

Newsletter No 112

Winter 2018

Keeping birders nationwide in touch with Cley since 1986



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON MEMBERSHIP for 2018 We welcome new members and have two levels of subscription - £4 to view the newsletter on-line or £6 to receive the 28 page A4 paper newsletter three times a year.. Please contact Annie, as above.

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Acknowledgments

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Bird Photographs kindly supplied by David Bratt and Richard Porter and to World-Wide Fund for Nature for the photo of a **Snow Leopard**

Cover - Martin Woodcock's painting of a Red-flanked Bluetail which he saw at Wells.

Please note - Every effort is made to check information for accuracy, but views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CBC Committee.

Editorial

2019 kicks off with the novelty of the Club's first outdoor birding event in its history. This is the Big Bird Day to be held on 12th January. 'Year listers' and 'Bird Racers' should have no problem in donning winter wear for a day out counting and recording the birds in the Cley Square. Hopefully the full details on the next page will convince all members who have survived the festive season that there is a fitness and fun dividend in exploring the Cley Square competitively or simply on their own. Either way, all are invited to meet at the Visitor Centre at Cley at 4.00 to share records, refreshment and cake!

Following on from the main thrust of my editorial in the last Newsletter I have come across another individual who bears witness to the health benefits of birding. Joe Harkness, who has spoken recently at an event NWT Cley, is working on a book about his experiences. Look out for this book in the new year and his continuing connection with Cley.

RSPB Scotland has come up with a calendar of seasonal activities using local knowledge and understanding of connecting people with nature. It *'attempts to provide a greater variety of ways to realise the health benefits that nature can provide regardless of health condition, confidence or if you are a sociable or more solitary person. A leaflet will be handed out at each doctor's discretion.'*

The benefits of regular physical activity are well documented, reducing the risk of heart disease and strokes, diabetes, cancers, depression, anxiety and sleep problems. Being outdoors and enjoying wildlife surely have a positive impact on mental wellbeing as well; apparently there is now a body of evidence that people with a stronger connection to nature experience more life satisfaction and vitality.

The long-term future of conservation activism will rely on a steady stream of new birders and naturalists. There seems a very real danger that local and world-wide population pressures, exploitation of finite natural resources and the need for fresh water will drown out calls for better protection of wildlife and habitats. It goes without saying that ecosystems become very fragile when elements of food chains are depleted or disappear.

Although the road to environmental repair seems an uphill struggle, there are still individual and groups with vision and sheer determination to have a go at improving our beleaguered environment. The review by Andy Clarke of the inspiring book 'Wilding' by Isabella Tree provides a glimpse of hope in what many feel is a dark period in our history. Isabella will be at NWT Cley to speak at the evening talk and supper event on 28th February (*booking is on 01263 740008*)

Always on the lookout for new material, I was very pleased to receive the article '*Stranger in a Fair Land*' from Marcus Webster, a new member from the USA. There is a pleasing and unexpected twist in what prompted him to join the Cley Bird Club!

We hope you like the innovation of a centre page photo spread. We look forward to receiving more pictures from members.

Wishing you a good Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Tom

CLEY BIRD CLUB BIG BIRD DAY - SATURDAY 12TH JANUARY 2019**PURPOSE**

- To discover how many species are wintering in the Cley 10 km Square in January.
- To provide an opportunity for both Cley Bird Club members and non-members to have an enjoyable day's birding, either on their own or with friends and/or to take part in the first Cley Square Big Bird Race

THE CLEY SQUARE

- The CBC square lies between grid TG600 in the west (but including the tip of Blakeney Point) and TG610 in the east and between TG340 in the south and the sea in the north, although obviously, any birds seen out at sea are also countable. **The map of the Cley Square is also to be found towards the back of this Newsletter**

RULES FOR BIG BIRD RACE

- Teams can consist of three or four people who must travel together throughout the day. Teams cannot split up to cover different areas of the square.
- All birds seen or heard must be recorded on the Big Bird Race checklist that will be available to download from the CBC website.
- Birds will only count if seen or heard by at least two members of the team. Species only seen or heard by one person should still be recorded to enable us to see how many species are in the square on the day.
- All birds recorded must be within the area of the Cley Square as shown indicated on the map.
- Teams must stay on public rights of way and if you are not an NWT member please buy a permit from the visitor centre before visiting any of the hides.
- The welfare of the bird must come first so tape luring is not permitted.
- Teams can start birding at any time of the day and starting pre-dawn for nocturnal species is perfectly acceptable. Teams must submit their completed checklists at the visitor centre by 4.15 pm.
- **Finally if you find a rare bird please put the news out so that everyone participating in the day can enjoy it. Any suppressed rarities will be excluded from a team's final total.**

MISCELLANEOUS

- **A room will be available at the NWT from 4-6 pm for free refreshments and to collate the results of the bird race.** Anyone finishing earlier can visit the NWT visitor centre up to 4 pm. Café is open until 3.30pm
- Anyone not already out 'in the field' is invited to **come to the Cley Centre at 9.00am** to meet others for some social birding or to make up a Bird Race Team.
- Anyone birding in the Cley Square on the day but not taking part in the race itself is still very welcome to use the downloadable checklist to record the birds they see on the day. We are very keen to receive as many records as possible on the day to get a true picture of what is present in the square.
- Please try to keep a record of any mammals you see during the day as well.
- **In the event of extreme weather the event may need to be re-scheduled. Please check the CBC website www.cleybirdclub.org.uk the day before for the latest information.**

Cley Square Bird News**July to October 2018**

As in the whole country July and August were mainly hot and sunny but we did have more cloud and wind on the coast keeping it feeling very pleasant. In early September the NW wind got sea-watchers out before the SW rain. Strong NW October winds and squally showers varied throughout the month with some calm sunny days and some gales, but it remained unseasonably warm throughout.

A total of 226 different species were recorded in the Cley Square during this period (compared to 212 last year) 22 are subject to confirmation by either Norfolk or national rarity committees. **Stejneger's Stonechat**, and one new sub-species if accepted, **Todd's Canada Goose**, will be firsts for the Square.

Cley Square highlights. The most interesting birds seen during the July to October period

A small **Canada Goose** seen at Cley by Mark Golley when roosting with Pink-feet on Pat's Pool on 20th October, was identified as one of the North American forms, **Todd's Canada Goose (*interior*) or Lesser Canada Goose (*parvipes*)**. Vagrants of these forms possibly migrate to Greenland or Iceland and end up in Pink-foot flocks. It was seen until the 23rd. If accepted it will be the first record of either sub-species for the Square.

On 10th August an unringed adult **White Stork** came in from the W. over Cley watched by Trevor Davies and Mark Golley. It drifted east before going west, at 11:00. Later reported on Whitwell Scrape before circling NE, and the next day over Blakeney and Cley and heading W. over Walsey Hills by Nigel Rogers at c.13:05.

Eddie Myers saw a **Glossy Ibis** flying W over Cley on 14th July and Nigel Rogers and Graham Fellows saw another flying W well offshore on 18th September.

A juv **Cattle Egret** flew W over Cley towards Blakeney Freshes at 09:40 on 27th August.

Great White Egrets are getting quite common now. **They are off the rarities list.** 1 over the Blakeney Freshes 09:40 on 20th July, 3 together by Iron Rd and over Cley on 17th August, 2 flew east far offshore on 18th September, 2 over Salthouse on 13th October and finally 1 flew along Meadow Lane from Kelling Quags and landed in a drainage ditch on 31st October.

Dave Davies saw an adult male **Montagu's Harrier** at Cley on 6th October.

At 07:45 on 29th October, Mark Golley saw a young **White-tailed Eagle** heading rapidly inland, moving SSW, viewed from the east end of Walsey Hills. Initially the bird had been seen at Weybourne and was noted heading west out to sea but it detoured back inland, across Muckleburgh Hill before reaching 'the Square'.

Steve Gantlett saw a **Rough-legged Buzzard** fly west from Salthouse at 15:35 on 19th October. It was subsequently seen north of Walsey Hills and on Blakeney Point.

European Black-tailed Godwit - 1-4 individuals of this sub-species of Black-tailed Godwit were seen at Cley most days between 1st July and 25th August in with the Icelandic birds. Several were colour-ringed. Graham Fellows found an adult **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** on rough sward by Simmonds Scrape on 3rd August. It was present from 14:50-16:20 then flushed by a **Sparrowhawk**.

An adult female **Red-necked Phalarope** was found by Ron Scott on Pat's Pool on 1st August.

Caspian Gulls regularly come in to the evening roost with other gulls on the central scrapes at Cley and were reported most days from mid-July to the end of October. The highest count was 6 on 23rd August.

A **Roseate Tern** was found by Nigel Rogers on Arnold's Marsh on 6th July and singles were seen later that month on Blakeney Point on 13th, 16th and 18th.

Andy Stoddart found a **Siberian Chiffchaff** in suaeda on Yankee Ridge on the Point on 16th October.

A **Greenish Warbler** was in the Plantation on Blakeney Point on 5th September and stayed until the 10th.

Also on Blakeney Point, Dave Andrews, Harry Ewing & Simon Mitchell found a **Blyth's Reed-Warbler** in the Plantation on 7th October which was still there on the 8th.

