

CLEY BIRD CLUB



TEMPORARY ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE.

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

NEWS-LETTER NUMBER 12

JANUARY 1989.

Dear Members,

As you know, from the last newsletter, Nancy's Cafe has now closed down and Mrs Nancy Gull is enjoying her retirement going to Car boot sales and other such things rather than looking after the whims of the visiting bird-watcher. The cafe officialy closed on Sunday the 11th of December 1988, so now when you visit Cley you won't be able to hide in Nancy's from the rain and the cold.

The Cley Bird Club, The Bird Information Service, Sanderling Books and a collection on the Isles of Scilly during October, have between them raised over £650.00 and, more importantly a large retirement card with over 500 signatures and messages. The latter will be of more value to Nancy than any thing we can buy her, the card she will be able to show off to friends and relatives for years to come, it's not everyone that has had hundreds of satisfied customers.

With the money collected the Cley Bird Club bought a colour television, with a small discreate brass plaque with the inscription, "Presented to Mrs Nancy Gull on her retirement". We also bought a colour TV licence and a new TV ariel, with a booster so they can now watch Anglia instead of Yorkshire, and in colour for the first time ever.

The presentation was made in the afternoon of the 11th December, when over 70 birders and relatives of Mrs Nancy Gull, crowded into the small back room of the cafe (spilling out into the corridor and kitchen). Most people bought cards, gifts and flowers of their own, and "Umvolosi" looks like a Florists at the moment. I would like to thank all the Cley Bird Club members who contributed to the collection, and I think Mr and Mrs Gull would like to thank all personally, so next time your in Cley pop into see them, they'll be glad to see you!

The September Norfolk Bird News has been included in this newsletter, along with the Cley Square Bird News from the 25th of September to the end of the month. They were left out due to the fact that the editorial board of the Cley Bird Club newsletter, went on their annual holiday to the Isles of Scilly, and a good time was had by all!

Eddie Myers.

CAR STICKERS.

It is with great pleasure we announce that due to the financial wizardry of our financial officer, Mr Peter Gooden, we have enclosed a free Cley Bird Club car sticker with this quarters newsletter. The new car sticker, as you can see is a much plainer affair, with no address which makes the old one obsolete. If there's any one out there who would like another sticker, again free of charge, please send a SAE to Peter at the following address; Mr P Gooden, "Whimbrels", 45 Charles Road, Holt, Norfolk, NR25 6DA.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Members receiving a renewal form with this newsletter are due to pay their subscription (£2.50) as soon as possible before March 31st. Cheques and postal orders made payable to the Cley Bird Club, please.

Members who have overlooked payment - will find SOD (subscription overdue) in red on page one!! Will they please send their subscription by return.

ADDITIONS TO LIST OF MEMBERS.

Miss A.E. Hughes.

P.J. Lackey.

S. Seal.

LOG BOOK.

Now that Nancy's Cafe in Cley village is closed, the Beach Cafe is now the home of the Cley Bird Club Log Book. The owner of the Beach Cafe, Mr Derek Bean, has stated that all bird-watchers are welcome. And besides the Log Book there is also a Bird Board with the days sightings, and a large Display Board where posters and cards with information can be displayed. For further information on the cafe please ask next time you have a coffee there, you'll find them friendly and helpfull.

TIMES PAST.

We all know that bird shooters and collectors gravitated to Cley and district many years before birdwatchers took over and that the area's special qualities were appreciated long before Doctor Rivere first called it "The Mecca" back in the 1920's. What is less well understood, perhaps, is the long time it took birdwatching and photography to replace bird shooting and collecting.

N.H. Pashley, the celebrated taxidermist, who first came to Cley in 1868, did not set up his shop and work full-time as what E.C. Arnold (of Arnold's Marsh fame) called a "Bird Stuffer" until 1884 but he talked of bird collectors operating in the district as far back as the 1860's. His diaries were published as a book by Dr Rivere in 1925 and they covered the years 1887 - 1924. They provide a vivid picture of the activities of those times and the amazing range of birds collected. Some of the entries were quite hair-raising and that for 1st October 1894 is a good example. It reads "The first Yellow-browed Warbler for Norfolk was taken on this day. This bird was shot with a 10 bore gun and very large shot. Its head was nearly severed and the rump and intestines almost shot away, so the sex could not be determined. I have known many good birds and rare birds shot in the same way as this. The man who shot it fired off his battered old muzzle loader at the first bird he saw rather than take it home loaded. It was such a weapon as few people would care to fire off. This bird is in Mr Conop's museum. During that month in 1894 the many birds bought in for Pashley's expert attention included a Roller (shot on Barton Broad), a male Velvet Scoter, Shore Larks, Little Auks, Twites, Water Rail, Red-throated Diver and an adult Gannet!

Changes in attitudes began to show at about the turn of the century, Bob Pinchen became the first warden of Blakeney Point in 1901. His employers were the Blakeney and Cley Bird Protection Committee and he was paid 15/- (shillings) per week. It is of interest that in his book "Sea Swallows" Pinchen recalls that Mr Chas Hammond, of Twyford Hall, started the work of bird protection at Wells and it was his success there that prompted another reserve at Blakeney Point. So much for the widely held belief that Blakeney Point was the first nature reserve in Norfolk.

Later the Norfolk Wild Bird Protection Society was founded and maintained by private donations - the list for 1922, for example, showed the income as totalling £170 and was headed by H.M. the King with £3, 3, 0, followed by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales with £2, 2, 0, (and I know my place!).

Despite all the efforts by the conservationists shooting by collectors continued for almost another 30 years before new legislation finally put it outside the law late in 1928. From his book "Memories of Cley" it is clear that, despite such events as the purchase of Cley marshes and the creation of the Reserve in 1926, Arnold and his friends continued their activities in the district. Describing the end he records how on 15th September 1928 his companion, one Carter, was "doing some bushes with alertness unusual at this time of day. He explained that he had found a bird which, on the strength of my notes, he had diagnosed as a Red-breasted Flycatcher or Black Wheatear, and, while we were boiling the kettle he suddenly saw it again. Darting forth, and unfortunately omitting to use his glasses, he shot the bird at the second attempt and it proved to be our long-sought Red-breasted Flycatcher. Its flight was of the darting variety and it cocked its tail like a Wren. Thus we just anticipated the passing of the law, which brings these notes to an end."

Not, one would think, a day too soon!

Joe Johnson,

A BIRDING TRIP TO TEXAS, PART 3.

Our first morning at Big Bend was given over to finding a campsite, some easy birding around the site and the Rio Grand village where we found Roadrunners, White-winged Doves, Vermillion Flycatchers, Brewer's Blackbird, Marsh and Rock Wren and Black Phoebe.

Venturing further afield we came across Clay-coloured Sparrows, an Alder Flycatcher in full song. Calling in at the Panther Junction HQ, we picked up some cheap field guides before birding around the gardens, which were remarkably good for birds, amongst the cacti and other shrubs we found Brown and Green-tailed Towee's, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, and a Say's Phoebe.

Our next stop was the old ranch where we spent the heat of the day watching a small spring. Some of the birds noted coming to drink were Rufous-sided Towee, Hermit Thrush, Verdin, Warbling Vireo, Orange-Crowned and Nashville Warblers.

