

**CLEY  
BIRD  
CLUB**



TEMPORARY ADDRESS  
FOR CORRESPONDENCE.

Cobbles, Holt Road,  
Cley-next-the-Sea,  
Holt, Norfolk.  
NR25 7TU.

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 10.

JULY 1988

E.T.MYERS, EDITOR,  
UMVOLOSI, HIGH STREET,  
CLEY-NEXT-THE-SEA,  
HOLT, NORFOLK, NR25 7RR.

Dear Members,

I'm back, after two newsletters in the trust of the caretaker editorial board I thought it was time to get back and sort out the newsletters back to pre-October 1987, no not really, I think the caretaker editorial board has done a sterling job and I would like to thank them for their tremendous efforts.

I was very relieved on my return to Cley, to find that I'd only missed a Red-breasted goose and very little else, no ticks. I enjoyed my trip to Northern India and Nepal during the winter, but now it's back to real birdwatching, there's no place like Cley!

Most of you will have noticed that for the last three newsletters we have been using a type-writer, but hopefully we'll have the wordprocessor back for the October newsletter. The wordprocessor makes the job of producing the newsletters a very easy task, and not a chore as it can be, and is on a type-writer. Many thanks to Steve Gantlett for the use of his type-writer, without which this newsletter might not have been produced in time.

Although the main aim of the newsletter is to be as topical and up-to-date as possible it was thought that some of our members might find short items on the earlier days at Cley of interest.

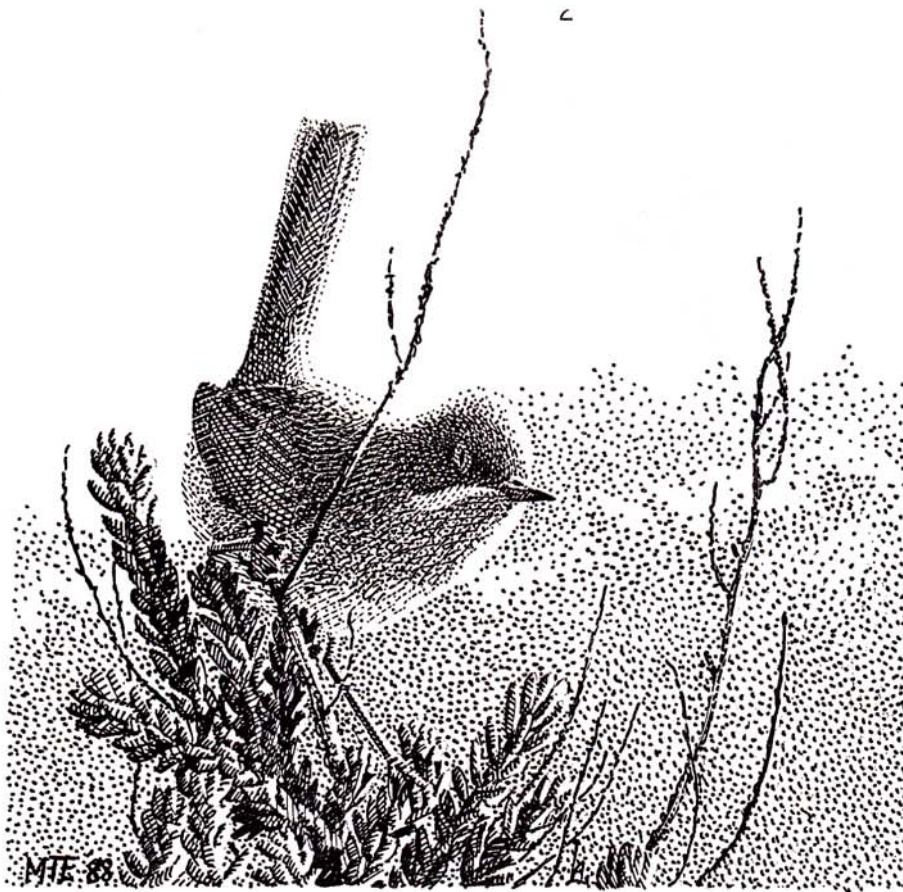
As an experiment Joe Johnson has volunteered to produce something along those lines for the next few issues under the general heading of "Times Past" and the first dealing with Cley Bird Observatory - is in this issue. Also new from this issue will be the inclusion of foreign birding trips undertaken by any of our membership, we all know that Cley is the centre of the British birders universe, but on occasions we all like to see new places and new birds. The first such report is from Mick Fiszler, who in early April of this year was in Texas, with Steve Beal, Paul Lee and Roy Robinson, who are also Cley Bird Club members.

Well back to the real thing, the birds of the Cley 10km square during the last quarter, a very good spring for passerines but poor for waders but we can't have everything. A Bonelli's warbler and a Great reed warbler were both new species for the square, giving the square a total of 340 species to date, surely the best mainland birding site in Britain!

I've noticed that since I returned from far off places, that the log-book in Nancy's cafe has been, and still is being neglected, with lots of blank pages throughout the first six months. The local birders are more to blame than anyone else, but when ever you have the chance please add your sightings, anything you see may be of interest, it may be common in your own local patch but uncommon or even rare in the Cley 10km square.

E.T.Myers.





Subalpine Warbler at the Watch House on Blakeney Point, by Martin Elliott.

#### A GOOD TEN DAYS IN MAY.

The good ten days started on Sunday the 8th of May, when the male Subalpine Warbler, which appears in the above drawing, was found at The Watch House on Blakeney Point. This was the first twitchable Subalpine Warbler in Norfolk in living history, and it of course caused a mass rush towards the point by the hoards of Norfolk listers. The bird performed happily to the crowds, after the initial "push" to locate it, the bird then settled down to feed low down in the Sueada bushes. Also found on the same day was a Firecrest, this was at The Marrams, which is the first large area of Sueada scrub as you walk from the Cley Coastguards car park. The Subalpine Warbler was present to Wednesday the 11th, where it was seen well by most, if not all the Norfolk birders.

On Wednesday the 11th, there was another fall of passerines over - night on Blakeney Point, and the following birds were noted: A male and two female Redstarts, a male and a female Ring Ouzel, about 8 Whinchat, a single male Pied Flycatcher, two Fieldfares, three Spotted Flycatchers, about 20 Lesser Whitethroats and a Grasshopper Warbler.

It then went quiet, except for a very difficult Icterine in the Lupins, to Saturday the 14th when in the early morning a Little Egret was seen on the marshes. It stayed briefly on Pat's Pool, and then it flew off west over the West Bank, and though it was searched for extensively it was not relocated within the 10km square. It was relocated later on a flooded dyke on the Holkham Fresh Marshes at 11.30am, where because of the distance and the heat-haze, the views were rather poor. This was the first sighting of Little Egret within the Cley 10km square since one at Salhouse from the 2nd to the 14th of June, 1981.

On the same day a Bonelli's Warbler was found at the Hood on Blakeney Point, this was a really superb bird and rather tame. It was in very crisp summer plumage, and could be viewed from close range in strong direct sunshine. In the Lupins on the point there was a Long-eared Owl and a female Pied Flycatcher, but the owl was not present later, much to the disappointment of the many who walk up especially to see the bird. The Bonelli's Warbler was only a one day stayer, and a few big day listers never saw it, even though they knew about it on the day. This was a new species for the Cley 10km square, as was the Subalpine Warbler.



Overnight, the 14th and 15th, there was another fall of passerines along the North Norfolk coast and the first hint of this was when a Wryneck was found at Salthouse. The bird was feeding along the edge of the Beach road at the Coast road end, it flew off into the bushes around the Duckpens and proved a little difficult to get to grip with. In fact a few missed it, as the news of an unidentified Nightingale at the Marrams reached us whilst we were waiting for it to reappear, which it did after we left. The Nightingale was quickly relocated at the Marrams, where with aid of a tape playing singing Thrush Nightingale, we found out that we had a first for the square in the form of a "Sprosser". The bird was rather difficult, to get a decent view of it was to find an open area and hope that it hopped across, in my case it stopped and sang in response to the tape. More good news reached us latter from the point that there was a Red-throated Pipit, the bird was near the Lifeboat House and was supposed to be tame. Boats were chartered to take out the hoards from Morston, but for the "Grossers" an hours wait was too much for their nerves to handle, so they walked both ways.

