats, these birds sometimes spending high tide periods swimming at sea in a raft; peak counts were 555 July, 280 Aug 6th and 150 Sept 3rd.

Away from traditional sites 2 east at Paston June 12th. 4 west Aug 8th and 3 west Aug 19th at Sheringham. Inland: 2 at Buckenham May 14th/15th and singles at Welney May 12th and 21st/22nd.

### Stone Curlew

*Burhinus oediconemus*

**Breeding summer visitor almost restricted to Breckland.**

First at Stanford Heath Feb 25th, but main arrival probably not until March 15th/16th when seen at Weeting Heath, Bodney and Hilborough. A total of 45 pairs bred in the Norfolk Breck with a further 2 pairs elsewhere.

Post-breeding flocking at one locality produced counts of 24 Aug 19th, 43 Sept 22nd and 41 Oct 18th with the last 5 birds Nov 17th. Just one observed away from traditional sites: a colour-ringed bird at Gun Hill, Burnham Overy, July 17th.

### **Oriental Pratincole**

*Glareola maldivarum*

#### **Vagrant from Asia.**

One present on horse paddocks and arable at Gimingham from May 14th – identity confirmed May 18th (DJH DN *et al* ). Remained until 12.30 hrs June 3rd when it flew off west, later being seen at Weybourne, also flying west, at 13.00 hrs. Next day, June 4th, it appeared at Halfway House, Blakeney Point, 08.00 to 10.15 hrs when it headed west. The following day, June 5th, it was located at Burnham Norton where it remained until June 21st before re-appearing at the same site July 13th to Aug 13th then moving to Titchwell Aug 14th to 17th where it occasionally visited Thornham saltings. What was presumably the same bird appeared at Pevensey Levels (E. Sussex) Aug 29th and Havergate Island (Suffolk) Sept 4th and 19th.

Although 1993 produced some phenomenal birds this will remain, for wader buffs particularly, one that really stood out. Only the third British example and all three have been very long stayers. Previous individuals were in Suffolk/Essex 1981 and in Kent 1988. *See page 131*

### **Little Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius dubius*

#### **Migratory breeder and passage migrant.**

Recorded between March 11th (Cley) although not widespread until the month-end, and Sept 12th (Titchwell). A total of 41 pairs reported on territory, but little information available on breeding success. Failure at one site due to excavation/landscaping work while Kestrels predated chicks at another site.

Only small concentrations in spring including 6 Surlingham and 7 Buckenham in May and up to 8 Cley April/May. Return movements peaked in July, largest gatherings being 21 Cantley BF July 10th, 6 Hickling July 9th, 8-10 Cley June/July and still 6 Sept 1st, 15 Holkham July, 6 Holme Aug 1st, 8 King's Lynn BF July 23rd, 9 Wisington BF July 30th and 6 Sennowe Park June 24th.

### **Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius hiaticula*

#### **Summer visitor breeding at the coast with a small element in Breckland; also a passage migrant (including the Arctic race *tundrae*) and winter visitor.**

A breeding survey found 422 pairs, the vast majority along the coastal strip although 15+ inland (9 of the latter in Breckland). Main concentrations at Blakeney Point (55 pairs), Scolt Head Island (74 pairs) and Snettisham/Heacham (59 pairs). Further details of both Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover breeding census appear in *Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin* No 6.

Peak spring counts of the Arctic race *tundrae* were 366 Breydon May 22nd, 23 Buckenham May 26th/27th, 29 Hickling May 29th, 80 Cley in May, 16 Holkham in May, 107 Holme May 6th, 100 Snettisham May 23rd, 30 Lynn Point May 8th and 28 Welney May 26th. Passage continued on a smaller scale until first week in June.

Returning migrants in good numbers at several sites Aug/Sept with peak counts of 351 Breydon, 250 Blakeney Point, 166 Holkham Bay, 400 Brancaster/Scolt, 352 Titchwell, 260 Holme, 520 Snettisham and 95 Terrington Marsh.

Wintering numbers much lower with the largest gatherings 57 Blakeney harbour Dec, 65 Burnham Overy harbour Jan and 23 Titchwell Jan. A partial albino Sheringham Aug 23rd.



### Antish Plover

*Charadrius alexandrinus*

*once but annual passage migrant, exceptional in winter.*

marked improvement on last year's disappointing showing: an early male appeared at Breydon March 28th (ADB PRA), the second March record for the county. A female at same site May 28th (PRA). Elsewhere another female, at Cley, April 9th (ETM G *et al* ) with one June 25th (MSR). A rare inland record of a male Welney April 9th (K *et al* ). Just one on autumn passage: Hickling Aug 22nd (JH).

### Wentwiler Plover

*Charadrius morinellus*

*once but annual passage migrant. Has wintered.*

light movement during May commencing with a female in Happisburgh/Waxham/Horsey area on 2nd followed by 2 at Bacton/Paston on 6th, 3 Horsey/Waxham on 9th and a single on 16th/17th. Another at Weybourne/Salthouse May 20th.

An early autumn juvenile Titchwell Aug 8th was probably the bird on Holme beach on the same day. This was followed by 3 juveniles Burnham Overy Dunes Sept 7th, north-west at Waxham Sept 8th followed by a juvenile at the same site Sept 15th, latter possibly the individual at Horsey Sept 18th-20th. Also singles at Cley Sept 18th and Sheringham/Weybourne Sept 25th.

### Golden Plover

*Pluvialis apricaria*

*once but annual passage migrant and winter visitor*

recorded up to May 15th (Buckenham) with returning migrants from June 30th (Cley). Noted June sightings at Salthouse on 3rd and Blakeney Point 8th-10th. A noticeable arrival by mid-July with small movements regularly observed from North coast sites during July/Aug, but only infrequently later in autumn.

Widespread in winter, the largest gatherings (those over 1000) appearing at Breydon were 4800 Feb, 5000 March, 6000 Oct and 5400 Dec; Ludham 2000 Oct and 3000 Nov; Buxton 2000 Feb; Paston/Mundesley 2000 Dec; North Walsham 3500 Oct; Titchwell 4000 Feb and 1500 Nov; Holme 2900 Feb and 1450 Dec; Snettisham 2000 Dec and 1500 Nov; Daffy Green 2000 Jan and Wreham 1800 Dec.

### Grey Plover

*Pluvialis squatarola*

*once but annual passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Record at Wash at Snettisham held 170 Jan, 150 Feb, 250 March, 800 April, 3100 May, 20 June, 8 July, 1050 Aug, 280 Sept, 535 Oct and 300 Nov. Other major counts from Breydon where 114 Jan, 84 May and 84 Dec; Blakeney Harbour 103 Feb and 131 Oct; Wroxham 287 Feb; Wells Harbour 113 Jan; Holkham Bay 228 Oct; Scolt Head/Brancaster Harbour 200 May and 450 Sept; Titchwell 705 Aug; Holme 2000 Feb, 2000 March, 1900 April, 780 May and 740 Dec and Lynn Point 510 Sept.

Westerly autumn movements off Sheringham peaked at 130 Aug 23rd.

A number of inland records: Buckenham/Cantley 69 Jan 25th-31st; Cantley BF May 1st; Hardley Flood 2 May 15th; Hickling May 2nd, 8th, 14th and July 30th; Ludham 2 May 5th; Pentney GP Feb 21st/22nd; Thetford Nunnery lakes Aug 23rd and Welney Jan 1st, Feb 14th, March 15th, April 25th, during 12 dates May 5th to June 1st with maximum of 10 May 17th and 10 dates Sept to Nov with a maximum of 11 Sept 20th.

### Lesser Frigatebird

*Chettusia gregaria*

*once but annual passage migrant from south-east Russia.*

adult in full breeding plumage entertained many visitors during its lengthy stay in the county. After visiting Cley April 21st to 23rd (TM SRM *et al* ) it moved to Holkham

Freshmarshes April 24th to 29th (RP AIB *et al* ) and Burnham Norton April 30th (VF). After a period in Lincs presumably the same bird was relocated at North Wootton M 18th to 20th (PR RA1). During its stay the bird was frequently in dispute with territorial Lapwings. The fourth county record and the first in spring.

### Lapwing

*Vanellus vanellus*

***Declining breeder. Also a passage migrant and increasing winter visitor.***

Relatively low numbers in Jan, the largest flock reported 3000 Daffy Green, but a February influx produced counts of 14,700 Breydon, 2500 Titchwell, 5000 Snettisham and 6000 Welney where also 2000 in March.

Latter part of year saw exceptional numbers at Breydon: 13,200 Nov and 36,000 Dec; Ludham 5500 Oct and 6000 Nov; St. John's Fen 2000 Nov; West Caister 2500 Dec, Paston 2000 Dec; Lynn Point 2500 Oct and finally Welney 3000 Oct and 2500 Nov.

Visible migration recorded at Sheringham when 1600 east March 8th and in the autumn when westerly movements included 220 Sept 29th, 300 Sept 30th, 500 Oct 15th and 400 Nov 23rd. At Holme westerly movements of 2000 Sept 29th and 2100 next day.

A total of 388 breeding pairs on the coastal marshes Snettisham to Kelling including the largest concentration of 240 pairs at Holkham NNR. Another 134 pairs reported at inland sites although this total by no means comprehensive. Largest groups: 57 pairs at Welney, 34 pairs Gooderstone, 18 pairs Stanford Battle Area and 15 pairs Surlingham.

### Knot

*Calidris canutus*

***Passage migrant, winter visitor and non-breeding summer visitor.***

The huge numbers frequenting the Wash and north-west Norfolk coast resulted in a number of impressive high-tide roost counts. The most consistent site at Snettisham held 45,000 Jan, 32,200 Feb, 15,000 March, 8000 April, 2000 May, 1800 June, 4850 July, 27,000 Aug, 25,500 Sept, 70,000 Oct, 75,000 Nov and 32,400 Dec. At Holme (Gore Point) 70,000 Sept and a staggering 150,000 to 200,000 Oct 16th with 20,000 Nov. Nearby Titchwell produced counts of 15,000 Aug, 42,000 Sept, 22,000 Oct and 15,000 Nov. There is likely to be much interchange of birds between these sites.

Other counts from Breydon where 277 Jan, 220 Nov and 203 Dec; Blakeney harbour 300 Jan, 120 Nov and 210 Dec; Warham 6000 Jan, 4200 Nov and 3050 Dec and Scofield Head 940 March.

Coastal movements observed at Sheringham: 580 east July 20th, 110 west and 200 east Aug 30th, 240 west and 40 east Aug 31st and 200 east Sept 3rd.

Despite massive coastal gatherings scarce inland. Noted at Buckenham where 2 May 8th; Hickling April 17th, 2 May 11th, 3 May 12th, May 14th and Aug 21st; Lynnhall Easthaugh GP May 14th; Wissington BF Sept 4th and Welney May 11th/12th, 2 May 27th, July 9th/10th, Oct 24th and Nov 13th.

### Sanderling

*Calidris alba*

***Passage migrant and winter visitor.***

Largest numbers during passage periods in May and Aug with smaller numbers overwintering particularly on the more sandy stretches of coast. Favoured areas included Breydon where 41 in winter months; Winterton 45 Nov; Holkham Bay 85 Jan, 223 May, 48 July, 236 Aug, 168 Sept, 140 Oct and 69 Dec; Titchwell 130 Jan, 105 May, 125 Aug, 113 Sept and 100 Oct; Thornham 100 Aug and 120 Oct; Holme (Gore Point) 79 Jan, 140 Feb, 326 March, 409 April, 603 May, 314 July, 434 Aug, 370 Sept, 197 Oct, 240 Nov and 175 Dec and Hunstanton 80 May, 113 Sept and 100 Oct. At Snettisham 105 Jan, 35

6 March, 160 April, 250 May, 1030 July, 1940 Aug, 600 Sept, 160 Oct and 68 Dec.  
Only coastal movement of any significance from Sheringham: 60 east July 20th.  
A spate of inland records during first half of May; when recorded at Buckenham  
a. Hickling 14th, Pentney GP 2 on 12th/14th, Wissington BF 8th with 2 on 13th and  
Welney 1st with 3 on 12th.

### **Wing-palmated Sandpiper**

*Calidris pusilla*

*migrant from North America.*

2: Hickling May 8th/9th; not 8th to 10th as indicated in 1992 NBR.

### **Lesser-necked Stint**

*Calidris ruficollis*

*migrant from Siberia*

2: Cley adult July 29th to Aug 3rd, not Aug 2nd/3rd as in 1992 NBR.

### **Little Stint**

*Calidris minuta*

*passage migrant, scarce in spring. Fluctuating numbers in autumn, rare in winter.*

Isolated occurrence on Jan 3rd at Titchwell followed by 4 early spring migrants there  
until 23rd. A typical light spring movement noted at Breydon 2 May 15th; Berney May  
14-22nd and 28th; Buckenham May 4th and 25th; Hickling May 10th-26th maximum  
followed by a straggler June 14th; Cley May 14th, 26th-31st and June 6th-9th;  
Holkham May 10th and June 8th; Titchwell 2 May 18th-21st; Welney May 9th/10th and  
May 12th.

First returning adult appeared at Titchwell July 7th with a rather weak passage  
throughout July/Aug and larger numbers during Sept. Recorded at Breydon July 10th to  
11th max 19 Sept 13th; Cantley BF max 26 Sept 13th; Hickling from July 14th max  
Sept 10th/11th; Salthouse max 29 Oct 2nd; Cley from July 17th max 65 Sept 9th with  
a further wave of migrants in third week of Sept when 42 on 21st; Blakeney Point max 2  
Aug, 5 Aug and 9 Sept; Holkham max 37 Sept with 10 Holkham Bay Sept 19th;  
Titchwell max 29 Aug, 41 Sept and 10 Oct; Holme max 2 July, 5 Aug, 16 Sept and 3  
Oct; Snettisham max 2 Aug and 8 Sept; Lynn Point max 2 Aug, 23 Sept 19th and 2 Oct  
1991; King's Lynn BF July 21st to Sept 6th max 5 Aug 27th/29th; Wissington BF Aug  
10th to Sept 13th max 7 Sept 5th with 2 Oct 3rd and Welney Aug 23rd to Oct 6th max 9  
Oct 4th-11th with a single Oct 18th.

A few lingered into Nov when singles at Snettisham 7th, Titchwell 12th and Cley  
14th. Very small numbers (under 5) also recorded at 11 other localities during autumn  
passage.

### **Green-winged Teal**

*Calidris tenuinckii*

*passage migrant, more frequent in spring.*

Moderate spring-passage at favoured sites commencing early May and involving  
possibly 13 birds. At Hickling 4 May 6th-9th, 3 May 10th and singles May 11th, 14th  
and 29th, Berney May 18th, Buckenham May 26th-29th. Cley May 6th-9th and another  
May 29th-31st. Titchwell May 7th/8th and another May 25th-29th and Welney May 6th  
and another May 8th-14th.

Return passage involved singles at Cley July 16th, Aug 2nd and 7th and Sept 13th;  
Holkham Norton Aug 3rd and Titchwell Aug 22nd.

### **Red-throated Diver**

*Calidris bairdii*

*migrant from North America.*

1 adult at the high tide roost Snettisham Pits Aug 19th-22nd (PJH JBK *et al* ) was the



ninth county record. It followed one at Cantley in 1992 almost to the day. One Titchwell Aug 25th (DEH TRD) may have been the same bird.

### **Pectoral Sandpiper**

*Calidris melanotos*

*Vagrant from North America/Siberia. Almost annual in autumn, rare in spring and summer.*

Only two records and suprisingly both on spring passage: Salthouse April 29th (RC *et al* ) and Holme May 13th/14th (NL *et al* ).

### **Curlew Sandpiper**

*Calidris ferruginea*

*Autumn passage migrant in fluctuating numbers; scarce in spring.*

An early migrant at Cley April 25th followed by regular sightings there of 1-4 May and to June 2nd. Also at Breydon: 1-4 May 4th, 20th, 29th and June 6th; Buckenham May 8th; Hickling 1-3 May 10th, 13th, 18th and 25th; Titchwell 1-3 May 4th-13th and 2nd and Welney May 8th-10th.

As usual adults appeared in July, the first at Breydon and Blakeney Point on 1st July becoming more widespread by the third week but most sites – apart from Breydon – recording rather low numbers during Aug/Sept. Peak totals for each locality: Breydon 69 Aug and 69 Sept 11th; Cantley BF 8 Aug 27th/29th and 11 Sept 3rd/7th; Hickling 3 July and 7 Sept; Cley 16 July, 40 Aug and 12 Sept; Blakeney Point/harbour 5 July, 10 Aug and 20 Sept; Holkham 11 Aug and 8 Sept; Titchwell 8 July, 20 Aug, 10 Sept and 3 Oct with a straggler Nov 4th-6th; Holme 6 Sept 4th/6th; Snettisham 8 Aug 20th/21st and 7 Sept 3rd; Wissington BF 4 Aug 28th and 7 Sept 3rd. Smaller numbers at 8 additional localities.

### **Purple Sandpiper**

*Calidris maritima*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Extreme dates May 15th-17th (Blakeney Point) and August 11th/12th (Cley) with isolated record from Titchwell July 10th. First obvious autumn arrival in late Aug when noted at Snettisham 20th, Blakeney Point 21st and Sheringham 22nd.

Most regular wintering sites included Walcott/Paston 5 Jan, 6 Feb, 5 March, 2 April, 4 May (last on 8th), one Aug-Oct, 3 Nov/Dec; Overstrand 2 Jan-March and 2 Oct; Titchwell 4 Jan/Feb, 3 March, 2 April and 2 Sept-Dec; Heacham-Hunstanton 11 Jan, 12 Feb, 12 March, 13 April, one Oct and 12 Nov/Dec.

Also reported from 9 additional sites but in very small and irregular numbers.

### **Dunlin**

*Calidris alpina*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Non-breeders in summer.*

Largest numbers at Snettisham: 3010 Jan, 500 Feb, 1000 March, 5000 April, 2000 May, 330 June, 7560 July, 4760 Aug, 6700 Sept, 3000 Oct/Nov and 2010 Dec. Other sizeable gatherings at Breydon 1400 Jan, 2100 Nov and 1800 Dec; Titchwell 2200 Nov 12th; Holme 414 April and 435 Dec; Hunstanton 3000 Oct and Lynn Point 2000 Feb.

Large numbers frequent the saltings and creeks and harbours along the North coast shown by the following counts: Blakeney Harbour 570 Jan, 540 Feb, 60 April, 300 July, 500 Sept, 750 Oct, 400 Nov and 500 Dec; Warham 515 Jan, 429 Feb, 86 April, 480 Oct, 310 Nov and 626 Dec and Brancaster Harbour/Scolt Head 145 Jan, 700 Feb, 230 April, 300 May, 250 July, 800 Sept, 345 Oct, 470 Nov and 500 Dec. Additional birds visited Wells, Burnham Overy and Thornham harbours.

Non-tidal and inland areas also produced significant totals particularly during passage.

periods: Cantley BF 60 Sept 5th; Ludham 48 Nov 16th on flooded marshes; Hickling 33 May and 78 Sept; Cley 130 March, 70 May, 25 July, 400 Aug, 119 Sept, 72 and 39 Nov; Holkham NNR grazing marshes 173 Jan, 257 March and Welney 85, 116 Feb and 30 April.

A series of westerly movements at Sheringham: 500 Jan 3rd, 110 July 12th, 240 Aug 1, 180 Sept 4th and 330 Oct 15th. Also 115 west Paston Sept 4th.

### **lidris sp**

unidentified wader at Cley Nov 8th-14th and Nov 26th-30th had characteristics of Dunlin and Purple Sandpiper. It was considered likely to be a hybrid.

### **oad-billed Sandpiper**

*Limicola falcinellus*

#### **grant from North Eurasia**

One more occurrence brings the country total to 43: Breydon, almost statutory nowadays, May 7th-14th (PRA BB *et al*) followed by a juvenile at Cley/Blakeney harbour on 8th-12th (MAG AMS *et al*) the latter bird was much appreciated as this plumage is rarely seen in Britain.

### **ff-breasted Sandpiper**

*Tryngites subruficollis*

#### **grant from North America**

A juvenile made a brief 40 minute appearance at Cley Aug 22nd (TCD *et al*), the 25th county record.

### **ff**

*Philomachus pugnax*

**ring passage often well marked with impressive leks. Also autumn passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.**

Wintering birds at Breydon 5 Jan/Feb and Dec; Cantley 28 Feb 25th; Hickling Jan 4th; Blakeney 32 Feb 27th; Cley/Glaven marshes 14 Feb, 13 Nov and 27 Dec; Blakeney marshes Jan 10th; Stiffkey 36 Feb 7th; Holkham 3 Jan, 42 Feb 14th; Burnham Norton 14 Feb; Titchwell 29 Jan, 48 Feb and 24 Dec; Thornham 3 Jan 27th; Holme 3 Jan and Blakeney only small numbers due to deep flooding 7 Jan, 6 Feb and 7 Dec.

Reasonable numbers at some sites during March, but the expected April/May passage failed to develop. Peak counts from the most favoured localities were: Burnham/Cantley 42 March, 18 May; Cley 40 March, 16 April and 4 May; Holkham 19 March, 9 April, 46 April and 14 May; Titchwell 44 March and 20 April; Holme 21 March, 10 April and one May; Welney 43 March, 14 April and 27 May and Hardley Wood 17 March. Very small numbers (1-6) recorded erratically at 11 other sites in the March-May period. Scarce during June with just 1-2 birds at 4 sites.

Only moderate numbers on autumn passage with only two localities attaining three-figure gatherings: Titchwell 20 July, 38 Aug, 104 Sept, 119 Oct and 75 Nov and Welney 30 July, 72 Aug, 123 Sept, 85 Oct and 11 Nov – deep flooding here reduced counts from mid-Oct. Other main sites: Cley 34 July, 50 Aug, 45 Sept, 9 Oct and 4 Nov; Holkham 19 July, 22 Aug, 11 Sept and Burnham Norton 35 July, 39 Aug and 13 Sept. In addition isolated high counts at Caister GC 16 Sept 15th, Cantley 42 Sept 3rd, Orsey/West Somerton 28 Sept 30th, Cockthorpe 30 Nov 13th and Binham 19 Oct 27th. Small numbers (1-11) irregularly at 19 other localities.

### **ck Snipe**

*Lymnocyrtus minimus*

**ssage migrant and winter visitor, declining.**

Reported up to May 23rd (Holme), a particularly late date with just one other May

record at Barnham Broom Common on 2nd. First autumn migrants arrived Berney St 18th and Cley next day.

Recorded at 32 sites, mostly 1-2 birds, but 4 each at Ludham Oct 7th, Wells Oct 20th and Cantley Nov 24th; also Holme 6 Oct 29th. One at West Somerton taken by Sparrowhawk.

## Snipe

*Gallinago gallinago*

***Passage migrant and winter visitor; decreasing as a breeder.***

A county total of 135 'drumming' birds included 43 drummers on the coastal grazing marshes between Snettisham and Kelling and a reduction to 72 drummers on the Norfolk length of the Ouse Washes in the Welney area. Prolonged winter and spring flooding at Welney left several hundred acres of Snipe breeding habitat too wet and with retarded vegetation unsuitable for nesting. Both Kestrels and Sparrowhawks were taken breeding Snipe there.

Strong westerly movements during the autumn again observed at Holme where 3 Aug 18th, 210 Sept 21st, 140 Sept 29th and 100 Sept 30th. A small westerly passage at Sheringham produced counts of 13 Nov 9th and 14 Nov 24th.

A very wet autumn created large areas of ideal feeding habitat, a situation reflected in the greatly increased numbers reported during the Oct/Nov period. Largest gatherings were from Breydon/Berney 200 Nov; St. Benet's Level Ludham 250 Oct 19th; 500 Oct 31st and 700 Nov 2nd; How Hill 89 Nov 7th flying north; Bawburgh 200 Nov 26; Sparham 70 Nov/Dec; Cley Green/River Glaven 250 Nov 23rd; Binham 50 Nov 22; Holkham NNR 246 Nov and 122 Dec and Titchwell 66 Nov.

An RSPB Survey of set-aside land revealed very small numbers feeding on wheat stubble, ploughed land and harvested potato and sugarbeet fields during Oct/Nov possibly encouraged by the wet conditions.

## Woodcock

*Scolopax rusticicola*

***Most abundant as a Breckland breeder. Immigrants from the Continent in autumn.***

Roding birds reported from Winterton, Hickling, Strumpshaw, Upton Fen, Wroxham, Swanton Hill, Holkham Park, Dersingham, Roydon and Syderstone. Breeding information severely lacking. Widespread in winter (Jan, Feb and Dec) but once again clearly under-recorded. Reported from 25 sites in very small numbers although 8 Hickling Dec 4th, 21 Bayfield estate Feb, 5 Kettlestone Common Nov, 5 Ringstead Common Nov, Roydon Common Dec and 14 East Wretham on roadside at dusk Nov 7th.

Autumn immigration commenced early with singles at Sheringham Sept 24th and Holme on 28th. General influx began Oct 11th with a noticeable surge of sightings particularly at coastal sites, between Oct 22nd and 26th. Multiple records at this time included 8-10 in Yarmouth cemetery, 12 Wells East Hills, 6 Holkham NNR and Holme.

## Black-tailed Godwit

*Limosa limosa*

***Abundant passage migrant and also a winter visitor. Breeding stock fast decreasing.***

Opening months of the year produced records from Breydon 32 Jan and 27 Feb; Cley Feb; Burnham Norton 4 Jan; Brancaster 6 Feb; Titchwell 11 Jan and 10 Feb; Snettisham Jan and Welney 1-5 Jan also a south-westerly movement of 85 Jan 24th followed by 2 Feb 11th-14th and 267 Feb 16th as the spring passage of *islandica* commenced.

Increasing numbers March/April when largest gatherings were Breydon 22 Mar 13th and 31 April 23rd; Cley 21 March 31st and 210 April 10th; Blakeney harbour 4 March 13th; Titchwell 62 March 29th and 29 April 11th; Terrington Marsh 778 Mar



h: Snettisham 800 April 10th (probably the Terrington flock); Welney 518 March and 140 April 7th.

An easterly movement recorded on the North coast with flocks of 220 Holkham and 10 Holme April 9th and a further 85 east at Holme on 11th. During May up to 100 Cley 1-4th but numbers much lower elsewhere with 10 Breydon, 12 Hickling, 12 Buckenham, 19 Holkham NNR, 15 Brancaster harbour, 20 Titchwell, 6 Holme, 8 Snettisham and 26 Welney. Low numbers in June apart from 78 Cley.

During July an improvement as returning passage migrants/winter visitors appeared. Main areas: Breydon 176 July 31st, 209 Aug 13th, 408 Nov 6th, 568 Nov 12th and 591 Dec 18th – these figures dwarfed previous site counts and the first time large numbers were overwintered here; 150 at Halvergate Dec 18th and 35 there on 28th doubtless part of the Breydon group.

Elsewhere: Ludham 137 Oct 31st on flooded fields were probably Breydon birds; Cley 123 July 4th down to 12 Aug 25th; Holkham NNR 150 July and 53 over Wells on 18th; Titchwell mostly small numbers, but 23 Aug, 126 Sept 30th, 26 Oct 12th and 11 Nov 11th; Terrington Marsh large numbers throughout Aug peaking at 2340 Aug with an estimated 3500 Aug 10th, 770 Sept 3rd and 74 Nov 24th. These birds normally only visible on a rising tide. Also recorded at Welney 127 July 5th down to 19 Aug with several other localities noting very small numbers.