There were 2 or 3 **Barred Warblers** seen in October. 1 at Walsey Hills from 710th, 1 in the Plantation on the Point from 711th with either the same or another there on the 19th.

Andy Stoddart found an **Eastern Lesser Whitethroat** (probably sub-species *blythi*.) in the Plantation on 7th October.

A **Red-spotted Bluethroat** was also found by Andy Stoddart at Long Hills on the Point on 19th October. Steve Gantlett found an 'Eastern' Stonechat on Meadow Lane, Salthouse on 19th October. He was unsure of the form but thought it maybe a **Stejneger's Stonechat**. It remained until 8th November being seen by many birders. A DNA test has now proved it to be a Stejneger's which makes it a new bird for the Square. A **Common Rosefinch** found by Paul Laurie was seen by many others in the Point Lupins on 16th October. Chris Mills found a **Coue's Arctic Redpoll** feeding in suaeda in the Marrams on 29th October which was still present early morning on the 31st. There was also a **Mealy Redpoll** in the same area. A **Little Bunting** was found on Blakeney Point on 16th October.

Sea-watching highlights

The late summer and autumn weather gave lots of good sea-watching and the following highlights.

AUGUST: there was a probable **Cory's Shearwater** on the 20th. 1 or 2 **Black Terns** were reported from the 18th, single **Pomarine Skuas** on 23rd & 28th, and a single **Long-tailed Skua** on the 28th.

SEPTEMBER: There were 4 **Pomarine Skuas** on the 4th (with 1 or 2 on three other days), 2 **Long-tailed Skuas** (with 1 or 2 on five other days) and a **Sooty Shearwater**. A **Great Shearwater** flew E on the 5th when 3 **Long-tailed Ducks** and 5 **Black Terns** were seen. A single **Velvet Scoter**, flying W on the 6th was the only one for the month. Single **Red-necked Grebes** were seen on 10th, 12th & 22nd and a single **Shag** on the 18th. On the 23rd, Kayn Forbes saw a close **Wilson's Storm Petrel** fly W past Cley and there was also a **European Storm Petrel** W past Cley and Blakeney and 3 **Leach's Storm Petrels**. Eddie Myers had a probable **Black-browed Albatross** on the 24th but too distant to confirm. A single **Balearic Shearwater**, seen on the 28th, was the only one for the month and another **Leach's Storm Petrel** and a **Black-throated Diver** were seen that day.

OCTOBER: The month began with a **Leach's Petrel**, 4 **Sooty Shearwaters** and the only **Black Guillemot** of the month on the 1st. There was a **Scaup** in the scoter flock on the 2nd and again on the 3rd when 2 **Black-throated Divers**, 1 **Great Northern Diver** and 1 **Red-necked Grebe** were also seen. On the 4th 3 **Velvet Scoters** were seen with up to 3 on at least 3 more days in the month. A **Leach's Petrel** and a **Grey Phalarope** flew past on the 6th. After a quiet period, a northerly on the 14th gave a **Shag**, a **Pomarine Skua** and a **Puffin** all flying E past Cley. The 15th saw the only **Balearic Shearwater** of the month, another **Grey Phalarope**, single **Pomarine** and **Long-tailed Skuas** and another **Puffin**. A strong NW wind on the 26th started a good run with highlights of 49 **Pomarine Skuas** on the 26th; 38 **Goldeneye**, 1 **Goosander**, 2 **Red-necked** and 1 **Slavonian Grebes** on the 27th; a **King Eider**, **Glaucous Gull** and 13 **Little Auks** on the 28th; single **White-billed Divers** on 28th & 29th and single **Sabine's Gulls** on the 28th & 30th. Then, a **Black-necked Grebe** on the 31st.

Summer visitors

Last dates are always difficult to determine as apart from very late birds we don't know we have seen the last until after they have gone. If you saw any on dates later than these, please let us know.

Garganey: seen on 13 days during the period with 3 together on Simmond's Scrape at Cley on 28th July. The last report of the year was a single over the sea on 25th August.

Spoonbill: recorded on 51 days with a maximum of 10 at Cley on 27th July. The last sighting of the period was of a single 1st winter bird which flew over Cley and Blakeney Harbour on 28th October.

Avocet: as usual these moved away quickly after breeding had completed, with only single figures remaining after 8th September. They were only reported on 3 days in October with a maximum of 3 birds.

Little Ringed Plover: the last was seen on 6th September.

Sandwich Tern: 1 or 2 were still being seen at the end of October.

Little Tern: the last report was of 2 in Blakeney Harbour on 24th August.

Common Tern: most left by late September with a late count of 250 offshore from Cley on the 21st, which was also the highest count for the period.

Arctic Tern: these were being seen late this year with the last report being 1 off Cley on 28th October, last year the latest date was 6th August.

Turtle Dove: there were only 5 sightings during the period with 3 from Salthouse Heath, 1 from Beach Rd, Salthouse and a very late sighting from Kelling village on 3rd October.

Cuckoo: there were 7 sightings during the period. The last being over Cley Marshes on 31st August.

Nightjar: the last report of the year was of 7 on Kelling Heath on 6th July. There must have been later ones!

Swift: the last report was of one over Hilltop, Cley on 7th September (3 weeks earlier than last year).

Hobby: the last confirmed sighting was of one over Salthouse on 30th September.

Sand Martin: the last report was of a single over Kelling WM on 8th September.

Swallow: 200 flew W over Blakeney Point on 6th August and the last were 3 over Salthouse on 25th October.

House Martin: the last report was of 1 over the sea off Cley on 24th September.

Sedge Warbler: last recorded at Cley on 3rd September.

Reed Warbler: the last record was of 1 at Cley on 10th September.

Grasshopper Warbler: the only sightings were singles on Blakeney Point on 7th August and 7th September.

Northern Wheatear: the last sightings were of 12 on Blakeney Point on 16th October.

Yellow Wagtail: the last was reported at Cley on 15th October.

Passage migrants seen during July to October

Osprey: singles seen over Blakeney Point on 17th & 18th August and offshore past Cley on 21st September.

Whimbrel: seen on 58 days with a highest count of 40. The last was a single east past Cley on 9th October.

Curlew Sandpiper: a poor year for this species, they were only reported on 15 days during the period (49 last year) with the last at Cley on 14th October. The highest count was only 2 this year.

Temminck's Stint: the only sighting was of a single bird on the Serpentine at Cley on 20th & 22nd July.

Little Stint: only seen on 12 days throughout the period (48 last year) with the highest count being only 2.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 was on Blakeney Point/Harbour on 13th August, 1 at Cley on 21st & 22nd September with either the same one or another there on 25th & 26th.

Jack Snipe: reported on 12 days between 23rd September and 18th October from Cley, mainly on Snipe's Marsh where there were 4 on 5th October. Elsewhere in October singles were on Blakeney Point on 28th and at Meadow Lane, Salthouse on the 31st.

Common Sandpiper: seen on 45 days, the most being 10 at Cley on 13th August and the last there on 27th October.

Green Sandpiper: a good year at Cley. Seen on 96 days with 16 at Cley in August and the last there on 29th October.

Wood Sandpiper: only seen on 18 days up to 2nd September.

Spotted Redshank: seen on 56 days with a highest count of 4; the last record was 2 at Cley on 22nd October.

Long-eared Owl: Two seen coming in off the sea at Cley by Mark Golley on 27th October, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, the latter landing in a birder's garden on Coast Rd. Another was seen on Blakeney Point by Andy Stoddart on the 28th.

Wryneck: only one report of a single bird briefly by the Coast Rd near Walsey Hills on 4th September.

Great Grey Shrike: one was seen near Halfway House on 10th October.

Yellow-browed Warbler: reported on 6 days between 7th & 16th October with sightings from Blakeney Point, Cley Village where Steve & Sue Gantlett had 2 in their garden on the 11th, Kelling WM and Walsey Hills.

Ring Ouzel: reported on 5 days between 6th & 19th October with 5 on Blakeney Point on the 16th and 3 in a Cley garden on the 19th.

Other thrushes: the only falls of thrushes were reports in October of 350 **Song Thrushes** (250 Blakeney Pt, 100 Cley) on the 11th, 848 **Redwings** (148 Walsey, 700 Blakeney Pt) and 155 **Fieldfares** at Walsey on the 16th and 405 **Fieldfares** (375 Blakeney S of village, 30 Langham) on the 26th. As last year, although we don't have all the figures yet, a large number were reported coming in off the sea in early November.

Spotted Flycatcher singles were seen on 20th August, and 4th & 7th September on Blakeney Point.

Pied Flycatcher: a good year for this species, they were reported on 13 days with a maximum of 6 on Blakeney Point on 3rd September. A more unusual sighting was of 2 in a Blakeney garden on 7th August.

Black Redstart: only 3 or 4 were reported, singles in Cley village on 14th July, Cley beach on 21st July, and Blakeney Point on 16th & 18th October.

Redstart: reported on 6 days from Blakeney Point between 21st August and 19th September with a maximum of 4 there on 3rd September. A single was also at Meadow Lane, Salthouse on 19th October.

Whinchat: reported on 20 days throughout the period with the last on Blakeney Point on 11th October. The highest count was 8 on Blakeney Point on 3rd September.

Returning winter birds seen during July to October

Pink-footed Goose: the first returning birds seen in the Square were 75 flying east over Cley on 8th September. A count of 3182 was made of birds leaving the roost on Cley scrapes on 12th October and later in the month at least 3000 were seen feeding in winter wheat S of Walsey Hills.