When we arrived there was a large gathering of birders viewing the bird, it was indeed a rather tame individual, and a real cracker in full summer plumage. The boat arrived about 20 minutes after the walkers, and as its human cargo spilled ashore the bird upped and flew away. It flew off only a short distance before pitching down on the saltmarsh about a 100metres away, it came back about 10 minutes later when it performed to the admiring crowd. Also on the point the same evening was a male Ortolan Bunting in full summer plumage, and male Lapland Bunting also in breeding plumage, but these two birds were ignored in the haste to get the pipit on the list.

The following day, the 16th, there was another fall on Blakeney Point. A second bird joined the Red-throated Pipit, so now there were a pair. The original bird was heard singing and was also seen collecting nesting material, but this all came to an end because the second bird dissapeared in the late afternoon. The Ortolan and the Lapland Bunting were still present, but both were proving a little difficult to track down, I never did see either. A Quail was heard calling from the sueada on the Yankee Ridge, though we failed to see or hear it soon afterwards, it was seen well later in the evening by a number of birders.. A male Red-spotted Bluethroat in the Lupins and a couple of females, one on the Yankee Ridge the other in the main sand dunes, were the other good birds of the fall. Another male Red-spotted Bluethroat was found in the car park of Walsey Hill at dusk, but this dissapear and was not relocated.

On Tuesday the 17th, a third Red-throated Pipit was found on the point, this was a skulker and kept to the Plantation. There was, and there probably will always be a little disagreement over this bird, I didn't this individual so I can't say one way or the other. The Thrush Nightingale was still present, though even more difficult to see than at first. There was also a female Bluethroal on the point, in the main sand dunes.

On the 18th, there was still a Red-throated Pipit still on the point, near the Plantation. The male Red-spotted Bluethroat from Walsey Hill, was relocated in front of Irene Hide where it was seen off and on to dusk.

So ended one of the best springs in North Norfolk for passerines in a long long time, it a shame we can't have the waders as well, now that would be a good spring!

E.T.Myers.

#### SPRING ARRIVAL DATES AT CLEY FOR 1988.

(With compararative dates for 1987 and 1986.)

These dates refer to the first individuals, often several days ahead of the general arrival. Some of the species over-wintered in other parts of the county, but do not normally do so at Cley, eg; Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull etc etc. Over the last few winters both Greenshank and Spotted Redshank have wintered but neither did so in 87/88. In a few other species the issue is also somewhat clouded by the prescence of occasional wintering individuals, eg; Common sandpiper, Blackcap and Chiffchaff as in 87/88. In these cases, the dates refer to what are thought to be the first genuine returning migrants - (W) indicates



overwintering. White and Blue-headed Wagtails are included in addition to Pied and Yellow Wagtails simply to add interest.

J.T. Corcoran.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1986</u>
AVOCET	16/2	28/2	7/3
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	20/2	13/2	13/2
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL	26/2	28/2	15/3
RUFF	8/3	(W)	(W)
SPOTTED REDSHANK	8/3	26/3	(W)
GANNET	13/3	1/3	29/1
WHEATEAR	17/3	22/3	15/3
WHITE WAGTAIL	19/3	31/3	1/4
SANDWICH TERN	20/3	25/3	17/3
WHIMBREL	21/3	11/4	22/4
FIRECREST	22/3	3/4 (W)	3/4
SAND MARTIN	22/3	26/3	24/4
CHIFFCHAFF	22/3 (W)	6/4	23/3
GREEN SANDPIPER	26/3	5/3	23/1 (W)
RING OUZEL	27/3	5/3	12/4
GARGANEY	31/3	4/3	8/3
BLACK REDSTART	31/3	31/3	23/3
MARSH HARRIER	1/4	10/4	24/4
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER	1/4	31/3	22/4
SWALLOW	1/4	15/3	16/4
YELLOW WAGTAIL	1/4	7/4	16/4
COMMON SANDPIPER	2/4 (W)	4/4	21/4
BLACKCAP	3/4	16/4 (W)	28/4
WILLOW WARBLER	3/4	5/4	21/4
TREE PIPIT	3/4	18/4	3/4
GARDEN WARBLER	4/4	18/5	3/5
LITTLE STINT	9/4	29/4	14/5
HOUSE MARTIN	10/4	6/4	24/4
SEDGE WARBLER	11/4	9/4	21/4
CUCKOO	12/4	21/4	30/4
GREENSHANK	14/4	25/4	(W)
LITTLE TERN	14/4	14/4	28/4
COMMON TERN	14/4	20/4	24/4
OSPREY	14/4	26/4	4/5
COMMON REDSTART	15/4	28/5	17/5
WHINCHAT	17/4	18/4	25/4
BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL	17/4	20/4	24/4
WHITETHROAT	17/4	19/4	24/4
MONTAGU'S HARRIER	18/4	26/4	20/5
GRASSHOPPER WARBLER	19/4	18/4	26/4
NIGHTINGALE	19/4	14/4	25/4
TURTLE DOVE	21/4	19/4	24/4
LESSER WHITETHROAT	21/4	26/4	25/4
WOOD WARBLER	22/4	27/4	5/5
REED WARBLER	23/4	1/5	30/4
BLACK TERN	26/4	17/4	2/5
ARCTIC TERN	27/4	22/4	16/4
SPOONBILL	28/4	26/4	1/5
CURLEW SANDPIPER	30/4	3/5	3/5
SWIFT	30/4	25/4	4/4
KENTISH PLOVER	1/5	23/5	9/4
DOTTEREL	1/5	28/4 (W)	no date ?
TEMMINCK'S STINT	5/5	13/5	2/5
WOOD SANDPIPER	5/5	29/4	14/5
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER	8/5	18/5	15/5
PIED FLYCATCHER	8/5	20/4	6/5
HOBBY	10/5	22/4	24/4
WRYNECK	15/5	23/5	5/5

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1986</u>
BLUETHROAT	16/5	22/5	no date ?
NIGHTJAR	16/5	15/5	17/5
QUAIL	16/5	no date ?	no date ?

#### LATE DATES FOR WINTERING BIRDS, 1988.

A few sick, injured or non-breeding individuals of several species remain throughout the summer mainly in Blakeney harbour or offshore (eg, Brent Geese, Eider, Common Scoter and small numbers of waders), so some of the dates may be a bit arbitrary.

Red-throated Diver - 26th May.

Brent Goose - 27th May, 3 east offshore (still 160 in harbour on the 17th).

Black Brant - 3rd March, 2 on Blakeney Fresh Marshes.

Red-breasted Goose - 3rd March.

Wigeon - a handful usually remain on the reserve throughout the summer, where still 10 on 5th June and 5 on the 22nd (bred in 1952, 1963 and 1965, the latter year two pairs bred).

Eider - a few remain around the Point but small numbers heading east offshore on four dates in the last week of May, the last on the 31st.

Common Scoter - often summers, but singles and small parties heading east offshore until 5th June.

Goldeneye - a female at Weybourne on 22nd May.

Red-breasted Merganser - 5 in Blakeney Pit on 5th April.

Hen Harrier - immature male flew east over the reserve on 3rd May.

Merlin - female at the Hangs, 4th April.

Water Rail - one remained by the Three Swallows pub until the 2nd April.

Golden Plover - 3 west on 26th May.

Grey Plover - often non-breeders in the harbour. A summer plumaged bird on the reserve on 4th May.

Knot - summer plumaged birds on the reserve on 30th April (2), 18th May and 19th June (2), were the mid-June birds coming or going???

Sanderling - often non-breeders in the harbour. Odd birds on the reserve during May, with 3 on 25th and 5 on 27th.

Purple Sandpiper - one at Salthouse on 5th April.

Turnstone - still 20+ in Blakeney harbour, 17th May. A noisy, excited party of some 30 birds, chasing each other around, on 5th May on Arnold's Marsh, were probably preparing to depart.

Glaucous Gull - Boy George was last seen on 12th February, but a second winter bird at Weybourne on 22nd May.

Short-eared Owl - a pair displaying over the West Bank on 1st May, and at least one still there on 31st May.