The Wash figures completely eclipse the previous county record of 1084 at Welney on 22nd 1989.

Breeding records confined to Welney where 3 territorial pairs present, 2 pairs rearing chicks each to the flying stage. *"The Ouse Washes have been prone to spring flooding for over 15 years and breeding Black-tailed Godwits could disappear if this situation continues. Since 1975 there have been only 3 summers without flooding and the godwit population on the complete length of the washes has slumped from 65 pairs in 1972 to 16 pairs in 1993. Efficient agricultural drainage, urban run-off and river engineering works are thought to be responsible for the increased frequency of summer flooding which ruins the breeding season for waders"* (British Wildlife June 1993 Vol 14:5).

### Black-tailed Godwit

*Limosa lapponica*

*passage migrant and winter visitor; also non-breeders in summer.*

Largest numbers as usual on the west side of the county: Snettisham 3500 Jan, 4100 Feb, 500 March, 1500 April, 310 May, 300 June, 430 July, 1100 Aug, 1540 Sept, 5000 Oct, 2000 Nov and 3500 Dec. Large flocks also frequently at Holme (Gore Point): 2100 Jan, 6200 Feb, 985 March, 1138 April, 93 May, 11 June, 160 July, 225 Aug, 42 Sept, 10 Oct, 1115 Nov and 1350 Dec.

Elsewhere peaks were Breydon 110 May 6th; Cley 81 May 8th; Blakeney harbour 63 Jan, 65 Feb, 30 July, 50 Aug, 46 Sept, 91 Oct and 116 Dec; Burnham Overy harbour 98 Jan and 60 Nov; Brancaster harbour/Scolt Head 374 Jan, 286 March, 170 July; 230 Sept, 10 Oct and 90 Nov; Titchwell 97 Jan, 200 Feb, 147 March, 26 April, 52 May, 3 June, 10 July, 630 Aug, 4200 Sept, 890 Oct, 1125 Nov and 56 Dec.

At Sheringham a westerly movement of 270 July 12th was a site record.

A number of inland records particularly during spring passage: Buckenham 3 April 10th, 1-4 May 1st-9th and May 27th/28th; Hickling May 1st/2nd and 8th with 13 May 10th; Colney GP 2 May 7th and May 13th; Hellesdon 2 over May 2nd; Lyng Eastaugh 1 May 8th; Wissington BF May 29th; Welney 1-7 April 29th-May 16th with peak of 12 May 10th, but only one on autumn passage: Sept 29th.

## Whimbrel

*Numenius phaeopus*

### *Passage migrant*

Recorded between April 10th and Sept 28th (both Holme) with an over-wintering bird Burnham Overy from Nov 3rd into 1994.

Noted at Breydon April 11th to May 27th max 60 and one remaining to June 14 Halvergate 40 April 27th; Hickling 36 April 24th; Cley 25 May 1st; Blakeney harbour 25 May; Holkham NNR 32 April 24th and 45 May; Titchwell 22 April and 17 May; Holme 34 April 20th; Snettisham 13 April 23rd and Lynn Point 50 May 2nd.

First signs of return passage when 3 Cley and a single Holme June 21st. Site maximum Breydon 40 July 27th; Ludham July 13th-Aug 17th with 108 July 23rd and 53 Aug 1st; Happisburgh 30 July 22nd; Cley 57 July 16th and 20 Aug 1st; Morston 110 July 25th and 70 Aug 6th; Scolt Head 29 July; Snettisham 14 July 25th and 15 Aug 21st; Lynn Point 17 July 25th. Smaller numbers at several other sites.

Coastal movements observed at Sheringham: 22 east April 24th, 40 west July 12th and 60 west Aug 17th; Holme westerly passage 62 Aug 6th, 53 Aug 18th and 49 Aug 20th.

Inland records: Colney GP 4 May 12th, North Elmham 9 Aug 9th; Flitcham 2 April 25th; West Acre 23 April 24th; Pentney GP May 8th; Welney April 20th-May 15th on 5 dates max 8 April 24th and 9 May 13th, also on 5 dates July 20th-Sept 4th with max 10 Aug 2nd and 10 Aug 5th and Thetford Aug 6th and 20th.

## Curlew

*Numenius arquata*

### *Scarce breeder. Abundant passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Widespread on coasts with small numbers feeding inland. Largest flocks: Breydon 4 July, 743 Aug and 605 Dec; Wells 650 July and 600 Sept; Holkham NNR 271 Jan, 1 Feb, 248 March, 85 April, 130 Oct, 215 Nov and 307 Dec; Brancaster harbour/Scolt Head 183 Feb, 360 March, 180 June, 750 July, 550 Aug, 480 Sept and 150 Nov; Titchwell 300 Aug, Holme 250 July/Aug, 240 Oct and 209 Dec; Snettisham 1500 Jan, 503 Feb, 500 March, 450 April, 150 May, 400 June, 180 July, 1000 Aug, 830 Sept, 800 Oct, 532 Nov and 702 Dec. Up to 102 feeding inland at Flitcham April 2nd.

Westerly movements at Cley where 100 June 27th and Sheringham 170 July 12th.

Birds present at 13 Breckland sites in summer with 6 pairs and chicks reported. At least a single pair nested in north-west Norfolk.

## Spotted Redshank

*Tringa erythropus*

### *Passage migrant; small numbers over-winter.*

Very small numbers in winter at Breydon/Berney (2 Jan/Feb and 2 Nov/Dec) and Titchwell (2 Jan/Feb and 2 Nov/Dec).

Spring numbers low apart from Cley where observed from March 29th, peaking at April 24th and 20 May 2nd. Also recorded at Breydon/Berney 2 March, 3 April, May, Hickling March 4th-19th, 2 April; Titchwell 2 March and 2 May and Welney 2 April, May with isolated singles at Holkham, Burnham Norton, Holme, Snettisham, Lynn Point and Bittering GP.

Return movements commenced in second week of June, the largest groups being at Breydon 15 Sept 13th and 3 Oct 19th; Cley 8 June 27th, 20 July 18th, 20 Aug 3rd and 20 Sept 9th; Holkham NNR 7 June, 13 July, 4 Aug, 5 Sept; Titchwell 8 Aug 22nd, Sept 12th, 17 Oct 3rd; Snettisham numbers down on some previous years with 25 Aug 4th and 38 Sept 18th. Small numbers (1-6) occasionally at 9 other sites.

## ds Shank

*Tringa totanus*

*clining breeder. Also passage migrant and winter visitor.*

greatest gatherings at Snettisham: 100 Jan, 175 Feb, 200 March, 200 April, 50 May, 100 June, 176 July, 1600 Aug, 3280 Sept, 180 Oct, 400 Nov and 160 Dec. Moderate concentrations in North coast harbours and saltings. Counts received from Blakeney harbour: 104 Jan, 124 Feb, 200 Aug, 164 Sept and 114 Oct; Wells harbour 198 Sept. 68 Nov and 82 Dec; Burnham Overy harbour 171 Feb, 124 March, 84 Oct, 75 Nov. 125 Dec; Scolt Head/Brancaster harbour 71 Jan, 89 Feb, 53 March, 150 July, 400 Sept, 154 Oct, 84 Nov; Titchwell 63 Jan, 200 Feb 168 Aug, 150 Sept; Holme 137 March. 83 Aug and 110 Dec; Hunstanton 200 Oct; Ousemouth 120 Feb, 177 March. 212 July, 270 Aug and 188 Sept. A number of inland feeding birds at Cley Green/River Glaven where counts were 50 Nov 25th and 105 Dec 11th.

Coastal movements at Sheringham where 110 east and 55 west Aug 30th and 37 west Nov 23rd.

A total of 95 breeding pairs on coastal grazing marshes between Snettisham and Hunstanton with a further 30 pairs on Thornham saltings and an inland concentration of 49 pairs at Welney. Virtually all sites reported good breeding success. No breeding information for the Yare Valley, Broads, Wash saltings and much of the North coast saltings.

## Marsh Sandpiper

*Tringa stagnatilis*

92 addition: The Gunton Park bird also present May 22nd

## Greenshank

*Tringa nebularia*

*passage migrant, singles occasionally over-winter.*

Early birds at Cley March 27th/28th, Blakeney harbour on 30th and Holme on 31st, but autumn passage not developing until second half of April and continuing to mid-May. Numbers then fell sharply.

Main spring passage sites: Breydon 12 May 7th; Hickling 22 May 10th; Strumpshaw 15 May 16th and Welney 16 April 29th and 15 May 8th. Much smaller numbers (1-8) at additional sites.

Scattered records throughout June with an influx from June 29th as autumn passage gathered momentum. Favoured areas included Breydon 12 July, 9 Aug, 19 Sept and 13 Oct; Cley 8 July, 27 Aug and 20 Sept; Holkham NNR 18 Sept; Burnham Norton 21 July, 34 Aug, 12 Sept and 4 Oct; Titchwell 66 Aug, 32 Sept and 30 Oct; Holme 14 Aug, 11 Sept and 11 Oct; Snettisham 33 Aug; Ousemouth 11 Aug and 16 Sept. Inland a flock of 11 over Frettenham July 31st. Smaller numbers (1-9) at 19 other sites.

A handful of birds lingered into Nov when records from Blakeney harbour on 19th, Titchwell 2nd-8th, Holme 5th and Snettisham 27th.

## Green Sandpiper

*Tringa ochropus*

*passage migrant, abundant in autumn but scarce in spring; also winter visitor.*

Ones and twos (and once 3) during the winter months (Jan/Feb and Nov/Dec) at 24 mostly inland sites.

As usual only a light spring movement between April 3rd (Welney) and May 22nd (Cley) when 1-2 birds at 15 sites. Returning birds from June 9th (Burnham Norton) with peak numbers during July/Aug; very few remained after mid-Sept. A widespread passage noted at 28 sites. Largest counts: Cantley BF 35 July 10th/31st and 34 Aug 14th; Cley 26 Aug 16th; Holkham NNR 20 July/Aug; King's Lynn BF 17 July 15th; Wislington BF 23 July 24th and 25 Aug 3rd. Last passage migrant Oct 10th (Welney).



## Wood Sandpiper

*Tringa glareosa*

### *Passage migrant in fluctuating numbers.*

Early spring arrivals at Blakeney Eye April 27th, Cley 1-2 April 27th-29th and Pentney GP April 30th. Main passage in first half of May when small numbers (1-3) at Blakeney, Buckenham, Hickling, Cley, Holkham NNR, Burnham Norton, Titchwell, Holme, Welney, Acre, Welney, Lakenheath Flashes, Thetford Nunnery Lakes and Hardley Flood; the latter site having the last spring passage date of 2 May 24th.

A single at Holme June 8th difficult to assign to either passage although another at Berney June 25th presumably a returning migrant. A rather light autumn movement with low numbers at 18 sites. Largest groups: 6 Welney Aug 14th and 4 Cley July 17th and Sept 13th with just ones and twos at other localities. Late birds lingered at Cantley BF until Oct 10th and Berney until 11th.

## Common Sandpiper

*Actitis hypoleucos*

### *Passage migrant; rare in winter. Has bred.*

First spring migrant at Colney GP March 27th. General arrival not until April 19th (Breydon, Blakeney Freshes and Welney). Numbers low until a burst of activity around May 5th-13th when counts of 14 Breydon, 6 Buckenham, 5 Hardley Flood, 9 Hickling, 13 Cley, 13 Wells, 9 Holkham NNR, 8 Burnham Overy, 10 Titchwell, 18 Holme, 10 Snettisham, 6 Pentney GP, 13 Stowbridge, 4 Wissington BF, 4 Welney, 10 Lynn Point, 1 Easthaugh GP, 5 Sparham GP and 5 UEA Broad. Latest spring migrant June 5th (Cley).

Return movements from June 28th (Wroxham Broad) followed by 2 Lynn Point and a single Holme June 30th. Passage birds widespread, but numbers mostly low with the exception of 23 Breydon Aug, 16 Cley Aug 14th, 16 Lynn Point July 17th, 16 Wissington BF Aug 8th and 16 Cantley BF Aug 14th – these being the only localities to attain double figures.

Oct records from Paston on 1st, Titchwell (2) and Wissington BF (3) on 3rd and Breydon on 11th.

## Turnstone

*Arenaria interpres*

### *Passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Counts at Snettisham: 76 Jan, 160 Feb/March, 135 April, 167 May, 196 July, 545 Aug, 235 Sept, 75 Oct, 70 Nov and 36 Dec. Other main sites: Blakeney harbour 56 Jan, 4 Feb, 50 July, 30 Aug, 41 Sept, 42 Oct, 41 Nov and 23 Dec; Scolt Head/Brancaster 6 Jan, 34 Feb, 52 March, 95 April, 62 May, 80 July, 75 Sept, 78 Oct, 67 Nov and 27 Dec; Holme (Gore Point) 37 March, 33 April, 59 May, 17 July, 31 Aug, 35 Sept, 26 Oct, 1 Nov and 15 Dec.

At West Runton up to 70 March 11th on clifftop fields and similarly at Sheringham where counts of birds on ploughed land included 63 Oct 22nd, 42 Nov 6th and 23 Dec 18th. A handful of summering birds during June when 3 Breydon, 3 Blakeney Point, one Titchwell and 7 Snettisham.

A small number of inland birds particularly on spring passage. Recorded at Cantley BF March 7th; Hickling 2 May 7th/11th, June 17th, 2 July 20th and one July 24th; Colney GP 3 May 1st; Pentney GP April 29th and May 8th/9th; Wissington BF May 11th and Aug 10th and Welney April 19th, 4 April 24th, April 28th, 3 May 8th and May 13th.

At Wells Quay 7 very tame birds shared a fish-and-chip lunch with an observer; Feb 28th!



*Red-necked Phalaropes (N. Borrow)*

### **Red-necked Phalarope** *large passage migrant.*

*Phalaropus lobatus*

one on spring passage, but an exceptional autumn when an influx of juveniles recorded Cantley BF Sept 9th-12th with 2 Sept 13th-21st (PJH BWJ *et al*); Cley Aug 14th (DG JEG), Aug 22nd-24th (NRS JRW *et al*), Sept 8th increasing to 3 Sept 9th-14th with 2 remaining until Sept 18th (DB JB *et al*) and Burnham Norton Sept 19th, the latter possibly one of the Cley individuals.

### **Grey Phalarope**

*Phalaropus fulicarius*

*large driven autumn migrant in very small numbers. Rare in winter, exceptional in spring.*

an early autumn migrant off Cley Sept 4th (MAG) followed by more typical migrants flying east off Sheringham Oct 14th (PJH BWJ) and Oct 22nd (RGM KBS) with a bird in Holkham Bay Oct 16th (PM).

### **Pomarine Skua**

*Stecorarius pomarinus*

*passage migrant, largest movements associated with autumn gales and exceptional at other times of the year.*

1 Feb an adult/subadult east at Sheringham on 28th. Early autumn arrivals of singles (possibly the same bird) at Waxham, Walcott and Sheringham July 20th; Cley July 21st and Aug 10th and Scolt Head Aug 12th. Duplication of sightings confused the picture as usual during the main autumn passage; maximum counts on each date of occurrence are given (singles unless otherwise stated): Along the North coast between Paston and the Wash recorded on Aug 22nd (2), 23rd (2), 24th, 26th, 27th, 28th (4), 30th and 31st, Sept 1st (4), 4th (6 Holme), 8th, 14th (9+ Cley), 15th and 26th (8 Holme), Oct 14th (2) 17th, 18th, 20th, 21st (Holkham Bay and 7 Hunstanton) and 22nd (6 Sheringham), Nov 5th, 11th (2), 7th (2), 9th, 14th (3) and 16th.

South of Paston only reports were Scrabby Sept 14th, Horsey Sept 15th, 7 Winterton Oct 21st and Horsey Nov 6th. In Dec an adult/sub adult east at Sheringham on 21st and a juvenile east between Sheringham and Mundesley on 26th. First juvenile of the autumn reported Oct 14th.

## Arctic Skua

*Stecorarius parasiticus*

*Passage migrant, often abundant in autumn. Very scarce at other seasons.*

During spring/summer singles at Cley April 11th; Sheringham May 7th and Cley July 12th before regular sightings from June 24th.

In autumn largest movements all recorded off Sheringham where all-day watch produced 140 Aug 22nd, 160 Aug 23rd, 125 Aug 24th, 125 Aug 26th, 165 Sept 4th, 1 Sept 14th, 75 Oct 13th and 62 Oct 21st. Best count south of Paston: 10 Waxham Aug 22nd.

Notable movements of birds moving inland at Ousemouth included 40 Aug 10th, 1 Aug 23rd and 14 Aug 26th; 84 headed inland over Norfolk from Nene Mouth Oct 13th. Nov records of singles at Sheringham on 1st and 6th, Horsey on 7th and a small passage of up to 20 birds at several sites on 14th. None in Dec. Interesting observations include 16 pursuing waders over Titchwell fresh-marsh Aug 15th and 2 at Hickling Broad Sept 3rd.

## Long-tailed Skua

*Stecorarius longicauda*

*Scarce autumn passage migrant.*

Following a poor showing in 1992 numbers again back to those recorded in 1990/91. Adults at Walcott and Sheringham July 20th and Brancaster Aug 15th. Then numerous sightings towards end Aug/early Sept. Aug 22nd: juv east Paston, 4 Sheringham (one adult and 3 juvs) and 4 Cley; 23rd juv Sheringham, 4 Cley and juv Blakeney Point; 24th juv Cley and adult and 2 juvs Blakeney Point; 25th 2 west Sheringham; 26th adult Cley and Brancaster and 2 juvs Holme; 27th 4 Cley; 29th adult Home; 30th juv Sheringham. Sept 2nd juv Sheringham, 2 juvs Cley and an immature Blakeney Point; 3rd adult East Runton, immature and juv Sheringham and adult and 2 juvs Cley; 4th juv Happisburg and juv Cromer, adult and 3 juvs Sheringham and 2 juvs Holme.

Subsequently an adult Mundesley and 2 Cley Sept 14th and then onwards recorded only from Sheringham: Sept 26th; 2 Sept 29th; Oct 14th; 4 east Oct 21st; one west 22nd and a late bird Nov 14th.

## Great Skua

*Stecorarius skua*

*Passage migrant with heaviest movements during autumn gales. Seldom close inshore at other seasons.*

During Jan sightings at Sheringham/Weybourne on 5th, Titchwell 24th/25th and on Sheringham, 3 Brancaster and 8 Holme all on 25th. In Feb singles at Gun Hill on 18th, Titchwell on 10th and 27th and Weybourne and Hunstanton on 20th with 9 Sheringham, one Holkham and 3 Hunstanton on 21st during north-west gale.

Then absent until July when singles at Sheringham on 7th and Titchwell on 20th. Main autumn passage Aug to Nov and largest numbers as follows: 35 Sheringham Aug 22nd; 60 Sheringham Aug 24th; 168 Cley and 85 Wells Sept 14th; 108 Sheringham and 184 Holme Sept 26th; and 60 Sheringham Oct 21st. In Dec 1-2 at Sheringham on 5th, Sheringham on 21st, Mundesley on 24th, Horsey/Walcott on 26th and Titchwell on 28th.

More unusual records: 11 heading inland at Ousemouth Aug 23rd and 4 at Breydon in severe northerly gale Nov 14th.

## Mediterranean Gull

*Larus melanocephalus*

*Regular all-year visitor in increasing numbers often remaining for weeks and returning to winter in the same area in successive years.*

Following the first attempted breeding in the county in 1992 at Blakeney Point and Titchwell, single pairs of adults were again prospecting at both sites, but no eggs



ported. The ever increasing numbers of sightings of this species is becoming difficult document. Coastal records are summarised in the following table which gives approximate numbers of birds reported under the three age-classes each month:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1st-year	2	—	—	3	3	2	1	3	—	—	—	—
2nd-year	2	3	7	5	2	2	3	5	3	1	1	—
adult	4	6	6	7	5	1	3	7	8	6	7	7

As usual the most favoured sites were Yarmouth, Breydon, Mundesley/Paston, Overstrand, Sheringham, Cley/Blakeney, Titchwell, Holme and Hunstanton. Other than adults and a second-year bird regularly at Blakeney Point in April/May and 2 adults with 2 second-summers at Titchwell in late March, no reports of more than 2 birds together. There was an influx, clearly from the Continent, Aug 2nd when an adult and a juvenile west at Sheringham with 2 newly arrived juveniles at Salhouse. Also involved with this movement was an adult hybrid Mediterranean x Black-headed Gull west at Sheringham (KBS).

All inland records are listed: Sparham Pools/Lyng GP a 2nd-winter Feb 9th-12th and single adults July 11th and Dec 11th-27th; Wroxham 1st-year bird Feb 19th-April 28th; Blakeney GP an adult April 2nd and an adult Nov 11th; Welney single 1st-years April 7th and May 16th; Hickling a 1st-year May 16th; Egmore an adult July 17th and Thorpe (Norwich) an adult Dec 27th.

It is tantalising to read that just across the North Sea "the largest ever Mediterranean gull colony in Holland containing over 100 nests was discovered in Zeeland in 1993" (*Birding World*).

## Little Gull

*Larus minutus*

*non-breeding summer visitor. Also passage migrant and winter visitor with most impressive totals when birds swept close inshore following storms.*

Recorded all months as usual. Largest monthly counts: 62 Holme 23rd and 14 Paston on 25th; 6 Sheringham Feb 21st; 9 Titchwell March 29th; 22 Welney April 24th; 8 Cley during most of May; 9 Cley most of June; 8 Cley July; 10 Sheringham Aug 3rd; 60 Sheringham 14th and 60 Scolt Sept 18th; 95 Sheringham on 1st and 205 there Oct 3rd; 100 Sheringham Nov 14th and 6 Mundesley Dec 26th.

Fewer than usual inland records and passages at both seasons generally small.

## Sabine's Gull

*Larus sabini*

*almost annual but always scarce autumn vagrant from High Arctic.*

All observations during first half of Sept: Sheringham and Mundesley single juveniles on 4th; Cley juvenile on 5th; Sheringham juvenile on 13th; Scrabby adult on 13th; Cley adult on 14th and Wells juvenile on 14th.

Additional 1992: Sheringham adult Oct 4th.

These wanderers probably en route from Greenland and north-east Canada to winter off Namibia and South Africa.

## Black-headed Gull

*Larus ridibundus*

*breeds colonially, dispersing in winter when many immigrants from Eastern Europe.*

Counts of breeding pairs as follows: 20 Strumpshaw, 25 Hickling, 450 Salhouse, 30 Cley Marsh, 2500 Blakeney Point, 50 Blakeney-Morston, 225 Stiffkey Binks, 50

Stiffkey-Morston, 2560 Wells Saltmarsh, 3 Bob Halls Sand, 450 Scolt Head, 6 Titchwell, 119 Snettisham Pits, 355 Snettisham saltings, 358 Wash Trial Bank, Wissington BF and 3 Welney.

Largest roost counts: 7500 Bob Halls Sand, 6600 Snettisham and 3800 Welney Jan; 4000 Elsing Feb; 8000 Blakeney Point April; 6000 Mundesley, 6000 Scolt Head and 17,500 Lynn Point all Oct and 2000 Wroxham Broad and 6700 Welney both Nov.

Most notable visible migrations recorded at Sheringham: 1100 east March 12th, 50 east March 13th, 3700 east March 14th, 1200 west July 31st and 2100 west Aug 2nd.

### **Ring-billed Gull**

*Larus delawarensis*

*Vagrant from North America first recorded 1991.*

The over-wintering second-year bird at Yarmouth (and occasionally at Breydon) remained until March 29th (PRA KRD). It or another present at Breydon April 18th May 1st (PRA KJB KRD). Six previous county records.

### **Common Gull**

*Larus canutus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor with non-breeders remaining all summer. Sporadic breeder since 1965.*

Breeding occurred at 2 sites: At Blakeney Point 4 pairs fledged 8 young and at Stiffkey Binks a single pair fledged one young.

Notable roost counts included 4118 Thornham Jan 17th and 5716 Snettisham Jan 24th, 11,200 Ousemouth Oct 21st and 5200 Thornham Dec. Visible migration at Sheringham on a rather small scale with max 420 west April 18th, 400 west Aug 9th and 250 west Oct 16th.

### **Lesser Black-backed Gull**

*Larus fuscus*

*Passage migrant, migratory breeder nesting colonially and increasingly observed in winter.*

Breeding took place at Blakeney Point (one pair), Wells saltmarsh (13 pairs) and on the Wash Trial Bank where there was a mixed colony of Lesser Black-backs/Herring Gulls – 666 nests in all (BH). As usual only small numbers during winter with up to 9 at handful of sites in Jan, Feb and Dec.

Series of counts at Colney GP where 145 April 17th, 175 July 15th and 500 Nov 5th at Titchwell up to 380 in May, 800 in June, 406 in July and 464 in Aug.

Also 300 following a fishing boat at Holme Sept 2nd and 300 Blakeney harbour Sept.

### **Herring Gull**

*Larus argentatus*

*Rapidly increasing breeder, also late summer passage migrant when yellow-legged gulls put in appearances and winter visitor when Northern race argentatus distinguished.*

Three breeding colonies: 20 pairs at Blakeney Point, 80 pairs at Wells saltings and a mixed one of 666 nests of Herring/Lesser Black-backed on the Wash Trial Bank.

Largest counts: 390 Holme in March, up to 800 Snettisham during April increasing to 1100 in May/June and 1150 Holme Sept and Dec.

Largest movements of birds on visible migration at Sheringham were 600 west (of which 500 of race *argentatus*) Feb 22nd, 550 west March 6th and 230 west April 17th.

An albino Titchwell March 24th (RQS) and leucistic birds at Attlebridge Jan 16th 20th and 29th and Dec 11th and at Snettisham April 19th-21st.

Yellow-legged birds, usually ones and twos, recorded each month except Dec

majority between mid-July and Sept. Most are considered to be of the race *michahellis* breeding in the Mediterranean and Iberia and undertaking a northerly or north-westerly post-breeding dispersal.

### **Herring Gull**

*Larus glaucoides*

*Immature but very scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Long-staying first-year bird roosting at Blakeney Point but spending most of its time feeding at Sheringham Jan 3rd to May 22nd (MY-P *et al*) was a highlight of the early year; a first-winter bird at Winterton, Paston and Mundesley Jan 9th/10th (PC MF BJR) could have been the same individual. An adult at Sheringham March 1st-5th (KBS *et al*) also roosted nightly on Blakeney Point; a first-year at Lynn Point May 8th (CD) and a second-winter bird at Sheringham/Weybourne on the unusual date of Oct 10th (BS MPT).

### **Glaucous Gull**

*Larus hyperboreus*

*Winter visitor in fluctuating numbers; rare in summer.*

Full records are given: Cley immature Jan 6th, Attlebridge adult Jan 17th-Feb 2nd and a first winter Jan 17th, Cley 1st winter Jan 25th, Titchwell 2nd winter Feb 2nd, Mundesley 1st winter Feb 21st, Breydon 2nd winter Feb 27th, Hunstanton 1st winter March 7th, Sheringham 1st winter Feb 28th-March 1st, Breydon 1st winter March 19th-22nd, Snettisham 1st winter March 21st, Cley 1st year March 25th, Winterton immature March 27th, Paston 1st year April 4th, Winterton April 30th, Cley adult May 1st, Blakeney Point 2nd year May 8th, Snettisham 2nd summer June 14th, King's Lynn docks adult Sept 21st, Yarmouth adult Oct 8th, Attlebridge adult Nov 8th-20th, Sheringham 1st winter Nov 5th and Paston 1st winter Dec 27th.

