

The Birds of Whitlingham & Thorpe 2017



Compiled by James Emerson

Contents

Page 2 – Contents & contact details

Page 3 & 4 – Introduction & site map

Page 5 -7 – New to Whitlingham: Ring-necked Parakeet

Page 8-10 – Hawfinch irruption

Page 11-12 – Visible migration at Whitlingham – a new approach to birding here

Page 13-14 – Ringed wildfowl at Whitlingham in 2017

Page 15-16 – Still more colour-ringed Black-headed Gulls

Page 17 – Whitlingham Wildfowl Count

Page 18-48 – Whitlingham & Thorpe classified species list

Page 49 – Appendix A – Expected species not recorded this year

Page 50 – Appendix B – Escaped and released birds

Page 51 – Appendix C – Hybrids & domestic wildfowl

Page 52 – Acknowledgements & Further reading

Get in touch

I would welcome any comments, corrections or constructive criticisms about this report. These can be sent to me, along with any sightings for inclusion in the 2018 report, by emailing: whitlinghambirds@yahoo.co.uk.

All text copyright © James Emerson 2018 except the article on
pages 11 & 12, © Justin Lansdell

All photos copyright © James Emerson 2018 except those indicated. I am particularly grateful to Gary White for providing a large amount of photos from Whitlingham for use in this report, and also to Ricky Cleverley and Justin Lansdell who have also provided photos.

Introduction

This is the sixth annual report of the bird species reported from the Whitlingham area (including Thorpe Marshes NWT reserve), covering sightings from 2017. It should be noted that this bird report is independent from any of the organisations that manages these sites, notably the Broads Authority, Whitlingham Charitable Trust, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and South Norfolk Council. A map of the recording area covered by this report can be found on the next page. Within this area most of the sightings come from the area around Whitlingham Great Broad and Thorpe Marshes. In a slight change to bring the report in line with the terms being used by the NWT I have adopted the name “Thorpe Marshes” rather than Thorpe Marsh, and “St Andrews Broad” rather than Thorpe Broad throughout the report.

In addition to my monthly counts and other sightings, a large number of records have been supplied by other local birders, to whom I am grateful. I have included the majority of sightings that have been sent to me directly or reported online, with only a few being left out of the final report. This does however mean that many of the reported sightings in this report have not been seen by me personally. As a result I feel that for recording purposes the sightings in this report should be treated as unverified records, i.e. sightings should not be used for any ‘official’ purposes.

In general when deciding what records and details to include I have adopted the following categorisation:

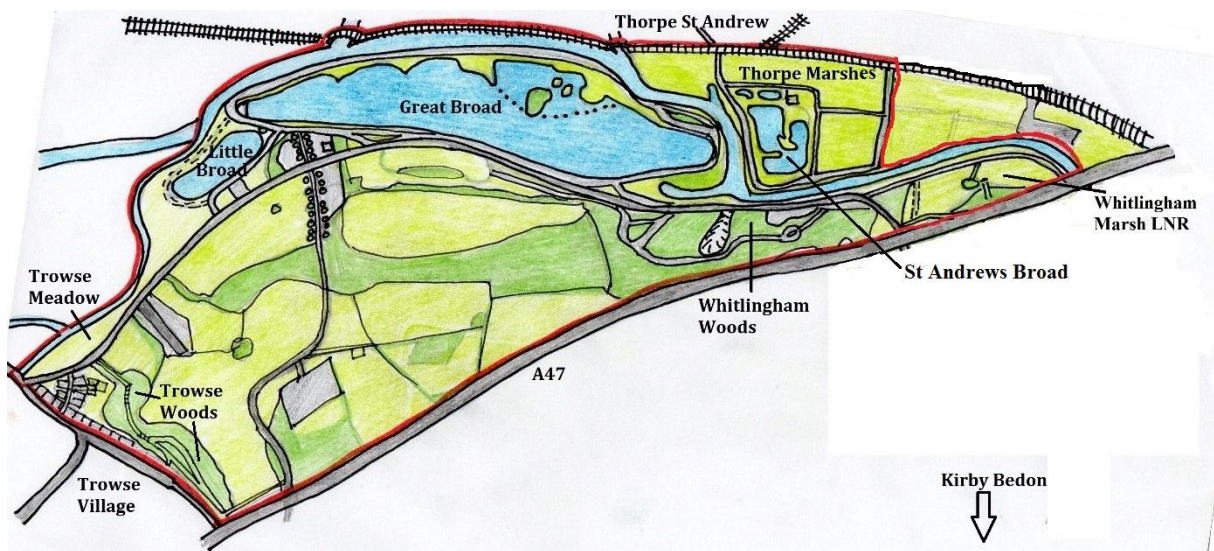
Resident species and regular migrants – reports have been used to write a general summary for the species, with records only omitted if they were particularly unusual, for example very early or late records.