Shorelark - 2 on the Point on 12th April. Often present until early May (latest date 23rd May 1973), but as their favourite area on the Point is in the vicinity of the tern colony, they are not often looked for once the terns have settled in.

Rock Pipit - still 2 along the shingle-bank, 29th March.

Grey Wagtail - The wintering bird at the local Sewage Works remained to at least 13th February.

Fieldfare - a single bird remained on the Point until at least, 17th May.

Redwing - 5 at Wiveton on 9th April.

Brambling - one at Cley on 2nd April (in 1979 a male was in song between 17th and 25th June on Salthouse Heath).

Twite - still c40 at Moreston on 9th March. Normally present to early April.

Lapland Bunting - a summer plumaged male was on Blakeney Point, until 17th May.

Snow Bunting - one at Salthouse on 23rd April.

Of the overwintering summer visitors, the Common Sandpiper remained to at least 8th March, the Blackcap around the village gardens to 26th March and the Chiffchaff at the Sewage works to 13th February.

J.T. Corcoran.



CLARIFICATION.

Steve Gantlett has drawn attention to a slightly alarming item in the 1987 accounts of the Norfolk Naturalists Trust which reads, profits on the sale of "Avocets"-£45,934. However admirers of that species need not be unduly alarmed, nor should those who have been heard to mutter darkly about the need for a cull ask "How much each did they fetch and is there an ongoing market?".

The item refers, of course, to the sale of the Trust's property of the name on the Coast road at Cley.

TIMES PAST.

A Bird Observatory was set up at Cley under the sponsorship of the Norfolk Naturalists on the 31st of October 1949 with its Headquarters and one Heligoland trap situated in an empty military observation post and derelict gun emplacements immediately behind Cley beach.

It was recognised by the British Trust For Ornithology as the ninth British Bird Observatory in 1950 and in 1951 a second Heligoland trap was constructed, this one being sited on Walsey Hill. A great gale with disastrous sea floods at the end of January 1953 demolished the gun emplacements and the traps and undermined the Observation Post but, after repairs, reconstruction and a great deal of hard work the Observatory continued its work on Walsey Hill.

Funded by subscribers its affairs were managed by a Committee which varied slightly over the years but Richard Richardson served continuously as Honorary Warden from inception in 1949 until his resignation in 1963. In November a letter to the Subscribers included the message "the Committee after having explored every possible alternative, have most regretfully decided that as they are unable to employ a full time paid Warden, to dissolve the Observatory was the only solution". So it all ended but there is no doubt that by providing valuable data and a regular flow of news, especially in the migration field, the Observatory did a great deal to revive and stimulate Norfolk Ornithology in the immediate post-war period. Its achievements included more than 17,000 birds of 154 species ringed, over 200 recoveries recorded and four new species, plus Ashy-headed Wagtail added to the Norfolk records.

We are grateful to Michael Seago for sending us his personal copy of the very first Bulletin issued by the Observatory in June 1950. The list of 40 species breeding, or believed to be breeding in the immediate vicinity included the following which make an interesting comparison with the present situation - Little Tern c 12 pairs, Corn Bunting 1 or 2 pairs suspected of breeding, Garganey 3 pairs (W.Bishop), Bittern 5 pairs (W.Bishop), and Red-backed Shrike(!) 3 pairs in thorns besides the main road.

Joe Johnson

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The usual reminder that the 1988 subscription is only £2.50.

Members receiving a Renewal form with this newsletter are due to pay their subscription as soon as possible and before September 30th please, by cheque or Postal order made payable to the Cley Bird Club. Prompt payment is very helpful and saves much time.

One or two members have overlooked payment(!) and will find the letters SOD - in red - on page one of this newsletter. This means "subscription overdue" and is not the Membership Secretary expressing an opinion! Will they please send their subscription BY RETURN please.

Peter Gooden.

MEMBERSHIP.

The total membership of the Cley Bird Club is currently 193. This includes family members paying a combined subscription. A complete list of the current membership follows on the next two pages.



CLEY BIRD CLUB MEMBERS - July 1st, 1988.

R. ABEL	M. FISZER	P. MILFORD
R. ABERDEIN	T. FLETCHER	R. MILLINGTON
T. ABERDEIN	K. FARRELL	Ms H. MILLINGTON
E. ABRAHAM	R. FRANCIS	N. MOODY
Rev. R. ABRAHAM	Ms E FRANCIS	P. MOORE
J. APPLETON	P. FYLDES	E. MCKERCHER
Dr. I. ADAM	P. FIRTH	Ms A. MANSFIELD
N. ALFORD	Ms P. FIRTH	I. MAYER
Mrs P. ALFORD	P. GAFFAN	J. MILLAR
W. AUSTIN	S. GANTLETT	J. MORTEMORE
B. BLAND	F. GATES	E. MYERS
W. BOOTH	B. GEE	P. MCEWAN
D. BRADSHAW	P. GOODEN	R. MCDAVITT
A. BROWN (Alastair)	Ms J. GOODEN	Ms D. NICHOLAS
P. BEWICK	G. GAME	P. OLDFIELD
D. BRYANT	P. GEARY	D. ODELL
Ms D BULLEY	P. GRANT	L. PARR
C. BAINES	D. HAMPS	G. PEART
B. BARNACLE	Ms J. HAMPS	M. POWELL
M. BENDIX	J. HAMPSHIRE	M. POULTON
K. BENTLEY	K. HARRISON	V. PARK
R. BOWEN	C. HOLTBY	N. PARTNER
T. BROOM	D. HOWARTH	M. POWLES
A. BROWN (Alan)	C. HUDSON	Ms S. POWLES
Ms V. BROWN	K. HARDWICK	S. PERRY
J. BELSEY	P. HEATH	D. POWELL
Dr R. BANHAM	D. HALL	R. ROBINSON
S. BEALE	D. HANDS	R. ROWE
R. CHIDWICK	V. HANLON	Ms B. RATCLIFFE
S. CHIDWICK	M. HAYES	P. RILEY
T. CORCORAN	G. HERRIEVEN	M. RIMMER
D. COTTRIDGE	Ms M. HICKS	B. RUMSEY
M. CROSS.	P. HILL	Ms D. RIDGLEY
Ms B. CALLIGHAN	A. ILLINGWORTH	L. ROKER
Ms L. CASSELS	Ms C. INSKIP	M. ROONEY
D. CHAMBERS	R. IVY	R. SAUNDERS
Ms J. CLIFT	M. JENNINGS	M. SEAGO
A. COLLEDGE	J. JOHNSON	A. SHERWIN
L. CUMMING	Dr. D. KELSEY	R. SIMPSON
N. COBLEY	C. KIGHTLEY	V. SOUTHAM
Ms D COBLEY	Ms. B. KIGHTLEY	Ms E. STANFORD
P. CASTLE	A. JENKINS	D. SEVERN
J. COPPOCK	T. JENNER	K. SHARPE
J. COLEMAN	R. JOHNS	Dr R. SELF
Ms A. DALTON	Ms S. JOHNS	J. SELVEY
Ms R. DAMON	I. JOHNSON	G. SIMMONDS
T. DAVIES	D. KEYS	Ms S. SIMMONDS
D. DORLING	S. KEEN	A. SMITH
G. DUNMORE	A. LAST	D. SMITH
J. DONOVAN	P. LATHBURY	J. SPENCER
D. DIXON	P. LEE	J. STANMERS
N. DRIVER	J. LIGGINS	D. SUTTON
M. ELLIOTT	T. LUBBOCK	P. SEWELL
H. ELLIS	R. LUDFORD	D. SEWELL
Ms M. ELLIS	F. LEAVER	Dr M. TAYLOR
Ms J. EDWARDS	A. LOWE	G. TYE
M. ECCLESHALL	G. LLOYD	R. TIDMAN
G. ETHERINGTON	B. LOWE	R. TUCK
R. EVE	Ms A. LOWE	D. TAYLOR



## CLEY BIRD CLUB MEMBERS - July 1st, 1988 (contd)

A. TATE	K. WARMINGTON	M. WICKINS
Ms L. TATE	R. WHITE	N. WHILLOCK
D. UNDERHILL	M. WILLIAMS	D. WHEATLEY
S. VOTIER	P. WOSTENHOLME	Ms J. WYATT
A. VITTERY	C. WILBOURN	C. WATERS
J. WILLIAMS		

## HONORARY MEMBER

BERNARD BISHOP. Warden of Cley Bird Reserve.