A first-winter hybrid Glaucous x Herring Gull at Yarmouth Jan 9th (MAG).

### **Great Black-backed Gull**

*Larus marinus*

*Passage migrant, winter visitor and non-breeder during the summer.*

Very few reports: Notable counts from Attlebridge roost where 400 Jan 16th, 380 Nov 1th and 610 Dec 11th; Snettisham 160 adults Aug; Thornham 275 Sept and off Sheringham a notable passage of 1200 west Nov 15th.

### **Puffin**

*Rissa tridactyla*

*Passage migrant especially noticeable following gales. Has bred. Occasional non-breeding concentrations in summer.*

Largest movements: 1000 Cley Jan 24th, 1500 Cley Jan 25th, 950 Sheringham Feb 21st, 1000 Sheringham Feb 28th, 300 Sheringham July 21st, 300 Paston Nov 6th, 500 Sheringham Nov 14th, 600 Paston Dec 24th, 1000 Paston Dec 25th and 1000 Paston and 1000 Sheringham Dec 26th.

Also notable 500 roosting at Scolt Head July 22nd. Inland records of singles at Breydon Jan 18th and 29th, May 11th, June 20th and 23rd and Oct 18th; 60 heading inland over Choseley Feb 21st; singles at Welney Feb 21st; Stowbridge Feb 22nd; Colney GP 2 March 10th; Hickling April 6th and Welney April 18th and 24th/25th.

### **Gull-billed Tern**

*Gelochelidon nilotica*

*Passage migrant*

Vaxham one flying north June 26th (JRB JH). Another readily viewable long-stayer like the Titchwell bird of 1980 would be appreciated, although it made a nuisance of itself mobbing terns of both eggs and chicks.





*Caspian Tern and Black-headed Gulls (J. Wright)*

### **Caspian Tern**

*Sterna caspia*

#### ***Vagrant from the Baltic.***

Hickling an adult July 12th-14th and 17th/18th (RH JSH *et al* ) also visited Breydon July 13th, 18th and 22nd (KRD SS *et al* ). Previous visitors have also shown a tendency to commute between the two sites. Paston moving west July 28th (MF) and probably the same bird flew west along the North coast July 29th being observed at Blakeney Point 15.30 hrs (PJD), Brancaster 15.45 hrs (VE) and Holme 16.00 hrs (NL). Finally one was off Sheringham Aug 22nd (MPL MY-P).

### **Lesser Crested Tern**

*Sterna bengalensis*

#### ***Vagrant from north-east Africa.***

Scolt Head an adult July 8th-21st (CC JCT MW *et al* ) appeared at Thornham July 11th and an adult flew east off Sheringham Aug 22nd (DPA).

The Scolt bird was presumably a male as it was seen stealing a sandeel from a male Sandwich Tern and present it to a presumed female Sandwich Tern. At least 2 Lesser Crested Terns were present on the East coast of England during July; one seems to have been returning annually since 1983 when it was found on Blakeney Point in Aug.

Only previous county records 1983 and 1988.

### **Sandwich Tern**

*Sterna sandvicensis*

#### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant.***

Recorded March 14th (Holme) to Nov 25th-27th (Titchwell). Inland records involved Hickling June 5th, 3 Marsham north over the A140 Sept 14th, 2 Bentney GP April 14th and singles at Welney April 12th and 20th.

Away from breeding areas concentrations of 800 at Hunstanton feeding off Sunk Sand Sept 1st with sea movements of 120 north at Winterton Aug 28th; 390 east of Paston Aug 28th with 385 east Sept 14th; 400 east off Sheringham Aug 28th; 120 south of Snettisham Sept 22nd while 317 departed south inland at Ousemouth Aug 16th.

A first-summer bird at Breydon June 19th/20th with 2 on 21st – the first occasion

ds in this plumage have been seen here; the majority of one-year old birds remain in nter quarters.

Sandwich Terns enjoyed a good breeding season in 1993 with 3000 pairs Blakeney int fledging 2600 young and 853 pairs Scolt Head fledging 1000 young. It is extreme- gratifying to see Scolt Head featuring once again as a major British breeding site for e species. Factors considered responsible for the high productivity at Scolt (1.17 icks per pair) were (i) selection of best site for ternery (safe from tides and winds) led by colony of Black-headed Gulls already well established at site (ii) no inclement eather of note or flooding following exceptionally high tides (iii) no Fox predation due control (iv) adjacent safe chick-gathering beaches for practice flights (v) wardening d warning buoys preventing human disturbance (vi) very abundant supply of sandeels



Sandwich Terns (R.A. Richarson)

roughout nesting and rearing period – often very close inshore.

Sandwich Terns reared no young at Scolt Head during 1989-91 due to persistent Fox ctivity around the colony. Intensive control in recent years has involved night-sight ooting, snares, electric fences coupled with hunting on the mainland – over 90 were ill in the area adjacent to Scolt in a year.

	1986*	1987*	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993*
ests	2600	3089	2775	1052	0	320	280	853
oung	2200	3200	1200	0	0	0	25	1000

← Fox predation →

Sandwich Terns at Scolt Head Island 1986-93

\* Fox-free Years

Roseate Tern  
Rare passage migrant

*Sterna dougallii*

A very good showing in June to Sept period including a juvenile plumaged bird, a rare ounty occurrence, last observed in 1990. Records involved a single at Breydon June 1st (PRA); Paston juvenile west Sept 4th (JRA CA MF) and an adult Sept 14th (MF); heringham 2 Aug 8th and singles on 10th, 24th and 26th (DPA KBS RQS *et al*): Blakeney harbour/Cley/Salthouse/Weybourne area numerous observations on July 20th, 6th/27th, 2 on 31st, Aug 1st, 8th/9th, 2 on 10th/11th and 14th, 19th and 27th-29th DPA TCD MAG MPT *et al* ) and Scolt Head July 12th (PRA).

Roseate Terns last nested in Norfolk in 1948; in no year were more than 3 pairs ecoreded.

## Common Tern

*Sterna hirundo*

### *Migratory breeder at coastal and inland sites and passage migrant.*

An early arrival at Wroxham Broad March 24th with another at Titchwell March 30th. Main spring movements not until second half of April. Latest: Oct 9th (Holme and Snettisham).

A few westerly movements in Aug with 613 at Holme on 9th, 129 at Paston on 12th and 200 at Sheringham on 14th as well as further movement of 100 west and 30 east Sept 13th.

A total of 861+ breeding pairs reported (854 in 1992). The main colonies being Breydon (143 pairs reared 156 young); Blakeney Point (225 pairs reared 150 young, but some predation by Short-eared Owls on both incubating adults and young); Holkham NNR (95-101 pairs reared 30 young); Scolt Head (150 pairs reared 90 young); Snettisham (88 pairs reared no young) and Wash Trial Bank (64 pairs but no information available on success). Largest inland colonies at Hoveton Great Broad (22 pairs) and Ranworth Broad (22 pairs). At Ditchingham GP the tern raft (occupied 1991/2) was destroyed by fishermen during the 1992/3 winter as it was being used by roosting Cormorants.

The fortunes of the Scolt Head Colony, showing particularly its partial desertion by breeding pairs after Fox harassment, is outlined below (the low number of young in 1987 was due to very cold wet weather):

	1986*	1987*	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Nests	200	208	208	159	14	41	71	150
Young	110	21	45	10	0	0	8	90

← Fox predation →  
\* Fox-free Years

## Arctic Tern

*Sterna paradisaea*

### *A few pairs breed, but mainly a passage migrant*

Recorded April 10th (Welney) to Oct 21st (Sheringham). Spring passage observed at 11 sites with 2 small peaks: late April (when up to 17 at Welney 24th/25th and smaller numbers, 1-4, at Sheringham, Cley, Blakeney Point, Lynn Point and Pentney GP) and during the second week in May (when 1-6 briefly at Wroxham, Hickling, Paston, Cley, Blakeney Point, Titchwell, Snettisham, Lynn Point, Colney GP and Lyng Easthaugh GP).

Very small numbers at 5 sites in June apart from 30 feeding in Blakeney Pit on 27th while a first-summer bird at Breydon on 21st.

Autumn passage observed at 9 coastal sites with largest counts at Paston where 6 west Aug 22nd and 15 Aug 28th; Overstrand 12 Sept 14th; Sheringham 12 Aug 24th and 16 Aug 27th; Cley 12 Aug 1st and 14 Aug 9th; Titchwell 15 Aug 17th and Holme 14 Aug 22nd.

The breeding season saw up to 20 pairs at Blakeney Point with 15 young reared; 1-2 pairs at Scolt Head with 2 young reared and single pairs at Brancaster and Cley/Salthouse where success unknown.

## Little Tern

*Sterna albinifrons*

### *Migratory breeder, the Yarmouth colony being the largest in the country.*

First arrival April 10th (Blakeney Point), but no further records elsewhere until April 20th. Last stragglers at Breydon Oct 2nd, Holme on 9th and Sheringham on 10th.

Of interest a first-summer bird (the second county record) at Breydon June 15th-July 2nd also visiting the Yarmouth colony June 25th. Post-breeding gatherings again at



in Point where 59 July 25th and 70 Aug 15th. Only inland record: Welney May 10th. A county total of around 459 breeding pairs (565 in 1992) reared 220+ chicks. The line in total breeding pairs since 1992 almost entirely due to losses at Yarmouth where 168 pairs (249 in 1992) and Holkham NNR 89 pairs (123 in 1992). Low productivity over a number of years may now be having an effect. The Blakeney colony is divided into 2 main groups of 70 pairs (41 flying young) and 62 pairs (5 young), the latter suffering severe predation – particularly by Kestrels which on a single day visited the colony 9 times taking a chick on 8 occasions. On the credit side the elimination of Foxes at Scolt Head saw 37 pairs fledging 45 young – the most reared on the site since 1987. The Yarmouth colony, wardened by RSPB since 1986 produced 105 fledged young. Attracted cats all season. Five adult tern remains were found and it is possible that 4 were accounted for 90 young at night. Measures against hedgehogs were successful. Three were live-trapped inside the colony and 5 were caught outside. Seven were moved from the dunes. Supplementary feeding of Kestrels, first introduced in 1992, was again undertaken. Even so, 85 nestling terns were seen to be taken. The 200 woodshelters, first used during the previous year, were scattered throughout the colony. Set at an angle against north-easterly winds, they were regularly used by chicks as soon as they became mobile. Torrential rain on 9th July resulted in the deaths of 14 chicks.

### Black Tern

*Chlidonias niger*

*Annual passage migrant with frequent large-scale spring movements during May. Formerly nested abundantly in Broads and Fens.*

Early spring migrants April 24th (Berney and 3 at Welney), 25th (6 Titchwell, 6 Welney and 8 Lynn Point), 29th (2 at Blakeney Point) and 30th (2 Titchwell). A widespread movement followed particularly at inland sites between May 8th and 14th when observed at 31 sites. Records of 10 or more birds at Breydon where 14 May 11th; Cockland Broad 11 May 10th; Hardley Flood 15 May 10th; Wroxham Broad 12 May 10th; Colney GP 40 May 12th and 18 May 13th; Earsham GP 15 May 12th; Elsing GP 15 May 12th; Lyng GP 15 May 12th and 27 May 13th; Pentney GP 26 May 11th and 22 May 12th; Titchwell 13 May 11th/12th and Welney 15 May 10th, 97 May 11th, 17 May 12th and 33 May 13th.

A further scattering of records late in the month followed by just a single June bird at Breydon on 5th.

Apart from a heavy easterly passage at Breydon Sept 13th when 161 moved through after strong overnight south-east winds and rain, autumn passage was generally low key and erratic. Recorded between July 1st (Strumpshaw) and October 10th (Cley) at 12 mostly coastal sites. Largest counts: 8 Paston Aug 22nd, 15 Sheringham and 11 Cley on Sept 13th.

### Guillemot/Razorbill

*Uria aalge/Alca torda*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor. Occasional 'wrecks' following oil discharges and severe gales.*

Notable movements reported mainly from Sheringham where 90 Jan 9th, 240 Feb 21st, 300 Feb 27th, 190 Feb 28th, 430 May 9th, 260 July 7th, 335 Sept 26th, 560 Oct 22nd and 710 Nov 29th. Elsewhere notable passages included 150 Scolt Head May 26th and 1030 Holme June 13th.

A single inland record of a Guillemot on Hundred Foot River at Welney during spring tides Sept 18th. A flightless, but independent, juvenile Guillemot off Sheringham Aug 8th.

## Black Guillemot

*Cepphus gryllus*

*Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A good year with 6 records: Holkham Bay Jan 10th (MR), Sheringham Aug 6th (D KBS SCV), Sheringham Aug 18th (KBS SCV MY-P), Sheringham Sept 2nd (KB), Holme Oct 1st (NL) and Sheringham Oct 17th-25th (MPL KBS *et al*). The Aug 6th bird was a juvenile – perhaps an early date.

## Little Auk

*Alle alle*

*Autumn passage migrant and winter visitor. From time to time large numbers inshore during storm conditions when exhausted birds on tideline and others swept far inland.*

A handful of records, the poorest showing for several years: Sheringham Feb 22nd, Cley Feb 28th, 2 Sheringham Oct 13th, up to 5 at many sites Oct 14th, Sheringham Oct 15th, Holkham Oct 19th, 2 Mundesley Oct 22nd, Cley and Holme Oct 23rd, Caister, Holme and Snettisham Pits Oct 24th, Cley Nov 1st, Horsey Nov 7th and a freshly dead bird at West Harling Heath (killed by bird of prey) Nov 15th.

## Puffin

*Fratercula arctica*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers, particularly after gales.*

Rather scarce and all records are given: Sheringham Feb 28th, Holme May 1st, Mundesley May 9th and June 13th, Sheringham July 6th and 3 July 7th, Blakeney Point 2 Aug 22nd, Sheringham 2 Sept 4th, one Sept 5th and 4 Sept 14th, 4 Cley Sept 14th, one Mundesley and 4 Blakeney Point Sept 26th, Sheringham Oct 13th, 3 Sheringham and one Holme Oct 14th, Mundesley and Sheringham Oct 21st, 3 Holkham Bay Oct 22nd, Yarmouth Oct 24th and Waxham Nov 6th.

## Stock Dove

*Columba oenas*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Little information received. Highest totals in early part of year included Salthouse Heath 100 March; Choseley 70 March; Snettisham 50 Jan and Welney 21 Jan.

Spring movement at Holme where 27 west in March peaking at 10 on 12th; also west Sheringham March 14th. Present throughout spring at Holme: 26 April, 31 May and 21 June. Five pairs bred at Welney Reserve and a pair in the Old Lifeboat House. Blakeney Point reared 4 broods.

No sizeable autumn counts and only records received as follows: Paston 22 Dec, Sheringham 9 west Nov 9th; Ringstead 11 Nov and Welney 43 Sept/Oct, 30 Nov and 2 Dec.

## Woodpigeon

*Columba palumbus*

*Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Only large count early in year 700 Welney Feb 2nd. Spring migration noted at Holme where 190 west March 14th and 271 west April 22nd.

Autumn movements at Holme during Oct included 825 east and 40 west 27th, 63 east and 470 west 28th and 544 east 29th. Notable concentrations at Wolferton 100 Nov 7th; Flitcham several thousands late Nov onwards and Lynn Point 6500 west Dec 19th.

## Collared Dove

*Streptopelia decaocto*

*Resident coloniser. After spreading rapidly across Europe first bred in Britain at Cromer in 1955.*

Largest assemblies: Collen's Green near Lyng 42 Jan; Roydon 50 Feb; Great Ryburg 43 May and 87 Sept; Flitcham 32 Dec and Wreham 118 Dec.

Migration at Holme in May peaked at 11 east on 24th. Judging from details submitted this bird is far less numerous nowadays.

### **Little Dove**

*Streptopelia turtur*

**Passeratory breeder and passage migrant, decreasing.**

Arrival commenced with an early bird at Snettisham April 12th followed by others at Barnhamcross Common 15th and Waxham 19th. Widespread from 20th. Main movement mid to late May when 70 west Sheringham 16th, 60 west Overy Dunes 21st, 40 west Titchwell 22nd, 60 west Sheringham 29th and 56 Snettisham June 2nd. At Welney 17 pairs and at Barnhamcross Common 3 pairs – the only breeding details given. Latest in autumn: Holme Sept 18th, Welney 19th and Sheringham 22nd.

### **Ring-necked Parakeet**

*Psittacula krameri*

**Introduced.**

Found at Cley, Halvergate Marshes, Happisburgh, Heacham, Holme, King's Lynn BF, Lymington, Sporle, UEA (Norwich) and West Walton. The discovery of a county breeding is still awaited. It is interesting to note that when writing in 1855 J.H. Gurney commented nesting "in the wild at Northrepps and on 5 occasions young were brought to maturity".

Records of the similar Alexandrine Parakeet are increasing and observers should no longer assume a 'green' parakeet is a Ring-necked.

### **Great Spotted Cuckoo**

*Clamator glandarius*

**Passeratory breeder and passage migrant.**

1922: The juvenile at Blakeney Point July 7th/8th and 11th was first seen at Cley July (PEB).

### **Cuckoo**

*Cuculus canorus*

**Passeratory breeder and passage migrant.**

Often numerous inland sightings before coastal localities noted arrivals. An early migrant Narborough April 4th followed by East Beckham on 11th, 2 Barnhamcross Common on 12th, Lynford, Little Cressingham and Pentney on 13th and Cley/Blakeney Marshes on 14th. Widespread from 20th, but nowhere numerous until May.

Most adults departed by end July. Juveniles lingered into third week of Sept with late ones Thornham Oct 1st and Happisburgh on 2nd.

### **Great Horned Owl**

*Tyto alba*

**Resident. Continental race *gutata* has appeared as a vagrant.**

Records from well over 100 sites throughout the county, but a scarcity in Breckland. A healthy population in East Norfolk where 5+ on several occasions in Hickling area.

An injured bird near Swaffham carrying a closed plastic ring indicating an illegal release died at a local vets.

### **Little Owl**

*Athene noctua*

**Introduced.**

Welcomed upturn in fortunes with records from over 80 sites. Notably scarce in Brecks and majority of records away from coast. In fact of the 30 localities where breeding confirmed, only 4 were coastal. Most remarkable total was at a 500 acre Caistor St. Edmund farm where an abundance of nesting boxes resulted in 11 breeding pairs.



## Tawny Owl

*Strix alio*

### Resident

No true picture of status available, but the pair with 2 full-grown young in Norwich (61 Palace Road) Feb 7th indicates very early breeding. A scarce grey phase example d at Sheringham in Oct.

## Long-eared Owl

*Asio ot*

*Scarce and local resident. Also a passage migrant and winter visitor often roosts communally.*

Scarce in both winter periods and a disappointing year in general. All observations listed: Bradwell Jan 2nd; Lessingham March 14th-19th; a road casualty Acle New Rd March 20th and Rollesby March 27th. Presumed spring migrants Brancaster Ma 30th, Lynn Point April 22nd, Holkham April 24th and 28th and Holme May 19th.

Interesting mid-summer occurrence when one present on Amoco 49-27 Alpha p form (35 miles off Yarmouth) July 20th-22nd. A young bird at Holme most evening mid-July to mid-Aug. Breeding known to have taken place at 8 sites including just 2 Brecks.

Autumn migrants few and far between: Thornham Oct 12th with another there nt day; in off sea Holkham on 19th; Yarmouth Oct 20th/21st; Sheringham Nov 1st; Wel road casualty Nov 2nd and Warham one roosting in a hedgerow Nov 4th. In addition Docking Nov 7th, Beccles (Stanley Carrs) Nov 28th and Stibbard Dec 11th. No communal winter roosts reported.

## Short-eared Owl

*Asio flamme*

*Increasingly scarce breeder. Also passage migrant and winter visitor rarely forms daytime roosts.*

Scarce in first-winter period with mainly singles in coastal locations. The traditional Halvergate/Breydon/Berney area held only 1-3. Up to 8 at Snettisham mid-Feb and Wells/Warham Jan-Feb; also 5 Denver Sluice to Ten-mile Bank Feb 17th. Only other multiple sightings at this time: 2 Cantley Feb 10th and 2 Lynn Point on 20th.

More numerous during April when spring passage noted at coastal sites including Cley March 27th with 3 there April 2nd, 2 Morston 11th and 2 Cley on 14th.

Only known breeding locality at Snettisham where 3 pairs nested. Also a pair summered in West Caister/Mautby area with an adult carrying prey June 26th.

The few autumn arrival details are given: Sheringham in off sea Oct 1st; Holme Oct 9th; Overstrand in off sea 10th; Eccles/Sea Palling 30th; Blakeney Point Nov 3; Titchwell Nov 7th, 20th/21st and 25th; Breydon Nov 13th, Welney 2 and Bure Pa Yarmouth 2 on 15th; Welney 21st; Salthouse/Cley 26th and Cley Dec 31st. Low numbers in Fens considered to be due to low populations of small mammals. In autumn/winter records from traditional wintering stronghold at Snettisham. Numbers wintering have greatly declined since the days when Halvergate Levels attracted over 100 birds. Even by recent standards a further decline is in progress.

## Nightjar

*Caprimulgus europae*

*Migratory breeder, Breckland remains the stronghold*

Early records from Santon Downham May 6th and Croxton Heath on 9th with major arrival from mid-May. No breeding survey although observations received indicated sustainment of the healthy population levels revealed during the 1992 BTO/RSPB survey. Latest: Barrow Common Aug 5th. One hawking over traffic lights on the A11 near Thetford June 23rd.

**gratory breeder and passage migrant**

ing passage from April 21st when noted at Norwich, Sheringham, Snettisham, Wotton Marsh, Welney and Pentney. Large numbers moved west through the county at end of May: on 29th 1800 past Sheringham and 400 per hour past Paston and on 30th 'hundreds' at Cley and Balkeney Point with 120 per minute at Titchwell in evening. Earlier westerly movements noted Cley June 18th and Holme on 26th. In July 1200 west at Paston in 4 hours on 3rd and 2400 west at Sheringham on 18th.

A number of records in first week of Oct with lingerers Sheringham on 10th and Holme on 11th – the last sighting of the year. A leucistic individual at Lyng GP May 1981 showed white underparts and a pale back.

**Pacific Swift***Apus pacificus***grat from Asia**

Considered the jewel in the crown of an outstanding spring, one at Cley at 10.30 hrs on 30th during a heavy westward movement of Swifts and hirundines was forced low by oppressive weather conditions (AB SJMG RGM *et al*). The bird remained at Cley to the great relief and appreciation of its many observers until skies cleared at 16.10 hrs when it spiralled up and away never to be seen again. The first 'onshore' record for Norfolk and for Britain and Ireland.

The only previous example was one found on a gas platform 28 miles off Aberdeen on 19th June 1981 and released at Beccles, Suffolk, the following day. It is remarkable that three days after this event, Britain's first Oriental Pratincole was reported. This year's Oriental Pratincole, at Gillingham, and the Pacific Swift occurred within days of each other. *See page 133*

**Pine Swift***Apus melba***grat from southern Europe.**

The only record was of a well-watched individual between Sheringham and Cromer on 22nd (CL JRW *et al*) which moved to Mundesley that evening before heading west at dusk. The 34th county example.

**Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis***Resident, numbers fluctuating in response to severity of winters.**

Continued increase in sightings over recent years with birds reported from well over 10 sites. Disappointingly, breeding was confirmed only at Cantley BF, Corpusty, Wurboldisham, Hillington Park, Saham Toney and Wroxham Broad (2 pairs). Reports from several locations within Norwich city centre during the winter. A migrant in off the coast at Sheringham Aug 18th.

**Bee-eater***Merops apiaster***grat from southern Europe.**

Two sightings, both typically fly-overs; west over Holkham Park June 7th (RC SJ MR) and east over Snettisham on 24th (PF). A long stayer would be appreciated by the great majority of birders who still need this ace bee-catcher.

**Poopoe***Upupa epops***Annual vagrant in very small numbers.**

Locally bird at Fornsett January 2nd, moving to Shipdham on 4th where caught and bled but died shortly afterwards was considered likely to have been an escape. An



*Hoopoe (P. Jones)*

above average scattering of spring and autumn records commencing at Burnham Norton April 6th/7th with 2 reported from Gunton Park 'during April' and further singles at Dilham May 10th and Heacham north beach May 17th/18th.

Noted in autumn at Saxlingham Nethergate Sept 2nd-10th, Strumpshaw Sept 2nd and in Sheringham/Weybourne/Kelling area Sept 28th to Oct 1st with a late bird at Sea Palling Oct 28th/29th. A wintering bird at Horsford Nov 19th-30th was relocated to Taverham Dec 23rd where it remained into 1994.

### **Wryneck**

*Jynx torquilla*

**Former migrant breeder. Now a scarce but annual passage migrant with largest totals of drift migrants following north-easterly winds.**

A marked increase on last year's showing. Spring arrival from May 12th resulted in 10 birds in 6 coastal locations from Yarmouth to Holme including Hickling. Autumn migration noted from Aug 22nd, when one found dead inland at Spixworth, followed by a second casualty which struck glass at Sheringham on 27th with additional August sightings at Winterton, Holme and Old Hunstanton. In Sept, after a second inland example at New Costessey on 7th and a single Wells East Hills on 8th, an influx on 14th resulted in 2 at Blakeney Point (with 3 on 15th and one 16th), singles at Stiffkey, Wells East Hills and Burnham Overy Dunes and 4 at Holme (with 2 there to 16th then one to 19th). Additional coastal records at Titchwell Sept 16th, Wells Dell 17th/18th, Horsey 17th-19th, Waxham and Winterton 18th and Sea Palling 19th. Further inland records from Magdalen Bridge Sept 18th and Bradenham on 22nd. Last of the autumn at Blakeney Point Sept 28th/29th.

### **Green Woodpecker**

*Picus viridis*

**Resident.**

A group of 7 together in Holkham Park Feb 20th was an unusual sighting as was another flying along the sea wall at Ousemouth Sept 19th.

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker**

*Dendrocopos major*

**Resident. Birds of the Northern race major occasional in autumn.**

A sighting at Waxham Sept 25th possibly referred to a migrant.





*Great Spotted Woodpecker (M.L. Cornish)*

### **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *local resident.*

*Dendrocopos minor*

Reports from 45 sites, but confirmation of breeding from only three – surely under-recorded. Six pairs located in Holkham Park during the summer. Single records at Eringham and Welney were the first for several years. Another flew south along Pettisham beach Sept 18th.

### **Woodlark**

*Lullula arborea*

#### **Gratory breeder, very recently increasing.**

Returning in Breckland from Feb 8th. The annual survey, commenced in 1974, confirmed a further increase in the breeding population with 82 singing males in Norfolk (70 in Thetford Forest and 12 on heathland) and a further 94 in the Suffolk Breckland. This represents over 150% increase since intensive research began in 1986. A record total of 100 young were ringed from 45 nests. Since 1986 485 Woodlarks have been ringed in Thetford Forest.

