



BIRDING NEWSLETTER



Ely & District U3A Birdwatching Group



Planning Team

Graham Cole
Sean Greenway
Sue Greenway
John Middleton
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Tony Pleasance
Nigel Puttergill
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Forthcoming Events

10th January
Titchwell
(Graham & Babs)

25th February
Soham Lode
(Sean & Sue)

15th March
The Brecks
(Graham & Babs)

Seasons Greetings!

December 12th

Dear Birdwatchers,

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2021 and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the newsletter over the past year. I have received several comments about the quality and substance of the birdwatching newsletter, but that quality is only maintained by the excellent submissions from our members. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the planning and organisation of our monthly meetings. Again, without their support our program of events would be limited.

Our last field trip of the year was to RSPB Lakenheath on Friday 10th December and we had an excellent turnout with 19 members joining for a walk round the reserve followed by the festive picnic. The weather was good, but there was a strong and bitter wind blowing that kept many birds well hidden and our group well wrapped up. Due to the large number of the attendees, we had to split into two groups. One led by Tony Pleasance and the other by myself.

In total, between the two groups we spotted 42 different species. Some of the highlights were two cranes flying over, a great white egret and a great spotted woodpecker.

Our first outing in 2022 will be to Titchwell on 10th January. Details of which will be sent out after Christmas.

Until then, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Enjoy your birding! Nigel





RSPB Lakenheath - bird pictures by Sean Greenway



Blue Tit



Redwing



Crane



Reed Bunting



Marsh Harrier

From Sean Greenway

Sue and I took a couple of trips to Welney, but with the opening times being 10 am we used the time to go to Pymoor first. The ring necked parakeet was still there, feeding off a bird feeder and making a lot of noise. The majority of the noise was the whooper swans that were present in huge numbers. The banks had meadow pipit, reed bunting and goldfinches going through the trees and a merlin put in a quick appearance. Sue noticed an unusual bird in the far distance and I was able to get a rough photo which we were able to get ID'd at Welney. It turned out to be a South African shelduck which was thought to be an escapee. At Welney itself we had a good number of sightings in good weather. whoopers, wigeon and lapwings were a constant soundtrack and I got to see cattle egret, stonechat, pochard, as well as the mixed flocks going through the trees. A merlin put in another quick appearance which helped the year list. One visitor that stayed pretty much in front of the main hide was a Laysan duck. It seemed to have teamed up with a male mallard, but was fairly constant.



Whooper Swans



Black-tailed Godwits



Meadow Pipit



Stonechat



South African Shelduck



Laysan Duck



Kestrel



Pochard



Cattle Egret



Kestrel



Ring-necked Parakeet

From Graham Cole

It was the first of December and I had not been out for a while. As it was not dreadful weather I decided to take myself up to Titchwell for a 'blow' on the beach. I certainly was not disappointed with the strong wind coming along the beach. I quickly realised that there was no one else there, just me. I had the whole beach to myself! Regular readers of Nigel's newsletter will be pleased to hear that I actually took my camera with me. I positioned myself in the ruins of the old pill box and waited for the birds to come closer to me, as the tide was coming in. This worked and I have a few to include in the newsletter. There were huge numbers of sanderling running around on the sand along with dunlin, turnstone, redshank, bar-tailed godwit, curlew and grey plover. There was also one fine knot in lovely plumage. The sea was quite rough with lots of waves which may have explained why there were not so many birds as I had hoped, when I did some sea watching. I was only able to find a small group of three male goldeneyes, plus some red-breasted mergansers passing. As I walked back to the centre, I stopped off at the hides to watch some marsh harriers over the reeds, some golden plover, lapwing and black-tailed godwit. I did stop for a warm drink at the café, which meant I was mugged by a friendly robin that first perched on my boot, before coming to my hand for a crumb or two. I also saw a small vole coming to the caged ground feeder next to the ramp by the welcome hub, which had not been seen by the volunteer there, but it was far too fast for a photo.



Black-headed Gull



Black-tailed Godwit



Redshank



Knot