Coming back from Dugout Wells several Scott's Orioles were feeding on the brightly coloured flowers. That evening was spent watching the Elf Owls at their 'stake out', before driving the roads looking for Common Poorwills of which we saw five.

Dawn broke on the 12th, this was the day everybody had been looking forward to, the day we had planned to walk the Chisos Mountain loop. We arrived in the basin about an hour after dawn. Warming ourselves up by searching the scrub around the various buildings where we found Rufous-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows, Brown and Rufous-sided Toweets, and Dark-eyed Juncos. As we began the steep climb we came across many Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Further up we found Canyon and Rock Wrens and a Hermit Thrush, before our first Acorn Woodpecker appeared, what a bird! as he sat there looking down at us with his beady white eye. Moving on up we could hear a bird we were particularly hoping to see, singing in the distance, a Colima Warbler but try as we might we never got to see it, but we did identify Bell's Vireo.

Just before the summit we stopped to admire the Violet-green Swallows and White-throated Swifts as they wheeled around overhead and some absolutely breathtaking views of the Chisos basin far below us. Resting at the top we watched Common Ravens and Red-tailed Hawks soaring around Emory Peak before we had a quick fly-by view of a Band-tailed Pigeon.

On reaching Boot Springs we stopped for our mid-day snack to be greeted by some noisy Grey-breasted Jays, searching around the immediate area we came across an unexpected bonus, which went some way to compensating for the Colima Warbler - an adult male Painted Redstart in full song.

Slowly we started the decent eventually finding a Hutton's Vireo amongst the many Kinglets, along with Bush Tits and Yellow-rumped Warblers. As we approached the bottom we flushed out Black-chinned Sparrows and Cassin's Finch, before a Zone-tailed Hawk appeared above our heads bringing to an end the tactic of trying to look at every Turkey Vulture.

On the way back to camp we called in again at Dugout Wells, but apart from Curve-billed Thrasher there was little there. It was while driving back from there that a falcon appeared beside the road, eventually identified as a Prairie Falcon - another big bonus for us.

Arriving back at the camp we found a Western Wood Peewee before meeting up with Arty and Hanna again, joining them for some good freshly made coffee and a large plate of fresh chocolate cookies kindly donated by a little old lady from a nearby camper - after listening to a Skunk ripping his way through the rubbish left outside the van everybody fell into a deep well earned sleep.

Next morning was spent doing some easy birding around the camp site and in a fairly long goodbye to Arty and Hanna before heading off north towards the Davis Mountains. A fairly uneventful journey saw us arrive around the middle of the afternoon.

A quick look around the camp site soon produced Say's Phoebe, Brewer's Sparrow and Black-headed Grosbeak, when we heard the immortal words "You wanna see the quail, there's two out the back", sure enough a pair of Montezuma's Quail were feeding a small prepared drinking pool. It was decided at this point to run for Lake Balmorhea to give ourselves more time in the mountains the next day. On arrival we quickly found the wintering Western Grebes along with rafts of Eared and Pied-billed Grebes. The small pools away from the main lake held small numbers of Blue-winged Teals, Buffleheads and a handful of Cinnamon Teals. A shallow area at one end of the lake held an interesting assortment of waders including Marbled Godwits, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Western, Least and Spotted Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes and American Water Pipits. Whilst driving back we found a flock of some 200 Yellow-headed Blackbirds and a couple of Great Horned Owls.

Next morning we again birded the campsite where we added Phainopepla and Wilson's Warbler to our lists before driving to the Davis Mountains loop where we again saw Acorn and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Montezuma's Quail as well as Northern Flicker and Western Bluebird and a rather distant Golden Eagle.

We now started the long and rather boring drive from the Davis Mountains to the Edwards Plateau - a journey punctuated by occasional Swainson's Hawks and American Kestrels until we reached Legion where we needed a small diversion to twitch the Lewis's Woodpecker which had overwintered. As we approached the plateau the scenery and vegetation began to change dramatically from an arid one to one of lush green beauty. Driving around we picked up several new species including Eastern Bluebird and our only Eastern Phoebe. Having found Po-Po's restaurant we were not to be disappointed with up to 20 Black-chinned and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds attending the special feeders.

Having spent a comfortable night in Kerrville we arrived at Lost Maples as dawn was breaking, having no bother finding the two specials Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler along with Blue Grosbeak, House Finches and Orange-crowned Warblers.

Moving onto Neal's Lodge to give those who had not seen Green Kingfisher a last chance. Arriving at the appointed river crossing we searched up and down without joy. As Paul and I had seen it we let the others go off in search returning about an hour later, faces looking strained. Green Kingfishers were not a subject to talk about. Leaving the river, for some reason we turned the wrong way, correcting ourselves we about turned and re-crossed the river, to everybody amazement a Green Kingfisher was feeding from a low branch near the bridge. The journey to High Island now continued in the highest of high spirits.

Our arrival at High Island completed the circuit of Texas which we had planned to travel and we now looked forward to 4 or 5 days birding centred on this mightier hot spot.

Keen to get into the woods we entered Audubon's just after dawn, only to find there were virtually no warblers present - however there were plenty of Gray Catbirds, Cedar Waxwings and Orchard Orioles. We did though make good use of our time to find our way around the pathways before heading out to Rollover Pass.

Arriving at the pass we were confronted by a great mass of shorebirds, gulls and terns, searching through them we identified Great, Snowy and Reddish Egrets, Semi-palmated, Piping and Wilson's Plovers, Western and Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Royal, Caspian and Forster's Terns a Black-legged Kittiwake and a Le Conte's Sparrow.

Returning back to the village we called in at the cafe for fresh coffee and Pecan pie (highly recommended), before trying the Sun Oilfield road for waders. Here they were in smaller numbers but gave much closer views, amongst those identified were Stilt, Baird's, Least, Semi-palmated and Western Sandpipers, and after some help from Jon Dunn and the Wings party, Short-billed Dowitcher.

In the early afternoon we heard the warblers were beginning to show at Smith's Oaks, Paying our two dollar entrance fee we began working our way around the woods getting our first views of such goodies as Northern Waterthrush, Kentucky and Yellow Warblers amidst a host of Tanagers and Orioles, but the main talking point was the Burrowing Owl seen on the Sun Oilfield that morning.

Rising earlier this morning we drove down from Winnie calling in at the oilfield before light, Flashing the headlights around the field we finally picked up the Burrowing Owl, stood to attention on a small ridge - an excellent start to the day.

As the woods were quiet it was decided Anhuac would be a good fill in, driving out there we passed numerous paddyfields chocka-block full of waders eventually finding Hudsonian Godwit amongst them. At Anhuac itself, now that there was no buggy ride we had to drive around the circuit, eventually finding American Purple Gallinule, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, King and Clapper Rails and good numbers of Eastern Kingbirds, along with some mean looking Alligators, before returning to Smith's Oaks where we notched up both Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers. While over at Audubon's we found Prothonotary Warbler, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler and after some crawling about on hands and knees a Swainson's Warbler.

Next morning we drove into the Sun Oilfield to look for rails, we scored with Sora, Clapper and Virginia but alas no Yellow Rails. Calling in at the wader pools noting little change, we made the trip out to Beaumont, finding the Fish Crows in the park (for me an uninspiring tick). The park also held Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers, plus a number of Pine Warblers.

Driving onto Silsbee we found the Parie Warblers at the appointed site, but unfortunately we could not tempt a Bachmann's Sparrow into the open although it sang well from cover.