Brent Goose: The first small groups of **Dark-bellieds** were seen offshore from 24th September with a flock of c.300 off Cley on 18th October. We have not seen any reports of sizeable flocks feeding in the fields. **Wigeon:** Very few began to return before late September this year but numbers eventually built up in late October with over 1000 counted towards the end of the month.

Pintail: very few have been seen yet this autumn. A single count of 43 on Simmond’s Scrape mid-afternoon on 15th October was the largest but they were back to single figures after that.

Teal: numbers were also slow to build up this year with only 295 present at the end of August but numbers climbed to c.2000 on Simmond’s Scrape by 29th October.

Hen Harrier: the first report of the autumn was of a ‘ringtail’ on Blakeney Point on 5th September. After that at least 1 ‘ringtail’ and 1 male were seen regularly.

Golden Plover: numbers started to build up slowly in August with a count of 275 across the area on the 13th. A count of 550 in a field near the church at Morston on 29th October was the highest in the period.

Woodcock: the first migrants were in October with 2 seen flying west past Cley on 23rd. Another one was seen flying up Old Woman’s Lane at dawn on 27th and 4 were on Blakeney Point on the 29th.

Short-eared Owl: 1 or 2 were seen on 18 days from 9th August with at least 6 coming in off the sea at Cley on 27th October.

Merlin: the first sighting this autumn was on 19th August.

Shore Lark: the first this autumn was a single on Blakeney Point on 10th October with 3 there on the 16th & 19th and 5 on the 31st. A group of 5 were on the shingle near Arnold’s on the 28th then flew out to sea.

Lesser Redpoll: the only report was of 1 on West Bank, Cley on 28th October.

Lapland Bunting: the first of the autumn was a single at Blakeney Point on 7th October with 3 there on the 31st. A single was at Salthouse on the 19th.

Snow Bunting: the first of the winter, a single, was seen on Cley Beach on 25th September. The flock at Cley built up to 35 by 29th.

Highest counts of more common ducks and waders at any one sight during July and October

Species		Species		Species	
Shelduck	37	Oystercatcher	1323	Black-tailed Godwit	700
Shoveler	67	Lapwing	350	Ruff	121
Gadwall	34	Ringed Plover	281	Dunlin	362
Mallard	283	Curlew	259	Redshank	129
Little Egret	29				

(See page 25 for information about the Wetland Bird Survey - WeBS counts and the need for more helpers)



Monthly figures for the more common sea birds									
Species	Max daily count for a single site				No. days reported				
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	
Eider	3	1	6	86	6	3	2	9	
Common Scoter	397	74	450	935	20	18	16	19	
Red-breasted Merganser	1		2	6	1		3	6	
Red-throated Diver	1	2	60	47	1	7	20	18	
Fulmar	2	4	20	15	6	13	11	2	
Manx Shearwater	10	3	22	42	2	1	11	7	
Great Crested Grebe		1	2	6		4	11	6	
Gannet	106	153	300	615	19	23	22	14	
Kittiwake			10	200			2	6	
Black-headed Gull	1077	684	1000	190	19	19	17	13	
Little Gull	2	2	5	23	4	1	3	5	
Common Gull	266	19	98	71	18	18	15	12	
Great Black-backed Gull	14	10	13	15	17	18	16	11	
Herring Gull	59	86	135	63	17	19	15	13	
Lesser Blacked-backed Gull	90	56	5	164	8	9	8	4	
Great Skua	1	4	25	26	1	8	19	13	
Arctic Skua	2	10	36	22	6	14	21	14	
Guillemot	2	1	17	69	4	1	10	14	
Razorbill	1		3	16	1		3	6	

Escapes, hybrids etc.

A **Bar-headed Goose** was first reported by Dave Griffiths on Watling Water on 29th July. Early August became quite a wildfowl collection on Watling Water or the pool just west of Iron Rd with the Bar-headed, a **Fulvous Whistling Duck** and a **Ruddy Shelduck x Egyptian Goose** hybrid all present for several days.

Other hybrids seen were a colour-ringed **Herring x Caspian Gull** in early August and a juvenile **Viking Gull** (Glaucous x Herring Gull) along the shoreline on 28th October.

Notes:

This does not cover all birds seen in the Square but, hopefully, the more interesting ones. Sightings that were recorded as only 'probable' by the observer are not generally shown above. We have excluded sightings where information has been written in the log books at Cley with no name or an illegible one or they have come from the information services where we haven't been given a name. If you find this interesting, do please submit your records to us, the more we get, the more accurate our data becomes. You can do this by entering them to the CBC website, submitting them at the end of each month by email or post or by writing in the log books which are situated in Daukes Hide, Babcock Hide and the Visitor Centre. If writing in the logs please give a full legible name as otherwise your records cannot be used. Full details on how to submit records and what we do with them can be found on the website.

Pat & David Wileman *email: cbcrecords@talktalk.net*

THE BEST OF THE REST IN NORFOLK JULY – OCTOBER 2018

What a strange year it has been. After a cold, cold spring and a scorching summer, this autumn remained unseasonably warm and settled and low in birds right up until mid-October, when the Arctic cold suddenly came down to meet us and even brought us a first for Norfolk!

JULY was hot, full stop. One or two **Honey Buzzards** were reported from Swanton Novers raptor watchpoint on five separate days. Possibly these were birds again dispersing from other breeding sites up north? An adult **Lesser Yellowlegs** was much appreciated at Titchwell from 13th up until 4th August. A classy **White-winged Black Tern** graced Snettisham RSPB pits on 21st. Well found also at Snettisham was an adult **Semipalmated Sandpiper** 29th/30th. Frustratingly, an **Alpine Swift** scythed over Titchwell's tidal pool on 31st but kept going northwards.

AUGUST's continued warmth brought a few exotics from the continent. A **White Stork** flew east from Holme Dunes on 7th, another south over Titchwell on 15th and a juvenile south over Winterton on 16th. The next day a juvenile **Purple Heron** came in off the sea at Hopton-on-Sea. Hints of easterly migration came with a **Greenish Warbler** at Cromer Golf Course and an elusive **Icterine Warbler** in Winterton South Dunes the same day. Another 'iccy' was at East Hills on 23rd and a third at Weybourne Camp on 30th.

SEPTEMBER is usually sparkly in Norfolk birding annals, but barely cut the mustard this year. A first-winter **Citrine Wagtail** was a good find at Buckenham Marshes on 2nd. Another **Greenish** and a **Barred Warbler** were at Burnham Overy Dunes on 5th/6th respectively. More 'Barreds' were at Winterton 8th/13th, Happisburgh 15th/16th and 24th at Burnham Overy Dunes. Two juvenile **Pectoral Sandpipers** together at Buckenham Marshes stayed socially from 22nd to October 13th. An adult **American Golden Plover** was at Titchwell on 27th. A tasty **Olive-backed Pipit** was found in Wells Woods on 30th, but seen only briefly the next day.

OCTOBER started slowly with a very tame **Red-necked Phalarope** at Wells boating lake on 4th, looking very much the cute 'rubber duck' job. **Great Grey Shrikes** were very much thinner on the bushes this month than usual – one south east of Waxham on 7th, another Burnham Overy Dunes/Ringstead 18th-20th, another Stiffkey/Warham Greens 27th, and finally one at Roydon Common on 31st. So scarce in Norfolk latterly, a first-winter **Ortolan Bunting** was worth seeing near Waxham Sands Holiday Camp 7th-9th. A non-coloured **Red-breasted Flycatcher** was at Waxham 10th/11th.

Very much in the pink was an adult **Rose-coloured Starling** in gardens at New Costessey 10th-16th. At last a **Red-flanked Bluetail** was unearthed in Holkham Pines on 15th, glimpsed again two days later, but sadly was only seen by a few lucky birders. Huge consolation for some however was a second-for-Norfolk **Two-barred Greenish Warbler** in the same stretch of the Pines on 16th/17th, but it was always in the canopy and really hard to catch up with. At last the big one on 21st – a first-winter **Brown Shrike**, long predicted to turn up in Norfolk, was well identified in bushes by Weybourne Camp scrape. Thanks are due to Moss Taylor for allowing access 'inside the fence' for the several hours that it was 'gettable'. A really hard bird to see as the day went on, keeping well tucked into bushes. We haven't seen Weybourne beach car park so packed since the 1999 Pallid Swift release! Sadly a clear night followed and no further sign the next day. Much better behaved has been a second-winter drake **King Eider**. First seen off Sea Palling on 28th, it gave itself up off Sheringham seafront on 30th, catching crabs and sea-urchins and has stayed well into November. Huge but hard to see as ever, a juvenile **White-tailed Eagle** flew 'in-off' at Weybourne on 29th, then later seen on the north side of Norwich heading towards the Broads..... No further sign to date. A second **Red-flanked Bluetail** was a surprise find on the path to the sea at Titchwell on 29th, but then was hiding in the suda all day.

Hat's off to anybody who saw more than a handful of the highlight birds in this report, it's been tough!

Trevor Davies and Pauline Walton

CLEY & SALTHOUSE MARSHES BREEDING BIRDS 2018

This article covers Norfolk Wildlife Trust's (NWT) Cley & Salthouse Marshes between West Bank and Iron Road plus Snipe's Marsh. It also includes North Foreland wood but only for Herons & Egrets.

