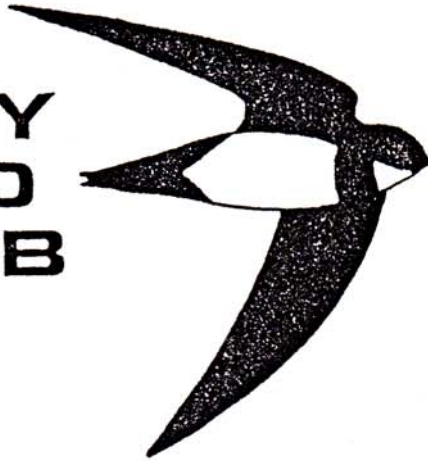


CLEY BIRD CLUB



C/o Driftwood Cottage
Longhouse Yard
Cley-next-the-sea
Holt, Norfolk
NR25 7RU

0263-740-095

NEWS-LETTER NUMBER 5.

APRIL 1987.

Hello once again,

The start of the second year of the Cley Bird Club and its good to know that the vast majority of the membership are into their second year, so I must be doing a fairly decent job of the news-letters? This year sees the start of both the Breeding bird atlas and the Wintering bird atlas, both three year surveys with the idea to produce an atlas on both at the end of the period. These will constitute the first 1km square bird surveys ever undertaken in Great Britain, the Cley Bird Club leads the way. The Answerphone will I hope be in operation sometime in the summer ready for the autumn, that's if we get enough in the way of donations to cover the costs. Please read the Answerphone piece in this news-letter, contributors needed, please. The birds of the first quarter of 1987 are as follows: Sooty Shearwater, Dotterel, Black-necked Grebe, Waxwings, Smew and Peregrine in January. Red-crested Pochard, Red Kite, Glaucous Gull and Avocet in February. And in March, Iceland Gulls, Crane, Sandwich Terns and some early summer passerines.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS.

This year and for the next three years we, the members of the Cley Bird Club, are going to undertake the first survey of the breeding birds of any area on a 1km square basis, this will be the Breeding Birds of the Cley 10km Square. We will after the three years collate all the data and produce an atlas, we also plan to start a wintering bird survey later this year and produce an atlas for this as well. Any of the members wishing to take part in the survey please write for details and the squares available, and I will send all the relevant material to them. Up to now we have a number of the local birders surveying some of the squares, but we can't cover the area well enough we need your help. Most of the locals are doing up to four squares and there are 56 squares in all, there are 34 squares left and not all the good ones have gone yet.

The following squares are still vacant, please take some and let's get them covered. They are as follows: 0040-0041-0402-0403-0404-0405-0406-0140-0141-0142-0143-0144-0145-0146-0240-0241-0244-0245-0246-0341-0441-0540-0451-0640-0641-0642-0644-0742-0743-0744-0482-0940-0941-0942.

If you feel up to covering two, three or four squares please take them, if we can get 100% coverage all the better. The more coverage we get on both the surveys the more important the information will be, and the better the sales will be of both the breeding and wintering atlas's.

**CLEY MARSH WILDFOWL COUNTS.
WINTER 1986-87.**

Dates.	14-9-86.	12-10-86.	16-11-86.	14-12-86.	18-1-97.	15-2-87.	15-3-87
Mute Swan.	8	6		4	17	6	3
Greylag Goose.	249	60	67	3		2	160
Canada Goose.	19			13		18	16
Brent (DB).				70	900	6-900	528
Brent (PB).							4
Shelduck.	39		9	19	32	85	92
Wigeon.	273	734	1850	2490(+)	280	324	917
Gadwall.	109	14	43	12	8	53	69
Teal.	716	574	1060	701	332	260	83
Mallard.	234	146	144	186(+)	720	220	36
Pintail.		67	203	256	2	357	62
Shoveller.	15	16	52	25(+)	6	36	14
Pochard.							1
Tufted Duck.					2		8
Goldeneye.				1	9	4	2
Smew.					1		
Merganser.						1	
Coot.				3	15	10	14

Many thanks to Dr Derek Kelsey for the Cley Marshes Wildfowl Count results for the 1986-87 winter, and many thanks to the many Birders who count the wildfowl every month.

NORFOLK LOCAL GRAPEVINE.