On arriving back at Smith's Oaks it was obvious there had been a bit of a fall and in the next couple of hours we gleaned White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireos, while the warbler list was made up of Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Tennessee, Nashville, Northern Parula, Black and White, Cerulean, a stunning Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Kentucky, Hooded, Worm-eating, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat and an American Redstart.

Thinking we had done as well as we could we dashed over to Audubon's, although good numbers of migrants were present they were much the same as Smith's except for Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat and Arcadian Flycatcher according to the locals.

The 19th was more or less a repeat of our first day at High Island, doing the circuit of Sun Oilfield, Rollover, and wader pools before having lunch in the cafe. After which we went over to Smith's to find it much quieter than yesterday although we did find a Yellow-throated Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Yellow-throated Chat while Indigo Buntings were everywhere, Audubon's was much the same except for Eastern Wood Peewee, Brown Thrasher, Philadelphia Vireo and a male Bay-breasted Warbler.

Dawn broke on our last full day at High Island, while driving out to the wader pools we were flashed down by Robin Brace and the other British crew who had found a Least Bittern lurking in the reeds beside the road. On entering Audubon's we were hoping for a good fall to see us on our way, but although several species were present nothing exceptional appeared to be happening, that is until mid-morning when the woods started to fill up with Swainson's Thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Yellow-billed Cuckoos. It was then we heard of the news of a Black-billed Cuckoo over at Smith's, this was big news for the Americans let alone us.

Smith's was alive with birds especially Swainson's and Wood Thrushes. Searching through the woods we found White-eyed, Red-eyed and Solitary Vireos, Yellow-billed and up to 4 Black-billed Cuckoos and a good list of 13 species of warbler. On leaving Smith's we bumped into "Texas Tom" who we had met a number of times during the last few days, who told us he had just left the Magnolia

Warbler just round the back,

Immediately we were off, charging down the path till we reach the spot where the "Maggie" had been seen, to be met by the other British team arriving from the opposite direction. Within minutes we had the bird encircled, as it gave some brilliant views. Calling in at Audubon's there was nothing new, so we started the drive up to the Jones State Forest. On the way we passed paddyfields full of waders, we finally caught up with Wood Duck and Buff-breasted Sandpiper and an enormous flock of Dickcissals.

On our last day in Texas, we spent the morning in the Jones State Forest, the two required species Brown-headed Nuthatch and Red Cockaded Woodpecker being easily found and supplemented with Red-shouldered Hawk, Mississippi Kites, Blue Grosbeak, Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

The rest of the day was spent drifting back to the car hire depot, before catching the early evening flight from Houston back to London. Most of the flight home was spent trying to sort out Roy's lists, for birds seen, birds nearly seen and birds dipped!

During our time in Texas our team had identified 343 full species, with each member getting over 250 ticks.

Mick Fizzer,



Joke follows Tommy Corcorans piece in the last newsletter.

Drawing courtesy of Dudley Chambers.

LATEST DATES, FOR SUMMER VISITORS AND REGULAR PASSAGE MIGRANTS IN THE CLEY 10KM SQUARE.

In the case of the Little Tern, the bracketed date refers to a bird almost certainly of this species, and in the case of Cuckoo, Common Whitethroat, Nightingale and Wood Warbler, no records worthy of inclusion were forthcoming.

Spoonbill - 14-9,	Garganey - 10-9,	Marsh Harrier - 19-8,
Hobby - 28-8,	Avocet - 5-11,	Little Ringed Plover - 27-9,
Dotterel - 12-9,	Little Stint - 3-12,	Temminck's Stint - 28-8,
Curlew Sandpiper - 16-9,	Black-tailed Godwit - 5-12,	Whimbrel - 30-9,
Spotted Redshank - 30-9,	Greenshank - 28-9,	Green Sandpiper - 25-9,
Wood Sandpiper - 9-9,	Common Sandpiper 3-11,	Pomarine Skua - 26-11,
Arctic Skua - 18-11,	Long-tailed Skua - 29-9,	Bonxie - 19-11,
Lesser Black-backed Gull - 11-12,	Sandwich Tern - 17-12,	Common Tern - 4-11,
Arctic Tern - 9-10,	Little Tern - 13-11 (17-12),	Black Tern - 8-9,
Turtle Dove - 8-9,	Nightjar - 27-8,	Swift - 5-9,
Wryneck - 12-9,	Sand Martin - 28-9,	Swallow - 11-11,
House Martin - 28-10,	Tree Pipit - 4-9,	Yellow Wagtail - 15-9,
Black Redstart - 19-10,	Redstart - 14-9,	Whinchat - 13-10,
Wheatear - 28-10,	Ring Ouzel - 28-10,	Grasshopper Warbler - 15-8,
Sedge Warbler - 15-9,	Reed Warbler - 15-9,	Lesser Whitethroat - 17-9,
Garden Warbler - 17-9,	Blackcap - 11-10,	Yellow-browed Warbler - 12-10,
Chiffchaff - 4-11,	Willow Warbler - 26-9,	Spotted Flycatcher - 5-8,
Pied Flycatcher - 27-8,	Red-breasted Flycatcher - 20-9,	

EARLY DATES, FOR RETURNING WINTER VISITORS TO THE CLEY 10KM SQUARE.

The Lapwing date refers to the first post-breeding flock, heading west, These flocks being an annual feature of June, Incidentally the first Common Sandpiper returned on 7th July and for Wheatear it was 19th July, A second summer Glaucous Gull was in Blakeney Harbour on the unusual date of 9th July,

Red-throated Diver - 15-7,	Great Crested Grebe - 30-8,	Red-necked Grebe - 7-8,
Bewick's Swan - 5-11,	Whooper Swan - 29-10,	Brent Goose - 27-8,
Goldeneye - 17-9,	Red-breasted Merganser - 15-7,	Hen Harrier - 30-8,
Rough-legged Buzzard - 29-10,	Merlin - 17-7,	Golden Plover - 15-7,
Grey Plover - 11-8,	Lapwing - 11-6,	Sanderling - 9-8,
Jack Snipe - 23-8,	Woodcock - 12-10,	Pomarine Skua - 3-9,
Arctic Skua - 29-6,	Long-tailed Skua - 27-8,	Bonxie - 15-7,
Glaucous Gull - 18-9,	Razorbill - 14-9,	Short-eared Owl - 12-10,
Shorelark - 12-10,	Rock Pipit - 19-9,	Grey Wagtail - 17-7,
Stonechat - 21-9,	Fieldfare - 19-9,	Redwing - 1-10,
Firecrest - 13-10,	Great Grey Shrike - 19-10,	Brambling - 4-10,
Siskin - 16-9,	Twite - 4-10,	Lapland Bunting - 10-9,
Snow Bunting - 28-9,		

NORFOLK MONTHLY BIRD NEWS.

SEPTEMBER BIRD NEWS.

The information covers the whole of the month, which was carried over from the last news letter, due to the staff annual Scilly holiday!

The Bee-eater seen at Cley and Blakeney on the 3rd, reappeared on the 4th at Paston, and it made its way along the coast to Wolferton, Visiting on route Cley, Titchwell and Holme, in the process flying past, at Cley, a large group of birders awaiting its arrival from Paston! An Osprey was seen at Titchwell RSPB reserve, flying off inland after a brief visit,

One of the very few Barred Warblers of the autumn, unfortunately appeared at Weybourne Camp on the 6th, and was duly, suppressed. Another was reported on the 14th, from Blakeney Point, but no names were put to this record?