As in previous years most areas were visited frequently during spring and summer 2018, noting nesting birds and youngsters seen, and following the progress of families. The warden again did transect counts in the reedbed for passerines and watched areas that we could not otherwise easily access.

With no major flooding incidents in winter 2017/18, the habitat wasn't significantly changed from last year, apart from a little more build-up of shingle in places and the sea eating into the seaward side of the shingle bank north of Arnold's Marsh. The weather appeared to have a significant effect on breeding this year delaying the arrival of several species. We had a fairly mild winter but at the end of February the 'Beast from the East' arrived bringing frozen scrapes and snow. It remained cold and wet throughout March and April apart from a brief warmer spell mid-April. It turned warmer in early May but onshore winds brought a lot of cloud onto the coast keeping temperatures down. This persisted right into July but it then got drier and warmer and although it was always cooler on the coast than the rest of the country we had a warm dry spell and the meadows and pools started to dry out.

Species Highlights

Two pairs of **Canada Geese** successfully nested again fledging 5 young between them. Two **Mute Swan** nests were found, one in the reedbed and the other on Don's Pool, from which 7 and 4 cygnets hatched respectively. 5 cygnets were lost from the reedbed brood but the remaining 2 and the 4 from Don's Pool all survived and should have fledged by the time you read this. Another pair was seen with 3 cygnets by the Iron Rd. It is thought these may have hatched from near Mill Drift in Salthouse. One cygnet was lost but the rest of the family were then seen regularly in the Catchwater Drain for about a month but then moved back to Salthouse where we hope they will fledge during October.

Other than **Mallard**, dabbling ducks didn't do too well this year with only 2 pairs of **Shoveler** seen with 4 young fledging and although there were 19 pairs of **Gadwall** only 10 young fledged. **Pochard** did well with 4 broods being seen initially on Simmond's Scrape, Snipe's Marsh and Don's Pool but they moved around a bit with 1 brood finishing up on Watling Water. In total we believe 11 ducklings fledged. Two broods of **Tufted Duck** were seen (8 and 7 ducklings) but we lost sight of them both after about 3 weeks.

We had no evidence of breeding **Little Grebes** this year other than on Snipe's Marsh where we believe one pair had 2 broods from which 3 young fledged.

Grey Herons and **Little Egrets** again nested in N. Foreland Wood where viewing seems to get more difficult each year. It is thought there were 2 **Heron** and 6 **Little Egret** nests and young were seen on the reserve from 22 June and 2 July respectively.

The female **Marsh Harrier** that has been at Cley for several years now (known as Blondie) again wintered with her mate on the main reserve. They bred successfully and 4 young were seen flying at the end of June. In the eastern part of the reserve two males and two females were seen around in April and May but although there was some displaying, carrying nest material and the occasional food passes, there was no real evidence of breeding and no young were seen.

At least 2 pairs of **Water Rails** bred, one near Daukes Hide and one near Bishop's Hide. Four chicks were seen and we think 2 fledged. Although they were heard from several places throughout the summer there was no other evidence of breeding away from the central scrapes. **Moorhens** and **Coots** did better than last year but with pairs and young fledging still below the average of the last 10 years.

There were circa. 11 pairs of **Oystercatchers** trying to nest, mostly on the shingle, with some in the fenced off areas and others on the open beach, then roped off to protect them from disturbance. Single chicks hatched from 3 nests; on the Brackish Pool close to E Bank, on Arnold's and on Sea Pool. Two of these fledged. This sounds poor but it is only the second time in 10 years that any have fledged.

The first **Avocet** nests were seen on the central scrapes in mid-April including the newly renovated Whitwell Scrape with 52 active nests counted on 8th May. The first chicks were seen there on 17th May and others soon followed with a total of 19 broods (54 chicks) being seen by the end of May. By 7 June all nests and

chicks had gone from Pat's Pool but some chicks may have moved to Simmond's and Whitwell where some nests and chicks survived and 5 eventually fledged. Elsewhere in the western area, 3 pairs nested on and around the Brackish Pools with 1 pair hatching 2 chicks from the western end, which then moved to Pope's Pool. Very few birds nested on the Serpentine, Pope's Pool and Arnolds this year but there were good numbers on the Shooter's Pools where at least 16 pairs nested and 9 broods (27 chicks) were seen. They had all gone by mid-June but we think some of the families may have moved to Pope's Pool and Watling Water where 5 fledged. In addition to the broods hatched on the reserve at least 4 pairs were seen moving their chicks from the Blakeney side, across Beach Road, but none are thought to have survived long.

Although **Lapwings** made 34 nesting attempts this year the number of broods and fledglings were low. Nesting was concentrated in areas such as around the Serpentine and along the eastern boundary. The highest density was adjacent to the East Bank. In contrast to most years, success here was very low with most chicks being lost after just a few days. Across the whole reserve only 7 chicks were known to fledge. Once more all this year's **Ringed Plover** nests were on the shingle. Two pairs managed to nest successfully but they only survived for a few days. Four pairs of **Little Ringed Plovers** were seen, 1 on the central scrapes, 1 near N Screen, 1 in the Serpentine/Arnold's area and the last on Watling Water. A nest on Whitwell was watched for a few days in mid-May then a Black-headed Gull was seen to take the eggs. No chicks were seen, though juveniles were around in late June and we assume these flew in from elsewhere.

Black-headed Gulls had a slightly better breeding season than in 2017. At least 41 pairs nested on Pat's Pool in May but only 7 chicks were seen and none survived more than a few days. 11 or 12 pairs of **Bearded Tits** were seen. This included sightings from within the reedbeds as well as those from the normal paths. The first juveniles were seen along East Bank on 13th May, then between the 18th and 31st up to 3 families could be seen along the Boardwalk to the Main Hides. A pair with 3 juveniles and another adult with 2 juveniles was seen in the eastern reedbed.

Despite a few sightings of **Swallows** prospecting potential nesting sites in June no nests were found. **House Martins** nested on houses along the Coast Rd again.

Two singing male **Cetti's Warblers** were along the Catchwater Drain near Old Woman's Lane and Snipe's Marsh. Three very recently fledged juveniles showed between the Visitor Centre and Old Woman's Lane on 14th July and the next day one had to be rescued from the path and put back into the vegetation.

Sedge Warblers arrived late this year and were low in numbers but **Reed Warblers** did well. It is difficult to make direct comparison with earlier years for these species as our count methods have changed over the last 2 years to include counts of the interior of the reedbeds.

The following tables list the main species that bred this year (2017 figures in brackets).

Species	Pairs	Young fledged	Species	Pairs	Young fledged
Canada Goose	2(2)	5(5)	Marsh Harrier	1(1) nests	4(4)
Mute Swan	3(4)	8(1)	Water Rail	2(1)	3(?)
Shelduck	12(33)	42(85)	Moorhen	13(8)	10(1)
Shoveler	2(7)	4(20)	Coot	9(8)	8(3)
Gadwall	19(24)	10(62)	Oystercatcher	11(14)	2(0)
Mallard	39(42)	77(55)	Avocet	90(71)	10(15)
Pochard	4(3)	11(1)	Lapwing	34(44)	7(8)
Tufted Duck	2(2)	0(0)	Ringed Plover	4(5)	0(5)
Little Grebe	1(2)	3(4)	Little Ringed Plover	4(3)	0(7)
Grey Heron	2(3)	?	Redshank	19(27)	12(21)
Little Egret	6(7)	?	Black-headed Gull	73(23)	3(0)

Species	Min. Pairs	Species	Min. Pairs
Bearded Tit	11(8)	Grasshopper Warbler	0(0)
Skylark	16(16)	Wren	1(1)
Swallow	0(0)	Meadow Pipit	15(19)
Cetti's Warbler	2(2)	Linnet	2(1)
Sedge Warbler*	19(27)	Reed Bunting	16(15)
Reed Warbler*	17(10)		

* these counts are for the same transect in the western reedbed for both 2017 and 2018. More were present elsewhere on the reserve.

Notes:

This is only a brief summary of this year's breeding birds. The full report with details for each species and comparisons with previous years is available on the **Cley Bird Club website** on the **Reports** pages. Copies are available by contacting us at the address in the front of this newsletter.

Thanks to Kath & Mick Claydon, Sue & Peter Morrison and Pat & David Wileman with help from Mike Harcup. Many thanks to the wardens, George Baldock, Bernard Bishop and Ken Foster, and others who told us of their sightings of nests and young birds around the reserve thus helping to complete the picture.

If you have some spare time and would like to help us to monitor the breeding birds on the Reserve or any other area in the Cley Square, we are always looking for more people to help, so just drop us an email.

Pat & David Wileman

Ringling in the Cley Square - October 2018 Notes

Pat and Dave Wileman continue to receive and process a wealth of data on ringed and tagged birds and wish to convey special thanks as always to all who have sent in sightings or provided information or photos. One of their most fascinating recent reports relate to **Pinkfeet**. They note:-

As we had hoped, some collared **Pinkfeet** turned up in the flocks roosting at Cley Marshes. Even better, **Mark Golley** found that one of them; TAC was paired with one of the Hull University tracker birds and he was able to read the code CAB on its orange leg-ring. He received the following information from the highly-delighted leader **Matt Stone** of the team that fitted this bird with its tracker in our area last winter.