The Local Telephone Grapevine for Norfolk is now in operation, each of the 32 people on the list will have received the form with the names and telephone numbers and details on who to ring with bird news. There are a few rules and they are as follows:

- (1). Please ring the person below you (number 32 rings number 1), or the next one down until you talk to some-one in "Person".
- (2). Please tell your call who the news came from, ie, if Steve Gantlett finds the bird then the 10 people above him don't get left out, so you say "Crane at Cley on fields off the Blakeney Bank, it was found by Steve Gantlett", or words to that effect.
- (3). Please ring round until you've exhausted the list, or you reach the source.

ANSWERPHONE.

Many thanks to the many who offered to help pay for the cost of the installation of the proposed Cley Bird Club Answerphone, some of the offers were a little over generous! Thank you. The idea is a good one but we have some opposition from a certain person who runs a National bird news service, he says that he has an answerphone with the Norfolk bird news on it already and it only cost £10 a year to join! I'm proposing to set up a Cley Bird Club answerphone to serve only the membership of the club, the information on the recorded message will cover the Cley 10km square first and foremost with good East Anglian birds always taking second place. We will also include in the message any real mega's but only a reference to them being hot news, and telling members who are interested in these birds to contact Bird Alert or Bird Line for full details.

I would like to ask now for donations to cover the cost of the answerphone and the installing of the new tele-phone line, we are looking for something in the region of £500 (50 members each giving £10 each) this will able us to buy a very sophisticated machine and help us to run a better service. If we don't raise this figure then we will buy a cheaper machine and do the job as well as we possibly can, I hope we raise the cash so we can run a decent service.

Would any member wishing to donate to the fund please send a cheque or postal order for £10 to Eddie Myers at the usual address, every person who donates to the fund will receive a five year membership of the answerphone plus we will publish a list of contributors. Membership to the Cley Bird Club answerphone service will be £2.50 to £3.50 per annum, so those donating to the setting up of the service will be getting a bargain.

BIRDWATCHING IN THE GAMBIA

Steve Gantlett is organising a fortnight's holiday/birdwatching tour to The Gambia, with the departure in late November 1987. Steve led a very successful tour there in 1986, and this will be his third visit there. It's a superb country for birding, so if you'd like to join a *small group* (max 10 participants) tour there with an experienced leader why not contact Steve? The tour will be primarily for birding, but will not be frantic 'twitching'; there will be plenty of time for relaxing and enjoying the areas visited as well as the birds. The cost will be £890, inclusive of airflight, all accommodation and meals and local transport (including up-river). If you might be interested please contact Steve for full details at:
18 Old Woman's Lane, Cley. (Cley 740127).

A KESTREL AUTOPSY.

A female Kestrel found by Steve Gantlett at Cley on the 13th of April 1986, was sent to The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at Monks Wood Experimental Station Huntingdon for analysis the following are their findings:

Report on the post-mortem examination and chemical analysis of:

Species: Kestrel
Ref. No: 8624
Collection Date: 13th April 1986
Collector: S. J. M. Gantlett
Locality: Cley-Next-The-Sea, Norfolk
Circumstances: Road casualty
Autopsy: Adult female, weight at autopsy 254.8g. In good, plump condition. The body was haemorrhaged. The gizzard was normal. The kidney was mangled.

Probable cause of death: Road casualty

Chemical examinations:

Organochlorines.
concentrations as ppm wet weight,
unless otherwise stated.
Analysis by gas-liquid chromatography.
Analyst: Monks Wood.

Toxic metals.
concentrations as ppm dry weight,
unless otherwise stated.
Analysis by atomic absorption.
Analyst: Monks Wood.

Tissue: Liver
% liquid: 5.98
pp'-DDE: 3.73
pp'-TDE:
pp'-DDT:
Dieldrin: 0.72
Hept.epox:
y HCH:
HCB:
PCB: 5.45

Tissue: Liver
% water:
Mercury: ND
Copper:
Zinc:
Lead:
Cadmium:

ND = none detected

Any of our members finding a corpse of one of the following list of eight species, Peregrine, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Merlin, Long-eared Owl, Heron, Kingfisher or Great Crested Grebe, are asked to send it to the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at Monks Wood for Post-mortem and analyses of pesticide residues. This is a worthwhile cause and they will also refund your postage. the full postal address is:

The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE17 2LS.

Notes on the Residue Figures

The categories into which the various residue levels are placed are intended as a guide only, as to their significance, based on experimental work so far completed. Those at the lower end are, as stated, generally the background range of residues now found in all specimens; the possible interactions of various compounds at these levels are not yet clear.

