

# BIRDING NEWSLETTER

Ely & District U3A Birdwatching Group



## Planning Team

Graham Cole  
Sean Greenway  
Sue Greenway  
John Middleton  
Mavis Middleton  
Tony Pleasance  
Nigel Puttergill  
Barbara York

## Forthcoming Events

**15th March**

**The Brecks**

(Graham & Babs)

**26th April**

**Fingringhoe & Abberton Res'**

(Sean & Sue)

**3rd May**

**Wicken Fen & Kingfisher  
Bridge**

(Tony & Nigel)

**8th June**

**Titchmarsh**

(Babs & Graham)

## Where have all the Sparrows Gone!

26th February

Dear Birdwatchers,

Did you take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch?

I spent an hour on the Saturday morning of the Garden Bird Watch weekend sitting in the living room and keeping an eye out for all the birds in the garden. Generally speaking there were far fewer birds around than I normally see, but most of the usual visitors did settle in the garden during the watch. The one exception was the big family of house sparrows. For many years house sparrows have nested in my neighbours roof and there is always a big noisy gang of about a dozen or so flying back and forth from his garden to mine. During this Garden Birdwatch, not one entered my garden. Since then I have been keeping a lookout for them and they seem to have gone. Let's hope they have gone off to another area to feed and will return again in the spring.

While on the subject of sparrows, Babs York got in touch with me and thought it would be good to let people know about the identification of tree sparrows. Do you remember in the last newsletter,



Sean had a picture of a tree sparrow on a feeder? Just to be clear on this subject, Babs informed me that there is no difference in the sexes of tree sparrows, so the sparrow on the right could be a male or female and the one on the left is a female house sparrow. This is something I didn't know before and hope you have learned something new as well.

Enjoy your birding! Nigel

## From Sean Greenway

Sue and I tried Holkham and Wells for a trip out. We wanted to see the shorelark and snow buntings that we had heard were there. Walking out onto the beach instead of turning right to the cordoned area where we had seen them before, we turned left. It was a fair walk, but just by a dead seal there were 4 shorelarks. Going back towards the cordoned area we did see the snow buntings.

I tried a trip to Lackford lakes, and although some paths were closed, the wooded areas had a lot going on. I was aiming to get nuthatch and marsh tit so headed into the woods. It didn't take long for them to appear, as did coal tit, chaffinch and bullfinch.

Sue and I then tried Deeping Lakes to see if we could get a view of the long-eared owl. We did get a view, but it didn't make it easy. Last time we saw them they were on the island, but it seems the cormorants moved them across the lake. Fortunately, there were a lot of eyes searching for the owls and we were lucky enough to be in a group that spotted one. You can see from the photo, it was not an easy spot.



Shore Lark



Snow Buntings



Coal Tit



Long-eared Owl



Nuthatch



Redshank



Dunnock



Curlew



## Soham Lode - Nigel

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On Friday 25th February, thirteen of our group turned out for the Soham Lode field trip led by Sue & Sean Greenway. We were blessed with a bright sunny day, but at times the wind picked up and it was cold. Nonetheless, we all remained in good spirits and enjoyed some excellent birding from the banks of the lode, with far reaching views over the fields and meadows.



In total we spotted forty six different species including a kingfisher, great spotted woodpecker, green woodpecker, snipe, stonechat and sparrowhawk. Here are a few pictures taken by Sean.



Stonechat



long-tailed Tit



Song Thrush



Sparrowhawk