A Spotted Crake was killed by a cat in Sheringham on the 8th, the bird was on a Railway embankment along Barford Road in the town,

A Firecrest was found at Bacton Gas Terminal, on the 11th, A Hobby was seen between Burnham Market and Brancaster on the 12th, an unusual bird at this time of year,

A Red-backed Shrike was seen in the Dell area of Holkham Meals, on the 14th, a juvenile,

Two more Red-backed Shrikes were seen at Holme on the 15th, and a Barred Warbler, a Red-backed Shrike and a few Siskin were seen at Holkham Meals,

On the 17th, a Grey Phalarope was seen on the beach to the west of Holkham Gap, whilst the first Yellow-browed Warbler of the autumn was seen nearby at the west end of the Holkham Meals,

An Icterine Warbler joined the two Red-backed Shrike which were still present at Holme, on the 18th, whilst at the west end of Holkham Meals, another Yellow-browed Warbler joined the first,

A Marsh Warbler was seen at Cromer on the 20th, staying to at least the 26th, frequenting an area of clifftop woodland just to the west of the Lighthouse, A Yellow-browed Warbler was found at the same site, on the 22nd, A Wryneck was found on Beeston Bump, Sheringham also on the 20th,

A count of 22 Pomarine Skuas were seen off Paston, during a sea-watch on the 24th,

The bird of the month was undoubtedly a juvenile Sociable Plover seen briefly at Titchwell and Holme, on the 25th, it was last seen flying off towards Hunstanton and presumably off across the Wash towards Lincolnshire?

An Icterine Warbler was at Stiffkey on the 29th, in the strip wood which skirts the marsh edge opposite Blakeney Point, an obvious next stop for tired migrants,

OCTOBER BIRD NEWS.

October was the best month of the year so far, and one of the best Octobers for 15 or more years. There were more good birds in Norfolk during the month than there was on the Scillies, I should know, I spent most of it on the Scillies!

The 1st started off with a Richard's Pipit and a Red-backed Shrike, both at Holme,

On the 2nd, two Richard's Pipits were found at Dead Mans Wood near Sheringham, they were seen briefly in a stubble field above the cliffs, whilst at Great Yarmouth, they finally sorted out the Arctic Warbler, but too late for some people to get to see it that day, Of course, it wasn't present the following day! A Red-breasted Flycatcher was found at West Runton, and the Mediterranean Gull was still at the Overstrand Sewage Outfall, A Red-backed Shrike was seen at the RSPB reserve at Titchwell,

A male Ring Ouzel was at Beeston Bump, on 4th whilst on the 5th at Titchwell there was a Kingfisher, and a single Little Stint were the only birds of note on the RSPB reserve,

On the 7th a Long-tailed Skua was seen on the beach at Bacton, A Yellow-browed Warbler was at Wells, in the Dell near the old toilet block,

The 8th produced another Long-tailed Skua at Paston, and 1 or 2 Yellow-browed Warblers at the RSPB reserve at Titchwell,

On the 9th the 2 Yellow-browed Warblers were still present at Titchwell along with three Lapland Bunting (2 of which were males), and another Yellow-browed was found at Snettisham, whilst at Holme there were, a Ring Ouzel and a Redstart,

During a Sea-watch from Winterton on the 11th, five Leach's Petrels were noted, At Wells woods there were 4 Yellow-browed Warblers, a Pied Flycatcher and 2 Redstart, whilst at Cromer in the evening there was a small fall, which included 2 Ring Ouzel and a pair of Bramblings

On the 12th in Holkham Meals pine woods there was a Great Grey Shrike and a Little Auk, 3 Ring Ouzel, a Black Redstart and a reported 17 Yellow-browed Warblers, whilst at Stiffkey there was an Icterine Warbler, Hawfinch, Redstart and 3 more Yellow-browed Warblers, And further along the coast (to the west), a Richard's Pipit at Holme,

The 13th was a red-letter day for Stiffkey, with an Olive-backed Pipit in the woods skirting the

marshes, the sixth County record if accepted, plus the Icterine Warbler, a Firecrest, an immature Black Redstart and at least 2 Yellow-browed Warblers, A Hoopoe was seen in the dunes at Winterton,

Still at Holkham Meals on the 15th, were up to 7 Yellow-browed Warblers and a Firecrest, 3 Yellow-browed Warblers at Stiffkey.

A juvenile Whiskered Tern spent a week from the 17th in the area of the Welney Wildfowl Trust refuge, but it was only seen in the evenings as it came in to roost, A Radde's Warbler was seen on the East Hills, over the Channel opposite Wells Lifeboat station,

On the 18th, there was an influx of Richard's Pipits into Norfolk, with 2 at Snettisham as well as the 7 seen at Salthouse. There were still Yellow-browed Warblers in Holkham Meals, one in the Dell and another at the West End,

Two Great Grey Shrikes were seen in the county besides the one in the Cley square, with singles also noted at Winterton and Heacham. At Wells there were a single Yellow-browed Warbler and a Firecrest, and a Red-necked Grebe at Titchwell.

A Siberian Gem in the form of a Pallas's Warbler, was found at Holme NNT reserve on the 20th this bird staying for at least a few days,

A male Indigo Bunting appeared at Wells Woods on the 21st, and stayed through to the 30th, fingers crossed for an acceptance from the rarities committee. A rather tame immature Hoopoe appeared on Beeston Common, and stayed through to the 28th, giving many birders excellent views of this usually shy migrant. A Bluethroat was found on Weybourne Camp, luckily near the perimeter fence, and it was seen by hundreds of observers before it disappeared on the 25th. A Firecrest was at Waxham, amongst a fall of some 400 Goldcrest. And there was a Red-breasted Flycatcher, at Stiffkey.

Another Pallas's Warbler was found at Wells, the 3rd Norfolk record of the Autumn, on the East Hills which is on the opposite side of the channel to the Lifeboat station. A Radde's Warbler was found in a marshside hedge at Wareham Greens near Wells late in the afternoon, but the crowds read the directions wrong and missed the bird. Though they did see the consolation prize of a Spoonbill in a creek near Wells.

On the 24th the first signs of the impending Waxwing invasion showed itself, with a single bird seen at Wells. Another Pallas's Warbler was seen at Scratby, near Gt Yarmouth, and a Little Auk was seen off West Runton.

A Red-breasted Flycatcher was seen at Wells, on the 25th.

The 26th produced an Isabelline Shrike at Horsey, not that I heard of this bird at the time, what about us, Please!

At Titchwell on the 27th, there were a Pomarine Skua, Red-necked Grebe and a Lapland Bunting.

The Spoonbill was still present in the channel, to the west of Wells Quay. Four Cranes roosted at Horsey, where up to 9 birds have been seen.

The 29th, saw more Waxwings with more at Cley, and 3 in Sheringham and 4 in Wells.

The Waxwing invasion picked up pace on the 30th, with 20 at Thornham, 7 more at Snettisham, 5 near Brancaster and another 5 at Holme.

On the 31st, there were more Waxwings with 42 seen at Wells and 30 near Wareham, plus a lot more at Cley.

NOVEMBER BIRD NEWS.