"This was one of the larger birds, caught on the first catch on the 16th January (the other catch being the 18th, and both at High Kelling near the rugby club), weighing 2.65kg. The bird departed from this location two days after tagging. It headed towards the Wash Estuary where it spent the next 21 days foraging on coast fields and inland fields to the west and south of the Wash with some use of the intertidal area of the estuary, presumably for roosting at night. On the 7th February, the bird made a cross-country flight to the West Coast of the UK. It then headed north making a series stop-overs of a few days on the West Coast (Ribble Estuary) and an inland location in Dumfries and Galloway. On the 16th February, it arrived in Midlothian where it spent the rest of the winter. During that time, its home range appeared to be small with a reliance on very few fields for either foraging or roosting. On the 15th April, the bird made a seemingly non-stop flight to Iceland. We are waiting for the offload of data at the end of November to see how it's staged its migration back".

Cley Square Miscellany - July to October 2018



The hedge

The ochre-gold-russet that glows
in the dawnlight
is a palette of movement,
of twigs shifting and shaking -
and the voices -
such quiet little voices.
There's the flash of the white
on a Chaffinch's wing,
brown leaves tit-mingled
with blue and with yellow,
that flit and that follow,
and the pink and the black
of the long-tailed pack.

Then one by one, and then in a rush
they are gone.
Silent and stiff stands the hedge,
wind-plucked and waiting,

while high high above,
flying poor tattered pennants,
sway the bare poplar twigs.
Then all of a sudden,
with a rush and a bustle and a
chack-chack-chack chacking,
the Fieldfares swarm in-
the poplar in full leaf again.

But restlessness flows with the
autumn breeze. Nothing stays.
They are off in a cloud, these field-side
wanderers, noisy and bold,
And all that is left to catch the eye
over the brown fields far away
is the lazy flap of the lapwing flock -
a flickering cloud in the grey grey sky.

Martin Woodcock



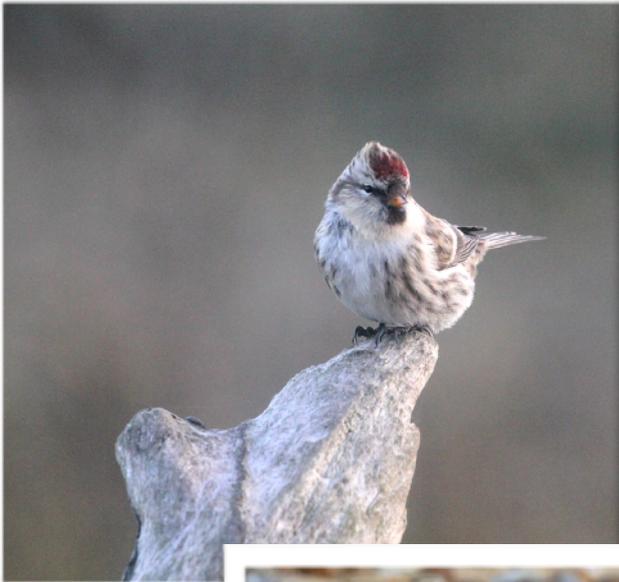


Photo credits - **Coué's Arctic Redpol** and juvenile **Little Tern**-Blakeney Point- *Richard Porter*, **Rough-legged Buzzard** and **Goldcrest** -Walsey Hills- *David Bratt, NOA Walsey Hills Warden*. **thrushes** and **Kestrel** - *Tom Green*

Cley Bird Club Matters

Winter meetings programme 2018/19 Unless stated these popular indoor meetings are held in the comfortable meeting room at Cley Village Hall or in the main room if large numbers are anticipated, **starting at 7:30**. To help with costs a £1 donation is requested. There is a refreshment break during the evening. Non-members are very welcome.

Wednesday December 5th 2018

AGM followed by 'Secrets of a Holkham Wood' Andy Bloomfield

Wednesday January 9th 2019

'East of Eden: the Story of Salthouse Marshes' Steve Harris

Thursday February 21st 2019

Joint meeting with North Norfolk branch of NWT
'The magic of island birding' Trevor Williams

Wednesday March 13th 2019

'NW Argentina: hummers, parrots, camels and cacti.' John Geeson

Our guest speakers

Andy Bloomfield is well-known to many of us as warden at Holkham Estates where he was born. He is the son of a shepherd and his passion for wildlife began at an early age with a particular interest in birds and mammals. He began volunteering on the National Nature Reserve in 1990, finally becoming full-time warden in 2012. He has written two books about Norfolk's wildlife: *The Birds of the Holkham Area* in 1993 and *North Norfolk's Wildlife* in 2007. Since becoming a warden his interests have broadened to insects and spiders. Andy has enthralled us on previous occasions with his talks.

Steve Harris runs The BIRDscapes Gallery at Glandford with his wife, Liz. After gaining a degree in Environmental Science at the New University of Ulster, Steve moved to Norwich where he worked mainly in farmland and landscape conservation for nearly 30 years at Norfolk County Council. For many years, Steve was the voluntary warden at Salthouse Marshes and his talk will draw on that experience, describe the landscape history of Cley and Salthouse, as well as bringing us up-to-date with more recent developments. His will be a critical view and this promises to be a lively and entertaining talk; one not to be missed.

Trevor Williams is a life-long birder, with a broader interest in all things connected to wildlife and conservation. He volunteers as a reserve guide with Norfolk Wildlife Trust at Cley. He is currently Chair of the North East Norfolk Bird Club. He leads bird groups for NWT, NENBC and the National Trust and teaches bird-watching skills to beginners. He believes in the opportunity which conservation projects provide to bring people and communities together.

John Geeson has been a familiar figure on the Norfolk birding scene for more years than he cares to remember. His enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, the county is remarkable. Birding has taken him to many far-flung corners of the world however, and his talk for us will be about a recent visit to northwest Argentina. Hummers, parrots and cacti one can understand- but where do camels come into it?

Recent Meeting Many thanks to our winter meetings organiser, Ann Duff, for securing the services of David Appleton who recently took an appreciative audience on a whistle stop birding tour of Oman. An excellent set of photos and lots of information illustrated just how much of a crossroads Oman is, will both a taste of Africa and some great migrants from 'up north'

A warm welcome to the new members. These include our first 'over the pond' member from Minnesota, U.S.A. *Eric & Tani Read, Phillip Hampson, David Griffiths, Christopher Williams, Christin Musgrave, Sue & Christine Bradshaw, Marcus Webster and Philip Howard.*

CBC Subscriptions

The committee continue to monitor the level of CBC subscriptions. Should changes be needed in view of increased postage costs plenty of warning will be given. Meanwhile our rates remain the same for 2019/20 at £4 for no paper newsletter and £6 if you wish to receive a printed newsletter.

If you wish an easier way to pay your subscription next April 1st please do a bank transfer. Our details are:-

HSBC Bank Cromer sort code 40-24-43. Cley bird club account number 11058339.

Thank you to those who send words of thanks or encouragement to committee. If you feel able to help with the administration of the club or contribute to the Newsletter or Website please get in touch.

Annie Abrams - Membership Secretary

Obituaries

Joe Sultana - We are saddened to report the death of **Joe Sultana, Head of Birdlife Malta**, who died on 11th September 2018 at the age of 78. In CBC News 107 Joe kindly wrote a short summary of the bird conservation situation in Malta, where he explained that *"Traditions die hard and the Maltese Islands have always been a black spot for birds"* due to illegal trapping and hunting. It is clear that Joe's passion and dedication has not only inspired conservation action in Malta, but also internationally.

Patricia Zurita, CEO of Birdlife International has said; *"Joe [Sultana] was pivotal in helping us build BirdLife and will continue to be an inspiration,"* She added, *"[We] are grateful to have had Joe's support, guidance, wisdom and leadership. Our commitment to protect the birds he loved so much stands strong, so we can honour his legacy and commitment to making Malta and the planet a better place for nature and people."*

Editor

Rob Chidwick

Many members of Cley Bird Club will remember **Rob Chidwick**, who died recently at the age of 75 after a short illness. I am sure that everyone who knew Rob would wish to pass on their sincere sympathies to his family. Rob moved to Cley from the Midlands in 1978 and he and his son Simon were both keen birders and a familiar sight around Cley in the 1980s and 1990s. He eventually moved to West Runton but continued to visit Cley on a regular basis right up to his untimely death.

A gardener by profession Rob's ornithological claim to fame was probably finding the Cley square's first Cetti's Warbler at Walsey Hills in November 1981. Back then it was still a rare bird in the county but nowadays it is a familiar sight, or perhaps more correctly a familiar sound in parts of the Cley square.

I first met him in 1984 when Barbara and I commuted to Cley most weekends. In those early years the centre of national news during the day, was Nancy's Cafe, where the telephone rang frequently with news of rarities from far and wide. My son Robert and I went on many birding trips with Rob and Simon. The most memorable being one to near Aberdeen and back in 24 hours, where I drove for the complete trip. Ironically the American Robin that we went to see was not there!