A BIRDING TRIP TO TEXAS.

On the 4th of April 1988, Bryan Bosley, Steve Beal, Paul Lee, Roy Robinson and myself (MickFischer) headed south from Norfolk (with the blessing of the Cley Bird Club) towards Gatwick Airport to catch Continental Airlines flight direct to Houston, Texas.

This was the culmination of two years planning that would see us spending 19 days birding in the Lone Star State.

During the flight most of the time was spent thumbing through field guides, site maps and final route adjustments.

On arrival at Houston we immediately got down to the main job of ticking off American species - these coming in the form of American Crow and Killdeer, both being seen from the immigration building, whilst moving through customs, without too much hassle, plus several unsuccessful attempts to I.D high flying large raptors. We met the Alamo courtesey coach which took us out to the hire car parking lot ticking Mockingbird on the way.

After sorting out minor problems at the car hire and notching up Loggerhead Shrike we headed out of the parking lot and downtown to the Memorial Park where we arrived about an hour before dark. After running around like headless chickens we finally settled down seeing Blue Jays, Carolina Chickadee's, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Yellow-rumped Warbler and a flock of 38 Cedar Waxwings. Night was spent in a comfortable motel in Sealy.

After a pre-dawn breakfast of 'burgers, pancakes and coffee we headed out for our pre-arranged meeting with the ranger at the Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge. While waiting we tracked down a strange songster in the dark which turned out to be a Cardinal, had we known how many we would see on the trip we would have saved our energy - although Roy showed some good early form by missing it!

Finally the Ranger arrived and after giving us instructions on how to behave we drove off in convoy to one of the booming grounds. After waiting a few minutes with no chickens on view we were easily distracted by Northern Harrier, Bobwhite and an array of Meadowlarks and Sparrows, having to be constantly reminded by the Ranger that too much noise would frighten the chickens. At last he managed to find a male creeping into view, and we finally saw three males and a female before losing our concentration and looking for other things. At this he soon hustled us into the car and back to the refuge H.Q. to show us a video!! This was purgatory how could we be expected to watch watch a video with birds like American Robin hopping around outside the window.

At last we were let off the leash and allowed to bird the marshes on the edge of the refuge till it opened at 9.00am. While driving down we spotted our first Roadrunners on the railroad track, several Upland Sandpipers and the ubiquitous Red-winged Blackbirds, also Common and Great-tailed Grackles.

On the marsh itself we were treated to an array of waterbirds which included Pied-billed Grebes, Little Blue Herons, Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, White-faced Ibis, Roseate Spoonbills and American Coots all in the first scan, serching more carefully we found Blue-winged Teals, American Wigeon, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Least, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers while surrounding fields held American Golden Plovers and a group of Greater Whitefronted Geese.



Returning to the refuge we passed our first Scissor-tailed Flycatchers that gave some delightful views as we drove underneath, driving the refuge circuit we identified Vesper, Lincoln, Savannah, Field, Chipping, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows and a single Sprague's Pipit.

Overhead an impressive assortment of raptors appeared during the day including Turkey and Black Vultures, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Swainson's and White-tailed Hawks, Caracara's and American Kestrel.

Finally time ran out and we have to leave the refuge behind, and drive south. We noted several Swainson's and a large flock of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks on the way. Reaching Palacio we had our first view of the Gulf of Mexico plus Royal, Caspian and Forsters Terns, Black Skimmers and American White Pelicans - scanning over some inland pools we found some Tri-coloured Herons and American Bitterns before arriving at Tivoli where we spent a comfortable night in a clean cheap motel.

After another pre-dawn breakfast where we met a couple of other birders ( Hannah and Arty who were to become good friends on the trip) who told us of a Crimson-collared Grosbeak at Aransas - the next three hours were spent intensively searching for the grozzer and some warblers, although the grozzer failed to show up we did find a good selection which included White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireo's, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Northern Parula's, Yellow-rumped, Black and White, Yellow-throated, Black-throated Green and Hooded Warblers, while a Swainson's Warbler was seen by Paul Lee. It was here we had our first encounters with Hummingbirds, managing to identify Black-chinned after several attempts. With time running away we made a quick tour of the refuge.

Climbing the viewing tower which gave a magnificent view but no cranes, we did however see Marbled Godwits, American Avocets and Belted Kingfishers - time was now really getting away and we had to dash off to catch the M.V."Whooping Crane" making it with minutes to spare.

To say we were taken aback by this bright pink boat which was about to take us out to look for one of the rarest birds in the world was an understatement - but we duly paid our \$20 and climbed aboard.

On leaving dock the local Laughing Gulls quickly fell in behind to follow the wash occasionally joined by Ring-billed and Bonaparte's. Scanning through we also found Common and Sandwich Terns and a Franklin's Gull.

As we approached the refuge we saw our first large white dots Whooping Cranes, these were the tick views, now we were moving in for the pretty views which were indeed memorable as the boat almost beach itself next to the family party.

Arriving back we had to attend the obligatory photo call before ticking off Brown Pelican.

Driving around Rockport we met our first Orchard Orioles while some roadside pools held Dowitchers and both species of Yellowlegs.

Continuing south we enjoyed the last light of the day on the causeway just north of Corpus Christi watching an enormous flock of Black Skimmers and a Reddish Egret and a number of American Oystercatchers, before bedding down for the night.

To be continued. Mick Fiszer.

## NORFOLK BIRD NEWS.

### APRIL.

The start of the spring, after a long and usually boring winter, April is looked forward to with some anticipation the thought of the summer migrants winging their way towards Norfolk is enough to cheer most local birders. A couple of B.B. rarities and a sub-species new to the county list, a fairly good start to the spring in any birders book.

The month was seen in by the small flock of five Shorelarks at Thornham Point near Titchwell, at least three of these birds were still present at the end of the month.

The month was dominated by sightings of Cranes, sadly no longer a B.B. rarity, the first sightings were of two birds flying south-west over Titchwell on the 2nd. Another Crane arrived at Holkham Fresh Marshes, the start of a good spring



for this newly flooded area, this bird was joined by a second bird on the 27th and both were then present to at least the 29th. On the 25th a group of three birds were seen high over Mundford in the Brecks, and the small group of birds in the Broads were seen off and on throughout the month.

In the afternoon of the 1st a White Stork was seen over Stiffkey and a little later Blakeney, then in the evening over Snettisham and Holme. The bird was reported over Titchwell the following morning, and later between 11.15 and 11.30 it was seen in flight over Snettisham.

Also on the 2nd there were Firecrests present at both Holme and Holkham, and there was another at in the bushes behind the dunes at Waxham on the 7th.

There were still three late Bean Geese amongst the Grelags at Holkham Fresh Marshes, on the 2nd.

On the 8th there was a Hoopoe in the garden of Chris Kieghtly's house in Northrepps, but unfortunately he like every one else who raced of to see it, were "gripped off" by Barbara, Chris's wife as the bird had flown. Chris was out leading his birdwatching holidays at the time, the bird was later seen briefly some miles away near Cromer. Another Hoopoe appeared along the sea defences bank to the east of Burnham Overy Staithe, this bird at first was rather flighty but it settled down and was seen well up to the 17th. On the 21st, another Hoopoe appeared at Holme, but details are a little sketchy on this bird, maybe "keep it in the dark" Peter Clarke will enlighten us?

A first winter Iceland Gull flew west past Sheringham on the 8th, but unfortunately it was not seen later off Cley, an uncommon bird in Norfolk.

On the 14th, an Osprey was seen fishing in the lake at Felbrigg, no wonder the Mandarins are a little skittery just of late? On the 17th, there Ospreys seen at both Wolferton and Holkham, and yet another fishing at Ranworth Broad on the 29th.

On the 16th, there was an influx of Ring Ouzels into North Norfolk, and birds were noted all along the coast with a total of 40 or more birds, with at least 20 at Holme.