On the 2nd a wrecked Little Auk was found at Horsey, on the canal near the Windmill, staying to the 11th. On the same day a number were seen off Cley Coastguards.

A number of Little Auks were noted off Cley, West Runton and Cromer, on the 3rd.

On the 5th the North Norfolk Rough-legged Buzzard was noted all along the coast, from Salthouse to Titchwell. Also at Titchwell a Short-eared Owl and 5 Barnacle Geese on the marshes out towards Thornham. Whilst the winter plumaged adult Mediterranean Gull had moved along the coast, from Overstrand sewage outflow to Cromer Pier.

The Rough-legged buzzard was found to go to roost each evening near the church in Titchwell village, though unfortunately the 12th proved to be the final evening.

Titchwell seemed to be the place as on the 13th a partial eclipse adult drake Baikal Teal was found on the fresh lagoon at the RSPB reserve, this bird was present to at least the 22nd, but proved elusive as there was an RSPB working party on the pool each morning flushing all the duck onto nearby salt marshes to feed. Two Pomarine Skuas were noted off Titchwell on the same date, and grebe and sea duck were starting to build up in number. A Black Guillemot, a Red-necked Grebe and four Little Auks were seen flying west offshore at Paston, the Black Guillemot was later seen off Cley coastguards. A Little Auk was the only thing of note at Holme.

A couple of Rough-legged Buzzard were noted on the 16th, with one at Catfield in the Broads and another near Burnham Market in North Norfolk.

The 18th was a day of sea-watching, with strong north-easterly winds pushing the birds inshore. Off Hunstanton Cliffs, a number of birds were noted which included 23 Pomarine Skuas, 16 Great Skuas, 30 Arctic Skuas and 15 Little Gulls.

Whilst at Titchwell, 14 Pomarine Skuas were the only birds of note. Little Auks and Pomarine Skuas were also noted off Cley.

A Rough-legged Buzzard was seen over Heacham, on the 19th, and a drake Green-winged Teal was at Titchwell RSPB reserve (which remained to at least 23rd).

The sea-watching continued on the 20th, with the following seen off Titchwell; a Leach's Petrel, a Sooty Shearwater, 20 Little Auks and 20 Pomarine Skuas. Another Sooty Shearwater was noted off Waxham, whilst a little farther along the coast at Paston there was 22 Pomarine Skuas and 19 Little Auks noted. An adult Glaucous Gull flew past Winterton, and 12 Pomarine Skuas were off Lynn Point. Cromer seemed to have the best selection with 20 Little Auks, 2 Puffins and 26 Pomarine Skuas, the Puffins would have been nice to see - for some reason an uncommon bird off North Norfolk.

A Black-bellied Dipper (a continental race) was found on the river at Lyng on the 21st, it remained through into December, it has on occasion gave excellent views and has been heard to sing when the sun shone. The only other bird of note on this date, was a Little Auk off Cromer.

A drake Red-crested Pochard was found at Strumpshaw RSPB reserve near Norwich, on 27th. It seems that the drake Green-winged Teal had moved from Titchwell to Tottenhill gravel pits to the south of Kings Lynn, as with the Baikal Teal it probably didn't much like the disturbance from the RSPB working party. An Iceland gull spent the day at Breydon Water, Great Yarmouth, but unfortunately it hasn't been seen since, another uncommon bird in Norfolk.

DECEMBER BIRD NEWS.

Due to the lack of space in this quarters news-letter, the Norfolk Bird News for December has been held over to the April News-letter. If we have more than 9 pages of A4, the postage goes up from 2nd class to 1st class, we would rather spend the extra money on other things such as the free car sticker included in with this News-letter.

CLEY MONTHLY BIRD NEWS.

SEPTEMBER BIRD NEWS.

It was decided to leave over to this newsletter the information covering the last 5 days of the month, which time didn't allow us to do in the last newsletter, due to the fact that it had to go to press before the editorial board left for the Isles of Scilly on 1st of October.

No notes for the 26th, but on the 27th Pat's Pool held 9 Little Stints, a Little Ringed Plover and a Greenshank, whilst a Pectoral Sandpiper was seen and heard as it flew west.

Good numbers of waders were on the reserve and passing through on the 28th, including 12 Greenshanks, 6 Spotted Redshanks, Little Stint, Knot, Grey, Golden and Green Plovers (large numbers of the latter) on Simmond's Scrape alone. A Wheatear and a Whinchat were in the Eye Field and an Icterine Warbler was at Stiffkey.

A nice bright juvenile White-rumped Sandpiper was the bird of the day on the 29th, in company with 8 Little Stints, 12 Ruff and 6 Spotted Redshank, all on the reserve. Birds passing offshore at the Coastguards included 10 Pomarine Skuas, 8 Arctic Skuas, a Manx Shearwater and a Shag, whilst a Merlin, in the typical style of the species, dashed quickly but erratically across the Eye Field.

On the final day of the month, a very handsome Black-throated Diver, in full breeding plumage was on the sea off the Coastguards, and other birds passing offshore at this point included 7 Bonxies, 5 Arctic Skuas, a Scaup, 2 Common Scoter, 2 Red-breasted Merganser and a trickle of returning Brent Geese. A Kingfisher was again on the reserve, as were a Whimbrel, 20 Ruff and the White-rumped Sandpiper, the latter staying only until around 11.45am.

As a matter of interest, during the course of the month, totals of c130 Sabine's Gulls, c550 Leach's Petrels and 300 plus Long-tailed Skuas were reported from around the coasts of Britain.

OCTOBER BIRD NEWS.

By all accounts October was a pretty exciting month in the square, probably the best for a long time, with the largest number of winter visitors pouring in, together with latish summer birds and other less common visitors. But as I was alas, not at home to witness these stimulating events, I'm afraid I will not be able to do full justice to it. Nevertheless, I think that the coverage is pretty comprehensive, thanks being due to Barry Burton, Howard Medhurst, both the log books from Nancy's cafe and Walsey Hill, and in particular Joe Johnson who was kind enough to gather a lot of the notes together for me.

Perhaps due to the numbers of rare or uncommon species involved, I think that I should remind members that they are all subject to ratification by the British Birds or County rarities committees.

Many days of the month were quite mild. Rainfall was around average, falling mainly in the first week, and the winds were light south or south-easterlies which together with high pressure systems over Scandinavia and Central Europe, created ideal conditions for depositing migrants along the East Coast.

The month began with good numbers of Brent Geese passing offshore and a Spotted Crake on the Big Pool, but the place to be was Blakeney Point, where there was a Richard's Pipit and a Short-toed Lark (Watch House), the latter being only the third record for the square; the previous two being on the 14th October 1959 (Cley) and 8th September 1968 (Gramborough Hill). Waders on the reserve included Little Stint, Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwit and a second Richard's Pipit was near the Coastguards.

Next day (2nd) a Yellow-browed Warbler was at Walsey Hill and the Spotted Crake remained on the Big Pool, but again Blakeney Point held the cream, with a Red-breasted Flycatcher at the Hood and 4 Long-tailed Skuas were noted offshore.

A surprise on the 3rd was a Little Tern (normally all gone by late August-early September), though plenty of Sandwich Terns remained offshore. Also 6 Common Scoter passed west.

The sea was again interesting on the 4th, with Redwings coming in and two Red-necked Grebes and a Black-throated Diver were off shore. The reserve held only 2 Spotted Redshank, Little Stint and a few Ruff, these still being present the next day when a Whinchat was new, as was a Wheatear in the Eye Field on the 6th, when a Bonxie and a few Eiders moved east.