Unless otherwise stated, results are expressed in parts per million (ppm) in terms of fresh (wet) weight in the case of organochlorines and dry weight in the case of the toxic metals. (When given differently, w/w = wet weight, d/w = dry weight, lipid = crude extractable fat.)

pp'-DDE is the main metabolite (breakdown product) of pp'DDT. It is still toxic and can cause all the sublethal effects of the parent product, though its lethal toxicity is usually less than that of DDT. pp'TDE (DDD) is an insecticide in its own right (Rhothane). It occurs as an impurity in technical DDT but may also be a post-mortem metabolite of pp'DDT; although toxic to birds, residues found are normally too low to have had any deleterious effect. The insecticides aldrin and heptachlor are rapidly metabolised to dieldrin and heptachlor epoxide ('Hept. epox') respectively in animal tissue. These two latter compounds are also toxic. Dieldrin is also a commonly used insecticide in its own right and is very toxic to vertebrates.

Ordinary 'commercial HCH' contains a number of different isomers (forms) of benzene hexachloride, including alpha-HCH, beta-HCH and gamma-HCH. Of these only gamma-HCH is insecticidal. Commercial preparations of this isomer are termed Lindane.

HCB is the abbreviation for hexachlorobenzene, an industrial by-product, which has some industrial uses and is also employed as an insecticide (though not normally in Britain); it is moderately toxic to birds. PCB is the abbreviation for the polychlorinated biphenyls, which are substances having a number of industrial uses but which are not used in agriculture. Preliminary experiments suggest that while they can produce sublethal effects their toxicity to birds is rather low.

Interpretation of Organochlorine Residues (ppm, wet weight basis)

DDE:	0 - 5	These are low, 'background' organochlorine
dieldrin:	0 - 0.5	residues.
DDE:	5 - 20	Levels in this range can be regarded as the usual
dieldrin:	0.5 - 2	'background' residues now found in predatory birds and their eggs (see note 2).
DDE:	20 - 60	These are relatively high residues but are unlikely
dieldrin:	2 - 6	to have been high enough to have been an important factor in causing death/failure of this specimen. The residues are high enough to have caused some sublethal effects (see also note 3).
DDE:	60 - 150	These are high residues, probably on the borderline
dieldrin:	6 - 10	of lethal residues for some species. They are high enough to produce definite overt sublethal effects.
DDE:	150+	These levels are exceptionally high and are almost
dieldrin:	10+	certainly a contributory cause of death/failure (see note 4).

- Note 1. The effects of the various insecticides and their metabolites may be additive.
- Note 2. Eggs containing residues within these levels may be exhibiting thinner shells than pre-1940 specimens.
- Note 3. Liver residues in this range may move up into the lethal range if the individual containing them experiences stresses such as bad weather, breeding, starvation, long flights, or disease, which reduce the depot fat and release the stored organochlorine load to more sensitive regions.
- Note 4. The liver residues present after death from organochlorine poisoning vary between species according to their sensitivity, e.g. Kestrels may die with liver residues of dieldrin between 10 and 20 ppm, but in pigeons these residues may be twice as high before death occurs. Birds may sometimes 'overshoot' a lethal body burden by consuming more than a lethal dose before any effects occur.

PCB residues are difficult to evaluate at present as there is a considerable overlap in the liver residues present in birds dying from PCB poisoning and those surviving. Any liver level over 10 ppm in a body containing depot fat, or over 100 ppm in one starved and emaciated may be regarded as high.

Interpretation of Toxic Metal Residues

As yet we are still accumulating data on these elements in wild birds, and, in the absence of fuller information of normal background levels we cannot comment with certainty on the significance of these figures.

Mercury, copper and zinc are found in all specimens, and indeed the latter two are essential for life. Toxicologically, mercury is probably the most important metal present, though it is likely that seabirds in particular are adapted to coping with relatively high levels, since mercury is naturally present in the marine environment.

JANUARY BIRD NEWS.

Well January was a rather cold month with numerous days of severe frosts and heavy snow falls, Cley square was frozen and then covered by a fall of snow several inches thick. Needless to say in mid-month there were no birds of note to be seen in the area, but things were getting back to normal by the end of the month. In spite of the weather, or maybe due to it, we had a good month for rarities both in the Cley square and North Norfolk. Birds of the month were, a Sooty Shearwater, Dotterel, Black-necked grebes, Waxwings, Smew and a Peregrine.