Tony Aberdeen

Cley Eye - Local News and Event

CBC Sponsorship and access to the NOA Walsey Hills Observatory



Members will recall the donations from CBC made last year to Cley Square organisations; NWT, the Norfolk Ornithologists' Association and the National Trust. Recently we have had constructive discussions with NOA and NWT to explore ways of working more closely together, for our mutual benefit, and that of the birds!

To this end **The Cley Bird Club has agreed to sponsor the NOA feeding station at Walsey Hills.**

CBC Chairman John Dicks, Sophie Barker of NOA and David Bratt, Walsey Hills Warden at the bench purchased from the CBC donation to NOA following the 2017 Richardson Memorial Events .

During our discussion we were also able to clarify the position around access to the Walsey Hills Watchpoint. To preserve its ownership and access rights to the land it owns at Walsey Hills, it necessarily exercises control of public access to the area within its boundaries. While NOA values donations from any individuals who visit Walsey, we are very pleased to announce that **Cley Bird Club members will also be warmly welcomed at the Observation Point, and to the hide when the site is manned.** The hilltop hide provides comfortable shelter and commands a view over the Serpentine area adjacent to East Bank.

In return we hope that CBC members visiting the site will introduce themselves as CBC members to the Warden David Bratt, and also send in any records of birds, moths, butterflies, insects and mammals they might encounter there. Please continue to post Walsey records (and nearby NWT Snipe's March) to the Club Bird News website or email them to our Recorders, Pat and Dave Wileman.

For Information about NOA including membership, visit www.noa.org.uk or contact via info@noa.org.uk

New Monitoring Officer appointed by NWT A wealth of information has been collected for Cley over many years, but monitoring of the numerous reserves owned, managed or supported by NWT, is a major challenge. NWT have recently appointed Emily Dimsey as Monitoring Officer.

Parking at the Cley Visitor Centre

Most regular visitors to the Cley Reserve will by now have heard that NWT has been consulting locally on car parking, and plans to apply 10am to 5pm charges for the Visitor Centre Car Park in addition to the Beach Car Park. Importantly parking will continue to be free to NWT Members, Cley and Salthouse Residents, visitors paying a Reserve entry or attending an event.

It has been pointed out that although numbers of visitors buying permits has increased, numbers accessing the whole of the Cley and Salthouse Reserve has increased. Anyone wishing to hear more should contact the Visitor Centre Manager, Ewan Carr on 01263 740008 or ewanc@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

Are Brent Geese disturbed by birders and walkers?

Our recorders and CBC members who work with NWT provide a wealth of data on breeding, wintering and migrant bird species. One of the key surveys in recent years has involved Brent Geese on the Cley and Salthouse Marshes. NWT's **Kevin Hart**, Head of Nature Reserves for the Broads, Coast and Wetlands, emailed to say "Good to have the valuable partnership work between members of the CBC and NWT acknowledged in this way"

Kirsty Bailey of the NWT reports on this issue "In June 2015, as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund project, a new permissive footpath connecting NWT Cley and Salthouse Marshes was opened by NWT. The track is approximately 1 kilometre long and is adjacent to freshwater marshes, which provide feeding grounds for wintering Brent geese *Branta bernicla*, an Amber listed UK Bird of Conservation Concern. NWT is committed to understanding how these marshes are utilised by the geese in winter, as well as to what extent users of the new footpath are having an impact on the wintering geese.



Brent geese numbers across the whole of NWT Cley and Salthouse Marshes were recorded between November and March over the study years 2012/2013 – 2017/2018. This was carried out by experienced volunteer ornithologists who patrol the NWT Cley and Salthouse Marshes area. Surveyors covered the whole extent of the reserve and population data was recorded for all fields surveyed.

Causes of disturbance were divided into categories (e.g. walkers, traffic, wildlife) and effects of disturbances were recorded. Analysis has demonstrated that members of the public using the new Attenborough's Walk footpath has not caused undue disturbance to wintering Brent geese, with a maximum of five disturbances caused by people in any one winter, out of over 120 days of recording each winter. Average populations of Brent geese on the reserve have seen a decline but this is more likely to be caused by external factors such as breeding success and flock make-up than disturbance rates."

40th Anniversary of the North Norfolk Local Group of NWT

On 20 September over 70 people gathered at the Cley Visitor Centre to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the North Norfolk Local Group of NWT. Following a splendid buffet, **courtesy of the Visitor Centre café staff**, and excellent wine, **courtesy of Lynton Wines**, we moved across to the Simon Aspinall Centre. The theme for the evening, reflecting that this was a significant anniversary, was changes in Norfolk wildlife. We opened with an informal introduction by renowned Norfolk photographer **Chris Knights** to a series of beautiful images of wildlife, carefully selected as exemplars of the changes that Chris has witnessed during a lifetime of farming in Norfolk. This was followed by an inspiring and quietly impassioned talk by **Mark Cocker**. Mark too reflected on change, but argued that we can – and should – do something about it. We then returned to the Visitor Centre for cake and more refreshments, bringing the evening to a convivial close. The continual buzz of conversation indicated an enjoyable evening for all, which successfully fulfilled two key functions of a NWT Local Group, namely social activity and fund-raising. It was therefore fitting that a donation of £400 for future conservation work was presented to NWT on the evening. Enormous thanks are due to **Ewan Carr and the café staff** at the Cley Visitor Centre for the smooth operation and excellent food, and the NWT (especially **Ginny Seppings**) for support and raising the funds that allowed this to be a free event (thanks Tesco's Bags of Help). Here's to the next 40 years...

Andy Clarke Chair, North Norfolk Local Group of NWT

Conservation Matters - Local and Further afield

Cley and Sculthorpe

Recently the CBC Committee decided to make a donation towards the current land appeal at Sculthorpe. The **Hawk and Owl Trust** has made a strong conservation case for expanding their Sculthorpe land holding. Whatever is achieved to protect Cley in the future against the ravages of the sea, it is heartening that further wetland habitat is being planned not very far away near Fakenham. We wish the Trust every success in this project. **Su Gough** from the Trust has written below about their Fen Appeal.



Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve and the Fen Land Purchase Appeal

Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve is a wonderful place. If you've never visited, you really must. It's a bit of a hidden gem, sign-posted off the A148 Fakenham to Kings Lynn road. So many people mean to drop in when they see the signs, but those who do, come back again and again.

Sculthorpe Moor is a peaceful place, with a rich variety of wildlife in its diverse and unexpected habitats. So close to the wetland reserves of the North Norfolk coast the mosaic of woodland, fen, river, grazing marsh and reedbed comes as a bit of a surprise – and the variety of wildlife matches the variety of habitats.

In the winter the trees are alive with Redpoll, Siskin, Bullfinch and Brambling, all coming eagerly to the feeders allowing close views. Otters and Water Voles are more obvious as the vegetation dies down and Red Kites and Buzzards float overhead. Woodcock stalk the woodland floor and shocking splashes of Scarlet Elf Cup fungi brighten the monotone ground.

As spring turns to summer, warblers chunter and serenade all around and flying jewels in the form of butterflies and dragonflies take to the wing. The air is alive with birds, with a number of raptors and owls busy provisioning their young at nests around the reserve; the crowning glory is the ever-present Marsh Harriers. Wild flowers brighten the grazing marshes and fen and Swallows and Swifts swoop overhead.

We are fiercely proud of the fact that the whole reserve is accessible to anyone; the entire path network is board-walked with many stopping and sitting opportunities along the way. All the hides are accessible to wheelchair and mobility scooter, even our tree-top 'Volunteer's Hide'!

The Hawk and Owl Trust, who manage the reserve and have their UK headquarters at Sculthorpe, have been given a unique opportunity to purchase the land surrounding either side of the existing reserve. If the money is raised by May 2019 it will more than triple the size of the protected area, prevent the land being sold on the open market and make it fully accessible to all.

Since 2007 the Trust has been delivering basic agricultural stewardship for the current owners, but no public access has been possible. By buying the land the Trust will be able to manage the area fully for wildlife, encourage public access and celebrate its vibrant history.

Our vision for Sculthorpe Fen is about so much more than the amazing wildlife that exists in this significant and important chalk river valley: it is about creating a self-funding commitment to restore and nurture a unique living landscape, where nature, history, education and health combine into a place for both the community and wildlife into perpetuity.

If the landscape is right, the wildlife will thrive.

The Hawk and Owl Trust is a small charity without access to major financial backers. Our current modest membership allows us to carry out our current day-to-day activities but any extra projects, such as this land purchase, must be raised through public appeals and applications to grant-giving organisations.

The Trust is currently at the second-round stage of applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) but, if successful, this will only raise 50% of total project funds needed. If the application to HLF is unsuccessful then the Trust will try to raise enough funds within the time limit to secure the land.

Any work to create improved habitats and allow public access and engagement must be put on hold until further funding can be secured. To deliver the vision, we need to raise £875,000 as part of a £1.75m project.

But, what a difference this project will make! We need your help to bring this vision to life and you can help by simply visiting the reserve. We hope to see you there soon!

Su Gough, Communications & PR Officer, Hawk and Owl Trust.

www.sculthorpefen.co.uk

Further afield The situation in places such as **Albania** highlight the growing problem of world population and increasing affluence. It was fascinating to hear that after the fall of the dictatorial communist regime in 1994 Albania's new government brought in a complete ban on hunting birds, giving Albania a better record than most EU countries. This led to some improvement in the situation in the lagoon of **Caravast and Divyaky National Park** (the westernmost point of the range of the Dalmatian pelican), but in general the situation with nature conservation in the country continues to be complicated. Like much of the Mediterranean where tourism often provides the mainstay of local economies, Albania is seeking a 'piece of the cake'. Apparently much of the magnificent Caravast National Park wetland is now under threat from plans to create a very large tourist complex.