Yet again, sea-watching proved awarding on the 7th, with 2 Slavonian, a Red-necked and 2 Great Crested Grebes being seen along with a Bonxie and 4 Arctic Skuas. A similar assortment of grebes remained on the 8th, with the addition of a Long-tailed, several Pomarine and 6 Arctic Skuas and a Bonxie plus a Mediterranean Gull and several Little Gulls, and the late Little Gull was seen again. A Kingfisher and a Whinchat were by Cley Windmill.

By the 9th, Brent Geese numbers were building up and odd Swallows and House Martins still passed through. A Merlin was over the reserve and 15 Twite were by the Sea Pool, where 5 Curlew Sandpipers were new and a Yellow-browed Warbler was found at Salthouse.

The 11th saw the beginning of a longish spell of easterlies and associated with this were very large numbers of immigrant thrushes and lesser numbers of Bramblings, Blakeney Point also holding Black Redstart, Whinchat, Blackcap and a female Merlin, whilst 2 Ring Ouzel were at Morston. A Long-

tailed Duck moved west past Cley Coastguards.

Another big 'thrush-day' occurred on the 12th, including hundreds of Blackbirds, Blakeney Point held lots of Robins, some Brambling and a Black Redstart and a Short-eared Owl and a Woodcock were seen to come in off the sea at Cley. The 2 Ring Ouzels were still at Morston together with a 'Northern' Chiffchaff. Stiffkey also did well with Icterine and 3 Yellow-browed Warblers, 100 Brambling, Hawfinch, Spotted Flycatcher and a Black Redstart. A Yellow-browed Warbler was also at Cley, along the East Bank, where a Shore Lark was also seen. Another Yellow-browed Warbler and a Pied Flycatcher were in a village garden and 8 Lapland Buntings were near the North Hide.

Both quality and quantity continued to be high on the 13th, when Stiffkey was host to an Icterine and 3 Yellow-browed Warblers, a Firecrest, Black Redstart and an Olive-backed Pipit, unfortunately, just outside the square, the only record for the square being a short stayer on Blakeney Point, as recently as 2nd October 1987. Whilst at Morston 2 Ring Ouzel, Whinchat and lots of Goldcrest were seen. A Pied Flycatcher and a Blackcap were on Blakeney Point and a Little Auk at Salthouse.

Similar species remained at Stiffkey on 14th, with the addition of a Ring Ouzel and a Redstart, a Black Redstart was on Blakeney Point, also remaining there next day with a Ring Ouzel and an added bonus of a Sabine's Gull on the beach, 9 Scaup passed east off Cley Coastguards, and a Black Redstart at Salthouse.

Yet another huge influx occurred on the 16th, mainly a mixture of thrushes, but also some high quality birds, with reports of a Red-breasted Flycatcher, Radde's Warbler, a Pied Wheatear and a possible Black-eared Wheatear, Little Bunting, 750 Brambling, lots of Goldcrest and a Snow Bunting. The Icterine and 2 Yellow-browed Warblers still found Stiffkey to their liking, together with a Pied Flycatcher and lots of Brambling and Goldcrest. (Writing this report for the month is becoming increasingly painful!).

More anguish on the 17th (as a temporary Scilly exile), when news trickled through of a Black-eared Wheatear at Salthouse, the details of which I can do no better than quote ad-lib from my source of information. "Late in the afternoon a Wheatear (sp) was found at Little Eye and provisionally identified as a female Black-eared Wheatear. It was lost at dusk and never seen again for certain, although some observers thought they may have seen it on the 18th when several Wheatears were in the area, including one odd bird". Apart from this 'loads' of new arrivals were on Blakeney Point, mainly Goldcrest, Robins and Redwings, and departures included 2 Swallows, Ring Ouzel and a Black Redstart, with another of the latter, together with a Common Redstart and a Whinchat were along Cley beach. Also at Cley were 5 Barnacle Geese, which proved to be the first of several small parties, which built up to a total of 32 by the 19th.

The 18th turned out to be a 'Richard's Pipit day' with claims of 3 at Kelling Quag, 2 Salthouse beach, 2 along the Iron Road and 2 near Arnold's Marsh. Also along Salthouse beach were Short-eared Owl and a Woodcock, whilst Leach's Petrel and an Arctic Skua passed offshore at Cley Coastguards.

A minimum of 4 Richard's Pipits remained in the Salthouse area on the 19th, whilst other good birds were a Bluethroat, Richard's Pipit, Firecrest, 2 Ring Ouzel, Jack Snipe and 3 Woodcock on Blakeney Point and a Great Grey Shrike at Cley, where also 3 Black Redstarts.

The 20th was murky and wet, but nevertheless, lots of Siskin, Brambling, Goldcrests, Fieldfares and Redwings were seen to come in off the sea, where Pomarine Skua passed east and a Great Grey Shrike was on Salthouse Heath. On Blakeney Point there was still a Richard's Pipit and a Short-eared Owl, while at Cley a Yellow-browed Warbler frequented Walsey Hill.

On the 21st, the scrub over the West Bank near the Cley Coastguards car-park produced Pallas's Warbler, Siberian Stonechat and 2 or 3 very dark Willowchiffs. The Barnacle Geese still 'chomped' away in the Eye Field and a Shore Lark was seen on Blakeney Point (the only one seen there so far this winter). A Red-breasted Flycatcher was at Stiffkey and a Mediterranean Gull, 4 Little Gulls and an Arctic Skua passed west at Cley Coastguards, and 30 Common scoter at Salthouse where a lot more Bramblings, Goldcrests and thrushes were coming in off the sea.

The Pallas's Warbler still gambolled in the gorse by the Coastguards car-park on 22nd, when a splendid male Red-spotted Bluethroat was found at Weybourne (to the 25th at least). Two Richard's Pipits were still at Salthouse and Little Stint and a Greenshank on Cley marshes.

The Bluethroat was caught and ringed on the 23rd, when 2 Little Stints and a late Avocet were at Cley on the scrapes and a Ring Ouzel in the Eye Field, whilst Gramborough Hill was host to a Firecrest.

A sizeable westerly movement of sea-duck was observed off Cley Coastguards on the 24th, which included a 'very big' party of Common Scoter and 30 to 40 Scaup, and 2 Little Auks headed in the same direction off Weybourne. Three Short-eared Owls came in off the sea, and 2 Black Redstart were along the shingle bank. A Woodcock was flushed out of the North Foreland pine plantation.

Yet another large thrush-rush occurred on the 25th, when a Velvet Scoter was just offshore at Coastguards and 3 or 4 Little Auks zipped past there. Along with the thrushes came 4 Owls, in off the sea (but no details on whether Long-eared or Short-eared, but at Holme on this date 3 owls came in, 2 of which were Long-eared and a Short-eared). Several Ring Ouzels were amongst the other thrushes on Blakeney Point, where also 18 Woodcock were counted, with a few more at Cley.

A dead Little Auk on the 'Plait' (Beach Road pool) was a sad sight on the 26th, but very much alive were 9 Barnacle Geese grazing on Pope's Marsh off the East Bank. A Black Redstart was on Blakeney Point, and 2 Long-tailed Ducks were on the sea off Cley.