A Black-throated diver was seen off Blakeney point on the 18th, and another off the North hides on the 24th. These were the only records this month. A Great northern Diver was seen on the sea off the Coastguards by Rosemary Damon on the 30th, it was first seen swimming alongside a Red-throated diver which it dwarfed so no doubt on its identification.

A Red-necked grebe was on the Beach road pool on the 2nd, but it stayed only briefly flying off as soon as it was found. 2 birds were seen in the Pit in Blakeney harbour on the 3rd. Another one was seen on the sea off Arnold's marsh on the 4th, and another there on the 10th. 1 flew east off the East bank on the 17th. Another on the sea off the Coastguards on the 18th. 1 flying east off the Coastguards on the 30th. A Slavonian grebe was noted flying west off shore at the Coastguards, on the 11th. The Black-necked grebes stayed through into the new year out on the Pit in Blakeney harbour, with the following records: At least 1 on the 1st, 8 on the 3rd, 1 on Arnold's marsh on the 7th, 2 in the Pit on the 10th, another on the sea off the Coastguards on the 26th.

The bird of the month was a Sooty Shearwater seen by Eddie Myers and Marilyn Buller flying east off the Coastguards during a strong easterly gale on the 14th, the bird was a hundred or so yards offshore and in good light so it was easily recognizable. The same day a number of Gannets were seen flying east, and hundreds of Kittiwake were also moving east.

Three Whooper swans were on the River Glaven on the 17th, just upstream of the Stone Bridge. The Black Brant was seen on the 1st in a gaggle of Brents at Salthouse. Eddie Myers found 2 birds in with the Brents off the Iron road on the 9th, both were classic adults. They were both seen again on the 10th in the same spot, along with a pale-bellied Brent goose. There were 10 Pale-bellied Brents near Weybourne Camp on a number of dates around the 19th, and they are probably still in the area somewhere.

A drake Mandarin was seen by Tony Aberdein on Pat's pool on the 10th, unfortunately it was not seen subsequently so we all dipped out on a good Norfolk year tick. A drake Pochard was on the Glaven near the Stone bridge in Wiveton, on the 2nd. Also a female was seen on the Beach road pool on the 11th. A Velvet scoter flew west off the Coastguards on the 17th and another on Salthouse marshes on the 18th later flew off west and back out to sea again. Another was on the sea on the 25th off the Coastguards, too far off to sex, but easily identified as it flew off west showing white wing patches. A redhead Smew was on Arnold's marsh on the 18th, other records were of 2 more on the Sea pool on the 24th and 25th. There were 2 on Pat's pool on the 27th and then 3 there on the 28th, and 4 there the following day the 29th. No drakes this year in the Cley square, but a number were seen in West Norfolk. Two female or immature Goosander flew west along the shore at the Coastguards on the 9th, a rarity in the square due to the lack of habitat. A male and a female or immature Goosander flew west off the Coastguards on the 11th.

A male and up to 3 ringtail Hen harriers were roosting in the reed beds on the NNT reserve at Cley during the latter part of the month, but not every night especially the male. A Rough-legged buzzard was seen over the second crossroads in the morning of the 1st, but not seen since. Tim Lubbock saw a Peregrine take a Bar-tailed godwit out on the mud flats in Blakeney harbour on the 9th, the prey was too large for it to fly off with so it ate it on the spot with Tim looking on from a hundred yards away.

A performing Water rail was found on a flooded meadow near the Three Swallows public house at Newgate on the 1st, a good year tick.

The Dotterel stayed through into the New year and was seen on the 1st and 2nd, and finally on the 9th on the Eye field. The bad weather seems to have moved on the Golden plover, I hope the Dotterel went with them? The only record of Purple sandpiper was of one seen flying east over Arnold's marsh by John Hampshire on the 12th. A Woodcock was seen feeding in an unfrozen dyke with 6 or 7 Water Rails near the Three Swallows pub, on the 17th.

A first winter Little gull flew west off the Coastguards on the 2nd, the only record in the month. The adult Glaucous gull was present throughout the month, frequenting the beach at Coastguards and roosting at Blakeney point. A first winter bird was seen at the Coastguards on the 3rd, and over Cley village on the 5th in the early morning.

Barn owls seem to have fared well despite the weather, and have been seen hunting in and around the 10km square on numerous dates. Only a single record of Short-eared owl during the month, one was seen over the reserve hunting at dusk on the 31st.