Although there are six National Parks and 24 reserves the protection of all these areas is mainly carried out on paper. All parks are under severe pressure from human activity, and the country simply does not have the finance for their maintenance.

Pollution by human waste is the main reason for the reduction of the natural ecosystem of Albania. Until now, almost all of the wastewater enters the rivers without any treatment, and the dumping of industrial chemicals and agricultural waste into the rivers has become pretty terrifying.

What might appear to be a 'third world' problem is happening within Europe. For a generation which grew up thinking that the main threat to nature was mainly associated with such things as loss of habitats due to increasing population, agri-chemicals, vehicular pollutants and oil spills, we must now add rising sea temperatures, and plastics.

Editor

**What might leaving the EU mean?
Yet another voice of real concern at the future
uncertainties surrounding UK wildlife**

EU-funded tern project provides huge boost to
British Little Tern population

Almost 3,000 **Little Tern** chicks have successfully fledged since the start of an EU LIFE scheme five years ago. A total of 26 sites across Britain have hosted breeding birds supported by EU legal protection. Little Tern numbers have declined by a fifth since 2000 This project has had 50 per cent funding from the EU to identify the key reasons for Little Tern declines.

Susan Rendell-Read, the EU LIFE Little Tern Project Manager commented: "*We achieved what we set out to doFurther funding is urgently needed to build on the lessons learned.*"

Martin Harper, the RSPB's Director of Global Conservation, added: "*Without a replacement for the EU LIFE fund, and a significant increase in funding for nature conservation across the UK, large-scale biodiversity projects will struggle to be funded, and the goals of the Westminster government's 25-Year Environment Plan for England and the devolved governments' ambitions for nature's recovery in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be unachievable.*"

Wars and Wildlife - NWT Lunch and Talk

There is another chance to hear **Richard Porter**, author of *Birds of the Middle East* at Cley VC - 24th January 2019 (Booking on 01263 740008) reflecting on 50 years of travel and conservation work with an emphasis on war-torn Yemen and Iraq.

A Quest for Snow Leopards

Our group had travelled to a remote part of Outer Mongolia to attempt to encounter a Snow Leopard via the ugly and polluted Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar. It was such a relief to leave there to fly for three hours over unspoiled terrain dotted here and there with gers (*the Mongolian homes which many would know as yurts*) which looked like tiny mushrooms. The next few days were to be spent travelling into the nearby national park to search for these wonderful, elusive creatures. They are amongst the most difficult animals on the planet to see. We discovered that even the author of the book 'The Snow Leopard' never actually managed to encounter one!

The ger camp we stayed in was spotlessly clean and care was taken over the hygiene of our food which was appreciated as were the western style toilets! The camp employs spotters who camp on the tops of the mountains then spend their days trying to locate the cats for the visiting groups. They are never close, so the leopards are not disturbed. A few weeks previously the spotters had seen a female cat with three full grown youngsters. What a fabulous sight that must have been! We were envious. Just one would do! The following day we set out in four-wheel drive vehicles which took us high into the mountains. We passed feeding **Yaks**, impossibly cute **Pallas's Picas** (*resembling their close cousin, the Rabbit*) and a variety of **wheatears** which included **Pied and Isabelline**. The views were breathtaking!

We scanned the rocky slopes all day - nothing. We knew how effective their camouflage could be but couldn't make any shape into a cat. We found a few ibex but nothing else though it was fun watching the **Black Vultures** and **Lammergeiers** cruising lazily overhead.

The following day we were back once again. Scanning, scanning. The spotters had been unsuccessful. My wife found a shape she became sure was a leopard. We checked it again and again but although you could imagine you were seeing a cat it was just a rock formation.

Late in the day a call came through on the walkie-talkies and our guides were suddenly alert. A leopard had been located sitting on a rock at huge distance. None of us could see it or make it out until eventually she moved. I followed the movement and guessed where she might emerge from the rocks. Then, suddenly, there she was, silhouetted perfectly against the sky! A long, sinuous body and a huge tail which swept gracefully upwards. Those who could see it tried hard to get others onto it but very few managed to locate it - there were so many rocks! It had taken two days' searching but here she was: one of the most elusive and arguably most beautiful of all animals on earth - a Snow Leopard!

I watched as she walked languidly towards me down a gully turning from a silhouette into the most beautiful grey spotted cat you could ever wish to see! I watched her easily negotiate the rocky slope and walk down a grassy slope. It was a fabulous view but still despite constantly calling directions as best as we could only myself and our guide could see it! The camouflage of the creature was astonishing! Eventually it disappeared down a gully and wasn't seen again. I felt elated and sad at the same time. I was so pleased to finally have a great view but very sorry that less than half the group had seen it!

I was even less happy when the group were told, amazingly, that as our group had now registered a successful sighting we would not be allowed back in the park! There was open rebellion and a huge amount of disbelief in what we were being told! Whilst delicate negotiations were going on the following day, we explored the huge, grassy open plain between two mountain ranges where we located endangered **Saiga Antelopes** and watched flocks of **Pallas's Sandgrouse**. But what was to happen the next day? Would the others get their chance?

Thankfully it turned out that they would get another chance as the following morning we climbed into the SUVs and headed high once more. Incredibly, the spotters had found three animals together, the eighteen months' old full-grown cubs that had been seen a few weeks previously. The family was back! One of the spotters located the animals in our telescopes but could we see them? Absolutely not! Eventually, however, I got my eye in. If you want to see a Snow Leopard then look for its tail which is huge, broad and creamy white underneath. Once you found that you could follow it to locate the animal.

You'd think that like domestic cats they'd love to snooze in the sun but no, they sleep in the shade, avoiding the sun as their coats are so thick and warm. We spent seven hours with them enjoying watching them particularly when they roused themselves and walked around. The associated wildlife of the area was wonderful too and included **Saker Falcons** and very beautiful **Güldenstädt's Redstarts**.

What amazed us most was the leopards' camouflage. We watched two of them together as they climbed a rock. They reclined on top of it in full view blending so perfectly into their surroundings that you simply couldn't see them. Late in the day as the sun was setting we left them to their slumbers.

Seeing these beautiful animals was a truly magical experience seared indelibly upon our memories!

Chris Abrams

Editor's Footnote

Chris would dearly loved to have obtained photos like the WWF one below. Sadly, on this occasion it was not to be, but his description certainly captured the excitement and the challenge of seeking rare animals.



Image from World Wide Fund for Nature - details on worldwildlife.org

Conserving Snow Leopards, Securing Water Resources, and Benefiting Communities

In October 2012, WWF began a four-year project to conserve snow leopard habitat, promote water security, and help communities prepare for climate change impacts in Central Asia. The USAID-funded, \$7.3 million Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities project will conduct field activities in and build alliances among six of the snow leopard's twelve range countries: Bhutan, India, Nepal, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan. The project ran through 2016.

Stranger in a Fair Land

Fifty years ago, my older sister Marj moved to Britain from our American home in Indiana. We are a family of bird watchers, having learned field marks and bird behaviors from our naturalist father. I've made a few trips over the years to see Marj and her family at their home in Kent, and we always include nature exploration inner visits. A vacation to the Norfolk Coast was marked by wet and windy weather, but the birding made up for it and a certain little sparrow made our field trip a grand success.

I'm a recently retired biology professor and former instructor of animal and human physiology at St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, in central Minnesota. My research concerns the physiology of water and energy use by small birds like our Black-capped Chickadee and a tiny desert tit, the Verdin. My long-ago graduate work at Washington State University was supervised by the late Prof. James R. King, an eminent US ornithologist and surely at one time the world's leading expert on the White-crowned Sparrow.

King's lab housed hundreds of white-crowns from Jim's own doctoral work in the 1960's on premigratory fattening and reproductive physiology all the way through the late 80's. My first job as a junior student was to clean cages and look after the experimental birds. King's work - curtailed by his early death in 1990 -- inspired a generation of students and colleagues to continue the study of white-crowns.



So with this background, imagine my surprise when visiting the Cley Marshes visitor center to encounter a car with the CBC decal featuring a bird from my home country! After learning the story of the Cley white-crown, we set off to find the stained glass window where the bird is memorialized *(by Richard Millington)*

Although we saw a number of "lifers" in Norfolk - Pink Footed Goose, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit and Little Gull were all new to me - the best moment of our trip came when I focused my binoculars on that tiny sparrow in the great west window at St. Margaret's Church.

I'm proud to be the 751st and the first American member of the Cley Bird Club. I may never have the opportunity or funds to return to your fair coast, but I'll keep my membership current if only to read about the birds I might have seen.

Happy birding!

Marcus Webster, Minnesota, USA

(PS Being careful never to dumb down the scientific provenance of CBC News I have left out Marcus's list of papers on White-crowned Sparrow research! Ask if you would like to see more on the subjects such as:- 'An analysis of the heat budgets of the eggs and nest' OR 'Changes in plasma levels of luteinizing hormone, steroid and thyroid hormones during post-fledging development of white-crowned sparrows.' EDITOR)



Meanwhile; back in Cley, as if Brexit wasn't worrying enough, a Christmas dilemma for ethically minded birders "Cows = methane overload - BAD? or Cow-pats = lots of dung beetles - Good".... DISCUSS!