By the 27th, the flocks of Golden Plover and Brent Geese in the Eye Field had built up considerably, the latter containing a Black Brant. Four Waxwings were watched fly-catching from the telegraph wires by Cley Sluice and a Ring Ouzel was over the Wiveton Bank nearby, with another at Kelling.

On the 28th late summer birds included 2 Swallows around the houses at the top of the Beach Road, the Ring Ouzel remained by the Wiveton Bank, a Common Sandpiper was by the Beach Road Sluice and a Wheatear was by the Coastguards, also a Stonechat. In stark contrast, definite winter birds, the 4 Waxwings fed greedily in the hawthorns by the Sluice. On the sea 30+ Little Gulls passed through, as did 4 Great and 7 Arctic Skuas and a single Ruff was in the Eye Field.

On the 29th, the sea-watchers were rewarded with sightings of several Great, Arctic and Pomarine Skuas, 25 Manx Shearwaters, 12 Pink-footed Geese, Great Northern and Red-throated Divers, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, 5 Long-tailed Ducks, Velvet Scoter, 2 late Sandwich Terns, 2 Purple Sandpipers and 2 or 3 Little Auks, with another picked up alive from the Catchwater Drain. Two Whooper Swans dropped onto Simmond's Scrape, where also 2 Little Stints and a Black-tailed Godwit, the stints moving later to the Serpentine. More terrestrial were Rough-legged Buzzard and a Richard's Pipit at Cley.

By the 30th the number of Waxwings now encamped in Wiveton village, had multiplied tenfold, now totalling 40, with an additional threesome on Salthouse Heath. A lone Swallow hawked around Cley Hall Farm and a Pale-bellied Brent Goose had joined the Eye Field congregation, whilst on the other side of the shingle bank, up to 80 Little Auks, c650 Common Scoter, 5 Long-tailed Duck and a baby Boy George, in the form of a first winter Glaucous Gull moved west, a Pomarine Skua headed east and 2 Short-eared Owls flapped in off the sea.

The Waxwing flock showed another but small increase on the 31st, now numbering 44 at Wiveton, but the majority had left for pastures new by early afternoon. Also on the morning of the 31st a further 21 Waxwings were on Salthouse Heath. A Rough-legged Buzzard was seen on Blakeney Point and a Common Buzzard was seen at Kelling Quag at 9.30am, and probably the same bird as Wells at 10.30am. Another late Swallow was at Morston, where also Water Rail and 3 Bramblings, whilst 9 Barnacle Geese saw the month out in the Eye Field.

NOVEMBER BIRD NEWS.

The month opened with a Rough-legged Buzzard coming in off the sea around 9.30am and possibly, the same bird on Blakeney Point until mid-day. Other arrivals were Waxwings, with 21 on Salthouse Heath, 10 (only 2 later) at Wiveton, 7 west past Walsey Hill and 5 near the Lime Kilns-Three Swallows Pub. Birds passing offshore included 4 to 5 Little Auks, an adult Little Gull flew west and 10 Red-throated Divers, and a noticeable feature was the large numbers of juvenile Herring Gulls passing west. A flock of 40 Snow Buntings and a Stonechat were around the Coastguards Car-park.

The 2nd proved quite a busy day offshore, with c50 Little Gulls, 14 Little Auks, Bonxie,

several hundred Common Scoter, 8 Golden Plover, 12 Red-throated Divers, a Long-tailed Duck, 2 Velvet Scoter, 2 Sabine's Gulls and a very late Little Tern whilst 3 Red-breasted Merganser were in Blakeney Harbour, 23 Twite were on Blakeney Point and a Kingfisher by the Beach Road Sluice, 5 Waxwings were on Salthouse Heath, another 5 were seen on Church Lane in Cley village and another was seen in flight over Cley. The Rough-legged Buzzard was seen again at both Cley marshes and on Salthouse Heath.

Amazingly, on the 3rd, 3 species of tern were seen off the Coastguards, Sandwich, Common and Little Terns, also offshore were Scaup, 120 Common Scoter, a Little Auk and 5 Little Terns. A trek to Blakeney Point produced a Water Rail (flushed from the sueada), Common Sandpiper, Great Northern Diver and an adult Whooper Swan (the latter seen heading west, seen earlier on Simmond's Scrape). Most of the Bohemian Chatterers had moved on, but 4 were along Church Lane and 3 remained on Salthouse Heath. The Rough-legged Buzzard made another circuit of Salthouse, where also a ringtail Hen Harrier, 4 Black-tailed Godwits and a Lapland Bunting were on Cley reserve.

The main talking point on the 4th, was a very odd-looking thrush along the shingle bank and in the Eye Field. The birds size, shape, build and Jizz were of a Blackbird, but with a buff supercillium and malar stripe, pale throat, pinkish horse-shoe on breast; belly and flanks were grey. From some angles the tail and primaries looked a deep blue and a pale patch on the folded wing reminded one of a Ring Ouzel. It also sported a buff eye-ring. The bill was dark horn coloured and the legs were also dark. Some of the other features were very subtle and the longer one looked at it, the odder it became. My personal view is that it was an aberrant (what a convenient word) Blackbird, although several other observers did not share this opinion and a look at the underwing pattern might have helped, but it steadfastly refused to show this feature. Other, less contentious species on the 4th were a Hen Harrier (ringtail) in off the sea on Blakeney point, a Little Auk, 9 adult and a 1st winter Little Gulls and a Common Tern, offshore, 8 Barnacle Geese were still in the area, dividing their time between the Reserve and Salthouse. A Scaup was on Arnold's Marsh, and a late or maybe a wintering Chiffchaff was by Snipe's Marsh.

Yet more Waxwings put in an appearance on the 5th when 16 flew west over Cley, 12 Woodcock were along the 'Hangs' (also a Fox), 3 Siskin at Hammer Hills and 3 Bewick's Swans, Merlin and a Hen Harrier all traversed them Eye Field, as did a Woodlark, the latter being a rare bird for the Cley square. Dotted around the reserve were a Scaup, 2 Avocet, 50 Snow Bunting, Stonechat and Kingfisher, whilst Purple Sandpiper, Shag and 2 Long-tailed Duck passed offshore.

On the 6th, a visit to Morston produced Rough-legged buzzard, Merlin, Velvet Scoter and a Long-tailed Duck, while at the opposite side of the square the Black Brant and 9 Barnacle Geese fed with the Brents at Kelling Quag. Between these two points, a Richard's Pipit flew west at the Coastguards, 3 Black-tailed Godwits were on the North Scrape and a Munjac Deer was seen at Hammer Hills.

A Water Rail was along the River Glaven on the 7th as was a Grey Wagtail, another Grey Wagtail was at the Sewage works near Glandford and another Fox trotted along the edge of a field by Cley Church in mid-afternoon.

On the 8th, Kingfisher, Stonechat and a female Scaup were the only birds of note on Cley reserve, but the 9th was a little more lively with a Slavonian Grebe, Gannet, 2 Eider, 3 Red-breasted Merganser and a Sandwich Tern off the Coastguards, while 6 Bewick's Swans flew west and 2 Black-tailed Godwits were on the reserve. A single Waxwing headed west at Blakeney and a Rough-legged Buzzard was seen at Walsey Hill.