The Shore Lark numbers went up to at least 21 on the 3rd on Blakeney point, though they were absent on a number of dates - on one of which I was up there to Year tick them, but the usual feeding areas were all frosted over in the previous night's severe frost. So I still need them for the year, but it's nice to have them in good numbers again compared to the last 2 or 3 years.

A Grey wagtail was seen at the Glandford sewage works on a number of dates during the month, and this was one of the few places in the square that didn't freeze up during the cold spell; no doubt that is why it is still there.

Two of the Waxwings stayed through into the new year and they were seen off Church lane on a number of dates in the first part of the month, the records are as follows: 2nd on Church lane and again on the 8th, on the 11th on Church lane and 2 in Langham on the same date.

A male Blackcap was seen in the garden of Driftwood cottage on the 13th, feeding on the apples put out for the Thrushes during the heavy snows. A female was seen in the garden of the Bowling green cottage on the 17th; I bet they wished they were in Africa for the winter.

A small number of Bramblings were mixed in with a large flock of Finches in the fields off Bixes lane at the back of Salthouse heath on the 2nd, feeding amongst the straw put out for the cattle. There were quite a number of males, rather smart birds.

FEBRUARY BIRD NEWS.

This is usually one of the colder months of the year, but here in North Norfolk we've had a fairly mild month compared to January. With very little snow, but a

nice pair of drake Red-crested Pochards, a Red Kite and the first returning Avocet.

A large number of Red-throated Divers were seen off the Coastguards on the 14th of the month, with well over a hundred between the Coastguards and Salthouse beach. The large numbers of Red-throats carried on to the 13th and 14th, when again there were at least a 100 birds off the Coastguards on both days. A single Black-throated Diver was seen off the Coastguards on the 13th, this bird was noted by Tommy Corcoran and is the only record for the month. A Great Northern Diver was seen off Blakeney Point on the 28th, the only record for the month.

An oiled Slavonian Grebe was found in the channel leading into Blakeney quay on the 14th of the month, it was present the next day but looked rather ill and didn't look likely to last out the night.

A Cormorant showing the characteristics of the European race "Sinensis" was seen in flight over the reserve on the 18th, and it alighted on the pools next to the North scrape. It showed the pale head and the white flank patches, these were easily visible at great distance. A single Shag was seen on the sea and then later flying east off the Coastguards, on the 6th of the month.

A male Bittern was found by Bryan Bland in a dyke near the Iron Road on Salthouse marshes on the 1st of the month, it was in a state and sadly it died the following day. B2 was telling me that it was at the large end of the scale for males and at the lower end of females for weight, and even force feeding could not have saved the poor thing. A Bittern was seen in flight over the marshes on the 21st, so at least one survived the hard weather.

Two Whoopers flew west over the reserve on the 8th, both adult birds. Another was seen on the sea off the Coastguards, on the 14th by Steve Votier. The Black Brant was still present in the earlier part of the month, or at least one was, but they seem to have disappeared by the beginning of March. They were recorded on the following dates: One on the Eye Field on the 8th. A group of 8 Pale-bellied Brent Geese frequented the Salthouse and Weybourne area, the Dark-bellied birds are the usual ones in Norfolk. A nice couple of drake Red-crested Pochards appeared on Pat's Pool on the 14th, they were present the day and had left by the following morning. They looked weary and slept for most of the time after feeding up, so that's three drakes at Cley this winter. These birds were found by Tony Aberdein, of the disappearing Mandarin fame.

The bird of the month was a Red Kite which was seen flying over Cley Marshes and off west over Blakeney at 09.30 on the 25th, by Eddie Myers and Dr Moss Taylor and his son. The bird was seen soon after at Warham, by Peter (Lucky) Gooden and Allan and Val Brown. It was also seen at 08.30 on 27th flying east over Cley Marshes, this was seen by Mrs Eileen Parrinder from her window as she ate her breakfast! A male and up to three "Ringtails" have been using the reed-bed near the Bittern Pool most evenings to roost, although they do use the "Traditional" roost on wet and windy evenings. A female Merlin was seen by Tommy Corcoran at Blakeney point on the 15th of the month, the only sighting.