The impressive early autumn build-up to a total of 44 in Stanford Battle Area in 1992 was only partially repeated with a peak of 9 birds on Sept 12th. Woodlarks in winter remain an enigma. However, a flock of between 8 and 18 lingered in barley stubble at Itwell from Nov 9th until Dec 31st (JS). Greatest known traveller is the colour-ringed bird marked as pullus in Breckland in 1993 and observed on the Isles of Scilly in late Oct.

The importance of forest replanting as the most attractive habitat is again demonstrated, holding 90% of the population. Woodlarks continue nesting in forest replants for a

period of up to 7 years when encouraged by annual inter-row ploughing (For Enterprise/R. Hoblyn).

Good numbers of coastal migrants: Winterton March 13th, Paston on 14th, Burnham Overy Dunes on 15th (2), Brancaster GC April 2nd, Holme on 5th and Sheringham and Cley (2 on 20th. A singing male at North Walsham April 3rd with an interesting sequence at Salthouse Heath where 1-2 present March 12th to April 10th and 3-4 May 20th, 2 again May 5th and thereafter 1-2 to June 12th, but no evidence of breeding. Additional singing birds at Hempstead Woods and Sandringham. A trio of coastal autumn migrants: west at Holme Sept 29th, Wells East Hills on 30th and at Stiffkey on 30th.

### Skylark

*Alauda arvensis*

***Widespread, but declining as a breeding bird. Immigrants during autumn followed severe weather movements.***

First winter period gatherings generally low with maxima of 200 Eccles Jan 4th, 1 Great Ellingham Feb 9th, 300 Lynn Point on 20th and 200 Holkham March 6th. Breeding pairs: 34 Cley, 40 Snettisham 22 Welney; also 61 territories Blakeney free marsh.

Autumn movements evident Sept 30th when 350 Sheringham and 100 west Holme and Oct 15th when 1800 west Sheringham and 3250 west at Holme with smaller seasonal movements at coastal watchpoints throughout the month. Flocks in second winter period also low: maxima 214 Burnham Market Nov 15th, 240 Sheringham on 22nd and 3 Necton on 24th. A leucistic bird at Welney on several dates in July.

### Shore Lark

*Eremophila alpestris*

***Passage migrant and winter visitor, nowadays usually in very small numbers. Exceptional in summer.***

An encouraging rise in records. Titchwell held good, but erratic, numbers during first winter period peaking at 38 Jan 17th with further monthly maxima of 20 Feb, 20 Mar and 14 April with 4 remaining to May 2nd. Elsewhere 3 Cley/Salthouse area Jan/Feb, 10 to 11 Blakeney point Feb to April (3 remaining to May 3rd) and 1-2 on various dates May 1st at Breydon, Cromer GC, Sheringham, Cley and Brancaster. Additional sightings in mid-May: Titchwell 14th (2) and Blakeney point 15/16th and again on 22nd.

Autumn return from Oct 17th at Holme where 6 Oct 18th-26th and 4 to Nov 1st with further Oct records from Sheringham (5 on 23rd) and Blakeney Point. Thereafter Sheringham Nov 1st-19th (where also 6 cast Nov 25th), 8-9 Salthouse Nov 13th and Blakeney Point Dec 5th-31st with 1-3 on various dates to end of year at Winterton/Horsey, Holkham Bay, Gun Hill, Burnham Overy, Titchwell and Snettisham.

### Sand Martin

*Riparia riparia*

***Rapidly decreasing migratory breeder and passage migrant. Mass autumn roosts a former feature.***

First back Cley and Holme March 12th followed by a steady trickle of arrivals at numerous sites throughout remainder of March with maxima of 11 Thetford Nunnery lake 16th and 12 Wroxham Broad 25th. Numbers remained generally low during first half April with modest influx from 19th when 150 west Holme 20th, 55 west Sheringham and 40 Cley 21st. Generally considered to have been a poor breeding season confirmed by low numbers in autumn. Only counts exceeding 100 were at Sheringham where 15 west July 18th and 100 west Aug 7th and Holme where 115 west Aug 1st and 380 west on 2nd. Autumn maximum at Welney, for example, was a mere 60 compared to counts



2000 roosting in Aug 1986.

Several birds lingered into Oct, latest Welney 9th and Terrington Marsh 17th. A leucistic bird at Welney Sept 4th/5th and an albino Hemsby Aug 17th.

#### Swallow

*Hirundo rustica*

**migratory breeder and passage migrant. In autumn large pre-migration flocks roost communally.**

Several March records, the first near Stalham on 17th. But no widespread arrival until second week of April. Marked coastal passage from April 21st, peaking May 9th when 50 per hour past Paston; also 950 east Holkham next day. Numbers generally down during breeding season. Autumn roost of up to 2000 in Holme reedbeds July-Sept, peaking mid-Aug. Maximum passage also at Holme: 1150 west Aug 14th. Numerous Nov sightings; latest Thetford Nunnery lakes 19th.

An apparent hybrid Swallow x House Martin at Cley May 1st.

#### House Martin

*Delichon urbica*

**migratory breeder and passage migrant.**

First Holme and West Acre March 30th, but then none until April 4th (Colney GP and Thetford Nunnery lakes). Heavy westward passage May 29th when 600 per hour past Paston and 500 past Sheringham. As with other hirundines, spring movements otherwise modest and numbers of breeding birds generally low. Return passage movements evident from mid-Aug with maxima of 1000+ Snettisham Sept 1st, 500 there 6th and 750 on 18th; 1100 moved east at Sheringham Sept 9th and 600 east in an hour at Paston the same date. Typically, several Oct records with Nov stragglers at Happisburgh 5th. Howland 13th and finally 2 Holme 27th.

#### Richard's Pipit

*Anthus novaeseelandiae*

**Almost annual autumn vagrant from western Siberia. Rare in winter and spring.**

The bird first noted at Cley Dec 31st 1992 remained until Jan 3rd. At least 22 at 11 coastal sites in autumn on 22 dates between Sept 5th (Burnham Overy) and Nov 12th (Salthouse), although records evenly scattered with no obvious influx. No more than two sites held birds on any one day. All singles with the exception of 2 at Deadman's Wood Sheringham Oct 1st/2nd.

Additional 1991: Breydon Sept 13th.

#### Fawn Pipit

*Anthus campestris*

**Almost annual vagrant in spring and autumn.**

Only record was a juvenile at Sheringham Sept 13th.

#### Olive-backed Pipit

*Anthus hodgsoni*

**Vagrant from Siberia.**

A confiding and well appreciated bird at Holkham Meals Oct 24th (MC *et al*) remained until Nov 2nd: the twelfth county record. On the 27th at least this skulking tail-pumper appeared to have two tertials missing whereas subsequent sightings concerned a fully-winged bird leading some observers to suspect that 2 birds were involved. Examination of photographs of 'both' birds, however, revealed no other differences; possibly the tertials were just occasionally displaced.



### Tree Pipit

*Anthus trivialis*

#### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant.***

Earliest West Harling April 2nd. Spring movements evident April 20th when 27 west Holme and 21st when 18 west Sheringham. Autumn coastal migrants from July 31 were most apparent in mid-Sept when up to 80 at numerous coastal localities with maxima of 21 Sheringham on 14th.

Few Oct records: Wells Dell and Happisburgh 14th and latest Holme 15th.

### Meadow Pipit

*Anthus pratensis*

#### ***Migratory breeder and passage migrant with smaller numbers in winter.***

Few flocks reported in first winter period, 60 at Breydon in Feb being the largest. Westward passage in spring from mid-March, most concentrated on 20th (1900 Sheringham and 2400 Holme) and 21st (2600 Sheringham and 2500 Holme). Movement continued in April with peak counts again from Holme where 1400 on 7th and 1000 on 20th.

Breeding data from Cley (54 pairs), Snettisham (44 pairs) and Welney (68 pairs). Return migration much less marked: peak counts of 220 Sheringham and 200 Wells Sep 16th and 140 Lynn Point on 19th; 250 Sheringham Oct 14th; 275 west Holme 15th and 100 Morston 17th. Inland flocks of 55 Welney and 30 Necton Oct 18th. Few gatherings reported after end Oct, 40 Brancaster in Dec and 38 Coltishall Dec 6th being the highest.

### Red-throated Pipit

*Anthus cervinus*

#### ***Vagrant from Northern Europe.***

Additional 1992: One still present on Yankee Ridge, Blakeney Point, May 29th (CEW).

### Rock Pipit

*Anthus petrosus*

#### ***Winter visitor. The Scandinavian race littoralis regularly recognised in spring.***

Extreme dates April 9th (2 Sheringham) and Sept 6th (Blakeney Point). A good scattering of records in both winter periods from usual coastal locations with peak counts of up to 25 Breydon, Wells, Snettisham and Lynn Point. Modest spring passage although several Scandinavian race identified including 19+ Lynn Point Feb 14th, 9 there March 14th and up to 7 Sheringham March 11th-21st.

Autumn passage more pronounced, best days Sept 24th (10 west and one east Sheringham and 50 west Holme); Sept 29th (45 west Holme); Oct 15th (35 west Holme) and 16th (50 west Holme). Recorded inland at Welney Oct 18th (2), Oct 20th and Nov 15th.

### Water Pipit

*Anthus spinoletta*

#### ***Winter visitor.***

Good numbers in first winter period, the 'Serpentine Pools' at Cley again recording the highest numbers with monthly maxima of 40 in Jan, 22 in Feb, 15 in March and 10 in April with latest April 24th. Elsewhere 1-4 at Cantley BF (with 8-9 there Jan 9th). Berney Marshes, Martham Broad, Blakeney Freshmarsh, Holkham Freshmarsh, Burnham Norton, Titchwell, Lynn Point, Wissington BF and Welney. A highly unseasonal bird Surlingham June 15th.

Recorded in autumn from Sept 23rd (Titchwell), but few until end of Oct. Far fewer during second winter period: maxima of 7 Cantley BF Dec 11th, up to 4 at Cley and 5 Wissington BF Nov 7th. Otherwise 1-3 at Buckenham, Waxham, Catfield Fen, Titchwell, Holme and Lynn Point.

## Yellow Wagtail

*Motacilla flava*

### *Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Early arrival at Holme March 19th followed by 3 west on 23rd then 1-3 at 4 sites March 30th/31st. Spring passage peaked during second half of April with maxima of 150 west at Holme 20th, 200+ at Cley 21st, 100 at Brancaster and 120 at Cley 23rd; also several other flocks in excess of 40 birds. Despite impressive spring numbers, lower totals of breeding birds (21 pairs at Holkham and 26 pairs at Welney).

Autumn gatherings on the low side peaking at end of Aug/beginning of Sept: maxima 82 at Lynn Point Aug 29th, 82 at Welney Sept 5th and 40 at Ludham early Sept (the latter site generally holds 150 birds at this time of year). Few in Oct when records at Waxham, Burnham Norton and Brancaster all on 10th being the latest.

Spring passage of birds showing the characteristics of the Continental race *flava*, the **Blue-headed Wagtail**, recorded in spring from April 18th until May 10th when 1-3 at 2 coastal sites with unseasonal birds at Holkham June 15th, Titchwell July 22nd-27th and Burnham Norton on 24th. Autumn sightings at Brancaster Sept 14th and Cley 4 on 5th.

After 1992 bumper spring, numbers of the Scandinavian race *thunbergi*, the **Grey-headed Wagtail**, returned to more expected levels. During May males graced Holme on 11th, Waxham on 12th, Burnham Overy and Titchwell on 13th, Burnham Norton on 14th, Blakeney Point on 15th, Holkham on 19th and Blakeney Point again on 27th. A single autumn occurrence: 3 males Hunstanton Sept 20th.

Males showing characteristics of the south-east Russian race *beema*, known as **Lyke's Wagtail**, at Salthouse April 20th, Welney (for 4th year in succession) April 20th, June 19th and West Runton June 7th. All are considered hybrids, probably locally bred.

## Grey Wagtail

*Motacilla cinerea*

### *Breeder in very small numbers, also passage migrant. Less common in winter.*

A good scattering of records of 1-3 at numerous sites in both winter periods including up to 3 at several locations within Norwich city centre. Modest coastal passage from March 1st.

Breeding confirmed at Buckenham Tofts, Burgh, Buxton, Corpusty, Didlington Hall (nest in a toilet), Ebridge, Fakenham, Hellesdon, Horstead, Ickburgh, Lyng, Marlingford (clutch taken), Mundford, Narborough and Shadwell. Additional breeding season records from Aylsham, Gooderstone, Lynford (2 pairs summered), Oxnead, Burnham Downham and Stringuise Drove.

Substantial autumn passage featured over 140 coastal migrants extending from July 6th (Weybourne SF) until Nov 7th (Sheringham), peaking Sept 18th when 3 north at Lorseley, one at Waxham, 2 east at Beeston, 15 west and 5 east at Sheringham, 8 west at Titchwell and 3 south at Snettisham.

## White Wagtail

*Motacilla alba*

### *Resident and passage migrant.*

Few flocks reported in first winter period: 200 roosting at Hickling March 11th; also 80 at Burnham Market SF Jan 16th and 90 at Rockland/Surlingham Feb 14th. Spring movements from mid-March peaking at 118 east at Paston on 13th and 120 west at Sheringham on 21st. Post-breeding roosts peaked in Aug: maxima 258 at Whitlingham, 77 at Fakenham Racecourse and 280 at Holkham Lake. Also 46 at Waxham, 70 at Titchwell, 50 at Lindringham and 47 at Wissington BF.

Roosts of up to 150 in a birch at Sprowston Manor Hotel Nov/Dec; 400 at Rhone Boulenc in Sweet Briar Road Norwich and 350-400 at Bacton Gas Terminal in Dec.

The Continental race, *alba* (the **White Wagtail**), appeared on spring passage Mar 12th to May 23rd at numerous coastal sites. Mainly 1-4, but 12 Titchwell April 22nd, there April 25th and 10 Bacton May 6th. Only 2 autumn records: 6 Blakeney Point Sep 11th and 3 Hunstanton on 20th.

### **Waxwing**

*Bombycilla garrulus*

#### ***Irruptive winter visitor.***

Recorded only in the second winter period with singles Ongar Hill and west of Sheringham Oct 22nd. Thereafter singles at Aylsham, Brancaster, Claxton, Eccle, Gorleston, Holkham Meals, Holme, Poringland, Rockland St Mary, Seething, Stalham, Sutton and UEA Norwich on various dates to year-end. Also 3 Waxham Oct 30th-Nov 1st, 4 Holme village Nov 6th, 3 Sheringham/Beeston Nov 16th-19th (with 4 on 18th), Thornham Nov 28th and Dec 12th, 2 Belton Dec 13th/14th and finally 1-2 in Wells gardens in late Dec.

### **Dipper**

*Cinclus cinclus*

#### ***The Scandinavian race cinclus is a less than annual winter visitor.***

A Black-bellied Dipper (*cinclus*) found on the River Wissey at Ickburgh April 28 remained in the area until 30th. It was caught and ringed and judging from its weight and an accumulation of droppings, was thought to have been present some time. One Heacham during Dec (probably in the area since Oct) was also caught and ringed; opinions were divided as to whether it belonged to the British race *gularis* or the central European race *aquaticus*. A third bird, not subspecifically assigned, was in the River Babingley/Hillington Park area from Dec 20th into 1994.

### **Wren**

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

#### ***Resident and autumn passage migrant.***

A breeding census at Welney located 13 territories; 2 territories at Blakeney Freshmarsh.

### **Dunnock**

*Prunella modularis*

#### ***Resident and autumn passage migrant***

Nine breeding territories located at Welney with 7 at Blakeney Freshmarsh; up to 1 pairs along Blakeney Point. Small falls of migrants along north coast Sept/Oct included a Norwegian-ringed bird trapped at Holme Sept 18th. Counts at Holme during this period included 50 Sept 17th and 40 on 18th.

### **Robin**

*Erithacus rubecula*

#### ***Resident. Passage may involve large numbers in autumn but most immigrants move further south.***

First autumn arrivals along North coast Sept 13th. No major falls recorded, largest counts being 50 Wells East Hills and 50 Holme Sept 14th-17th; 80 Paston Oct 1st; 6 Happisburgh on 14th and 40 Sheringham on 15th with 45 there Nov 7th.

An albinistic bird, white except for a pale reddish throat, near Tottenhill GP Nov 21st.

### **Nightingale**

*Luscinia megarhynchos*

#### ***Migratory breeder, rarely noted on passage.***

First recorded April 10th when 2 singing males in Brecks and 3 at Weston Fen. Singing males later noted at Alderford Common 4, Barnham Cross Common 7, Beeston Regis 2, Brundall, Buckenham, Buckenham Tofts, Buxton Heath, Kelling Heath 2, Pentney GP.



Blackland Broad, Roydon Common 4, Salthouse Heath 5-6, Stanford Water, Stonepit Heath, Strumpshaw Fen, Sugar Fen (Pott Row) 4, Swanton Novers 2, Thompson area 8 and Weybourne.

Only 2 coastal spring migrants: Holme village April 15th and Holme on 20th. No autumn migrants reported apart from one trapped Boughton Fen Aug 7th.

### **Thrush**

*Luscinia svecica*

**Small numbers of drift migrants in spring. Has become very scarce in autumn.**

total of 17 May migrants, the majority males: Cley, Blakeney/Morston and 2 Holme on 9th; Happisburgh, 2 Brancaster, 3 Overy Dunes and 3 Holme on 10th (still 3 Holme next day); North Walsham (dead on lawn but since preserved) and Overy Dunes on 11th; Waxham 14th; Cley and Blakeney Point 21st and Holme 27th. The largest number since 1987.

Four Sept records: Blakeney Point 16th-18th; Holme 16th-19th; Cley 17th and Titchwell 23rd-24th.

### **Black Redstart**

*Phoenicurus ochrurus*

**Very local migratory breeder. Also a passage migrant and occasional in winter.**

at Heacham a male Jan 6th-11th, presumed the same Hunstanton/Heacham Jan 30th to Feb 6th joined by a female Feb 5th to 20th. Also West Runton Jan 3rd, Caister a male on 11th and one caught in a building at Colmans, Norwich, on 11th.

During March Hunstanton/Heacham again between 2nd and 13th with 3 on 6th. Coastal passage generally commenced on 12th with many sightings of ones/twos on north and East coasts until May 29th – well over 100 birds involved. Largest counts: 7 at Hunstanton March 22nd; 3 Waxham March 26th-28th; 3 Blakeney March 29th; 3 Heacham March 30th; 3 Sheringham April 2nd with 4 there April 8th and 13th; 3 Winterton, 3 Wells East Hills and 3 Holme all April 3rd; 4 Holme April 5th and 3 Burnham Overy Dunes April 14th.

The only well inland sightings were Swaffham March 17th/18th and Winfarthing on 18th. Males in song at Caister Heliport and Cantley BF in April/May and a male summered at King's Lynn Docks. At Yarmouth 2 pairs successfully bred.

Following a female at Blofield on the unusual date of July 5th no other reports until Sept when singles Holme 9th and 14th; Cley 13th and Titchwell 15th. Further records between Oct 8th and Nov 8th at many coastal locations with 3 Cley Oct 30th; 3 Happisburgh Nov 3rd and 5 Heacham Nov 6th. One/two remained at Hunstanton/Heacham until at least Dec 4th. Late birds also at Norwich Airport Nov 2nd (roosting); Brancaster Dec 3rd and Warham Dec 21st.

### **Redstart**

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

**Migratory breeder, especially to Brecks and a passage migrant.**

Exceptionally early migrants at Paston March 27th and Ixteringham on 30th. An above average coastal passage in April/May, particularly in mid-May when 25 Blakeney Point and 11 Holme on 11th with 15 at Holkham on 12th/13th.

Breeding season males in song at Felbrigg Great Wood, Kelling and Briston; successful breeding also noted at Thetford Warren and at the following Stanford Battle area localities: Buckenham Tofts, Frog Hill/Bagmore, Stanford Water and Thompson Water.

A massive fall of continental migrants Sept 13th-17th undoubtedly involving several thousand birds. Peak numbers on 14th when 100 Sheringham, 130 Blakeney Point, 600 Titchwell/Overy Dunes, 100 Wells East Hills and 200 Holme. During this period inland records from Norwich, Sennowe Park, Barnham Cross Common and Thetford Nunnery.

Migrants still arriving in small numbers well into Oct with latest at Wells Dell Nov 3rd.

### Whinchat

*Saxicola rubetra*

**Very scarce breeder. Best known as an autumn passage migrant.**

Spring passage April 20th (Holme) to June 6th (Burnham Norton) with largest number mid-May: 15 Blakeney Point 11th, 13 Holme and 10 Overy Dunes 13th. Present in summer in Stanford Battle Area at Frog Hill/Smokers Hole and Tottington.

Autumn migration Aug 6th (Burnham Norton) to Oct 23rd (Holme and Hunstanton). A notable influx with other migrants Sept 13th/14th including 20 at Horsey, 60 at Sheringham and 20 Blakeney Point. A late bird at Sheringham Nov 2nd.

### Stonechat

*Saxicola torquatus*

**Confined to the coast as a decreasing breeder. More widespread in winter.**

In early months of year a wide scatter of wintering birds including 3 at Titchwell Jan/Feb. Coastal passage noted on North coast and Wash from early March with maximum 5 Sheringham 12th; 6 individual migrants recorded in April, the last at Snettisham on 13th.

Apart from at least 4 breeding pairs on East coast only 2 other May records Bowthorpe on 6th and Holme on 18th. A juvenile June 23rd at Weybourne - a former breeding locality.



*Stonechats (J. Wright)*

Autumn movements commenced Sept 19th with a notable fall Sept 30th around coast involving at least 15 birds when 4 at Trimmingham. Birds continued arriving in far larger numbers than usual during Oct with a monthly total of well over 70 reported. Thirty or more remained until the year-end including several inland as far as the Stanford Battle Area and with up to 8 Weybourne-Stiffkey, 6 at Brancaster, 6 at Holme, 5 at Heacham and 4 at Snettisham.

A bird showing the characters of one of the Eastern races *maura/stejnegeri* known as the Siberian Stonechat at Cley sluice 19th-22nd (KWL DS). An additional 1991 Siberian Stonechat at Titchwell Oct 11th-13th (RQS *et al*). 1991 was a peak year for these attractive little chats with 10 individuals recorded.

### Wheatear

*Oenanthe oenanthe*

**Passage migrant in decline. Continental and Greenland races appear on passage.**

First arrivals Bagmore (Stanford Battle Area), Burnham Norton, Holme and Hunstanton March 13th. Widespread from March 20th with 24 Sheringham on 23rd. During April concentrations of 50 Sheringham 10th and 60 there 20th. In May largest movements March 14th including 32 Holme 12th and 30 Overy Dunes 14th. Latest spring migrant Sheringham June 4th.

Present in breeding season at Weeting Heath, but no young fledged. Fresh juveniles Overstrand, Cley and Brancaster in June/July indicates local breeding birds.

During autumn large falls Sept 13th-15th in association with other passerines. Largest numbers on 14th including 280 Sheringham, 200 Blakeney Point, 100 Overy Dunes, 150 Holme and 160 Hunstanton. Nov stragglers at Blakeney Point 1st, Sheringham 3rd-7th and Breydon 8th.

### Black-eared Wheatear

*Oenanthe hispanica*

**Passage migrant from southern Europe.**

Very confiding first-winter male at Stiffkey/Warham Oct 24th-Nov 1st (SH *et al*). The bird in fact appeared in the parish of Stiffkey for the final 2 days of its stay. It was the first ever in Britain and also the longest staying since the male at Holme. Fourth county record, previous ones being at Salthouse Sept 1965, Cley May 1975 and Holme June 1975.

### Desert Wheatear

*Oenanthe deserti*

**Passage migrant from North Africa.**

Following one at Horsey Gap Oct 29th (ACF), a well watched female, typically late and seen in somewhat inclement weather, at Hunstanton Nov 16th and then at Heacham Nov 19th to Dec 7th (CG AH *et al*). Only 2 previous county records and both on Blakeney Point in Oct 1907 and October 1978.

### Ring Ouzel

*Turdus torquatus*

**Passage migrant in fluctuating numbers. Exceptional in winter.**

Following an early migrant at Holme March 21st spring passage March 29th to May 1st at many coastal localities with maxima of 21 south-west over Hunstanton April 1st; 8 Blakeney Freshes April 21st; 18 Holme April 22nd; 9 Waxham April 24 with 8 there May 2nd. Inland records from Barnham Cross Common, East Wretham, Grime's Graves, Hickling, Mundford, Stanford Battle Area, Syderstone Common, Thetford Tannery, Welney and Witton.

Autumn passage Sept 7th (Blakeney Point) to Nov 4th (Holkham Meals) in smaller numbers compared with spring. Largest counts: 6 Overy Dunes Sept 14th; 21 Blakeney Point Sept 29th and 6 Holkham Oct 13th. Inland: Cantley Oct 10th and Colney GP Oct 11th.

### Blackbird

*Turdus merula*

**Resident. Large numbers of immigrants often arrive in autumn, some continuing north to winter in France and Spain.**

Autumn immigration, especially on North coast, from end Sept to Nov but only on a small scale and no large numbers. Maximum counts: 200 Holkham Meals Oct 18th and 100 Paston on 25th.



## **Black-throated Thrush**

*Turdus ruficollis*

### ***Vagrant from central Asia.***

A first-winter female trapped and released Sheringham Oct 31st (KBS) headed south with other thrushes at 13.00 hrs but was refound in Sheringham Park (MJS DES JRW). Third county record previously being seen at Holkham Meals Oct 1975 and Coltisham Feb to April 1976.

This surprise arrival created much excitement, not to mention frustration to those observers desperately searching before the light completely failed.

## **Fieldfare**

*Turdus pilaris*

### ***Often abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Has summered.***

An exceptionally large-scale coastal movement Jan 30th with birds moving west along the North coast and south along the Wash shore. Counts included 600 in 2 hours at Sheringham, 600 Holkham, 3000 Titchwell, 740 Holme, 600 Hunstanton and 350 Snettisham. Latest May records at Paston 15th and Holme 21st.

In autumn an early arrival commencing Blakeney Point Aug 14th followed by smaller numbers from Sept 7th. During Oct much larger numbers compared with recent years and large flocks appeared both on the coast and inland. Counts included 2000 Egmont Oct 17th; 2000 south Snettisham and 1200 Holme Oct 18th; 1200 Lynn Point Oct 20th with 2000 there Oct 26th; 3420 Holme Oct 27th and 3000 Waxham Nov 1st.

## **Song Thrush**

*Turdus philomelos*

### ***Resident and passage migrant; decreasing.***

Several comments received on decline as a breeding bird. An RSPB set-aside survey recorded only 16 during visits to 10 farms (total of 20 visits) spread throughout the county.

As usual small-scale autumn influx on coast mid-Sept to early Nov with maxima of 200 Blakeney Point Sept 28th, 100 Paston Oct 1st and 100 Holme on 13th.

## **Redwing**

*Turdus iliacus*

### ***Passage migrant, less common winter visitor. Exceptional in summer.***

A major westerly movement in March especially on 20th when 4500 at Sheringham and 15,000 between 08.45 and 12.00 hrs at Titchwell. This movement: "An enormous spring movement of Redwing" features in *Norfolk Bird Club* bulletin No 4 (May 1993). Many stragglers at Holme 10th and Yarmouth 14th.