The Sandwich Tern still lingered offshore on the 10th, when a Swallow was at Salthouse and 2 Velvet Scoter passed through. Both the Swallow and the Sandwich Tern were seen again on the 11th, when a Short-eared Owl was seen near the Coastguards, a Lapland Bunting by the East Bank and 2 Little Gulls, a Shag, 5 Common Scoter and 5 Eider together with 2 Porpoise all moved through.

Lapland Buntings increased to 3 by the East Bank on the 12th, and on the 13th the sea again proved worthy of a look, with 10 Common Scoter, Black Guillemot, Little Auk, several Long-tailed Duck, Velvet Scoter, Arctic Skua, Red-necked and Little Grebes all being seen off the Coastguards, and incredibly, the Little Tern was still in the area with 2 Sandwich Terns. A local rarity, a Puffin was seen at Weybourne, 2 Waxwings were on Salthouse Heath, with another singleton along Church Lane in Cley village. Snow Buntings were present in good numbers, with flocks of c100 and 75

along towards Blakeney Point and another flock of c50 near Cley Coastguards.

On the 14th, all observations were of a maritime nature, with Puffin (Weybourne bird?), 2 Goosander, 14 Long-tailed Ducks, 60 Kittiwakes, 6 Little Auks, Guillemots passing through at the rate of c300 per hour, Bonxie, 5 Pomarine Skuas, Grey Phalarope, 50 Knot and a Black-headed Gull with a full chocolate hood, all of which were seen off the Coastguards.

The 15th was notable only for a female Ruddy Duck on the reserve, though still only the 3rd record of this species for the Cley square. Things were a little better on the 16th, when a Common Buzzard was seen over Salthouse Heath, a Short-eared Owl over the West Bank, a Bewick's Swan on Simmond's Scrape, a single Black Brant on the Eye Field and 12 Long-tailed Ducks in Blakeney Pit.

Looking out of place for mid-November 2 Sandwich Terns still patrolled offshore on Blakeney Point on the 17th and on the 18th both Spotted Redshank and Black-tailed Godwit lingered on the reserve, while 4 Little Auks, an Arctic and 3 Pomarine Skuas moved through.

On the 19th, both 'Boy George' and a first year Glaucous Gull were seen from the Coastguards, also 8 or 9 Little Auks, 4 Long-tailed Duck (and 13 in Blakeney Pit), Velvet Scoter, Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes, Bonxie, several Pomarine Skuas and 2 Little Gulls.

With similar conditions on 20th, sea-watching produced 19 Little Auks, 4 Velvet Scoter, both Glaucous Gulls, 10 Long-tailed Ducks and several Pomarine Skuas. A single Waxwing graced Cley village.

By the 21st movement on the sea was reduced to a trickle and only a Little Gull, 2 Velvet Scoters and a Pomarine Skua were recorded off the Coastguards. A small group of 4 Waxwings were seen on Salthouse Heath, on the 22nd, and a Hen Harrier hunted over Pope's Marsh same day.

The 23rd was a quiet day with only a single Waxwing at Cley for the notebook, and the following two pages were blank.

The Kingfisher was again on the reserve on the 26th, and a Slavonian Grebe on the sea off the Coastguards, where a Pomarine Skua and a Shag were also noted.

A Puffin was off the Coastguards on the 27th and next day a late Little Stint hurried hither and thither amongst a flock of c100 Dunlin on the Serpentine off the East Bank, and a male Stonechat still frequented this area, an uncommon bird in the square.

On 29th, c35 Pink-footed Geese headed west over the Salthouse and on the last day of the month a Hen Harrier and 6 Bewick's Swans (2 adults and 4 juveniles) passed over Cley reserve westwards, a female Scaup was on the North Drain and the Little Stint frequented the North Scrape.

DECEMBER BIRD NEWS.

No doubt due to at least in part, to the exceptionally mild weather, December was pretty average with very few birds of note. Unfortunately, the fears I expressed about our Shorelarks seem to have been realised, with only a single bird being seen so far - and that disappeared! Possibly a few more may arrive if the weather hardens on the Continent, but I doubt if they will ever reach their former numbers, such as in 1972 when around 250 were in the country, with 110 between Cley and Salthouse alone.

Past glories of December include Red-breasted Goose, Black-necked Grebe (up to 10 in 1986), Ring-necked Duck (79), Red Kite (72), Sea Eagle (4 separate birds), Goshawk (81), Gyr Falcon (53), Corncrake (62), Richard's Pipit (79) and Arctic Redpoll (72).

Interesting events on the 2nd included a Hen Harrier swooping on a finch flock sitting on top of a hedge and a total of 94 Yellowhammers in 20 minutes, all heading towards Salthouse Heath, presumably to roost.

Next day provided more action, with 25 Little Auks past the Coastguards, Goosander, 2 female Scaup and a late Little Stint on the North Scrape, with a male Stonechat by the East Bank, 4 Brambling near Rectory Hill and 50 to 60 Woodcock in local woodland.

A Lapland Bunting was in the Eye Field on the 4th and a Lesser Black-backed Gull and Black-tailed Godwit in Blakeney Harbour on 5th when a single Waxwing and a Pink-footed Goose headed west.

The 6th was brightened by a Kingfisher by the Beach Road sluice, and a Little Auk off the Coastguards and 50 Twite were at Morston.

Birds seen from the Coastguards on the 10th, included Little Auk, Long-tailed Duck with another in Blakeney Pit) and a yellow-legged Herring Gull, whilst a Common Buzzard was at Kelling and a Water Rail along the River Glaven. Also of interest were parties of 14, 35 and 42 Curlew and 9 Bar-tailed Godwits over Glandford at dusk, presumably heading for Blakeney Harbour to roost after feeding inland.

The 11th saw the end of an era, as Nancy Gull served the last slice of Bread-pudding at the famous Nancy's Cafe - she will be sorely missed. This day proved to be the last day for the 2 female Scaup on Arnold's Marsh, but the Goosander stayed on and another Lesser Black-backed Gull kept it company. A couple of Waxwings were found in Blakeney and the male Stonechat was again seen along the East Bank.

The Black Brant was at Salthouse on the 13th and in the evening 3 single Woodcock passed over Old Womans Lane in 5 minutes on exactly the same flight path, presumably on route to feed out on the marshes.

The 14th was notable only for a flock of 100+ Tree Sparrows near Thornhill and a party of Pink-footed Geese calling in the dark over Old Womans Lane, presumably some of the birds from further west, in search of new feeding areas, as this year all the sugar beet tops were ploughed in immediately after they were harvested in West Norfolk.

An unusual sight (for Norfolk) on 15th, was of 3 Grey Wagtails together by the Sewage Works near Glandford and a single Pink-footed Goose headed west over Cley reserve.

Even more unusual on the 17th was 2 terns off the Coastguards, one a Sandwich, the other almost certainly a Little (it was seen a long way out but seen by a very experienced observer, Howard Medhurst).

On the 18th the Goosander spent its final day on Arnold's Marsh, and a Shag was on the North Scrape.

Yet another Waxwing was seen on the 30th, this time at Wiveton and 2 Lapland Buntings were in the Eye Field.

The year ended on a brighter note, with Great Northern Diver, Long-tailed Duck and a Shag in Blakeney Pit, a Merlin over the Eye Field, a Hen Harrier over Rectory Hill, 2 more gaggles of 'gazumped' geese (35 and 22), 12 Woodcock around Hammer Hills and the Tree Sparrows still chirruped from the Kale.

J. T. Corcoran.