A male White-spotted Bluethroat was possibly a first for the county, maybe not but everyone needed it, was seen at Waxham on the 17th. A Great-grey Shrike was seen the same day a little further down the coast, at Horsey. And a rather elusive Wryneck was seen near the Fire Sign, at the Wells end of Holkham Meals, on the same date.

A Montagu's Harrier was reported from the RSPB reserve at Strumpshaw, near Norwich on the 21st.

An early Red-necked Phalarope was on the newly flooded fields at Holkham Fresh Marshes on the 26th, the bird was present to the end of the month, but the distance you had to view the bird from spoilt any enjoyment birders may have had from seeing this species, what sex was it?

On the 28th, a drake Green-winged Teal was found on the Rush Hills Scrape at Hickling, this subspecies is becoming quite common in Norfolk of late.

## MAY.

This is usually the month it all happens and May in Norfolk wasn't bad at all this year, with five B.B. rarities during the month, three of which were in the Cley 10km square. There was also a host of other goodies to keep us going, but it wasn't really ever quiet during the month, the birds seen were as follows:

On the 1st a male Kentish Plover was seen at Breydon Water near Gt Yarmouth in the morning, it was at Salthouse and Cley in the afternoon, but it got chased about by the Ringed Plovers and end up on the North Scrape where it stayed untill dusk? There was another male Kentish Plover at the RSPB reserve at Titchwell, on the 10th, possibly the same bird. Yet another, on the 24th, was at the new RSPB reserve at Berney Arms which is near Gt Yarmouth.

The Red-necked Phalarope was still present on the flooded fields at Holkham Fresh Marshes, and it stayed to at least the 2nd.

Also at Berney Arms on the 2nd, were two Temminck's Stints, the first of the spring.



A Tawny Pipit was found by Graham Etherington near the Beach car park at Weybourne, but unfortunately he was the only observer, soon after finding the bird it flew off into that well known private nature reserve of "Stalag" Weybourne, never to be seen again?

A female Dotterel was seen in a Bean field inland of the coast road, between Docking and Brancaster on the 7th.

A Crane was seen flying over Terrington St Clement near Kings Lynn, on the 8th.

A female Bluethroat at Holme on the 14th, stayed through to the the 16th at least. Another Bluethroat was at Winterton on the 15th, and the following day there was one at Gun Hill in Holkham Dunes. On the 18th there was another bird at Holme, not a very good spring for this species.

On the 15th there were three Red-backed Shrikes at Winterton, and a female at Holme on the 18th. The male breeding bird was back at Santon Downham at the end of the month, and it was joined by a female in early June, latest news is they now have young.

An Osprey flew south over Weyford Bridge, on the 16th.

On the 20th, there was a first summer Mediterranean Gull on Breydon Water near Gt Yarmouth.

A drake American Wigeon was on the RSPB reserve at Berney Arms near Gt Yarmouth, on the 23rd and 24th.

A female Red-footed Falcon appeared at Hickling NNT reserve in the evening of the 26th, and was present to the end of the month, also seen at Hickling during the last few days of the month were Hobby, Rough-legged Buzzard and Osprey.

## JUNE.

This is the month which usually turns up the odd rare wader or two and this year was no exception, a nice Terek Sandpiper at Holkham was the star bird of the month.

The female Red-footed Falcon was still present at the NNT reserve at Hickling from the beginning of the month, to the 19th, when it was seen nearby. At Titchwell which is having a rather lean time of late, they had three Little Gulls, a Wood Sandpiper and a Little Ringed Plover.

On the 14th, a Hobby was seen over Holkham Hall and the lake in the late afternoon.

A Terek Sandpiper was found on the flooded fields on Holkham Fresh Marshes on the 18th, the bird was found by one of the Assistant Wardens in the early morning and after sorting out a car park for the visiting birders, they let the news out on Birdline. We all saw the bird late in the evening, from quite a distance, but any view is better than none at all. On the same day two Caspian Terns were present at Hickling, but unfortunately both these and the Terek had gone the following day.

A summer plumage drake Surf Scoter was found late in the afternoon on the sea off The Firs at Holme, in their haste to see the bird most local birders raced off in their own cars, leaving behind the Editor of this newsletter who was in Dauke's Hide on the reserve, looking for rarities for them! The bird was present up to the 24th, and I saw the bird in the evening of the 20th. ( It was the 19th of course when the scoter was found, a slip of the keys!)

On the 26th, a report of a Pratincole species which was seen flying over Holkham Meals pine woods in the early morning, wasn't sadly seen again.

The last reported decent bird in the county was an Osprey, which was seen on the 25th at Southery, which is on the A10 to the south of Kings Lynn.



CLEY BIRD NEWS.

J.T. Corcoran.

Well that's another spring over, according to the birders calendar. On the whole a bit like the curate's egg; some excellent passerines in the square but the waders were a bit disappointing.

Another pleasing feature is in the increase in numbers, to my mind at least in some of our migrant breeding species, eg; Grasshopper Warbler, Cuckoo, Sand Martin and both Common and Lesser Whitethroats.

Whilst on the subject of migrants, I read somewhere how Sedge Warblers can double their body-weight before migration, storing large amounts of fat, even under their eye-lids and then lose half of their starting out weight in non-stop flight over Sahara and the Mediterranean, so I think Eddie must be related to a Sedge Warbler as he performed a similar feat on his spring migration this year. Welcome back E.T.M.

APRIL.

April was generally mild and dry, with cool easterly winds predominating. This combined with many heavily overcast nights, produced early dates for quite a few species, some very early, such as the Garden Warbler at Walsey Hill on April the 4th (this was seen by a number of reputable local birders), compared with May the 6th in 1986, and May the 11th in 1987. Though these two dates are later than the true arrival dates in most years. Although pretty early, the April 4th bird was not the earliest, there being a record of one at Cley on the 29th of March, 1981 (For other comparative dates, please see the chart).

Also noticeable this month was the larger than average numbers of Black Redstart and Ring Ouzels, both at Cley and the North Norfolk coast in general (23 Ring Ouzels counted at Holme on the 16th of April).

Now

for the nitty-gritty: The month opened with several sightings of that arch harbinger of spring, the Swallow. Other firsts were Yellow Wagtail and Little Ringed Plover. 4 or 5 Sand Martins, a handful of Wheatears and 3 Black Redstarts were also seen, and a Firecrest was at Gramborough Hill at Salthouse? Avocets totalled about 100, with 2 Spotted Redshanks and an albino Dunlin also present. Two Marsh Harriers and a Merlin were seen over the reserve, but the highlight of the day for a couple of lucky observers was a White Stork over Blakeney, later seen at Stiffkey, Settisham and Holme.

On the 2nd, 2 Lapland Buntings and 12 Wheatears were in the Eye Field and, a Short-eared Owl and a female Marsh Harrier were nearby, the latter staying in the area all month. Black Redstarts still numbered three and Chiffchaff were singing everywhere. A Water Rail still haunted the area around the Three Swallows public house, whilst on the marsh 6 Ruff were new. As was a Kingfisher which flashed past the front of Dauke's hide, a scarce species at Cley these days. Even scarcer is Ring-necked Parakeet, one of which was seen at Weybourne, Salthouse and Walsey Hill as it headed west.

On the 3rd, several singing Blackcaps, Willow Warblers and 2 Tree Pipits were on Salthouse Heath, rather early returning migrants. Black Redstarts rose to 8, with 5 along the point and 3 at Weybourne. Also on the Point was a Firecrest, whilst on the reserve Ruff had risen to 20, Little Ringed Plovers to 3 and a White Wagtail was in the Eye Field. Another albino; this time a Black-headed Gull, all white except for slight dirty-grey flecks on the nape and a normal coloured bill.

A very early Garden Warbler was at Walsey on the 4th, a female Merlin at the Hangs and a Purple Sandpiper at Salthouse.

At Salthouse on the 5th were, 2 Knot, a single Snow Bunting and a Hawfinch was seen up on the Heath. Sandwich Terns had reach 20 on the Point, were 4 Eider and 5 Red-breasted Merganser remained and a Coot was sitting on eggs along the Beach Road.

The 6th produced Snow Buntings at both Salthouse and Cley, and Wigeon still numbered c100 on the reserve.