First recorded in autumn Sept 4th (Yarmouth). Substantial arrivals commenced Sept 28th with further falls from mid-Oct. At Holme 300 on 12th, 400 on 13th, 350 on 15th, 800 east on 18th and 850 east on 26th. Elsewhere hundreds west over Norwich early on 13th, 500 south Snettisham 14th and 18th, 400 Holkham Meals and Warham/Wighton on 18th, 700 Guist Bottom Oct 23rd and 750 Erpingham on 25th.

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Top left: Red-necked Phalaropes, Cantley, September (*B.W. Jarvis*)

Top right: Oriental Pratincole, May to August (*R.C. Wilson*)

Centre: Spoonbills, Cley, June-July (*S. Young*)

Bottom: Oriental Pratincole, Gimingham, May (*R.C. Wilson*)



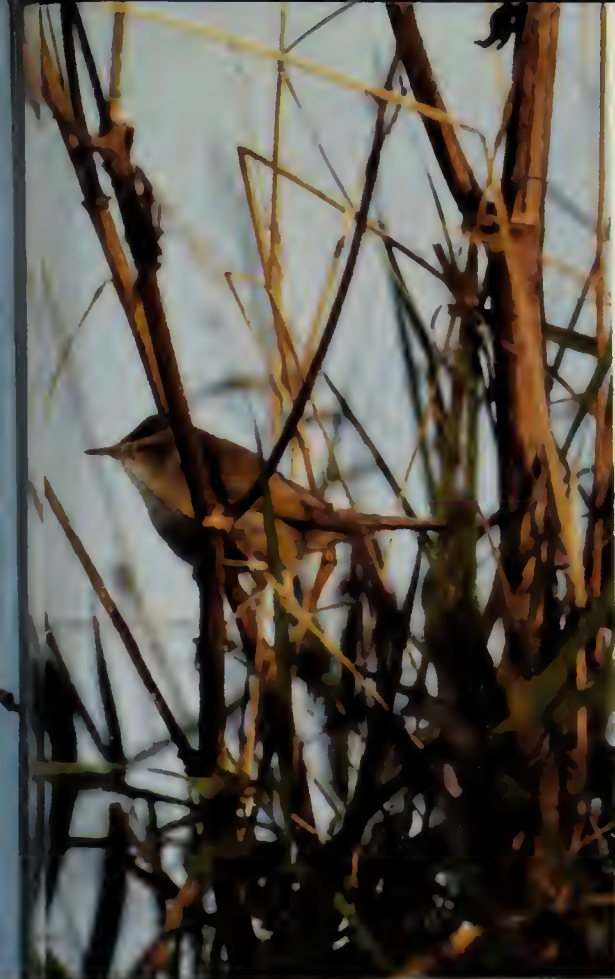




Top left: The long staying Black-winged Stilt (*N. Murphy*); top right: Great White Egret, C April/May (*J. Humble*). Bottom left: Ring-necked Duck, Strumpshaw, March (*N. Clayton*); right: Slavonian Grebe, Blakeney Freshes, March to May (*R. Chittenden*)



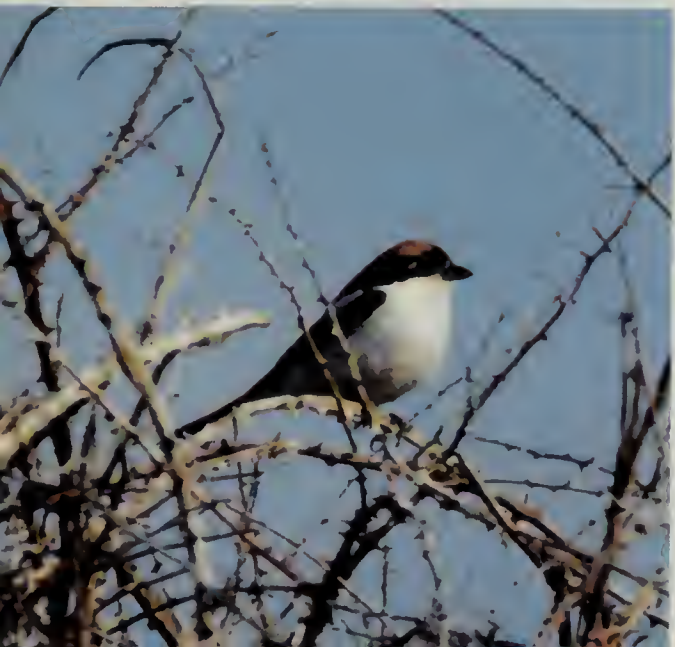




Top left: Paddyfield Warbler, Weybourne/Sheringham, September (*R. Chittenden*); right: Arctic Warbler, Blakeney Point, September (*R. C. Wilson*). Bottom left: Lanceolated Warbler, Sheringham, September and right: Great Reed Warbler, Titchwell, June (*both R. C. Wilson*)







### **Histle Thrush**

*Turdus viscivorus*

*Resident and partial migrant.*

Highest counts of flocks: 40 Thetford Nunnery Sept 14th; 38 Ludham Aug 19th; 33 Holme Sept 27th; 31 Salhouse Aug 28th and 30 Lower Bodham Jan 30th. Coastal movements included 10 Sheringham Sept 22nd; 7 west Overy Dune Sept 30th and 12 west Sheringham Oct 20th.

### **Cetti's Warbler**

*Cettia cetti*

*Broadland resident since 1974.*

Information from Broadland stronghold patchy making a full analysis difficult. During breeding season singing males at Surlingham/Wheatfen (3), Strumpshaw (6), Rockland Broad (4), mid-Bure (5-6), How Hill (2), Ormesby Broad and Martham Ferry.

Outside this period additional singing males at Catfield Fen, Hickling, Heigham Ponds and Chedgrave Common. Minimum of 23 singing males falls within the range of 20-33 singing males recorded annually during the last 5 years, but total is well below the 63 recorded in the heady days of 1984. More systematic recording would be welcomed to enable the apparent decline to be assessed more accurately.

North coast: Titchwell Sept 24th until year-end and Cley Nov 12th until at least Dec 1.

### **Unicoloured Warbler**

*Locustella lanceolata*

*Migrant from Siberia.*

First-winter bird, trapped at Dead Man's Wood, Sheringham Sept 29th (KBS SCV *et al*) was released in nearby clifftop vegetation where it remained for the remainder of the year. Once located this tiny mouse-like skulker was remarkably confiding. An addition to the county list and only the fifth to be recorded away from Shetland.

*See page 135*

### **Grasshopper Warbler**

*Locustella naevia*

*Migratory breeder and scarce passage migrant.*

First at Horsey Gap April 8th followed by a scattering of observations until a widespread arrival April 20th-22nd. May/June records of reeling males: Berney, Breydon, Lakenham Tofts, Cley (6), Dersingham Bog (6), Fleggburgh Common (2), Hickling (4+), Holkham NNR (5-7), Holme (2), Horsey Gap-Waxham (4+), King's Lynn, Mirstead Wood, Knapton, Martham, Stanford Water, Strumpshaw, Surlingham/Rockland (several), Titchwell and Welney. Considerably under-recorded. At the sizeable Broads population is difficult to census due to inaccessibility of habitat.

Autumn coastal migrants at Blakeney Point Sept 8th, 9th and 13th with a late bird at Lancaster Oct 3rd.

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Red-letter Day highlights:

Top: Sociable Plover, Cley & Holkham, April (left R. Chittenden; right Young)

Centre Left: Kentish Plover, Breydon, March (J. Bhalerao)

Centre right: Pectoral Sandpiper, Salhouse, April (R. Chittenden)

Bottom left: Woodchat Shrike, Weybourne/Kelling, June-July (R.C. Wilson)

Bottom right: Bluethroat, Holme, May (R. Chittenden)



**Savi's Warbler***Locustella luscinioides**Almost rare summer visitor.*

Catfield: Singing male in mid-June – the only report and the lowest total for some years.  
Perhaps indicating the demise of the very small Broadland population.

**Sedge Warbler***Acrocephalus schoenobaenus**Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

First at Titchwell April 1st, well in advance of a widespread arrival April 10th-13th.

Breeding season population totals based on counts of singing males included Cley 49, Blakeney Freshes 28, Holme 15+ and Welney 34. The Cley and Welney figures represent decreases of 33% and 30% respectively compared with 1992.

In autumn a number of mainly coastal records in Sept especially during the fall of continental migrants mid-month. Last record Sheringham Sept 27th/28th.

**Paddyfield Warbler***Acrocephalus agricola**Vagrant from South Russia.*

A first-winter bird trapped in a hedgerow between Weybourne and Sheringham Sep 24th (KBS SCV *et al*) remained until dusk. New for Norfolk and heralding something of a 'purple patch' for the Sheringham Ringing Group. *See page 134*

**Marsh Warbler***Acrocephalus palustris**Vagrant first identified 1923.*

Singing males at Sheringham June 2nd (KBS *et al*); Titchwell June 9th-17th (BB *et al*); Holme June 12th (NL) and at an undisclosed Yare Valley locality during June. Tape recordings of the Titchwell bird featured 30+ species including Quail, Nightjar, Bee-eater, River Warbler and Chiffchaff.

Prior to 1993 there were 15 previous county records, virtually all during the last decade. The last two years have seen a marked upsurge in spring occurrences. Future events are awaited with interest.

**Reed Warbler***Acrocephalus scirpaceus**Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

A very early bird at Blakeney Freshes April 13th was followed by another at Brancaster April 17th and a widespread arrival April 21st-24th. Breeding season counts of singing males: Cley 59, Blakeney Freshes 65, Holme 20 and Welney 47. Both the Cley and Welney figures represent small decreases compared with 1992.

One of the more interesting autumn records was of a bird in an Olney Street, Norwich, garden Sept 16th. Late migrants at Waxham Oct 16th, Holme 17th and Holkham 19th.

**Great Reed Warbler***Acrocephalus arundinaceus**Vagrant.*

A singing male at Titchwell June 11th-17th (JMF RQS *et al*). Although often elusive, it was enjoyed by many. Tenth county record and a typical date.

**Icterine Warbler***Hippolais icterina**An almost annual autumn passage migrant in small numbers; occasional in spring.*

Three spring records: 2 Blakeney Point May 27th with one remaining next day and another there June 5th-7th. A slightly above average showing, but well down on last year's springtime avalanche.

autumn total of at least 16 birds: Yarmouth Sept 14th; Trimingham Sept 18th; Easton Sept 14th-16th; Sheringham Aug 29th and Sept 13th-15th; Muckleburgh Hill 28th/29th; Salthouse Sept 18th; Blakeney Point Sept 13th, 2 on 14th, one on 16th; Wells (Dell area) 2 Sept 13th/14th, one on 16th and one on 19th; Holkham 15th, Sept 17th; Scolt Head Sept 17th and Holme Sept 13th, 2 on 14th/15th, one on 17th and one on 18th/19th.

The best autumn showing since 1987 when 18 were recorded; the average in recent years is 5-7 birds.

#### **alpine Warbler**

*Sylvia cantillans*

**passage migrant from the Mediterranean.**

Male at Sidestrand April 14th/15th (JT MAG *et al*). There has recently been a marked increase in the number of British spring records of this attractive over-shooting vagrant. This individual was Norfolk's tenth record; last occurrence was on Blakeney Point in 1990.

#### **chert Warbler**

*Sylvia nana*

**passage migrant.**

Very well-watched bird at The Hood, Blakeney Point May 27th until June 1st (MAG *et al*) was often in full song during its stay and even observed nest-building. Most occurrences in Europe relate to the Middle East/central Asian race *nana*. Norfolk's first record and Britain's tenth, but the first ever in spring. *See page 132*

#### **red Warbler**

*Sylvia nisoria*

**autumn passage migrant.**

Reasonable autumn showing with 10 examples recorded. No marked concentrated arrival period, records being scattered between Aug 29th and Sept 18th: Winterton Sept 29th; Waxham Sept 4th with 2 on 5th, one on 6th and 16th; Morston Sept 18th; Blakeney Point Sept 15th; Overy Dunes Sept 14th; Holme Aug 29th-31st, Sept 18th/19th and Stanton Sept 18th.

#### **grey Whitethroat**

*Sylvia curruca*

**passage migrant and passage migrant.**

Spring arrivals 2 at Holme April 22nd followed by a widespread arrival April 25th-26th. No breeding season counts submitted.

An autumn moderate numbers involved in the fall of continental migrants Sept 13th-16th. Highest counts at this time included Blakeney Point 40, Wells (Dell area) 20, Overy Dunes 15 and Holme 10. A number of late records with singles at Paston. Wells (Dell area), Holkham and Holme during the last few days of Oct. Latest: Wells (Dell area) Nov 1st and Holme Nov 1st-5th.

#### **whitethroat**

*Sylvia communis*

**passage migrant and passage migrant; exceptional in winter.**

First at Titchwell April 9th followed by a steady trickle during the next ten days with a general widespread arrival April 20th-22nd. Only breeding season count received concerned 15 singing males at Welney; the highest number there for at least 10 years.

Autumn passage unremarkable, but moderate numbers involved in the fall of continental migrants Sept 13th-16th. Highest counts at this time: Sheringham 45, Blakeney Point 15, Wells (Dell area) 10, Overy Dunes 25 and Holme 10. A small number of late records during Oct with latest at Holkham Oct 23rd-25th.

### Garden Warbler

*Sylvia bo*

#### *Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

Two very early birds at Holme April 10th followed by one at West Acre April 13. Then none until a single at Holme April 20th. Most sites recorded their first birds April 22nd-27th. No breeding season counts received, but local observers commented exceptionally high numbers in Brecks.

In common with several other migrants, peak autumn numbers occurred Sept 13-17th and highest counts at this time were 35 Sheringham, 10 Blakeney Point, Warham, 10 Wells (East Hills), 50 Wells (Dell area), 15 Holkham, 30 Overy Dunes, Scolt and 60 Holme. Up to 3 at several coastal sites during Oct with latest at Holme Nov 3rd-5th and 3 Wells (Dell area) Nov 1st-5th.

### Blackcap

*Sylvia atricap*

#### *Migratory breeder and passage migrant; some over-winter unless conditions become severe.*

During first-winter period (Jan/Feb) the exceptional total of up to 54 over-wintering birds reported. This figure correlates well with the 53 reported in Dec 1992 and the number present during the 1992/3 winter is far in excess of that in any previous year. Almost all were in gardens with nearly half the total in Norwich. Most records concerned singles, but 2-3 at several sites and one Norwich garden held 4 individuals throughout Jan. Peak numbers in early Jan with a decrease in reports after Jan 18th and further decline after Feb 8th. Some were long-stayers remaining at the same site for months; others just for a day or two. Of the 38 birds sexed, 23 were males.

With such a large over-wintering population it becomes increasingly difficult to determine true arrival dates, but the first apparently genuine migrants were at Merton and Titchwell April 3rd, Coloney GP on 7th and Welney on 8th followed by a widespread arrival on 10th.

In early autumn 100 juveniles were ringed in Stanford Battle Area. Autumn coast passage generally unremarkable with small falls of up to 20 birds at several sites in mid-Sept. A good number of Oct records, mostly ones and twos, but 20 at Sheringham Oct 12th, 25 Wells (Dell area) on 15th and 10 Holme on 26th. Remained quite widespread during early Nov, but few after mid-month. In the second winter period (Dec) reports of up to 23 over-wintering birds. All singles except 3 Blofield Heath Dec 10th, 4 Thorpe Oct 26th-30th, 2 Sheringham all month, 2 Wells (Dell area) all month and 2 Brancaster Oct 21st until year-end.

### Greenish Warbler

*Phylloscopus trochiloides*

#### *Vagrant from north-east Europe.*

A single in Wells Dell area Aug 28th (CHL DKL *et al*) fed actively in birches and was heard singing on several occasions. The late Aug date is typical for this wanderer.

### Arctic Warbler

*Phylloscopus borealis*

#### *Vagrant from northern Europe.*

A well watched bird near The Watch House, Blakeney Point, Sept 1st/2nd (BS JS *et al*) headed inland at 10.30 am Sept 2nd. Although there have been 10 previous records, this is the first in the county since one at Yarmouth in Oct 1988.

### Pallas's Warbler

*Phylloscopus proregulus*

#### *Vagrant from Siberia, almost annual since 1980.*

An autumn total of 7 between Oct 22nd and Nov 7th although almost all arrived Oct



id-25th. Two Holkham Oct 22nd with one remaining on 23rd (JBK MESR *et al*); at Runton Oct 23rd (MIW); Wells (Dell area) Oct 24th-Nov 2nd with a second bird re Oct 29th-Nov 2nd (AIB JBK *et al*); Winterton Oct 25th-29th (PC DJH *et al*); and Sheringham a first-winter male trapped and released Nov 7th (KBS *et al*). Still a star attraction despite the vast influx in 1982 when at least 19 identified in the county. But what induces thousands (presumably) of these flying fairy-lights to move 30 miles westwards into Europe. More intriguing, where do they go after leaving Britain?

### Yellow-browed Warbler

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

**Autumn passage migrant from northern Siberia. Exceptional in winter.**

Good autumn passage with at least 38 birds recorded between Sept 13th and Oct 30th. Records scattered throughout the period, but an obvious arrival Sept 29th at coastal sites east of Wells involving 9 birds. All recorded are listed: Yarmouth Sept 24th-30th and Oct 21st/22nd; Horsey Gap Oct 22nd; Waxham Oct 15th; Mundesley Oct 1st; Sheringham Sept 29th; Beeston Regis Common Oct 4th; Sheringham Sept 17th, a different bird Sept 18th-22nd, Sept 29th and Oct 1st/2nd; Salthouse Oct 24th; Walsey Hills Oct 29th; Cley Village Sept 30th-Oct 2nd; Blakeney (Friary Hills) 2 Sept 29th; Blakeney Point Oct 8th; Morston Sept 28th; Stiffkey Sept 25th, 2 on 29th, one on 30th and 1 Oct 29th; Wells (East Hills) Sept 26th and 30th with 2 Oct 4th; Wells Town Sept 24th; Wells (Dell area) Sept 13th/14th, Sept 25th, Sept 29th-Oct 2nd, Oct 18th with 2 on Oct 2nd and one remaining until 30th; Holkham Sept 19th, Oct 1st/2nd, 4th, 19th-23rd with 2 on Oct 21st/22nd and Brancaster Oct 14th. Inland: Thetford Nunnery Sept 17th/18th.

### Green-backed Warbler

*Phylloscopus fuscatus*

**Autumn passage migrant from central Asia.**

Recorded at Blakeney Nov 1st (DJH JW KW *et al*). The late autumn date is typical. A welcome re-appearance after a blank year in 1992.

1991 addition: Blakeney Point Oct 10th (DMJ BJR).

Twenty previous records.

### Golden Warbler

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

**Autumn passage migrant. Very scarce passage migrant.**

Strong spring passage involving 30+ birds, mostly singing males. Earliest: Blakeney Point April 21st; Yarmouth April 29th/30th and Thetford Warren April 30th. A succession of May records followed with a pronounced peak May 10th-15th. All records are listed: Cley 3 May 13th; Felbrigg Park May 10th; Happisburgh 2 May 14th and one on May 15th; Hickling May 13th; Holkham June 2nd; Holkham Park May 3rd; Holme June 3rd; Holme village June 7th/8th; Holt May 17th; Horsey Gap May 14th; Kelling Triangle May 5th, 8th, 22nd and 31st; Mousehold Heath May 10th-17th; Paston May 14th; Sheringham (Pretty Corner) May 2nd into June with 2 May 8th/9th; Stiffkey May 11th; Walton Hill May 1st; Waxham May 13th; Wiveton May 13th; West Runton May 10th; Yarmouth May 3rd, 2 May 11th, 3 May 12th-14th, 4 May 15th, 4 May 18th, one May 19th and 2 May 22nd.

Two reports of confirmed breeding, but both ended in failure: a pair at Walton were apparently both taken by a Sparrowhawk and a pair at Thompson lost their young to a magpie.

In contrast to the spring, a mere handful of autumn sightings, the majority in mid-May: Yarmouth Aug 9th; Blakeney Point Sept 13th; Cley Sept 13th; Holme Sept 14th; and Waxham Sept 15th.

### Chiffchaff

*Phylloscopus collybita*

**Migratory breeder and passage migrant; a few winter. Northern races from Scandinavia/West Russia (*abietinus*) and Northern Siberia (*tristis*) in late autumn.**

During first winter period (Jan/Feb) 18+ over-wintering birds: Cantley, C Dersingham Bog, Holkham, Holkham Park, North Walsham, Norwich (Onley St Norwich Rouen Rd, Potter Heigham, Snettisham, Strumpshaw, Sutton, Titchwell, Waxham, Wiveton 3 and Yarmouth.

The first obvious spring arrivals appeared March 12th at Holme and Sheringham becoming steadily more widespread from March 13th onwards. No major coastal influxes, but a bird showing the characteristics of the race *abietinus* at Paston April 24th and one of the race *tristis* at Blakeney Point May 11th.

No breeding season counts received.

A prolonged autumn passage with largest concentrations as follows: 30 East Winch Common Sept 5th and 70 Wells (Dell area) Sept 14th. Remained widespread to mid Nov. During Oct birds showing characteristics of *abietinus* at Sheringham Park, Wells (Dell area) 2 and Holkham. During Sept-Nov birds showing characteristics of *tristis* at Paston, Sheringham 2, Salhouse, Blakeney Point, Wells (East Hills), Wells (Dell area) 3, Holkham 5, Overly Dunes, Brancaster, Titchwell, Holme 2 and Docking.

During second winter period (Dec) at least 12 individuals when reports from Cley, Earsham, Holkham 3, Holme, Norwich, Stiffkey, Thetford Nunnery, Welton, Winfarthing and Winterton.

### Willow Warbler

*Phylloscopus trochilus*

**Migratory breeder, most abundant of the warblers and passage migrant. Northern race *acredula*, breeding from Scandinavia to Siberia, in spring and autumn.**

First was an early arrival at Lyng Easthaugh March 26th followed by one at Thompsons Water April 1st and widespread reports after April 2nd. A small coastal influx April 20th-22nd when up to 21 at Wells (Dell area) and 20 at Holme.

Autumn passage included a substantial fall of migrants at coastal sites Sept 14th when 40 Waxham; 38 Paston; 80 Sheringham; 100 Blakeney Point; 200 Wells (Dell area); 105 Holkham/Overly Dunes and 100 Holme.

*Acredula* race birds at Sheringham 2 Sept 13th, 3 Sept 14th, Sept 28th and 2 Sept 30th and Holme Sept 9th. Late birds at Catfield Fen Oct 25th; Wells (Dell area) Oct 26th; Winterton Oct 29th with the latest singles at Stiffkey and Holme Nov 2nd.

### Goldcrest

*Regulus regulus*

**Resident breeder and passage migrant. Often abundant in autumn.**

A very light spring passage at coastal watchpoints from early March with a maximum of 18 at Sheringham March 28th. First autumn migrant at Sheringham Aug 29th, but no substantial numbers until Sept 28th/29th when 100 at Sheringham (where a Russian ringed bird trapped on 30th), 100 at Blakeney Point and 200+ at Wells. Next fall occurred Oct 14th-18th when 100 at Waxham, 250 Paston, 400 Sheringham, several hundreds Holkham/Wells and 150 Holme. A third wave of migrants arrived Oct 23rd/24th resulting in 200 at Happisburgh, 500 at Sheringham and 200 at Wells.

### Firecrest

*Regulus ignicapilla*

**Spring and autumn passage migrant, occasional in winter. Has bred.**

A wintering bird at Felbrigg Hall Jan 1st. Spring passage between March 14th and May 25th with 1-2 at Yarmouth, Horsey, Waxham, Paston, Sidestrand, Sheringham, Salhouse, Salhouse Heath, Cley, Stiffkey, Holkham Meals, Holkham Park, Titchwell.

d Holme. Three at Holme April 3rd where present on 6 dates in March and 11 dates in April. Several of the above records referred to singing males. A singing male also present in Brecks at Lynford Arboretum March 14th-June 6th observed displaying to 2 Oldcrests March 28th. Another singing male at Welney June 6th.

An unseasonal bird at Yarmouth Aug 9th. Autumn coastal passage evident from Sept 1 to Nov 27th (heaviest in last week Oct and first week Nov) when 1-3 at Yarmouth, Interton, Horsey Gap, Waxham, Happisburgh, Holkham Meals, Titchwell and Holme 4 at Holkham Meals Nov 1st and 4 at Wells Nov 5th. Recorded inland at Thetford Nunnery Sept 17th-20th, Thetford Green Lane Oct 3rd and East Wretham Oct 3rd/4th.

### **Spotted Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa striata*

*Migratory breeder and passage migrant.*

An early record Holkham May 2nd, then Thornham Point and Holme on 10th. A conspicuous spring passage from mid-May with maxima of 8 Holme on 17th and 6 Blakeney Point on 25th. Generally considered to have been another poor year, although autumn passage more encouraging, peaking mid-Sept and producing maxima of 25 Wells Sept 14th and 25 Holme on 15th. Several records in first week of Oct with lingers at Wells on 8th, Holme 15th/16th and latest at Brancaster on 29th.

### **Red-breasted Flycatcher**

*Ficedula parva*

*Autumn vagrant in very small numbers, less regularly in spring.*

A typical scattering of autumn records: Waxham Sept 15th followed by Oct records at Holme on 14th, Stiffkey village on 25th, Wells East Hills on 26th and Wells Dell on 27th.

### **Lesser Flycatcher**

*Ficedula hypoleuca*

*Passage migrant, scarce in spring, abundant at times in autumn. Has bred.*

An impressive and protracted spring passage commencing with a female at Holme April 1st and extending to June 2nd when a male at Yarmouth. Most coastal watchpoints reported 1-5 birds during this period with maxima of 16 at Holkham NNR May 11th and 23 Blakeney Point and 6 at Yarmouth on 12th.

A small but widespread arrival Aug 14th heralded return passage. Again impressive and most pronounced Sept 13th-15th. Up to 15 reported at numerous coastal sites with peak counts of 20 Cromer, 55 Sheringham, 30-40 Blakeney Point, 20 Wells East Hills and 25 Wells Dell on Sept 13th; and 28 Sheringham and 50 Wells on 14th. Inland sightings at this time at Methwold Warren Aug 18th, Barnham Cross Common Sept 16th and Thetford Nunnery on 16th/17th. Passage continued well into Oct with latest at Salthouse Heath on 17th and Wells/Holkham on 18th followed by a straggler in Wells Town Nov 1st.

### **Cardinal Tit**

*Panurus biarmicus*

*Resident and partial migrant. Periodic influxes from the Low Countries.*

Despite a succession of mild winters numbers remain low at some locations. Breeding pairs at Breydon 1, Martham 6+, Hickling/Whiteslea/Heigham Sounds 45, How Hill 3, Horsey 6, Salthouse a few, Cley 4-5, Blakeney 1, Holkham NNR 6 and Titchwell 12-15.

Autumn coastal movements at several sites including 3 high to the east Overy Dunes Sept 30th; 8 south at How Hill Oct 8th and 16 departing high to the north at Cley on 10th. At Snettisham up to 4 Oct 8th until end Nov. Largest groups during the year: 35 rumpshaw June, 34 Titchwell and 32 Cley in Sept and 30 Cley in Oct. Only Breckland currence 2 Thompson Water Dec 5th-8th.