(You may wish refer to the great article in *British Birds*, November 2018 p636 "In praise of cow dung" by Ian Newton)

WeBS needs you.....

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is the monitoring scheme for non-breeding waterbirds in the UK. It provides the data for monitoring populations which, in turn, helps advise on actions for their conservation and that of the wetland habitats on which they are so dependent.

WeBS, in various forms, has been running in Britain for over 70 years and some 3,000 observers take part in the monthly counts on our estuaries, marshes, reservoirs and other wetlands. It is run by the BTO, RSPB, WWT and the government conservation agencies.

Here in the Cley area and its environs systematic counts are made on the NWT reserve, Salthouse and Kelling marshes, Blakeney Harbour and Freshes, Morston and Stiffkey and have been running since the late 80s.

But these counts can only continue if there are observers willing to give up a few hours each month to do the counting. Whilst there is a good team at present, there are often occasions when another pair of eyes would be helpful to cover the Blakeney Harbour/Stiffkey/ Morston area, which is coordinated by the National Trust.

So if you are into geese, ducks and waders, want to do your bit for conservation and are willing to get up at dawn (counts are made in the few hours after dawn on a high tide) then please contact Leighton Newman, the Blakeney Point Ranger: leighton.newman@nationaltrust.org.uk

WeBS counts provide vital information for conservation, are fun and help keep you fit.

Richard Porter - one of the Blakeney Point counters.



Red Knot Roosting on Blakeney Point - *Richard Porter*

For latest Cley bird news, a forum and more....

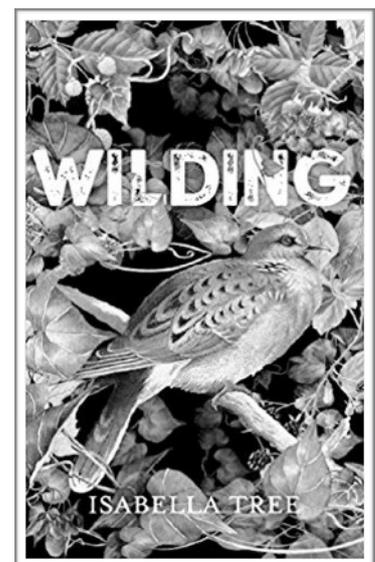
Book Review

Wilding by Isabella Tree, Published by Picador, 2018

Wilding is a beautifully written account of a brave and ambitious experiment. After many years of trying and generally failing to make a profit from modern intensive farming on the heavy clay of The Weald, Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree decided to try something radically different. With support from Higher Level Stewardship, and inspired by the work of Frans Vera at Oostvaardersplassen in The Netherlands, they ceased farming and introduced a range of grazing, browsing and generally disruptive herbivores to their family estate at Knepp. These included longhorn cattle (to represent the now extinct aurochs), Tamworth pigs (wild boar were not allowed) and deer. The results were dramatic and surprising. Nightingales and Turtle Doves returned, Purple Emperors established, and the landscape changed out of all recognition.

This wonderful book tells the story, but also provides insights into unexpected consequences (for example the value of Greylag Geese in maintaining open water). This is not a complete reversion to ancient landscapes, for there are no beaver (yet...) nor any predators, and some intervention remains necessary. As well as the overwhelmingly positive outcomes, there are also sad accounts of the way some visitors behave when given the opportunity to walk their dogs or ride their horses across the land.

Anyone with an interest in wildlife, conservation or landscape would benefit from reading this captivating and inspiring book. It should be required reading for any Minister of the Environment and everyone at DEFRA.



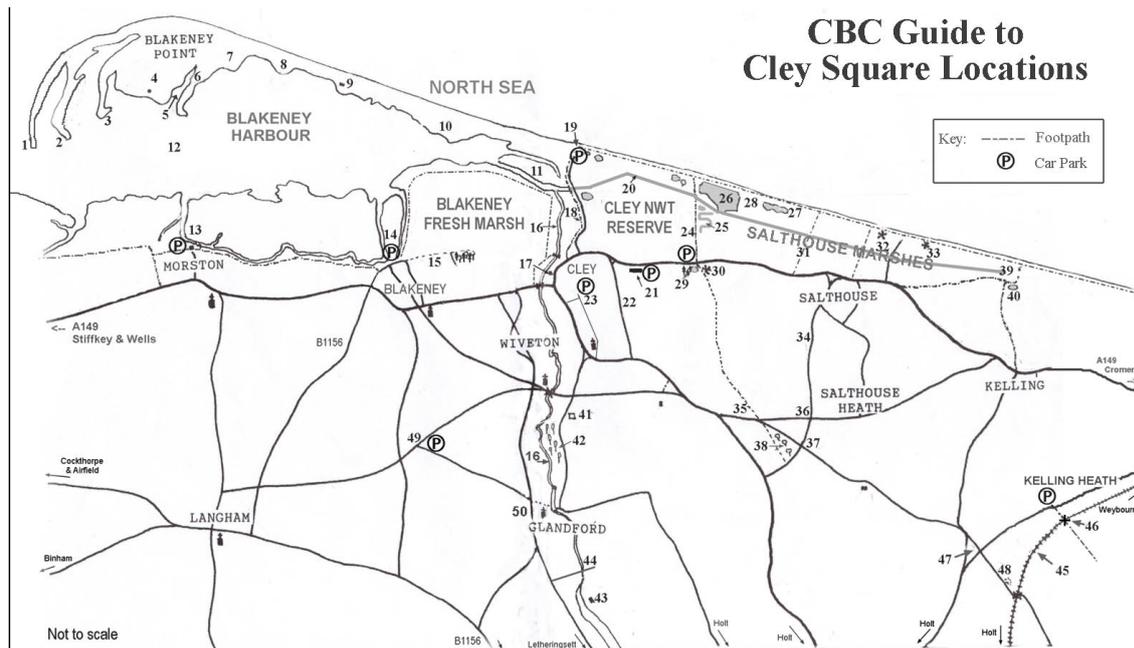
Andy Clarke

....visit www.cleybirdclub.org

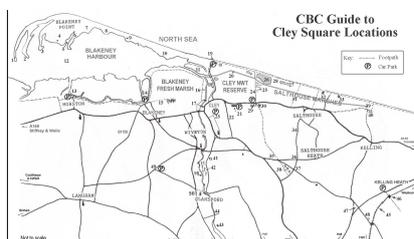
The CBC Survey Area

For exact scientific survey work purposes, the Cley Square (TG04) would not include the end of Blakeney Point, which in reality extends further west than shown above. In fact everything west of the 'Landing Place' at Pinchen's Creek including the Plantation, the Old Lifeboat Station and NT buildings fall west of Co-ordinate 600. For the Club's **Big Bird Day in on January 12th 2018** and general interest reports during the year, the tip of the Point IS included as if it were within the Cley Square, as is all of Kelling Heath.

Members will already know that during the autumn Grey Seal breeding season, much of the beach is out of bounds to walkers, so please keep well clear of the seals and observe any signage.



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|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Far Point | 9. Watch House (Halfway House) | 18. West Bank (Beach Rd) | 25. The Serpentine | 33. Gramborough Hill | 43. Bayfield Hall and Lake |
| 2. Middle Point | 10. The Marrams | 19. Beach Car park (Coastguard's) | 26. Arnold's Marsh | 34. Bard Hill | 44. Natural Surroundings (Wildflower Centre) |
| 3. Near Point | 11. Blakeney Eye | 20. Main Drain (New Cut) | 27. Sea Pool | 35. The Hangs | 45. North Norfolk Railway |
| 4. N.T. Lifeboat House, Lupins and Plantation | 12. The Pit | 21. Cley NWT Visitor Centre | 28. Wigeon Marsh | 36. The 1 st Crossroads | 46. Level Crossing |
| 5. Pinchen's Creek | 13. Morston Quay | 22. Old Woman's Lane | 29. Snipe's Marsh & North Foreland Wood | 37. The 2 nd Crossroads | 47. Kelling Triangle |
| 6. Yankee Ridge | 14. Blakeney Quay | 23. Cley Village Hall | 30. Walsey Hills (NOA Watchpoint) | 38. Taylor's Wood | 48. Stonepit Nature Reserv |
| 7. Long Hills | 15. Friary Hills | 24. East Bank | 31. Iron Road (Pipe Road) | 39. Kelling Quags | 49. Wiveton Downs |
| 8. The Hood | 16. River Glaven | | 32. Little Eye | 40. Cley Sewage Works | 50. CleySpy & BIRDScape |
| | 17. Cley Windmill | | | 41. Cley Sewage Works | |
| | | | | 42. The Poplars | |



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| | | | | 42. The Poplars | |

← Co-ordinate 40

↑ OS. Co-ordinate TG 00

↑ OS Co-ordinate TG10

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Member's 'non-business' adverts for first entry are free. All 'commercial' & business adverts are charged at £15 for three newsletter editions. Please send draft to the editor tomgreen@yahoo.co.uk or to discuss ring 01263 740788. Once advert is agreed, the treasurer will send an invoice with details of payment methods.

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