The first Avocet made it back just in time to see out February, it was found on the North scrape in the early morning of the 28th, by Rosemary Damon. There were two Avocet on Simmond's Scrape the following day, the 1st of March, a 100% increase, that'll do us for this year. On the 28th a large westward movement of Knot took place between 08.00 and 09.30, the only count I received was of 600 plus but there were much more than that, probably well over a 1,000. The Ruff were starting to appear back on the reserve by mid-month, a flock of 11 on the North scrape on the 26th was the largest count.

Boy George, the usual adult Glaucous Gull, was still present off the Coastguards on the 1st and again on the 14th. It was seen again on Blakeney Point, on the 21st. A second-winter Glaucous Gull was on Pat's Pool on the 27th at 10.00, preening and bathing with the other gulls.

A Barn Owl has been seen hunting over the reserve near the Bittern Pool on a number of dates during the month, it's good to know at least one has come through the hard weather in January none the worse for wear? A Short-eared Owl was seen on a number of dates during the month hunting over the marshes, it was seen on the following dates and places: One over Pope's Marsh on the 7th. One over the Blakeney Freshes on the 13th.

The Shore Lark were still present on the Near point up at the far end of Blakeney point at the end of the month, largest count was of 20 birds on the 15th.

A male Blackcap was seen in the garden of Dr Derek Kelsey on Church Lane in Cley village on the 10th, feeding on windfall apples. He also saw the same bird on the 25th of January, feeding on Sea-buckthorn berries in his garden.

A number of Bramblings were seen during the month in different places about the square, counts were as follows: 5 at Taylor's Wood on the 15th, 11 at Swan Lodge on the 19th. A mixed flock of finches held at least 5 Brambling, on the 19th at Kelling Triangle in a weedy field off the Holt road. A flock of a 100 plus Twite were seen on the far end of Blakeney Point, on the 15th.

There were four Lapland Buntings on the Eye Field in the morning of the 28th, these are the first to be seen there since the freeze up in January. A largish flock of Snow Buntings were at the Coastguards on the 7th, of some 50 birds. A flock of at least 75 was reported from the Coastguards on the 13th, feeding on the shingle ridge above the Half Moon Pit. Another flock of some 50 birds was seen at the far end of Blakeney Point on the 15th. A flock of some 60 birds or so were seen just east of the Coastguards on the 22nd of the month, these were the largest flocks reported during the month.

MARCH BIRD NEWS.

This is the month when we start to see an end to the winter, the evenings are drawing out and we can bird-watch till late. The first summer migrants arrive in the form of Wheatears and Chiffchaffs, plus most of the winter visitors have already left by mid-month. The birds of the month include two Iceland Gulls, 1st winter Glaucous Gull, Crane, Lapland Buntings, Avocets, Spotted Redshank and Wheatear.

A single Black-throated Diver was seen off Salthouse, close inshore in the morning of the 23rd. A Great Northern Diver was seen flying west off the Coastguards on the 23rd, as seen by Tommy Corcoran.

A Red-necked Grebe was seen off the Coastguards on the 23rd, sporting fine summer plumage.

A flock of c100 Bewick's Swans flew east over Salthouse at 6.30am on the 11th of March, these birds were seen from one of the windows of Mrs Zoe Owen's house on the front in Salthouse village. A group of 17 Bewick's Swans flew east over the reserve at dusk on the 12th, they thought of alighting on Pat's Pool but flew off being led by a single adult White-fronted Goose! A group of eight Wild Swans were on Pat's Pool briefly in the morning of the 30th, they flew off eastwards. There is some dispute as to what species these birds were, two people reported them and both got separate species. A leucistic Brent Goose was seen feeding

amongst the flock on the Glaven saltings near the Coastguards on the 3rd, it was seen the day earlier at Wells and the day after at Stiffkey. There were still 2,500 Brents at Salthouse on the 6th, and the group of 6 Pale-bellied birds were present on the 12th and the 13th. A drake Pochard was seen on Pat's Pool on the 13th, an uncommon bird on the reserve due to the lack of deep water. A number of Goldeneye frequented Pat's Pool during the earlier part of the month, a male and up to 6 females. A male Red-breasted Merganser was seen on Pat's Pool on the 1st, 10th and the 11th.

An adult Crane was seen to fly west along the line of the beach; at Weybourne Camp by Tom Fletcher and at Cley by Herbie and Mabel Ellis, Steve Gantlett and Eddie Myers. It flew off westwards, after turning inland over the Glaven, it was seen later over Blakeney Point heading west.