*Long-tailed Tits (J. Wright)*

### **Long-tailed Tit**

*Aegithalos caudatus*

**Resident breeder. Scandinavian white-headed caudatus very occasional in autumn.**

Groups up to 40 at widespread locations, together with 55 Surlingham Feb 24th, 85 East Winch Sept 5th and 60 Sandringham Dec 29th. At Sheringham 19 arrived in off sea Oct 18th at which time several observers commented on an abundance. A few at Blakeney Point Nov 3rd.

### **Marsh Tit**

*Parus palustris*

**Resident.**

Reports from all parts of the County and in some areas (including Holkham Meals) appears to be increasing.

### **Willow Tit**

*Parus montanus*

**Resident, apparently in decline.**

Following a request for information birds reported at 71 localities including breeding season/confirmed breeding at 22 sites.

### **Coal Tit**

*Parus ater*

**Resident and occasional passage migrant.**

Presumed migrants at Yarmouth, Scratby and Winterton during Oct. No other records received.

### **Blue Tit**

*Parus caeruleus*

**Resident.**

Notable increases in numbers during the autumn when feeding groups of 100 East Winch Common Sept 5th and similar number How Hill Oct 1st.

### **Great Tit**

*Parus major*

**Resident and occasional passage migrant.**

Only evidence of movement a group of 20 south over Snettisham March 13th.

### **Nuthatch**

*Sitta europaea*

**Resident.**

Remains widespread in broadleaved woodland. Wandering birds reported on coast at Holkham Meals and Holme.

ree Creeper

*Certhia familiaris*

Widespread resident in suitable areas.

Communal roosting in the soft fibrous bark of giant Wellingtonias was first discovered in the county in 1926. An up-to-date study would be welcomed.

Penduline Tit

*Remiz pendulinus*

Transient and a potential breeder

Seen at Titchwell April 23rd-28th (PS LS *et al*) delighted many observers. The fourth county record. Just across the North Sea the Dutch population thrives ...



Penduline Tit (J. Wright)

Golden Oriole

*Oriolus oriolus*

Migratory breeder in very small numbers and a passage migrant.

Spring migrants at Titchwell April 25th, Kelling May 22nd, Holme May 23rd, Mundesley/Gimingham and Weeting May 31st, Fakenham June 4th, Titchwell June 9th and Stiffkey June 13th. At Welney June 15th and 19th with 2 July 19th and 21st. A single autumn occurrence: Burnham Deepdale Aug 6th.

Golden Orioles have bred in Norfolk since 1971. The table – provided by the *Golden Oriole Group* – contains additional information and supersedes details published in the annual *Norfolk Bird Report*. During the eight-year period 1986-1993 a total of 27 young birds ringed in the county, often 80 feet high in poplars. In almost every case the additional sites column relates to pairs; this detail is not available for 1985/6:

	Breeding pairs	Additional sites where birds present
1985	5	—
1986	7	—
1987	12	4
1988	8	4
1989	9	5
1990	5	10
1991	9	4
1992	9	5
1993	9	5



*Hobby and Golden Orioles (N. Arlott)*

### **Red-backed Shrike**

*Lanius collurio*

*Former migratory breeder. Now a passage migrant in small numbers. Breeding birds abandoned Broadland in 1964 followed by departure from central Norfolk (Monsehold Heath) in 1970, the East coast in 1978, North coast in 1982 and finally Breckland in 1989.*

Spring migrants: Waxham May 8th/9th (taken by a Sparrowhawk); Heacham May 18th; Blakeney Point and Winterton May 21st; Salthouse June 5th; Horsey June 6th; Beeston Bump and Sheringham June 10th.

A flurry of autumn migrants following north-easterly winds: Winterton Sept 4th/5th, 15th, 18th, 22nd and 29th; Waxham 2 Sept 5th with singles on 6th, 23rd-25th and Sept 30th to Oct 3rd; Sheringham Sept 15th-17th; Stiffkey Sept 29th to Oct 4th; Overy Dunes 2 Sept 14th/15th with one till 19th and inland at Great Ryburgh Oct 4th.

### **Great Grey Shrike**

*Lanius excubitor*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in small but variable numbers. A peak was attained in 1974 when observations at 64 localities.*

Only three wintering birds: West Acre Jan 1st to Feb 17th; Castle Acre Jan 30th and North Creak Feb 11th to March 12th.

Passage migrants at Grime's Graves March 21st to April 14th; Stiffkey March 22nd; Cromer March 27th; New Buckenham March 27th/28th; Roughton March 28th; Strumpshaw April 9th/10th; Sheringham April 12th and Horsey April 29th to May 4th (seen to catch a lizard).

During the autumn reported at Stiffkey Oct 14th; Overy Dunes and Snettisham Oct 15th; Eccles and Happisburgh Oct 24th; Winterton Oct 23rd; Potter Heigham Oct 31st; Anmer Nov 18th and Aldeby on 28th.

### **Woodchat Shrike**

*Lanius senator*

*Vagrant. Irregular spring and exceptional autumn wanderer.*

A much visited male in Weybourne/Kelling area June 22nd until July 19th (JRW *et al*).



## Jay

*Barrulus glandarius*

**Resident. Exceptional invasion from Continent 1983 following a failure in the acorn crop.**

An influx of Continental birds at coastal sites during Sept/Oct; small parties also appeared inland even where little cover. First arrivals at Sheringham Sept 20th when 11 headed west with parties daily until month-end. At Holme 20 in off sea Sept 23rd then daily till mid-Oct. Peak numbers headed west Sept 24th when 90 Sheringham, 70+ Cley, 20 Blakeney Point and 53 Overy Dunes; also 12 south Yarmouth Cemetery. Next day 4 in off sea Horsey followed by 6 east and 43 west Holme Oct 1st; 16 west Holkham on 2nd; 45 west Sheringham and 6 Snettisham on 4th; 18 Titchwell and 12 Choseley on 8th; 27 inland Winterton in 2 hours on 9th and 14 south Snettisham on 10th.

A pinkish-bull leucistic bird at Ringland Feb 20th/21st.

## Magpie

*Pica pica*

**Resident. Increasing and forming winter roosts.**

A total of 1400 were trapped during the year on three Breckland estates and in the Stanford Battle Area.

Roost counts included 60 Aldeby, 110 Roydon Common and 50 Holme all Jan; 73 Ringstead Common and 140 Roydon Common Nov.

## Jackdaw

*Corvus monedula*

**Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Largest concentrations 380 Holkham Park Sept; 385 Welney Sept and 350 Oct and 200 Wreham Nov. Autumn passage at Holme peaked at 180 east Oct 18th.

## Rook

*Corvus frugilegus*

**Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Migrants included 70 east Paston March 14th, 35 east Holme Oct 15th and 53 east there on 18th. Autumn gatherings roosting at Welney peaked at 300 Sept and 350 Oct.

A pilot survey of over 80 rookeries was undertaken in 1994 to be followed by a full county survey in 1995.

## Carrion Crow

*Corvus corone*

**Resident, flocking in winter. The hooded race, cornix, now a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Most impressive numbers at Roydon Common where the roost contained 285 Jan, 100 Feb, 173 Oct, 283 Nov and 165 Dec. In addition 80 Dereham Jan, 60 roosting Docking Oct, 80 there Nov and 70 Dec. At Holme 26 arrived off sea April 20th.

During first-winter period **Hooded Crows** appeared in ones and twos at Burnham Norton, Foulden, Heigham Holmes, Ormesby, Potter Heigham and Roydon. Spring migrants March 20th to May 11th at a number of coastal sites with a peak April 20th/21st when 4 Sheringham, singles at Cley, Holkham and Burnham Norton, 5 Holme and 4 Ringstead. Summer records from Burgh Castle where 2 June 21st and one Aug 3rd and 16th. More widespread from Oct onwards (17 sites including Thompson Water in Brecks) with 3 Roydon Common, 4 Horsey/Waxham and 3 Ringland.

## Raven

*Corvus corax*

**Formerly bred. Nowadays a vagrant/escape.**

One in the Somerton/Winterton/Horsey/Hickling area from Nov 20th until the year-end provided many birders with their first opportunity of seeing this species in the county.



*Raven (N. Borrow)*

The bird covered a wide area appearing at Breydon Dec 17th, Scratby on 18th and Caister on 25th. Possibly a Dutch bird following a successful re-introduction in Holland in the 1960s. Fifty breeding pairs together with 31 territorial pairs reported there in 1992. It is interesting to note others were reported towards the end of 1993 in Suffolk and Beds.

Several recent observations have been of suspected escapes and the last apparently genuine bird was seen coming in off the sea at Wells 15th Nov 1986. *Birds of the Holkham area* (1993) reveals the presence of a Raven which wintered and was eventually shot in the South Creake area in the 1981/2 winter.

### **Starling**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

***Abundant all year, large numbers assemble after the breeding season and roost communally. Thousands of immigrants from Northern and Eastern Europe winter here.***

Westerly autumn passage peaked Oct 15th when 18,000 at Sheringham and 8500 at Holme; Oct 20th when 13,000 at Sheringham; Oct 26th when 3100 in 4 hours at Holkham and 7850 at Holme and Oct 30th when 9650 passing Holme.

Largest winter roosts: 10,000 How Hill Nov reducing to 3000 by early Dec and 5000 Strumpshaw, 30,000 to 50,000 Bacton Gas Terminal and 20,000 West Walton all Dec.

### **House Sparrow**

*Passer domesticus*

***Resident.***

Little information received, but it is clearly less plentiful nowadays. An RSPB Set-aside survey recorded House Sparrows on only one farm in ten, scatterer across the county. Largest group: 125 Welney May 25th.

### **Tree Sparrow**

*Passer montanus*

***Resident, but decreasing.***

A decline first noticeable in the mid 1980s has since accelerated. Rapid ploughing of stubbles in autumn and early winter combined with earlier sowing of winter cereals leaves the Tree Sparrow with very few feeding areas. Hopefully, set-aside schemes may help. Reported during the year at 74 localities including just 12 breeding sites. Largest

ocks at Beechamwell 50 March; Choseley 50 March and 30 Feb and Sept; Docking 34  
ov; Heydon 30 Dec; Lyng/Elsing 50 Oct onwards; Ongar Hill 40 Dec; South  
ickenham 100 Dec; Ten-mile Bank 30 Jan and West Acre 50 Jan.

Coastal migrants in spring and autumn including 6 west Sheringham March 15th and  
2 west Holme Oct 5th.

### Chaffinch

*Fringilla coelebs*

*Resident. Fluctuating numbers of Continental birds arrive in autumn forming large  
winter flocks,*

Wintering flocks of up to 250 throughout the county with largest concentrations 1200  
Thetford Jan, 800 Feltwell Jan/Feb and 350 Ringstead Nov. Spring passage peaked  
March 14th when 420 east at Paston.

Autumn movement peaked Oct 27th and 29th when 510 and 1075 respectively  
passed east at Holme.

### Crambling

*Fringilla montifringilla*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in highly variable numbers.*

Many flocks of up to 200 during first-winter period. Highest numbers included 240 Old  
Palace Road (Norwich), 280 Weston Longville, 2500 Thetford and 400 Holkham Park.  
Small numbers of coastal spring migrants with latest at Happisburgh June 5th.

Autumn passage from Sept 11th at Cley; largest numbers passing Snettisham (300)  
Oct 29th and Holme (215) Nov 7th.

Widespread in second-winter period: 800 Walsingham, 300 Snettisham, 200 King's  
Lynn, 400 Hilgay, 1000 Feltwell, 250 Welney, 200 Swanton Morley, 200 Guist and 600  
Waffham. Unharvested linseed and linseed stubble increasingly favoured by large feed-  
ing flocks.

### Cuckoo

*Serinus serinus*

*Resident.*

An unusual winter record of a male at Garboldisham Feb 5th to 10th which was trapped  
and ringed (DF) followed by singles at Cley June 3rd (MAG); Letheringsett June 5th  
(PHGW) and a singing male (with a possible female) at Sandringham June 5th to July  
1st.

### Greenfinch

*Carduelis chloris*

*Resident and passage migrant. Small but increasing numbers of Continental birds  
in winter.*

Largest winter flocks: 600 Thetford Jan; 400 Stanford Battle Area Feb; 250 Gooderstone  
Oct; 250 Welney Nov and 600 Magdalen Dec. Heaviest autumn movement 200 west  
Sheringham Oct 14th.

### Goldfinch

*Carduelis carduelis*

*Resident, passage migrant and summer visitor.*

Well marked westerly spring passage with 140 Sheringham, 420 Holme and 340  
Hunstanton April 20th; 185 Sheringham April 21st; 260 Holme April 22nd and 260  
Paston May 1st in one hour.

Highest autumn/winter numbers: 250 Snettisham and 120 Welney Sept/Oct; 100  
Magdalen Nov/Dec and 80 Antingham Dec.



## Siskin

*Carduelis spinus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor in uncertain numbers. Frequent instances of nesting especially following large-scale irruptions.*

During first winter period flocks of up to 50 at several Brecks and Broads localities. Larger gatherings included 105 Beeston Regis, 100 Whitwell Common, 100 Sparham, 184 Thetford, 100 West Acre and 250 Lynford.

A very pronounced spring passage peaked at coastal sites March 13th to 15th. Totals on 13th included 52 east Paston, 206 west Holme and 10 south Snettisham. Next day 78 east Paston, 55 west Sheringham, 90 west Holkham, 187 west Holme and 12 south Snettisham. On 15th total of 90 west Sheringham and 70 west Holkham and on 20th 130 west Holme.

During April largest group 70 at Buckenham Tofts on 10th. A pair lingered at Wells in the breeding season and several pairs nested at Sandringham with at least 2 family groups observed.

Autumn passage first noticeable Sept 13th when records included 75 Trimmingham-Happisburgh. Then recorded almost daily until year-end. Sept 16th was memorable with 35 in from sea at Cromer, 800 at Sheringham (the vast majority in the two hour period 14.00 to 16.00 hours), 100 Wells East Hills, 100 Holkham and 400 Holme. This day's arrivals were moving south. On Sept 24th 200 east at Holme and during the last 2 days of Sept counts of up to 160 at many sites including 90 south at Snettisham.

Movements continued throughout Oct with counts of up to 100 almost commonplace with as many as 280 east at Holme on 10th and 270 east and 140 west on 11th. On 15th massive westward movement developed with 150 at Waxham, 2600 Sheringham, 250 in half-an-hour Cley, 250 Wells Dell, 300 in 2 hours Holkham, 180 Titchwell and 220 Holme. Next day another 400 Waxham, 1000 Sheringham, 300 in 2 hours Holkham, 150 Holme and 350 south at Hunstanton in an hour. A further 220 headed east at Holme on 18th. At Catfield Fen 70 Oct 20th were followed by almost daily movements south including 115 on 22nd. The 26th saw the arrival of 150 at Thetford Nunnery. At Paston a peak was attained Oct 30th when an easterly movement of 660 per hour.



*Siskins (J. Smith)*

Nov heralded further spectacular movements with highest numbers early in the month. As birds moving east rather than the more usual west the most impressive totals were on the East Coast. On 1st 80 headed south in half-an-hour at Catfield together with 0 south at Waxham and 200 east at Sheringham followed by daily counts of up to 50 on both East and North coasts until the 5th, when 300 Waxham. On Nov 6th 200 Horsey and 55 east Holme. On 7th 20 Waxham, 130 east Sheringham, and 25 east Holme followed next day by 100 at Horsey. On 9th 40 east Paston and 20 Holme followed by 55 Alderfen on 13th. Numbers then became smaller but with limited movement during Dec when maxima of 26 west Holme on 15th, 20 west Sheringham 17th and 15 east Paston on 30th.

Many feeding flocks reported from a selection of inland sites during Nov including 0 How Hill, 150 Upton Fen, 90 Catfield Fen, 30 Wroxham Broad, 60 Coldham Hall Sheringham, 40 Sparham Pools, 40 Lyng, 10 Swanton Morley GP, 30 Roydon Common, 0 West Aere, 10 Lynford and 20 Welney.

Among Dec feeding groups were 65 Hundson's Bay Broad, 85 Belaugh Broad, 70 Catfield Fen, 85 Wroxham, 40 Norwich (Colegate), 130 Thetford Nunnery, 100 West Aere, 100 Sugar Fen (Pott Row) and 43 Welney Christmas Day.

A full summary of the remarkable numbers of Siskins visiting gardens to feed on nuts during the opening months of 1994 will appear in the next *Norfolk Bird Report*.

#### Chaffinch

*Carduelis cannabina*

*Feeding summer visitor and passage migrant with small numbers wintering.*

During opening months largest winter flocks 120 at Thetford and 100 at North Creak. Possible migration a feature in April with 1050 Holme on 7th and 850 on 20th; 500 Snettisham on 8th; 790 Sheringham on 10th and 700 on 16th; 1000 Horsey on 12th and 700 Sheringham on 16th and 850 Holme on 20th.

Highest Sept counts included 60 Blakeney Point, 150 Brancaster, 150 Holme, 350 Snettisham and 280 Winfarthing. During Oct largest numbers were 100 Warham Greens, 150 Titchwell, 250 Holme, 226 Necton and 500 Castle Acre. Nov totals included 50 Shernborne and 30 Welney. During Dec 200 Swannington, 300 Sandringham, 200 Rodney and 100 West Aere.

#### Chaffinch

*Carduelis flavirostris*

*Winter visitor*

Peak counts during first-winter period: 30 Breydon, 40 Warham, 80 Holkham Bay, 200 Brancaster/Scolt Head, 164 Titchwell, 170 Holme and 50 Snettisham. Latest April 10th Sheringham and Brancaster.

Autumn return from Sept 30th. Best counts attained towards the year-end when 35 Breydon, 165 Holkham Bay, 250 Brancaster/Scolt Head, 200 Titchwell, 150 Holme and Terrington.

A single inland occurrence: 8 at Stowbridge/Downham Market Jan 17th.

#### Redpoll

*Carduelis flammea*

*Declining resident, passage migrant and summer visitor. Continental Mealy Redpoll flammea is a winter visitor in greatly varying numbers. Greenland race rostrata also recorded.*

A disappointing year being absent from many haunts. Largest winter flocks 100 at Thetford during Jan. 70 Catfield Fen Oct. 55 Barton Broad and 30 West Aere both Nov. Spring passage negligible peaking April 20th when 105 west at Holme.

Mealy Redpolls (*flammea*) very scarce with only 2 reports: Norwich UEA Jan 6th and Gunton Park March 1st.

### Arctic Redpoll

*Carduelis hornemann*

*Winter vagrant. Unprecedented arrivals in autumn 1990.*

1992 additional: East Harling Jan 28th to Feb 6th (JD *et al*).

### Two-barred Crossbill

*Loxia leucoptera*

*Vagrant from the Siberian taiga.*

Correction: The 1990 Sandringham male first seen Sept 29th (JRW).

### Crossbill

*Loxia curvirostris*

*Breeding resident in fluctuating numbers with Thetford Forest the stronghold. Immigrants arrive most years in late summer and autumn. Major irruptions at irregular intervals.*

Widely distributed throughout Brecks during first half of year. Scarce elsewhere and only reported from 9 sites including 25 Honingham March 28th, 15 Sandringham June 29th, 12 Holkham July 1st and 17 Overy Dunes Sept 18th.

### Scarlet Rosefinch

*Carpodacus erythrinus*

*Formerly a vagrant. Increasing number of sightings from 1973 and a potential Norfolk coloniser.*

First for the year at Blakeney Point May 27th (SCJ) followed by Muckleburgh May 29th (DHS), Sheringham (MY-P) and Weybourne (RP) May 30th, Weybourne June 17th (RP), Holkham Decoy June 29th (JPT), Weybourne/Sheringham Sept 20th (KBS SCV) and Overy Dunes Oct 13th (JPT RH).

### Bullfinch

*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

*Resident, decreasing. Scandinavian race pyrrhula trapped at Yarmouth 1893 and at Holme 1968.*

Few records submitted. Among the more interesting a party of 12 Thetford Feb 22nd and 8 east Holme Oct 29th. The years of abundance were during the 1960s when a Great Hautbois fruit farm trapped 500 annually; this total was doubled at nearby Westwick.

### Hawfinch

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

*Very local resident. Highly elusive and erratic occupant of both nesting sites and winter roosts.*

Winter records (with largest numbers) at Barnham Cross Common (33 Feb and 19 March), Beechamwell, Costessey (4 Jan to March), Holkham Park (8 March), Lynford (17 March), Merton, Thetford (33 Feb), Trimmingham and West Acre. Sole breeding confirmation from Holkham Park where pair feeding 2 fledglings June 9th and 2 additional pairs probably bred there.

Additional breeding season observations from Dersingham, Hilborough, Kelling, Lynford, Mundford and Sandringham. Interesting series of autumn coastal migrants: Wells Sept 2nd, Yarmouth Oct 30th, Wells 2 Nov 2nd and Waxham Nov 4th.

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Further 1993 highlights:

Top: Pacific Swift, Cley, May (R.C. Wilson)

Centre left: Alpine Swift, Sheringham, April (J. Bhalerao).

Centre right: Raven, Horsey, November/December (R. Chittenden).

Bottom left: Penduline Tit, Titchwell, April (R. Chittenden).

Bottom right: Firecrest, Wells, November (J. Bhalerao).







The Blakeney Point Desert Warbler; a county first (Above: a painting by S. Cale; below, R. C. Wilson)







Opinions differed as to the race of this Dipper at Heacham in December (*R. Chittenden*).  
Although showing the characteristics of Syke's Wagtail from south-east Russia this visitor to Salthouse in April was an undoubted hybrid (*R. Chittenden*)







## **upland Bunting**

*Calcarius lapponicus*

*regular, but usually scarce, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Best winter period records (with peak numbers) at Breydon/Berney (10), Happisburgh, Sheringham (4), Weybourne, Cley, Holkham Bay (10), Overy Marsh (6), Burnham Norton (20), Titchwell and Holme (3). Late spring birds at Holme April 25th and Sheringham May 26th/27th.

First autumn arrival at Blakeney Point Sept 8th with a widespread arrival during second half of month with peak numbers between Sept 16th and 18th. On 16th a total of 76 sites including 30 Winterton, 12 Horsey Gap and 16 Wells East Hills. Next day total 105 at 11 sites including 40 Blakeney Point, 16 Sheringham, 17 Overy Dunes and 10 Burnham Norton. On 18th 73 at 5 sites including 30 Paston and 20 Sheringham. On 30th 12 at Sheringham and 9 at Holme.

Throughout Oct remained numerous at many coastal localities with peaks of 20 Sheringham on 2nd, 10 Mundesley/Paston on 24th, 15 Happisburgh on 28th, 17 Stiffkey on 29th and 23 Holme on 30th.

During first half Nov continued to be widely reported from coast with maxima of 13 Sheringham on 5th, 30 Happisburgh on 8th, 40 Halvergate on 16th and 13 Brancaster on 17th. Also 1-5 at a further dozen localities. Fewer in Dec, but peaks of 9 Sheringham on 1st and 25 Paston on 12th.

Inland sightings: Cantley BF Jan 9th, Welney Sept 29th, Melton Constable Nov 5th and Burnham Market on 15th.

## **Low Bunting**

*Plectrophenax nivalis*

*winter visitor, declining in numbers. Exceptional in summer.*

Highest totals in early part of year included 29 Breydon, 70 Yarmouth, 40 Happisburgh, 15 Sheringham, 15 Weybourne, 50 Salthouse/Cley, 75 Holkham Bay, 65 Brancaster, 10 Titchwell, 80 Holme, 32 Hunstanton, 20 Heacham and 19 Snettisham. Latest 4 at Paston April 20th.

Earliest in autumn at Warham Sept 16th followed by a slow build-up until early Nov when peak counts of 44 Breydon, 50 Horsey, 20 Waxham, 50 Happisburgh, 70 Paston, 10 Northrepps, 33 Sheringham, 100 Salthouse/Cley, 120 Holkham Bay, 150 Titchwell, 11 Holme, 11 Heacham and 10 Snettisham.

Birds move freely between sites and wintering population is likely to be considerably greater than the total of peak counts.

## **Yellowhammer**

*Emberiza citrinella*

*resident, declining.*

Largest winter flocks 120 Downham Market Jan, 100 Pott Row and 200 Syderstone Common Feb, 135 Ringstead Nov and 160 Winfarthing and 130 Paston Dec.

## **Artisan Bunting**

*Emberiza hortulana*

*scarce passage visitor, mainly in autumn.*

Arrival: Blakeney Point May 5th (RGM) and May 11th (APB).

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Stranded leviathans:

Top: Sperm Whale, Scolt Head Island, November 1991 (C. Campbell)

Centre: Sperm Whale, Heacham, December 1993 (B.W. Jarvis)

Bottom: Long-finned Pilot Whale, Scolt Head Island, December 1992 (C. Campbell)

*Autumn:* Waxham Sept 11th (DHR), Sidestrand Sept 13th (BM), Blakeney Point Sept 13th, Wells East Hills Sept 14th/15th (JMcC BS), Sheringham Sept 15th and O 1st/2nd (MPT).

### **Rustic Bunting**

*Emberiza rustica*

*Vagrant from Northern Europe.*

*Spring:* Holkham Meals May 18th (KE). *Autumn:* Horsey Gap Sept 15th-18th (PR, KRD *et al*) and Sheringham Sept 16th/17th (APB *et al*). The county total advances to 9.

### **Little Bunting**

*Emberiza pusilla*

*Autumn vagrant from northern Scandinavia eastwards.*

Two autumn occurrences: Blakeney Point Sept 14th-17th (RF MAG *et al*) and Blakeney Nov 1st/2nd (APB SJMG RGM *et al*). 17 previous records.

### **Yellow-breasted Bunting**

*Emberiza aureola*

*Vagrant from north-east Europe.*

1992 Correction: The Holme example observed Sept 19th/20th, not 20th/21st.

### **Reed Bunting**

*Emberiza schoeniclus*

*Resident and passage migrant.*

Largest winter flock 170 Thetford Jan and 150 Feb. Breeding details included 15 pair Clcy, 9 pairs Blakeney Freshes, 20 pairs Blakeney Point and 38 pairs Welney.

### **Corn Bunting**

*Miliaria calandrinia*

*Local and declining resident flocking in winter.*

Singing males in breeding season at Binham, Boughton Fen, Breydon, Choseley (17), East Somerton (2), East Winch (3), Fincham (3), Flitcham, Gimingham (5), Hemsby, Hilgay (7), Little Cressingham (2), Marham, Martham, Morston (family group), Mundesley, North Wootton, Ongar Hill (2), Sheringham (4), Southery Fen, Stoke Ferry, Titchwell, Watlington, Wereham, West Runton, West Somerton, Welney (9), Weybourne (2) and Wretton.

Highest winter gatherings: Choseley (150 March), Feltwell (20 Feb), Hickling (40 Feb), Lynn Point (50 Jan and 60 March), Methwold (200 Jan), Paston (20 Dec), Southrepps (30 Feb), Ten Mile Bank (49 Nov and 64 Dec), Titchwell (40 Feb), Welney (40 Jan and 36 April, Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen (85 Jan and 100 Feb) and Wissington BF (50 Feb).

Further reading: 'Decline of the Corn Bunting' *British Birds* 87: 106-132.



(J. Wright)



## Appendix I

This initial attempt to record escapes, feral birds and category D occurrences follows setting up of a scheme by the newly formed Association of County Recorders and Writers (ACRE). This organisation will collect such data nationally.