A Common Sandpiper on the marsh on the 7th was possibly the first genuine migrant of the spring, but hard to tell due to the one that wintered in the area.

At least a 100 Snipe were on the North Scrape on the 8th, 3 Little Ringed Plovers were on Simmond's Scrape (1 to 3



all month), and a fine summer plumaged male Lapland Bunting tantalised would-be observers as it played hide-and-peek in long grass around the edge of the South Scrape. Firecrests were seen both at Walsey Hill and Blakeney Point.

Little Stints were new on Arnold's Marsh on the 8th, whilst winter birds were represented by 20 Fieldfares and 5 Redwings at Wiveton and Snow and Lapland Buntings still in the Eye Field.

On the 10th, a rare bird for Cley, a Goshawk was seen to head west over the reserve by Peter Gooden, also present on the reserve were 36 Black-tailed Godwits and 2 Whimbrel. The first House Martin was seen from Walsey Hill.

The first Sedge Warbler was back on the 11th and 2 Green Sandpipers were on the reserve. At least 4 Ring Ouzels were in the area, including one on the point, where the Goshawk was seen again and 2 Short-eared Owls were along the West Bank. Also on the 11th, amongst the list of birds on the board at the Beach Cafe, was a "Bonaparte's Gull", Coastguards at 8am- does any one know anything about this? If so please send us the details.

The 12th was 'Ring Ouzel Day', with birds seen at numerous localities all along the North Norfolk coast including 3 at Weybourne, where a Red Kite flew west and the first Cuckoo of the year was seen.

The 13th was notable only for a Roe Deer at the North Foreland, a sighting almost as rare as Richard (The Hat) Rowe!

The first Little Terns were seen on the 14th (same date as last year), and 5 Common Terns were also the first for the spring, as was a Greenshank on Pat's Pool. An Osprey was seen along the Glaven (seen earlier at Felbrigg). Firecrest at Weybourne and the male Lapland Bunting had moved to the back of the North Scrape.

By the 15th the wader numbers had bucked-up a bit, with a 140 Black-tailed Godwits, 10 Spotted Redshanks, 120 Dulin, a Little Stint and 5 Ruff. Two Lapland Bunting were seen in the Eye Field and a Black Redstart by Manard's Hide, while c50 Sand Martins were over Pat's Pool, and a Crane came in off the sea. Three Shorelarks were still on the Point, the first was seen at Weybourne and a singing Tree Pipit along Marsh lane in Wiveton.

Another Osprey (or the same one?) was seen along the Glaven on the 16th, whilst on the marsh there were 2 Garganey, 2 Marsh Harriers and c150 Black-tailed Godwits, but again the day was most notable for the high numbers of Ring Ouzels, present all along the coast, 23 being counted at Holme and lesser numbers elsewhere.

The first Whinchat was at Walsey Hill on the 17th, the first Whitethroat on the Point and the first Blue-headed Wagtails were amongst a fall of some 100 Yellow Wagtails on the Eye Field. Two Cuckoos, another Redstart and several Ring Ouzels were also seen, and Black-tailed Godwit numbers had climbed to 180.

A fine male Montagu's Harrier hunted by the Cley Sluice on the 18th, and 4 Ring Ouzels were seen nearby. Waders included two Whimbrel, a beautiful summer plumaged Grey Plover and the numbers of Black-tailed Godwits had risen to 194. Wagtails were prominent in the Eye Field where the flock of Yellows had a Grey-headed in addition to the Blue-headed, and 5 White Wagtails consorted with about 20 Pied Wagtails.

The first Nightingales had returned to Muckleburgh Hill on the 19th, and a Purple Heron flew south at Weybourne. Grasshopper Warblers returned with 2 at both the West Bank and along the Skirts. Black-tailed Godwits peaked at 214 and 30 Fieldfares and 2 Ring Ouzels constituted an un-seasonable mixture at Morston.

Turtle Dove was new on the 21st, as was Lesser Whitethroat at Walsey Hill and the first 'Greenland' Wheatear on the Eye Field. Sandwich Terns on the traditional gathering ground at Arnold's Marsh reach 200, but the Black-tailed Godwits had dropped to 179, though a further 100 or so headed west over the reserve and 10 Bar-tailed Godwits were also present. The 2 Lapland Buntings still lurked in the Eye Field.

A Reed Warbler was singing near Dauke's Hide on 22nd and a Wood Warbler was at Walsey Hill. The latter are said to return direct to their breeding areas, which probably explains why we see so few of this species at Cley.

A late



Snow Bunting was at Salthouse on the 23rd, and 2 Garganey nearby on the 24th.

The springs second Garden warbler was at Walsey Hill on the 25th, a more normal return date and 4 Bar-tailed Godwits were on the reserve (rising to c50 by the 30th).

Waders on the 26th included Green Sandpipers and Greenshank. Black-tailed Godwits numbers had fallen to 30, but Spotted Redshank numbers had gone up to 15. The first Black Tern was seen at the Point by a local whitebait fisherman, who throws handfulls of these and sandeels to the Terns (it is not uncommon for one to perch on his head). He said the Black Tern joined the other terns in catching the hand-outs in the air, the first time he has known it to happen in all his years. He said that this probably due to the fact that all the terns were hungry, the sea being unusually cold for the time of year and smaller fish were in short supply!

An Arctic Tern along the New Cut on the 27th was the first of the month, Sandwich Terns reached 350 on Arnold's Marsh and 3 Black Redstarts were along the beach. Twenty Wigeon and a 100 Dunlin still remained and there was an interesting report of a "flava" wagtail showing the characteristics of a 'Sykes' Wagtail at Salthouse.

The first Spoonbill of the year arrived on the 28th in the form of a heavily leg-ironed first year bird and a couple of Whinchat perched along the reserve fence.

Two Grasshopper Warblers were at new sites on the 29th, Bard Hill at Salthouse and near the Windmill in Cley. And in the evening a Spotted Crake was calling intermittently from the main reed-bed opposite Irene Hide, it was also heard on the 30th.

At the end of the month, the reserve held Spoonbill, Spotted Crake, 5 Black Terns, 2 Knot, 50 Black-tailed Godwits, 2 Curlew sandpipers and passerines included 20 Yellow Wagtails and a Whinchat. Nearby the first Avocet chicks (2) had hatch and a pair of Little Ringed Plovers had started to nest. The first Swift was seen at Weybourne, where some people also saw a Subalpine Warbler.

## MAY.

The first half of the month was dominated by high-pressure giving dry weather and winds with an easterly bias, around mid-month winds veered north for a few days, cooling things down somewhat, but soon warmed up again until the end of the month as the wind went round to south-westerly.

An excellent month for passerines and the old adage, "Never leave Cley in May" proved good advice.

On the 1st, birds on the reserve included a male Kentish Plover on the North Scrape (also present on the 2nd) 6 Greenshank, 25 Black-tailed Godwits, 45 Bar-tailed Godwits, Spoonbill and a Marsh Harrier, with a pair of Short-eared Owls displaying enthusiastically over the West Bank (but unfortunately as in other years these birds left soon afterwards without breeding).

Similar species were present on the 2nd with the addition of 2 Little Ringed Plovers (1 or 2 present all month), 9 Spotted Redshank and a single Ruff. Whilst at the Coastguards an Osprey came in off the the sea, and an adult Glaucous Gull was seen. Several Swifts and Turtle Doves zoomed west, and few of each to the east, 8 Ring Ouzels were on Muckleburgh Hill and a Dotterel was at Weybourne.

The 3rd proved to be a 'harrier day' with all three breeding species being seen in the square - the inevitable female Marsh Harrier, an immature male Hen Harrier east over the reserve and a male Montagu's Harrier (also present on the 4th) hunting mainly around Pope's Marsh, but occasionally venturing over the reserve and as far east as Weybourne. Also at Weybourne were a Tawny Pipit and a Wood Warbler. On the marsh 3 Avocet chicks were seen and 55 were sitting.