The Avocet numbers built up slowly during the month, starting with 2 birds on the 1st and ending the month with over 40 birds present on the reserve. A Little Ringed Plover was found on the 31st in front of the Irene Hide on Pat's Pool, it later moved on to the Whitwell Scrape and it was showing nicely in front of the Avocet Hide up to dusk. This is over three weeks earlier than the first bird last year, a full list of the arrival dates with a comparison to 1986 will appear in the next News-letter. The numbers of Ruff built up rather slowly from early in the month, to at least 10 birds at the months end. The first Reeves were noted on the 24th! Black-tailed Godwits were noted on the following dates: 2 on the North Scrape on the 13th, 3 on Simmond's Scrape on the 29th. Two Whimbrel were seen flying west off the Coastguards on the 17th, a rather early record. A Spotted Redshank was seen on the reserve on a number of dates throughout the month, two birds were seen on Simmond's Scrape on the 30th one of which was showing signs of summer plumage.

A male Marsh Harrier passed through Cley on the 26th, pausing only to quarter the reed-beds briefly before it carried on westwards. Hen Harriers were seen on the following dates and at the following locations: A ringtail flew west over the reserve on the 3rd. A male over the reserve on the 10th. A nice male over the reedbeds in the morning of the 22nd. A female Sparrowhawk daily flies over the reserve from and back to the North Foreland, scaring the gulls up off Pat's Pool in the process. A male Merlin was seen over Salthouse Heath on the 16th, the only record this month.

A second year Iceland Gull was seen by Tommy Corcoran and Joe Johnson on Pat's pool on the 9th, the bird was present for an hour and flew off towards the Point and has not been seen again. A first winter Glaucous Gull was seen on a number of dates through the month, these are the records: On Pat's Pool on the 7th, bathing and preening with the other gulls before flying off towards the Point to roost. On Pat's Pool on the 9th, and again on Pat's Pool on the 10th.

The first Sandwich Tern was seen off Salthouse Beach on the 25th, with another two off the Coastguards on the same day, over two weeks earlier than last years early date.

A Barn Owl was seen on a number of dates during the month hunting the graveyard around Morston Church, still a common bird around our area, but only along the coast. Another Barn Owl shows regularly along the roadside between the NNT car park and Walsey Hill, usually well before dusk. A Long-eared Owl was found in the scrub at the back of Snipes Marsh by Ms Marilyn Buller, it sat in the trees completely unworried by the numerous birders looking at it from 20 yards away. Short-eared Owls were seen over the West Bank and the Eye Field on the following dates, 4th, 13th, 16th and the 19th. Two Short-eared Owls were seen over the fields off Marsh Lane Wiveton on the 21st.

The Shorlark were still present up to the end of the month, out on the far end of Near Point. Though on the odd date some were recorded from the shingle ridge at Cley, the records are as follows: 20 On the Near Point at Blakeney Point on the 7th. Only 10 were seen on the Near Point on the 14th. 16 birds were present on the 15th, again on the Near Point. There was one on the Shingle Bank near the North Hide on the 24th.

The first Sand Martins were two seen by Rob and Simon Chidwick flying west over the West Bank, on the 26th, nearly a month earlier than last year. The first Swallow of the year was seen over the Arnold's Marsh flying west on the 15th, beating last years earliest date by a month and a day.

A Water Pipit was seen by Tony Aberdein and a couple of other people at the Eye Field pool on the 8th, a rather elusive bird, easily flushed so missing from there most of the time. Chris Kelsey had one over on the saltings of the Glaven near the Coastguards on the 29th, and one was seen by Tommy Corcoran at the Eye Field pool on the 30th, a full summer plumaged bird.

A rare bird in the Cley square the Stonechat was seen on the 23rd, when 2 males were noted, one at Salthouse near the Dun Cow pub and the other on the fence that runs alongside the footpath out to Dauke's hide. The Salthouse bird was still present on the 31st, along the beach near Lodge Hill. The Cley bird was noted on a couple of days after in the NNT Centre car park. Then one in and around the reserve at the end of the month, a male seen from Daukes and at the back of the North Hide.

A report of two Wheatears on Blakeney Point on the 13th, was not confirmed. The first genuine report was of one on the Eye Field on the 22nd, nearly two weeks earlier than last year.

Lapland Buntings were noted in the Eye Field on numerous dates throughout the month, these are the records: 3 on the 1st. 2 on the 7th. 1 on the 8th. 1 On the 13th. 2 on the 14th. 1 on the 15th. 1 on the 21st.