It will be noted that there is a dualling of categories in some instances and details of certain wildfowl also feature in the Classified List. In future observers are requested to submit records of all feral birds and escapes. Summaries of birds of special interest appear below. In addition, the following were reported in Norfolk during 1993: Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*), Emperor Goose (*Anser canagicus*), White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*), Maned Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*), Argentine Blue-bill (*Myiura vittata*), Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*), Hill Mynah (*Gracula religiosa*) and Sudan Golden Sparrow (*Passer luteus*).

**Night Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Norfolk Wildlife Park, Gt Witchingham, nesting colony of up to 20 birds which fly from the Park at dusk.

**Greater Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)

Weybourne, an adult Jan 2nd later found dead at Sheringham, probably the victim of a fox.

**Chilean Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*)

Cley July 7th to 17th.

**Lesser Goose** (*Anser fabalis*)

Otter Trust Earsham contains a full-winged flock of 20 of the western race *fabalis*. Pensthorpe up to 5 occasionally join the collection.

**Lesser White-fronted Goose** (*Anser erythropus*)

Pentney GP Party of 9 (including 5 juveniles) arrived from north-east in two family groups Jan 16th; also singles there Oct and Dec and at Wroxham, Surlingham, Titchwell and Fordham. Pensthorpe birds in collection not known to leave site. At Earsham full-winged flock of 15.

**Snow Goose** (*Anser caerulescens*)

Holkham Hall, up to 22 wandered at times to Titchwell and Flitcham. Singles at Buckenham, Wroxham and Lyng.

**Horned Grebe** (*Branta leucopsis*)

Flights of 20 or so based at Ranworth, Surlingham and Earsham. At Pensthorpe up to 10 of the 35 present disappear in winter.

**Black Swan** (*Cygnus stratus*)

Salhouse Broad, a pair breeds most years before wandering in Broadland and to Earsham.

**Ruddy Shelduck** (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

Largest group 8 Sennowe Park Oct 24th; otherwise ones and twos at 12 localities.

**Red-crested Pochard** (*Netta rufina*)

Largest free-flying group, based at Pensthorpe, at times 48 strong. Poor breeding success and little evidence to suggest birds leave Reserve other than to adjoining waters.

## Appendix II Hybrids

**Lesser White-fronted Goose x White-fronted Goose**

Cley Jan to May and one, considered the same, at Titchwell Sept 23rd.

**Pochard x Tufted Duck**

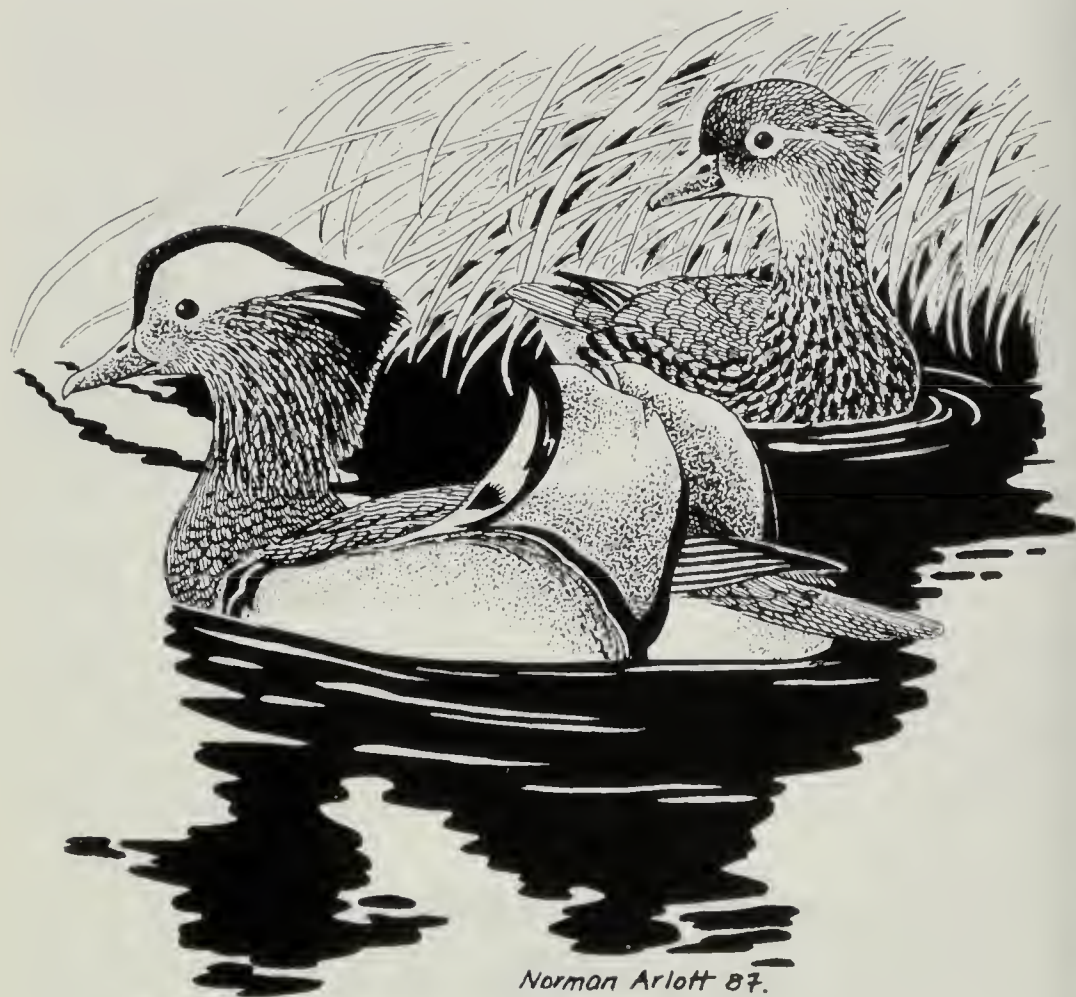
Welney 3 drakes regularly during first-winter period with an additional drake Oct to Dec.

**Pochard x Ferruginous Duck**

Welney a drake Jan 28th  
**Scaup x Tufted Duck**  
Cley July 25th  
**Mediterranean Gull x Black-headed Gull**  
Sheringham Aug 2nd  
**Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull**  
Yarmouth Jan 9th

Acknowledgement is due to The Otter Trust Earsham and Pensthorpe Waterfowl Park. Details of all observations have been forwarded to ACRE.

Further reading: *British Birds* 86 pp 591-599 and 605-614.



*Norman Arlott 87.*

*Mandarins (N. Arlott)*

# The Wetland Bird Survey 1993

## The Complete Wash

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
le Grebe	37	60	32	-	-	5	13	42	50	92	58
eat Crested Grebe	23	14	16	19	10	20	144	41	56	37	11
morant	204	147	157	85	91	115	297	211	146	97	120
ig	1	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	33	19	-
y Heron	19	11	3	13	10	55	63	63	50	19	24
te Swan	7	11	20	4	2	2	2	7	7	5	9
wick's Swan	117	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	88
ent Goose	19147	18213	13973	12238	6120	23	13	4588	15976	17169	24446
lduck	8673	8242	6578	1634	2232	1156	2588	6668	5949	7273	12937
geon	1081	380	152	4	5	-	17	1232	2661	436	274
dwall	25	24	17	9	2	3	-	8	6	18	77
il	382	417	90	79	7	4	97	218	409	208	827
illard	767	1378	695	209	191	196	718	1810	1466	885	2934
itail	225	98	26	5	-	-	12	67	122	165	296
oveler	10	6	4	2	3	-	1	2	-	7	5
hhard	141	106	70	2	-	-	-	8	46	72	93
fted Duck	135	48	26	41	16	25	19	84	111	155	152
up	2	2	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	4	7
ler	60	873	396	5	79	82	63	38	140	52	67
mmon Scoter	1	-	30	-	-	-	9	70	7	5	2
lvet Scoter	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	3
oldeneye	107	85	55	7	-	-	-	-	16	46	84
d-breasted Merganser	18	14	48	17	3	-	-	27	45	18	66
ot	65	60	62	16	11	56	58	148	151	221	154
stercatcher	13947	16624	11852	5939	4015	6317	22306	22653	19767	16612	25382
ocet	4	3	104	19	-	282	175	125	5	-	2
nged Plover	39	122	190	129	269	352	1600	726	127	17	90
olden Plover	1122	5318	2483	645	-	687	2576	1183	1957	4361	2403
ey Plover	4599	3075	6799	7573	9710	648	8939	10875	10313	5009	3726
pwng	3756	24100	124	15	24	876	838	893	2426	6432	13102
ot	89066	51843	57841	29550	2460	15558	46148	127081	103170	110841	62669
nderling	140	48	19	234	853	1371	1050	818	275	72	162
tle Stint	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	40	1	-	-
urple Sandpiper	3	12	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	10	12
anlin	29680	10162	27805	35594	27614	25381	16034	30698	25066	15617	16413
uff	-	8	7	-	2	5	26	8	1	7	1
ack-tailed Godwit	16	-	539	1062	-	565	2522	1496	397	128	281
ar-tailed Godwit	7956	7758	4049	1563	501	1572	6583	13083	7488	5013	5359
himbrel	-	-	2	2	102	288	262	162	1	-	-
arlew	2535	2116	4396	1256	429	4412	5727	10743	6768	2677	2180
otted Redshank	-	-	1	1	3	14	19	115	4	-	-
edshank	1791	1101	2269	1374	799	4530	7164	8805	2427	1128	1255
reenshank	-	-	-	-	33	137	162	154	8	1	-
ommon Sandpiper	2	-	-	-	7	55	82	7	-	-	-
urnstone	217	154	457	524	558	802	1292	599	476	115	527
ittle Gull	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	3	60	3	-
lack-headed Gull	16324	2298	2694	2426	2057	2990	9716	18598	7584	8671	795
ommon Gull	3983	165	461	243	611	158	1423	647	125	6316	840
esser B-backed Gull	5	-	2	-	92	489	128	170	145	12	1
erring Gull	266	496	961	1716	1084	635	2333	438	2966	1224	280



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R. J. WALKER  
M. I. WALLACE  
A. W. WALLIS  
P. F. WALTON  
M. WARD  
J. WASSE  
R. WATERS  
J. WELSBY  
G. & C. WHALEY  
C. E. WHEELER  
J. R. WHITELEGG  
J. R. WILLIAMSON  
J. WILSON  
R. WILSON  
P. H. G.  
WOLSTENHOLME  
M. J. WOOD  
P. J. WOOLNOUGH  
S. A. WRIGHT  
R. YAXLEY  
M. YOUNG-POWELL

# NORFOLK MAMMAL REPORT - 1993

## Editorial

The Editor is pleased to present the 38th annual Norfolk Mammal Report.

The article published in "*125 Years of Change*", (*Transactions Vol.30 Part 1, May 1994*), surveying the mixed fortunes of mammals in Norfolk during the history of the Society, was easier to prepare than a detailed review of any single year. The rise and fall of populations, giant wave motions, can best be seen from a distance. Are the ripples we see now signs of greater things to come or will they merge into the swell?

This year we have no dramatic events to record. The continuing spread of deer, the possible decline of certain smaller mammals are in the notes. Only the future itself can reveal how important these present signs may be. One thing is sure. The importance of these annual statements of accounts was made very clear indeed to the authors of the paper mentioned above. Bill Flynn also emphasises the point in his short article *Deer in Norfolk, 1993*. He is conscious he is creating a legacy for future recorders.

Bill ably represents that small body of enthusiasts who spend much of their time and their personal assets in finding out as much as they can about a small part of the animal kingdom. Not all their efforts are recorded and published in a form available to all interested parties. There is a serious danger that such personal records will be lost for ever. Hence our annual plea for all information, great or small, to be submitted for storage if not for publication.

The sifting of the data into a form to be presented as our *Classified Notes* has again been organised by Eddie Boosey. His is a most valuable contribution and he has taken into the modern age storing all information received on his computer data base.

*Water Shrews in Broadland* is a report on the continuing research into small mammal populations conducted by Dr. Martin Perrow and Adrian Jowitt. Their revelations of what we possess in our county has become a much prized feature of our annual Reports. We have the greatest pleasure in welcoming them to these pages once again.

Karen Smith choose to investigate the *Distribution of Harvest mice in East Norfolk* as a home-based project within her studies at Manchester University. With her father's help she covered the whole area in the short time allowed and discovered a more widespread distribution than we had assumed. A lesson for us to learn there?

Nothing stands in isolation and Nigel Middleton's project to discover the loss of a pair of Barn Owls gave us an interesting set of mammal notes from Kettlestone Common.

John Goldsmith's *Bats Review* is in addition to the comments in Classified Notes. John is continuing as Chairman of the Norfolk Bat Group and is heavily involved in promoting the cause of those often misunderstood and maligned mammals. He also continues at Norwich Castle Museum where he is available to answer queries on all matters to do with vertebrates, not just mammals.

We thank all the above and all contributors. This Report would not exist without them and we wish we could express our gratitude in a more personal way than this brief reference.

Contributions for next year's report should be in by 31st January 1995, sooner if possible. Map references are useful but better to leave them out than not send any notes at all! Please send to : **Rex Hancy, 124 Fakenham Road, Taverham, Norwich. NR8 8QH** or to **Eddie Boosey, 16 Suffolk Place, Dereham, Norfolk. NR19 1SG**

# Distribution of Harvest Mice in East Norfolk

Karen Smith

The Harvest mouse, *Micromys minutus*, is Britain's smallest rodent. A member of the family *Muridae*, it can easily be distinguished from other murids by its blunt muzzle and small, hairy, vole-like ears. Adults have a bicoloured pelage; they are russet/orange dorsally, and pure white ventrally. The juvenile pelage is agouti. Moulting into the adult colouring progresses forwards from the haunches. Harvest mice are unique in having prehensile tails, which adapts them well for their acrobatic life in the stalk zone of grasses.

Female harvest mice, in late pregnancy, build breeding nests between stems of monocotyledonous plants. The female grips the stem of the monocotyledon with her hind feet and prehensile tail, and uses her incisors to split the distal end of the leaves into ribbons which are left attached to the stem. When she has shredded many such leaves, she weaves them into the outer frame of the nest. The inner framework is made by pulling more leaves through the outer frame and shredding the distal ends. Thistle down and short lengths of grass are used to line the nest. These characteristic nests are a clear indication of the presence of the harvest mouse and provide a quick method of sampling an area for the species. There is minimal disturbance to living harvest mice if the nests are observed out of the breeding season. Disturbance to occupied breeding nests can cause the mother to abandon her pups, kill them all, or attempt to move them to safety.

As part of a project studying the historical distribution of the Harvest mouse in East Norfolk, a present day survey of the area for the presence of nests was made. During December 1993 and January 1994, data were collected to form a 10 km<sup>2</sup> distribution map for the species. A previous survey of the Saxthorpe and Corpusty area (Brewster & Brewster, 1983), showed that nests were most commonly found in cocksfoot and other tufted grasses. Due to the limited time available to survey the study area, the study concentrated on looking for nests in these grasses.

Upon entering each 10 km<sup>2</sup> time was spent looking for suitable habitat. The availability of suitable habitat varied considerably between neighbouring squares. When a suitable area was found, it was then searched for 30 minutes, by lifting up wind flattened grasses, and looking in clumps of grass. Numbers of nests found were recorded. This ensured a relatively constant search effort, to enable some picture of the relative abundance of the mice at each location.

The results of this survey are tabulated within this report. Nests were found in each of the 10 km<sup>2</sup> of East Norfolk, but never in any great numbers. There are, however, reports of considerable populations in the reed beds at Hickling NNR, (Perrow and Jowitt, 1992) and on an organic farm in Caistor St. Edmund (Chris Skinner, personal communication). Dead specimens of an adult and juvenile harvest mouse were presented by a cat at the author's house in Hainford.

Forty-eight possible sites were inspected during the study, and nests were found in thirty five of these sites. It was noticeable that in areas of high canine activity (i.e. those areas with large quantities of canine faeces present), no nests were found. Dogs are occasional predators of harvest mice and pose a threat of disturbance to breeding adults and their young.

It appears that Harvest mice are locally common, and any previous lack of records is



**Habitats in which Harvest mouse nests were found.**

Habitat Description and Number of Nests

adside (rural road)	6	Grassland	2
ldside (main road)	5	Sugar beet field	2
mbles	4	Hedgerow	1
adow margin	4	Stream bank	1
st and wire fence row	4	Woodland border	1
ldside (rural road)	3	Ditch	1
archyard	3	Suburban wasteland	1
adside (main road)	3	Total	41

ably due to a lack of observers. However as land use and farming methods become re intensive, the resulting habitat destruction and decreased marginal vegetation uces the amount of habitat available. Populations may become isolated by barriers h as extensive agricultural or industrial areas, which contain little suitable habitat; ere gene flow is restricted in already small populations, there is a danger of reduced etic fitness.

Harvest mice are capable of reproducing several times within a single breeding sea- t, and are thus capable of quick population growth. However, they are also very vul- rable to adverse weather conditions, such as persistent rain, hard frosts, and sudden ops in temperature, and equally rapid population declines are possible. These may ult in local population extinction, especially where potential re-colonists are some tance away (Perrow & Jowitt, 1992). It is thus important that mammal observers efully and systematically monitor local populations, to help build up an accurate pie- ce of the current status and distribution of the smallest rodent in East Norfolk.

**The Sites at which the presence of Harvest mice was detected.**

Locations and number of nests found

tleborough	1	Dilham	3	Mundesley	1
inham	1	Ellingham	1	Overstrand	1
awdeswell	1	Elsing	1	Potter Heigham	1
eighton	1	Great Yarmouth	1	Pulham Market	1
undeston	1	Hainford	*	Pulham St. Mary	1
riston	1	Halvergate	1	Saxthorpe	3
argh St. Peter	1	Hardingham	1	Stratton St. Michael	1
uistor St. Edmunds	*	Hickling	*	Stratton Strawless	1
ey	1	Horning	1	Trunch	2
orpusty	2	Horsham St. Faiths	2	Weybourne	1
ostessey	3	Long Stratton	1	Wymondham	1

\*see main text.

**References.**

- ewster, A. & Brewster, J. (1983) *Harvest Mice Nesting Sites*. Norfolk & Norwich  
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errow, M. & Jowitt, A. (1992) *The aptly named Harvest Mouse?* Norfolk & Norwich  
aturalists Society Transactions, Volume 29, Part 6, p 530-532.

# Kettlestone Common Survey

*Nigel Middleton, Conservation Officer, Raptor Trust*

**Area Surveyed:** Kettlestone Common (TF96.5/30) February to July 1993. No trapping was undertaken at Whitewell Hall Reepham, or Lyng Hall Farm, Wood Norton.

**Objectives:** The objectives of the survey were to see if the mammal population could have been a contributory factor in the disappearance of a pair of Barn Owls.

**Background Information:** The pair of Barn Owls had nested in an old Oak tree in an adjoining meadow area which was surveyed. The pair had been resident in the tree for 6 years and hunted the survey area on a regular basis (weather permitting) and could be seen almost every day during the breeding season. The pair were also regularly seen hunting at dusk during the Autumn and Winter. The birds were observed for a period of 6 weeks during the winter months and it appeared that a regular amount of prey was taken. The management of the meadows and surrounding farmland was not considered as a factor as this had not changed.

The pair last bred in 1991 and produced 2 sets of fledglings, 2 on the first occasion and 3 on the second. The second brood left the nest-site during December 1991. There were no further sightings of the birds together, although individual sightings did occur, the last being in February 1992.

Since the last sighting, a female was seen in the area on 21st December 1993 and fresh pellets have been seen around the old nest site. It is therefore hoped that 1994 will be a better year.

**Survey Results:** The site in question is approximately 11 acres in size. It can be seen from the results tabulated below, that it had a steady population of Pygmy and Common Shrews up until April and May and then began to drop. The decline may well have been caused by a pair of Kestrels which built a nest in a tree along an old railway line adjacent to the meadow. The pair could be observed daily hunting the site and Shrews appeared to be taken as a large proportion of their diet.

## Trapping Results

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Total
Common Shrew	5	10	20	12	7	3	57
Pygmy Shrew	7	15	12	25	15	5	79
Water Shrew	0	0	3	2	1	5	11
Field Vole	0	4	5	15	30	20	74
Wood Mouse	2	4	3	5	8	4	26

**Conclusions:** The data as gathered and shown above does not appear to point to a reason for the disappearance of the Barn Owls although the Field Vole population (*Microtus Agrestis*) appeared to be low until the end of April. It is possible that they could have died of old age or that one died and the other moved on and that the area was not taken up by other Barn Owls.

Another reason may be due to the rise in the Tawny Owl population which occurred during the breeding season of 1992. Three nest were discovered within 1000 yards of each other in a small piece of woodland not far from the Barn Owl nest site. The Tawny Owls produced 10 young between them.

# Bats Review

*J.G. Goldsmith, Chairman, Norfolk Bat Group*

1993 produced no great surprises - or treats - as far as bats found within the county; it was however a year of steady reecording and particular attention was paid to protecting and enhancing certain hibernation sites.

The first flying bat of the year was seen on January 4th in Norwich, although we know that most bats wake and reloecate to a more suitable hibernation loecation at various times during the winter, they are not often seen. This winter activity is currently the subject of a country-wide investigation by Aberdeen University. Perhaps the oddest phenomenon for the 1993/4 hibernation season was the paucity of Natterers bats found hibernating - this probably being a function of the relatively mild wet winter.

The largest breeding roost of Pipistrelles reecorded this year was 619 in the south-west of the county counted by Tony Vine, while the important Broadland Daubenton colony consisted of over 160 bats, which makes it the 4th or 5th best known site for the species in this country.



*(J.M. Last)*

Noetules continue to be found in increasing numbers in the Thetford Forest bat box project that spans the Norfolk/Suffolk border. Although several examples of the rare Leislers was found again on the Suffolk side, we still lack proof that they visit north of the border! Perhaps this year?

Our most important East Anglian species, the Barbastelle, was located on only 3 occasions at two Breckland sites, but work continued on properly securing a planned quarter of these 100 important underground hibernation sites, before the turn of the century, to help protect species like Barbastelle, Natterers and Daubenton. These sites are all disappearing at the rate of 2-3% per annum, but in the summer of 1993 substantial protection works were carried out, with the involvement of the Norfolk Bat Group, on two sites near Norwich, one chalk tunnel in the Stanford Training Area, a Bury St Edmund's chalk cave and more minor works or preparative liaisons, permissions and postings on a further eight sites.



# Water Shrews in Broadland

Martin Perrow & Adrian Jowitt

*ECON, Ecological Consultancy, Biological Sciences, UEA.*

The discovery of the highest population density of Water shrew (9/ha) at Hickling NNR yet recorded in the UK reported in the *Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report* (Perrow & Jowitt 1992), inevitably posed a lot of questions. For example: Is Water shrew widely distributed and relatively common throughout Broadland? If so, did this make Broadland something of a stronghold for the species? Are shrew associated with particular habitat types? And what sort of factors, particularly those related to or resulting from management, affect their distribution and abundance?

This article reports both on the findings of our continued work at Hickling over the last four years and of a major live-trapping survey of small mammal populations throughout Broadland. The latter was conducted between October and December 1992 on 30 individual trapping grids within 4 major habitat types at seven locations (Bure Marshes NNR, Carlton Marshes, How Hill, Hickling NNR, North Cove, Strumpshaw and Wheatfen) in each of the five major river valleys that make up Broadland (Bure, Ant, Thurne, Yare & Waveney) (for details see Jowitt & Perrow 1993). The 11,760 trap night effort of the survey produced nearly 3500 small mammal captures of nearly 1800 individuals including 65 Water shrews. This tends to confirm the natural rarity of Water shrew in the small mammal community and only enhances its conservation interest.

The good news is that Water shrew is widespread throughout Broadland, being captured in all the river valleys (at 6 of the 7 locations) and 20 of the 30 trapping grids. Judging from the density estimates obtained, Broadland is of national importance for Water shrew, with eight sites containing densities of  $\geq 3$ /ha, which is comparable with the previous highest density of 3.2/ha recorded by Churchfield (1984). All this in winter when shrew densities are naturally at their lowest ebb.

Although recorded in all habitat types, Water shrews tended to be more abundant in 'open fen' habitats such as reed and sedge beds, there being a significant difference (by ANOVA) between sedge and alder carr (Fig.1). To explain this habitat preference of Water shrew it is necessary to consider the basic ecology of the species.

Dietary studies have shown that Water shrew takes a high proportion of aquatic prey (Churchfield 1985). As reed and sedge beds tend to be wetter than alder carr and fen litter they probably provide more suitable foraging habitat, particularly in the summer months when water may be at a premium. Indeed our studies at Hickling within a reed-bed showed Water shrews were strongly correlated with water particularly where this formed shallow pools. In winter however, water is often freely available throughout Broadland (as many boat and house owners in the Broads will testify!) and not surprisingly during our survey Water shrew showed no relationship for water, but instead showed a significant positive preference for litter depth. Although Water shrew can clearly cope with relatively high water levels (unlike many other small mammals) it has no physiological and only rudimentary anatomical adaptations—such as a stiff fringe of hairs on hind feet and tail – for an aquatic lifestyle. Indeed Water shrew can only dive and stay under water for up to four seconds and must come out of the water to eat its prey (Churchfield 1985). The complex three-dimensional habitat of thick litter particularly in unmanaged sedge and reed-beds is likely to be ideal habitat both to haul out and provide shelter in flooded winter conditions.

Fen management may therefore be something of a double-edged sword for Water shrew. On a gross scale, clearance of trees may provide suitable open fen habitat.

However, management within reed and sedge beds is likely to be of considerable influence. For example, managed reed-beds with high water levels may be ideal for water shrew in summer but they do not appear to provide the structure required by shrews in winter. A diverse mosaic of managed and unmanaged habitats may therefore be required.