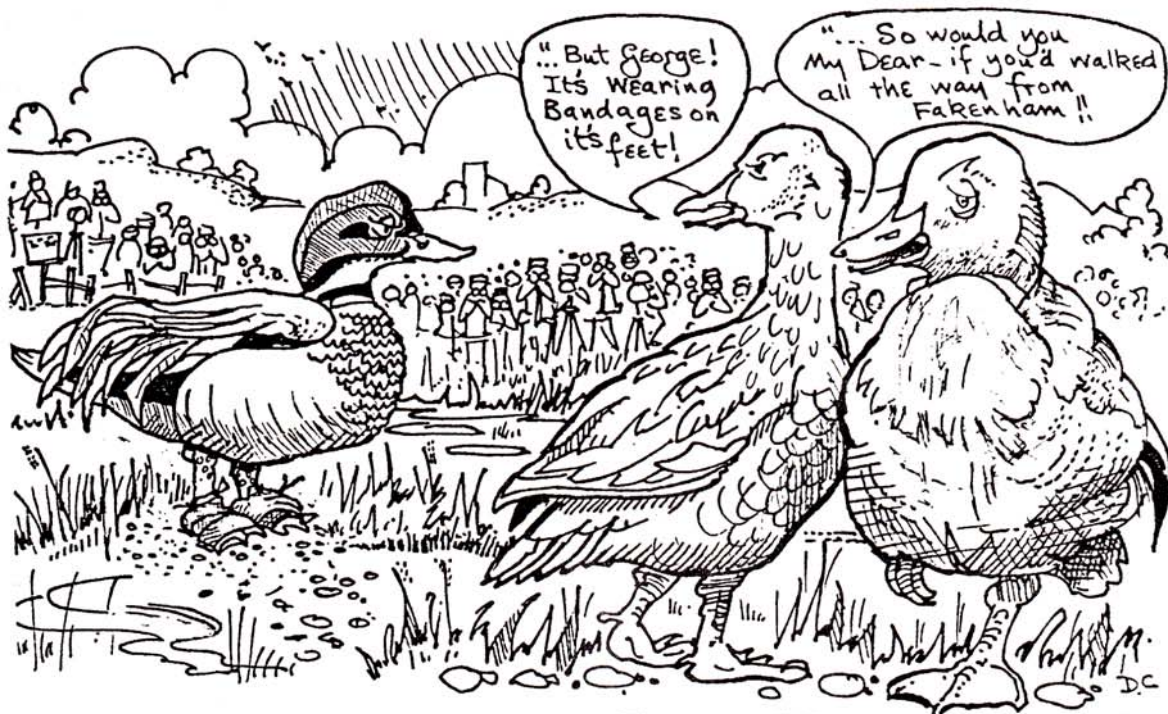
Waders on the 4th were 2 Little Stints, a single Curlew Sandpiper, 3 Ruff, a Grey Plover and 60 Dunlin. An uncommon bird these days, a Hooded Crow, headed west along the beach and Little Gulls were represented by one on Pat's Pool and 2 at Salthouse, all first summer plumage birds.



On the 5th, 2 Cranes headed inland after coming in from the west and spiralling up over the N.N.T.s reserve centre, and the local Swallow roost contained c350 birds. Amongst the waders were Temminck's Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper and 30 Turnstone, the latter were on Arnold's Marsh in a tight pack, running around, chasing each other, calling loudly all the while, obviously feeling the call of the North. Two late Fieldfares were seen at Blakeney.

Crane was bird of the day on the 6th when one was seen heading east over the reserve, then later in the day two birds east.

On the 7th a possible first for the square (if accepted) arrived - a drake Falcated Duck in company with 3 Wigeon - possibly the bird which over-wintered at Thrapston in Northants. It stayed to the 15th, many theories were passed as to where it originated from, the main feeling is that it came from a local Wildfowl collection at Pensthorpe near Fakenham (hence the joke below from Dudley Chambers).



A strong passage of Black Terns also occurred in the country, reflected at Cley by 3 on Pat's Pool, rising to 10 on Simmond's Scrape, with another 9 at Salthouse.

The disappointment of late April fell away on the 8th, when a male Subalpine Warbler was found in the sedge by the Watch House on Blakeney Point, staying until the 11th it gave many observers the chance of an unexpected quick "grip-back". Also on the point were Pied and Spotted Flycatchers, Redstarts, Whinchats, King Uzzel and a couple of Grasshopper Warblers. On the reserve were 3 Black Terns, 2 Temminck's Stints, a Wood Sandpiper and 10 Common Sandpipers. The 8th was also the start of what proved to be a quite exciting 10 days or so, as written up earlier by ETM.

The Point held similar birds on the 9th in perhaps, slightly larger numbers with the addition of both Whitethroats, Garden and Sedge Warblers, 2 Tree Pipits and a Fieldfare. Yet another Crane flew east over the reserve where a Green Sandpiper and 2 Curlew Sandpipers fed along with 2 Little Stints.

Similar birds on the 10th, supplemented by 3 Temminck's Stints, Wood Sandpiper and a summer plumaged Knot.

Blakeney Point was the centre of interest again on the 11th, where the Subalpine Warbler was said to have been singing, as were several birders, relieved that it was still there. Also on the point a mini-fall occurred, consisting mainly of chats and warblers, c20 Lesser Whitethroats and 10 Whinchats being the most numerous species, and a Tawny Pipit was also reported from the point.



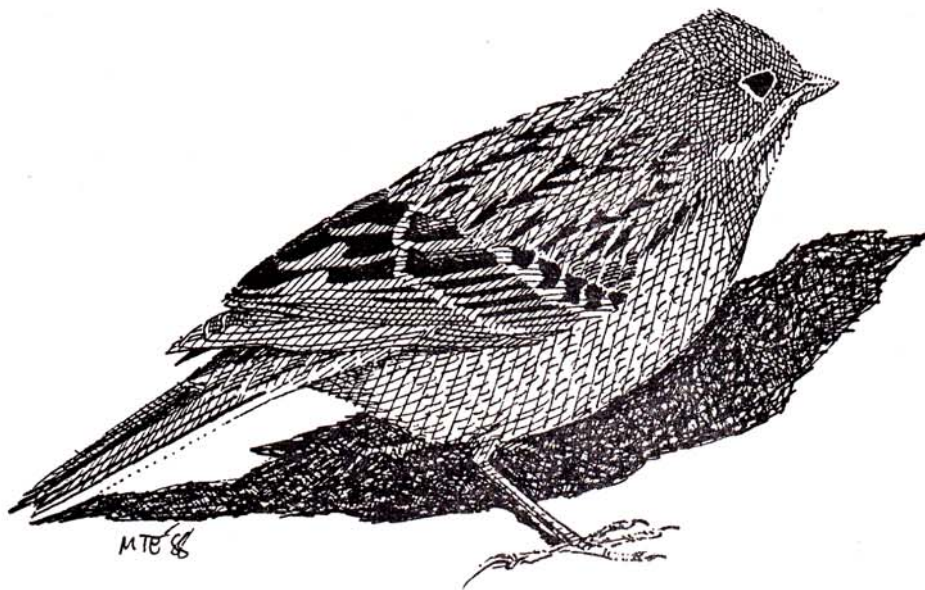
The 12th proved to be yet another "shingle-bashing" day with an Icterine Warbler on the point, when a first summer plumaged Mediterranean Gull was seen in the harbour. Good birds were seen at Cley, with a female Montagu's Harrier coming up off the shingle-bank behind the North scrape in the early morning and flying off east over the reserve. On the marshes there were 5 Black Terns, 3 each of Temminck's and Little Stints, 3 Wood Sandpiper and 2 Curlew Sandpipers.

The point still held the birders attention on the 13th wherein addition to the Icterine Warbler, plenty of passerines were amongst the sueada, this time Whinchats and Wheatears were the most numerous species, the single Fieldfare was still present and a Common Sandpiper probably having just arrived was flushed from the middle of a dense patch of Sueada. The rather high total of 150 Brent Geese still fed in the harbour as did a close-knit pack of summer plumaged Turnstone.

At Cley, the be-ringed immature Spoonbill returned to Pat's Pool, and 4 Black Terns glided above a fairly average selection of waders. Also on the 13th, 2 Woodlarks were seen by Rob Aberdein to fly inland from the top of the Beach Road and disappear over the village.

