

# BIRDING NEWSLETTER

Ely & District U3A Birdwatching Group



## Planning Team

Graham Cole  
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## Forthcoming Events

### 8th June

#### RSPB Ouse Fen (morning)

(Babs & Graham)

### 12th July

#### Rutland Water

(Tony & Nigel)

### 24th August

#### Frampton Marsh

(Babs & Nigel)

### 15th September

#### Minsmere

(John & Mavis)

## Cuckoos and Hobbys!

5th May

Dear Birdwatchers,

On Tuesday, 3rd May, we had an excellent turnout for our field trip to Wicken Fen and Kingfisher Bridge, which was led by Tony Pleasance and myself. As sixteen members turned out, it was decided to split into two groups, one led by Tony and the other by myself. The route taken was the standard circular Adventurers Fen trail. Tony went in an anti-clockwise direction and my group went the opposite way round and we crossed over more or less in the middle.

The main highlights of the day were the cuckoos, hobbys, cranes and swifts. There were quite a few cuckoos calling and flying around the reserve, in fact, the group I was with had a lovely view of a cuckoo sitting on the top of a tree, not more than 20 meters away. This was probably the best view I have ever had of a cuckoo. Just where the two groups crossed over we both spotted a couple of common cranes feeding amongst the long reeds and grass. They seemed pretty relaxed and kept looking up and dropping down as they fed. After a while we left them to it and carried on. It is that time of the year for hobbys to return to our shores and there were a few of them feeding on St. Mark's flies over the lode and scrub. Good sightings were made, including one perched on the top of a dead tree trunk. You may not think that swifts are that interesting, but they are becoming rarer and it is good to see them returning. I think the swifts we saw at Wicken are the first sightings this year for most of our members.

We kept a note of the different species of birds we saw and heard and it is interesting that the two groups had slightly different lists, but nearly the same amount. My group spotted 57 different species and heard (not seen) another two. Tony's group spotted 59 different species and heard (not seen)

another six. An excellent result for the morning and far more species than I had expected to see. After taking lunch at Wicken Fen we moved on to Kingfisher Bridge to see what was around there. We were not disappointed. We spent some time on top of the mound scanning the pool and ticking off a lot of different water birds. After that we walked along the river bank to see what else was around. While on the bank we observed a very strange incident of two hares chasing a muntjac deer, or at least it looked like that. However, we did notice there was a lapwing bombing both the hares and the muntjac, so it was probably chasing all of them away from their chicks. As some people were only at Wicken Fen in the morning, we decided to start a new bird count for Kingfisher Bridge. Although we were only there for a couple of hours we did manage to see 62 different species and heard (not seen) another five.

It was a good day out and it was also good to see some old faces again who had not joined our field trips for some time. I guess the pandemic is slowly easing and people are starting to get out and about more.

Here are some pictures that Sean Greenway took at Wicken Fen and Kingfisher Bridge.

Enjoy your birding! Nigel



Cuckoo



Marsh Harrier



Hares chasing Muntjac



Sedge Warbler



Green Woodpecker



Grasshopper Warbler



Common Crane

### From Beverley McVey

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Beverley McVey sent me a lovely picture for the newsletter with this explanation.

“We’ve had a marauding sparrow hawk in the garden over the past week or so; targeting the starlings on the feeders. This time he dropped in for a drink!”



### From Sean Greenway

Took a trip to Lackford Lakes a few days ago, I was hoping to get a reed warbler as I had heard they'd been seen. There was a large number of birds in the woods and were very visible, often carrying beaks full of insects to the nest. Green finches were around the visitors centre, with large mixed flocks of blue, great and long-tailed tits. The lakes didn't have a great deal on them, but the reeds were pretty busy. The reed warblers were singing loudly and showing well quite close to the hides. The photographers' spot had the marsh tit and nuthatch in good form, but the highlight was a nightingale. It started singing in view from the path and stayed there for a while.



Nightingale



Green Woodpecker



Robin



Reed Warbler



Blue Tits



Marsh Tit