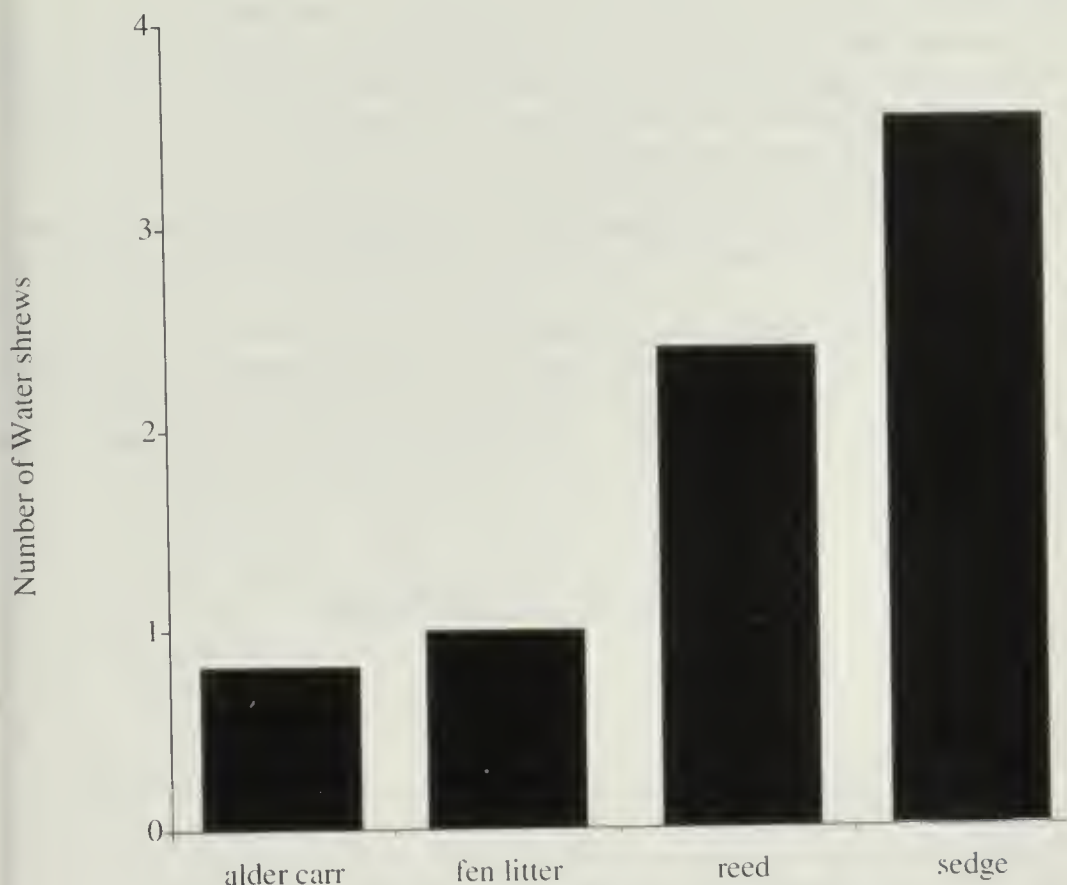


Fig. 1. Mean (+ standard error) number of Water shrews in each habitat sampled

Unfortunately, we are a long way from developing a habitat management prescription over areas large enough to support viable populations of Water shrew. We are only just beginning to understand the spatial and temporal habitat use, population dynamics and social organisation required for such a plan. What we do know from our four year live-trapping study at Hickling is all too sketchy but nonetheless intriguing. For example, it seems that individuals may range widely and often show considerable home range overlap suggesting that they are not territorial quite unlike other shrew species. Furthermore, it is clear that Water shrew may live for a relatively long time, with over 40% of our shrews captured on more than one occasion known to be alive for at least ten months. Within this group only 50% of individuals were captured in successive trapping sessions some 2-4 months apart. Indeed, one individual was recaptured after a gap of 15 months. All this indicates that shrews frequently 'go walkabout' and indeed some 25% of the individuals we have captured are known to have shifted home range.

The picture we have of Water shrew is of an animal adapted to the land-water interface, responding to changing environmental conditions in time and space. It is clear that

the best way of unravelling the mysteries and ultimately developing a habitat management plan to conserve viable populations of shrews is with radio telemetry. With a species at such low density we cannot afford to be complacent. Unfortunately, the prospects for further study are non-existent without more funding. If only Water shrew had wings and a beak...

**Acknowledgments** We are indebted to the Vincent Wildlife Trust for their support and to the many organisations landowners and individuals who granted access and information, including Rob Andrews and Jane Madgwick of the Broads Authority, Mike Blackburn of the RSPB, Steve Bradnock and Francis Russell of the NNT, Phyllis Ellis of the Ted Ellis Memorial Trust, David Holmes of the How Hill Trust, Nic Sanderson of the SWT and Rick Southwood of English Nature.

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## Deer in Norfolk

*Bill Flynn*

One of the most important reasons for the production of an annual report is that it provides an historical record for posterity. It would be extremely useful and interesting if we could turn up the records for 1884, 1904, 1924, for instance, and attempt to compare the status and population estimates for those years with our own assessments.

It is with this theme in mind that I have compiled this contribution in the hope that some enlightened enthusiast may in 2093 AD compare the then current state of wild deer in the county.

We are fortunate to be one of the very few counties in which all six of the wild species of deer now resident in the UK can be found. For a variety of reasons it is neither possible nor perhaps desirable to accurately quantify the total or local populations of each species. Attempts to carry out an annual census of deer have been made from time to time by such organisations as The Forestry Commission, The British Deer Society and The Ministry of Defence (on MOD Lands). A variety of techniques have been tried and results have varied tremendously. Recorded observations by trained deer enthusiasts have been compared with sightings by volunteer census-takers on a specific date. Recently there has been some credence given to population estimates arrived at on selected habitat areas. In general however it is accepted by professional deer managers and most older and experienced observers, that there is no possibility of providing 100% accuracy in estimates over any geographical area. Individual deer managers in situations such as the Forestry Commission or in private woodlands where there is a continuous presence of trained observers, undoubtedly have accurate estimates. However in this article only by conversations with local enthusiasts has it been possible to form impressions of how the different species are faring.



It is generally agreed that there are now greater numbers of each type of deer living in the wild in Norfolk than there has ever been known before. It is interesting to consider some of the factors influencing this dramatic increase. Prior to the introduction of The 1963 Deer Act there has been little or no legal protection for deer. This legislation introduced close seasons relating to the reproductive cycles of differing species and specified minimum rifle calibres to be used for control within statutory seasons, and virtually banned the use of shotguns to control deer. Before this legislation many were shot on organised drives with shotguns, particularly Roe, Muntjac and Chinese Water Deer. Between 1963 and 1980 deer began to increase particularly in the southern counties of England, but there was concern that with more deer and a relatively high demand for venison especially in Western Europe, new legislation was needed. In the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act further protection was enacted compelling game dealers to maintain records of the origin and details of all deer that they handled. The act also re-emphasised the importance of the use of rifles for legal or essential control and was more specific about the limitation of the use of shotguns. This new legislation was intended to assist the authorities in curbing the increase in deer poaching and undoubtedly did prove of some assistance. Although there was still a great demand for venison from the continent, observers began recording increasing numbers of deer. Ending of the Cold War and the lifting of trade barriers associated with the "Iron Curtain" had an instant effect on venison prices as suddenly Western Europe found a new source of supply in the impoverished former Eastern Bloc countries who were eager to gain hard currency. Thus for the past few years low prices available for venison has discouraged quick profits from poaching, substantially reduced legitimate income from professional deer management, and resulted in reduction of control pressures on wild deer. There has been concern that when deer population density increases to a level beyond the natural carrying capacity of the habitat, the general physical condition of the deer rapidly deteriorates. In severe winters, massive losses to starvation has been known to occur. It is therefore essential, when considering the overall welfare of deer, that all the factors affecting their population dynamics are evaluated in the preparation of any deer management plan.



(J.M. Last)

There has been little significant change in numbers and distribution of **Red Deer** since my last notes in the 1988 Mammal Report. However there has been an increase in isolated sightings of singles or small groups of Red Deer in transit rather than settled in a particular area. Thetford Forest, Wensum Forest and North Norfolk still contain the largest concentrations.

**Fallow Deer** are widely distributed over most parts of the county but predominate around King's Lynn in north-east Norfolk and Wensum Forest. Fallow in Thetford Forest are mainly confined to the southern part. Those seen recently in Wensum Forest are nearly all melanistic, with the occasional single white in west Norfolk.



(J.M. Last)

Although **Roe Deer** favour the coniferous plantations and the grassy rides within them, they are more frequently seen amongst the heather of heathland and feeding at first and last light in fields and along hedgerows. Throughout the county Roe have begun to be seen in numerous and widespread new locations. Some regular deer watchers believe numbers in Thetford Forest have stabilised; others fear the dramatic increase in Muntjac numbers there has coincided with a decrease in Roe.

In addition to the three native species all thriving within the county we come to the introduced Asian species: **Muntjac** and **Chinese Water Deer** and both are increasing rapidly. The latter limit their colonisation to fens, marshes and Broadland reedbeds. Muntjac have a wider choice including thick bramble cover. A limited number of sightings of Sika have been reported, mainly in north Norfolk, but this species has not yet established itself in the wild as in the Poole Basin, New Forest and in Scotland.



# Classified List



(J.M. Last)



With all animals, doing accurate surveys is rather difficult, and this is particularly so with mammals, so many of them being very small, secretive, and difficult to see, even in daylight. And so many of them, including many of the larger ones, being mainly or strictly nocturnal. With the **Hedgehog**, *Erinaceus europaeus*, however, this has not been a problem, so many living in gardens and making themselves rather obvious when stealing food from resident dogs and cats, and, wherever they lived, making themselves even more obvious as squashed corpses on roads. This year's reports are, therefore, rather worrying.

For the 1992 Mammal Report, there were a few comments concerning hedgehogs being "scarce" or "very scarce", but this year's records are very much worse. Reports from Swaffham, Woodton, Belton, Taverham, Watton, East Tuddenham, Thornham, and Sheringham, i.e. throughout the county, shows recorders reporting a great scarcity of hedgehogs. Rex Hancy said, "The main road passing us used to be a hedgehog accident black spot. In 1993, none was found dead there. Good news or bad?" Unfortunately, it would seem to be bad news. Jean Gaffney, for example, said that there was "no sight or sound of hedgehogs, not even a dropping" in her garden, this being the first time in her twenty years occupancy of that house that she has not recorded garden hedgehogs, and Ruth Hadman sent a similar report from near the Suffolk border. Other comments include "...fewer killed on local roads."; "The poorest year that I can remember. Only saw two alive, and one dead on road."; and "Hedgehogs seem to be at a low ebb now, with hardly any sightings, and fewer road casualties noticed."

The only really positive report was from Ian Keymer, who said that in Stanford Battle Area he had eight sightings of hedgehogs. "The most ever, possibly because they are no longer killed as vermin."

It is to be hoped that Alec Bull's phrase, "at a low ebb now" is accurate, and that this year's comments will not be repeated.



(J.M. Last)

Like the hedgehog, the **Mole**, *Talpa europaea*, makes its existence very obvious, although the evidence given by moles is very misleading. Moles are very anti-social, and want nothing to do with each other, except for a few minutes during the breeding season. They will fight to the death if they happen to meet underground. Any group of molehills is, therefore, likely to be evidence for the existence of just one mole, but despite the inaccuracies caused by recordings based on molehills they seem to have had a very good year.

"The moles are taking over!" said Diana Beckley, and several other recorders have noted increased activity and molehills appearing in regularly watched sites where they have not been seen before. Of particular interest, however, are two observations from

in Keymer. He reports that, in the Battle Area, there are thousands of molehills on old stures, *except where there is bracken*. It would seem, therefore, that bracken's allelo-chemistry does not just discourage competitive plants. He also reported a mole falling rough the branches of a pine tree and landing at his feet, apparently having been opped by a sparrowhawk, which he saw overhead.

When it comes to shrews, it is usually much more difficult to know if they are found amongst the local wildlife. As with hedgehogs, therefore, most records are usually of ad specimens and are provided by the owners of cats. Ruth Hadman speaking of the **common shrew**, *Sorex araneus*, said, "None seen this year – I have lost my hunting t." It is surprising, therefore, that not only were many more records of Common rews sent in than were received last year, but almost half of them report live sightings.

Of the **Pygmy shrew**, *Sorex minutus*, there were far fewer records than of the common shrew, but it is again surprising that there were twice as many reports of live ghtings as there were of dead specimens provided by cats or owls. One report, howev-, shows the limitations, valuable as they are, of casual records. The Raptor Trust car-ed out a survey of Kettlestone Common, using Longworth traps, from February to ly, during which they trapped 57 common shrews, but there were 79 pygmy shrews. 3% more. The pygmy shrew was, in fact, the most common of the five species which ere trapped.

The Raptor Trust also provided records of the **water shrew**, *Neomys fodiens*, the even specimens found on Kettlestone Common being more than are usually recorded r the whole county. This year there have been records from Titchwell, Saham Mere, ow Hill, Whitwell Common, Walsham Fen, Hemblington Churchyard, Welney Wildfowl Refuge and Beeston Regis Common, so it would seem that the water shrew is idely spread in the county.

A more detailed report on Norfolk Bats will be found elsewhere in this Report, but me items of interest have come in from general mammal recorders: A **Serotine**, *Myotis serotinus*, made a habit of coming into a house in Edgefield Street and flying ound for a while before leaving again. A **Brown long-eared bat**, *Plecotus auritus*, as reported as having been killed by a cat in Sheringham, though no further details ere given for this interesting event. Similarly, and just as strange, another Brown long- eared was killed by a cat at Saham Hills. A large bat, with slow wing-beats, thought to e a **Noctule**, *Nyctalus noctula*, was seen rather early, on 12th March, over Strumpshaw en at midday where it was caught by a kestrel. Perhaps the most interesting comment as from Pam Taylor, who, unlike many people, was delighted to report, *re* the **Pipistrelle**, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, "At last, we've seen some enter under our roof es!!". Bats need more people like her.

The **rabbit**, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, is unfortunately one of the species which many ontributors do not consider worth recording. Thus our knowledge of their distribution ad the size and health of populations is incomplete. The 151 records from many differ- at parts of the county do, however, give interesting and valuable information. In Belton ecord numbers were present: in a garden in Rockland St. Mary where rabbits had only een seen three times in thirty years, they are now a regular occurrence: in the Stanford attle Area, they are reported "with pleasure", as more plentiful than for several years. ut in Broadland rabbit sightings were described by two experienced recorders as "sur- rprisingly numbering only two, one of these referring to a single rabbit." By contrast sev- nty rabbits were feeding together on a clifftop at Beeston Regis. The most detailed port came from J.B. Kemp, concerning rabbits at Welney Wildfowl Refuge where ery low numbers at the beginning of the year, following a myxomatosis outbreak in the autumn of 1992. Numbers increased through the summer, "though not quite to the ordes of 1992". The first animal suffering from myxomatosis was seen on September



20th, and numbers fell dramatically during the next three months, leaving a low population again at the year end.

Black rabbits have again been seen from several parts of the county. Much more unusual, a white rabbit was seen on Snettisham Beach. The most disturbing report was from Dr. Ian Keymer, who took a rabbit from the cat which had killed it, planning to eat it himself. When he skinned it, he found it was suffering from pseudotuberculosis, a very nasty disease which is infectious to man.

There were many fewer records of the **Brown hare**, *Lepus capensis*, numbers being down by 22%. Reports included a Hethersett comment that the brown hare was "not seen at all this year in the local area". A detailed summary from the Coltishall, Spixworth, Buxton, and Wroxham areas by Dr. R.M. Leaney reports a very worrying decrease in recent years, continuing in 1993: "In the late 70s, I would see 'mad March hares' regularly in spring, but haven't seen any since then, and general hare sightings were six to eight per year, whereas I now see only one every year or two, and none in 1993." From west Norfolk, however, reports described hares as being plentiful, and populations stable. One recorder saw 182 live hares in 34 different sites in west Norfolk. More unusual sightings came from north and south Norfolk, several hares being seen in gardens where some were killed by cats. Best example of a "mad march hare" came from north Norfolk, Trevor Davies having seen one at Cley, on the first day of spring bathing in the sea.

We have again received no records of the **Red squirrel**, *Sciurus vulgaris*, but the project in Thetford Forest, designed to reinstate them is continuing.

"A real menace to our song birds, trees, and just about everything" is how one recorder describes the **Grey squirrel**, *Sciurus carolinensis*, which is in a very different position to the Red squirrel. A report from west Norfolk compares the total of 27 live sightings in 1993 to the 46 of 1991 and the 49 of 1992, and a Watton observer states that 1,497 Grey squirrels were killed in the Battle Area in 1992-3. Generally speaking – although Grey squirrels like rabbits are usually not recorded – there is no evidence they are at all threatened. There has been much unjustified condemnation recently of the sparrowhawk for the lack of songbirds in complainants' gardens. Grey squirrels are much more likely to be responsible. They were certainly responsible for the disappearance of crocus bulbs from a lawn in Thornham, and for the noise, and the insulated fibreglass nests, in the loft of a house in Taverham. Unfortunately, the nuisance looks very likely to continue throughout the county.

It was mentioned in last year's report that very few observations had been received of the **Bank vole**, *Clethrionomys glareolus*. Such a statement that could be repeated despite the fact that there were three times as many records received this year. The Bank vole was described by one very experienced naturalist as "an adaptable little creature", so one would expect more sightings. Many simply refer to "voles" so it is possible they were bank voles. It is interesting that the mammal survey carried out by the Raptor Trust on Kettlestone Common shows that no bank voles were captured. Yet while the report of a 1992 survey carried out in Foxley Wood, shows that the Bank vole was the second most commonly recorded species.

"The population in 1993 was probably at an all-time low...virtually no sightings of a species normally encountered at intervals during the year," said J.B. Kemp, writing about the **short-tailed field vole**, *Microtus agrestis*, at Welney Wildfowl Refuge. However the same species is described by George Jessup to have a very good year in the Watton area, and this was the second most commonly recorded species in the Kettlestone Common survey. From the county as a whole there have been slightly more records received this year than last. The species is subject to population explosions and crashes and only long-term studies can give an accurate picture.



The true picture of the status of the **Water vole**, *Arvicola amphibius*, would be desirable. There were slightly more records in 1993 than in 1992, but in a county like Norfolk many more observations would be expected. F.P.J. Reynolds could only report, "one seen on the stretch of River Ingol bounding this property. I fear the colony has gone completely." At Welney, 1993 showed a marked improvement on recent years, water voles being seen regularly throughout the reserve. Significantly, the high number of water voles at Welney corresponds with a low number of mink, which suggests a reason for the decline in water voles.

The **Long-tailed field**, or **Wood mouse**, *Apodemus sylvaticus*, on the other hand, does not seem to be in danger. Despite many recorders not considering it worth mentioning, it is still recorded all over the county and will perhaps become more regularly noted as it moves into closer association with humans. Alec Bull describes it as "the most destructive of greenhouse pests, and no matter how many are trapped they still keep coming." A wood mouse was feeding on the nuts in a peanut-holder attached to a bird table in a garden at Thornham, and it was reported that after snow had fallen wood mice invaded a certain "fast food outlet" on two occasions. These were trapped and other reports have been received of large-scale poisoning campaigns against indoor wood mice. A wood mouse was certainly in very close association with a human being at Welney Wildfowl Refuge on September 20th when it appeared on the handlebars of the reserve's motorcycle which was being used to check cattle. It continued running backwards and forwards along the handlebars, despite strenuous efforts to dislodge it, and remained as a passenger throughout the work. (The other two wood mice seen at Welney were somewhat unusual, one being dropped by a startled weasel and the other being found dead inside a trap containing a live brown rat.) Wood mice made up 41.5% of the small mammals trapped in Foxley Wood, but only 10.5% of the mammals trapped at Beettlestone Common.

The **Yellow-necked mouse**, *Apodemus flavicollis*, also seems to be doing well, being regularly reported, usually from south and south-east Norfolk. This year, eight specimens were seen by Shirley and Mike Hall in Scole and Martin Perrow reported 14 yellow-necked mice trapped in Heckingham, "by far the largest capture in Norfolk at such a northerly point".

The **Harvest mouse**, *Micromys minutus*, is like the mole as its presence is easily recorded by its very obvious home being seen. Many 1993 records relate to harvest mouse nests in different parts of the county. Other records were sadly provided by owners of cats, but some live sightings were received including two at an East Tuddenham place where they had not been seen for some years. A particularly interesting record also concerned a live sighting being provided by C.E. Tack, Mammal Recorder for the Bedfordshire Natural History Society. He had travelled from Whipsnade to Heacham to see a desert wheatear and found a harvest mouse running along the bottom of the sea wall.

The **House mouse**, *Mus musculus*, is another species which is surprisingly little reported, only 10 records were received. There has been a long campaign against the house mouse in the interests of hygiene, but perhaps the somewhat larger wood mouse moving into houses is also having an effect on house mouse numbers. Will we, in the future, be carrying out measures to conserve the house mouse?

There is no need to worry about the status of the **Brown rat**, *Rattus norvegicus*, which is more and more successful. A record number of calls was made to pest control officers in the Waveney District Council's area: King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council reported an increase in requests for help; Broadland District Council said the problem was widespread; North Norfolk Council was reported to be "stretched", and so on. Regular contributors have reported numbers as being higher than previously

seen. A series of mild winters has been given as the reason for this great increase. If this is true we can expect even more in 1994. Two contrasting reports, however, show how to deal with the rat problem. One gives a detailed account of how to stop a brown rat stealing food which had been put out for birds, involving moving the bird table away from the rat's means of access. The other report simply says, "one male rat shot feeding on bird table".

Unlike the brown rat, the **Fox**, *Vulpes vulpes*, is not hated by everybody, although there has been much comment about the need for control. The dichotomy in attitude to foxes is well illustrated by contributors to this Report. Foxes are reported as a continuing problem at Titchwell Marsh when predating ground nesting birds' chicks and eggs and seven foxes were killed at Welney Reserve to control the population during the birds' breeding season. On a Broadland 5500 acre estate over 60 were taken during the year. At a coastal reserve and adjoining farm 49 were removed. In contrast a regular recorder from Swaffham gives the seeing of three fox cubs at very close quarters and in daylight as her mammal sighting of the year. Another observer watched a fox at 2.50pm in bright sunshine walking hurriedly across very short grass where dogs are exercised daily. Next day the same person saw a fox again at 2-50 p.m. in bright sunshine walking unhurriedly along a busy road in the working area of a sand and gravel depot. A very strange sight was reported to Paul Cobb: a partially albino fox with a white head and pink eyes, a normal body, and a white tail. This was between Snettisham and Inmere. An unfortunate sight was a fox dead in mud pumped from Alderfen Broad as a conservation measure. In general the fox seems to be doing quite well.

The **Badger**, *Meles meles*, is much less common in Norfolk. A.E. Vine stated in his article in the 1992 Report that the number of occupied setts had doubled between 1980 and 1992. Many more reports concerning badgers have been sent in this year; all very pleasing, except that one concerned a badger dead on a road in north-east Norfolk. Other reports refer to occupied setts, badger's tracks and badgers being seen by chance and these sightings came from the centre, the north, and the west of the county. Of particular interest is a sett which was not included in A.E. Vine's count, as the badgers concerned did not start this sett in a new site until January, 1993. Unfortunately, they chose to dig in a "borrow pit" and all their hard work came to naught when in September five years of drought came to an end. This new sett is now completely under water, but the badgers have made another new one in a dry area nearby. Finally, Eddie Boosey saw 18 badgers, at three different setts, during the year, the most he has seen in 16 years of badger-watching in Norfolk. Perhaps things really are improving.

The same cannot be said for the **Otter**, *Lutra lutra*, only six observers reported sightings or evidence of otters from nine sites. Otters are very nomadic, so two or three reports could concern the same otter. The Otter Trust, however, is continuing its work, and one male and two female otters were released in the Stanford Battle Area; unfortunately the male was killed on a road at Mundford in August. Another male was then released in October and otter signs have been recorded regularly, so it is hoped otter cubs will appear in 1994.

"Not quite so many as in last 2 years" and "Worryingly few in last few years" are comments from the Broads and in mid-Norfolk concerning the status of the **Stoat**, *Mustela erminea*, in contrast a total of 17 trapped on Blakeney Point during the summer resulting in very few losses among nesting terns. At Welney only a single stoat noted which was "rather surprising in view of the number of rabbits available". In the county as a whole, numbers of stoats recorded alive and dead, is almost as many as last year, despite fewer people having sent in records.

"Worryingly few" was the comment from the same Broadland area, as under stoat, but the picture for the **Weasel**, *Mustela nivalis*, is rather different elsewhere. "More so



in of late" and "I saw more this year than for many years" are other comments. Figures certainly agree with the latter with 25% more live weasels recorded in 1993 than 1992, and 50% more dead ones. It is hoped this trend will continue especially as news from Potter Heigham of two weasels were of individuals killed by a cat. But the cat was injured by a rat it was attacking so it is hoped this cat has learned its lesson.

Increases in reports of the **North American mink**, *Mustela vison*, are not welcomed. It is an unwanted addition to our resident fauna, causing considerable harm, and is associated with the decline of the water vole whose burrows even when underwater offer no protection against this predator. The report from Welney Wildfowl Trust is encouraging in stating that 5 animals were trapped in February and March where a similar trapping effort caught 13 in 1992. However, worse news comes from Watton. George Jessup reports 4 American mink, that they are "quite common" in the Feltwell area, and that one keeper killed more than 100 during the last two years. One hopes continued trapping will have the same result as was achieved with the coypu.

There have also been two reports this year of another predator: the **Ferret**, *Mustela putorius*, both reports from Ann Brewster. One dead on a Thursford road and one alive passing in front of her kitchen window in Corpusty. This had escaped from captivity in the neighbourhood.

The sandbanks at the entrance to Blakeney harbour attract the county's largest group of **Grey Seals**, *Halichoerus grypus*. Between 40 and 50 were often on show. Breeding attempts are largely unsuccessful; in fact in most years only one or two pups survive. Crosby Sands off Yarmouth holds 15 to 20 Grey seals, but due to the bank disappearing at high tide attempts are made to give birth on mainland beaches north of Yarmouth. At least 2 pups were born this year.



(J.M. Last)

The Blakeney Point colony of **Common seals**, *Phoca vitulina*, is recovering very slowly from the virus which struck in 1988. Prior to that disaster the combined herd were totalled 730. No more than 300 seals have been observed there since then. And this combined total includes animals rescued elsewhere in the country and later released. At Crosby, up to 60 Common seals were often observed hauled out at low tide, but a proportion of the colony is always away at sea.

Common seals were "frequently seen" in the Ouse at King's Lynn during the summer: one was observed for a week "porpoising" in the outfall waters of Welmore Sluice, in the tidal Hundred Foot River at Welney. Others visited this tidal area on three occasions. In November a common seal was in the non-tidal Old Bedford River and in half an hour, it caught two large pike, only eating a portion of each fish.



The **Chinese muntjac deer**, *Muntiacus reevesi*, has again been seen throughout the county. The systematic recorders Frances and Ian Simper saw 15 muntjac during one early morning visit to West Harling woods.

Another introduced species, the **Fallow deer**, *Dama dama*, favours extensive mixed and deciduous woodlands so it is usually reported only from west Norfolk, though one young male was seen near Attlebridge. Fallow were found in six west Norfolk tetrads including fifteen young bucks at a single site on one visit; 23 does were seen in another widely separated, site on the same March day.

The **Red deer**, *Cervus elaphus*, is much more widely recorded, having been seen in all four quarters of the county.

The **Roe deer**, *Capreolus capreolus*, leads the way among successful deer. It has been recorded in 55 sites throughout the county, with numbers including 8, 10, and 11 together on occasion.

The apparent absence of roe at Foxley Wood, was mentioned in the previous report but they were seen there in 1993.

The **Chinese water-deer**, *Hydropotes inermis*, is doing very well with 55 reports from 24 sites in Broadland, two of them particularly interesting, both from George Taylor. Two appeared in his Potter Heigham garden, just outside the kitchen window, one a night in November, and an adult and a young specimen were casualties at Alderford Broad in July. The dead ones died, like the fox reported earlier, following conservation work.

Six reports of the **Common porpoise**, *Phocoena phocoena*, come from sites between Holme and Winterton, and include K. & I.G. Johnson's comment, "Very frequently seen during sea watches between Cley and Sheringham all year, in small numbers of up to six."

A Dolphin, of unknown species, reported in the *Lynn News* appeared in the River Ouse on 2nd July. But there was no doubt concerning identification of the only whale recorded during the year. On 2nd December a 40 foot adult **Sperm whale**, *Physeter catodon*, was stranded in the Wash off Heacham. It died soon after stranding on the early morning tide. The corpse was washed out to sea on the next evening tide.

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