The 14th began with an early morning dip-of the birding kind-when a Little Egret flew from Pat's Pool, over the West Bank and off westwards. It was seen later at Blakeney and then at Holkham Fresh Marshes (where I was un-dipped!). A Wryneck was found at Salhouse on the roadside next to the duck pens, it flew up into the bushes in the duck pens when disturbed and it was generally difficult to get to see. A Hooded Crow was around the reserve and a party of 4 Spoonbills flew west, but almost inevitably attention soon returned to the Point where a Bonelli's Warbler was holding court at the Hood, a first for the Cley square. A Long-eared Owl lurked in the Lupins, a late Lapland Bunting was in the dunes and a Gull-billed Tern was claimed.

Incredibly another new species for the Cley square was on the Point next day (15th), a Thrush Nightingale (till the 17th) with yet more surprises in store, - a Red-throated Pipit fed within 50 yards of a male Ortolan Bunting near the Laboratory. Grey-headed Wagtail and a summer plumaged male Lapland Bunting added to the list and the Gull-billed Tern was reported again. Small numbers of Flycatchers, Warblers and 3 Tree Pipits all added interest as did a late Fieldfare.



Summer plumaged male Ortolan Bunting on Blakeney Point, 15th of May, by Martin Elliot.



On the 16th, Point-lovers who frolicked over the shingle yet again were rewarded with, in addition to yesterdays birds, Quail in the sueada on Yankee Ridge, four Black Terns in the Harbour and a double dose of Red-throated Pipit, there being 2 present near the Laboratory. Three Bluethroats added to the list, and another was at Walsey Hill at dusk. The first "churring" Nightjar was heard on Salthouse Heath.

Birders again gambolled off to the Point on the 17th (not again!), where incredibly, there was what was said to be by people who saw all three birds, yet another Red-throated Pipit - the third in as many days. Up to the end of 1986, 8 out of 10 Norfolk records of this species occurred between the Kelling Quag and the Point, so with one on the Point and another claimed at the Quag in 1987 the Cley square certainly appears to be the place for this species. In addition the Thrush Nightingale, Lapland Bunting and a Fieldfare still remained as did 2 of the 3 Bluethroats.



The 3rd Red-throated Pipit on Blakeney Point, 18th May 1988, by Martin Elliot.

Whilst back at Cley, yet another Osprey passed west over the reserve, where three Temminck's Stints and a Wood Sandpiper were the only birds of note.

On the 18th a Blue-throat was near Irene Hide on the reserve, possibly the one seen briefly at Walsey on the 16th. A Red-throated pipit was still on the Point, and at least 7 Nightingales were in song up on Salthouse Heath. On the reserve waders in addition to yesterdays, included 2 Little Stints, a Knot and 4 late Golden Plover.

Spoonbill and a Marsh Harrier were the only birds of note during the 19th and the 20th.

On the 21st a Roseate Tern was reported from the North Scrape, and a first year male Eider was on the sea off the Coastguards.

Amongst the birds on the marsh on the 22nd, were 4 drake Garganey, 3 Black Terns, a Little Gull, 5 Greenshank and a Curlew Sandpiper. Whilst at Weybourne there was a Green Sandpiper, a late second year Glaucous Gull and a female Goldeneye.

Notable birds on the 23rd at Cley were 19 Black terns, with another 8 passing east and two Wood Sandpipers.

The 25th produced 2 Temminck's Stints on the marsh (also on the 26th) and a singing Wood Warbler in Taylors Wood on Salthouse Heath.

The commuting Spoonbills returned on the 26th, 2 birds arriving first and 'Ringo' joining them later. Three Golden Plovers hurried west and a late non-breeding plumaged Red-throated Divers was offshore. In the evening (also on the 27th) a Stone Curlew was heard calling near Salthouse Heath.

The sea proved worth a look on the 27th, when 5 Common Scoter, Eider, Gannets, a Manx Shearwater and 3 Brent Geese were seen offshore. Five Sanderlings



were late and a Dotterel was on the Point, remaining to the 28th.

The 29th was a day for 'large' birds with an Osprey over Blakeney Pit, 2 Spoonbills and a Crane at Cley (the latter was later at Holme). Barn Owls were very noticeable around the village at this time, often seen along the Skirts or the Glaven fresh marshes, but unfortunately the birds seen at both sites are just the one pair the only pair remaining in Cley parish. Their nest site is due to be demolished shortly, hard on the heels of another pair being evicted by Tawny Owls and another nest site in a tree being blown down in the big gales last year. Perhaps the Cley Bird Club should think seriously about constructing some nest boxes, if any one has a Tea-chest they don't want please bring it to Cley with them on their next visit and leave it with JTC.

A Hobby was seen at Salt-house on the 30th, and a Short-eared Owl was by the West Bank (also on the 31st), and the 3 itinerant Spoonbills returned yet again.

The month closed with 4 Garganey on the reserve, and an Eider offshore.

## JUNE.

Basically a warm, wet and humid month. Starting off with rain and westerly winds in the first few days, then a week or so of dry, warm weather, giving way to high humidity and thunderstorms, then a more settled two weeks with high temperatures, but often overcast and humid and the month ended with a few days of heavy showers.

June, so often a month of quality rather than quantity, producing in the past such species as Black Stork, American Wigeon, Spotted, Pectoral and Broad-billed Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalarope, Roller, Marsh Warbler and Rock Sparrow.

This year it proved to be fairly average but brightened up somewhat when a species new for the square was found on the reserve - a Great Reed Warbler. Other bright spots were Tawny Pipit and Icterine Warbler on the Point, the latter a nice bright individual not like the mid-May bird, also on the Point.

A nice bird to start the month was a Hobby at Weybourne, a Bittern was giving good views close to Dauke's Hide, where 3 Spoonbills still provided excellent examples of 'still-life'. Little Ringed Plovers hatched out three young in the area, and the Wood warbler still sang in Taylors Wood on Salthouse Heath.

No change untill the 5th, when the sea proved unusually fruitfull for early June, with 5 Manx Shearwaters, 29 Gannets, 57 Common Scoter and 150 Auks spp were seen of the Coast-guards.

On the 6th, a tightly pack flock of Knot passed east, these were the only birds of note recorded on this date.

Early morning phone calls sent the locals scurrying off to Irene Hide, with news of a Great reed warbler there, found by Paul Lee singing in the reed-bed opposite the hide. This bird proved to be a thoroughly unsociable creature, many people spending several hours (even days!) at the site without so much as a glimpse, although it did at least have the grace to stay until the 23rd, giving most birders several bites at the 'Cherry'.

Also on the 8th, an Icterine Warbler was found on the Point, the second of the spring (there has only been two previous spring records in 1980 and 1984), staying until the 11th.

A Hobby was seen on the 10th and the 11th, when the vanguard of the annual westerly passage of Lapwings began to pass through - shades of autumn already!

A short staying Tawny Pipit was seen on the Point on the 12th, Spoonbill and Curlew Sandpiper on the reserve on 14th and 15th, respectively. The Spoonbills once again rising to 3 on the 16th when 3 Little Ringed Plover and half-a-dozen Spotted redshanks were also present.

A Red Kite brightened the day for me on the 19th, hanging on the wind along the edge of Bayfield Wood, close to the road, before gaining height and moving off eastwards. In the evening a Hobby was seen again zooming over the reserve, where there was also a first summer Little gull, 2 red Knot, 2 Green sandpipers and a Greenshank.

By the 21st wader numbers had begun to



creep-up and 11 Spotted redshank, 3 Green sandpipers and a single Curlew sandpiper were on the scrapes.

There was a brief flutter of excitement on the 22nd with reports of an odd Swift over the marsh, showing a white rump and dappled throat, but it turned out to be an albinistic Common Swift. A count of adult Avocets totalled 152, this was much lower at the months end.

The 23rd proved to be the last day of the Great Reed Warbler, seen appropriately enough by the finder -Paul Lee.

Wader numbers continued to creep up and by the 25th, 13 Spotted Redshank, 10 Curlew Sandpipers and three each of Green Sandpipers and Little Pinged Plover were present on the reserve, with the addition of 4 Ruff and 15 Black-tailed Godwits on the 26th.

J.T.Corcoran.