Species recorded annually in low numbers at Whitlingham – species that occur in most years are dealt with as above but with more detail regarding the sightings

Species seldom recorded at Whitlingham or particularly scarce locally – records included in the report with * before the species name. As much detail as possible is included with each of these records, in particular it is mentioned if the species recorded was photographed, if it was seen by more than one individual, if there were any other sightings nearby etc. These records also have the initials of the person who reported the sighting. Note that this won’t necessarily be the person who first found the species in the case of multi-observed records.

County or national rarities – included at the editor’s discretion. Details of the record included as with local scarcities, but with an additional note as to whether the record has been submitted to and/or accepted by the relevant rarities committee, based on the latest WIP (work-in-progress) files.

Observers are asked to send details of any noteworthy sightings direct to the county recorder, Neil Lawton. Details on how to do this can be found here: <http://norfolkbirds.weebly.com/submitting-records.html>. Any observer lucky enough to find a species at Whitlingham that is a county rarity is asked to send a description to the [Norfolk Records Committee](#), who will publish their verdict in the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report, which is published in the following autumn.



The Whitlingham Recording area covered by this report. Where possible distinctive features make up the boundaries, for example the railway line along part of the north of the area and the A47 to the south.

The key parts of the recording area are: Whitlingham Country Park, Trowse Meadow, Trowse Woods, Whitlingham Marsh LNR and Thorpe Marshes NWT. Crown Point Estate land north of the A47 is currently included, although as most of it has no public access there are seldom any sightings from this area.

Areas of Thorpe St Andrew, including Thorpe Green, are just outside the recording area, however as the boundary is rather arbitrary, details of wildfowl and gulls recorded there have been included where it is likely that the birds involved were also sometimes present at or visible from Whitlingham.

New to Whitlingham: Ring-necked Parakeet

James Emerson

Ring-necked Parakeets have been a familiar sight in the London area since the 1970s, and more recently have spread outwards to other large urban centres. In 2014 breeding occurred just over the county border at the Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire (Cambridgeshire Bird Club, 2014), and there have been several coastal sightings in the past that might suggest a few track the coast up from the Thames. Despite several sightings of Ring-necked Parakeets in Norfolk each year on social media or bird news services, few of these make it into the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report. This could be for several reasons, such as observers assuming that records relate to escapes or not wanting to write out a description, but it does make it harder to track the spread of this species.

Prior to this year there had been no sightings of Ring-necked Parakeets in the Whitlingham Recording area, however in 2017 three records were received. The latter two, (possibly all three) probably relate to the same individual, with a male bird regularly seen around the same time around the area at the start of the Marriott's Way in north-west Norwich (see Figure 2), the likely bird. A second bird was also present in the same area from November, with proof that at least two individuals were present in the Norwich area coming on 24th November when Gary White photographed them together at Train Wood.

Details of the Whitlingham sightings:

1. Trowse, 21st May 2017 – This bird flew over Trowse Green into Whitlingham airspace (JL)
2. Thorpe Marshes, 26th September 2017 – A Ring-necked Parakeet was found calling from scrub near the mooring basin at Thorpe Marshes before flying across the river to Whitlingham C.P. (RC)
3. Whitlingham C.P, 12th October 2017 – This time the parakeet was seen and heard calling from the tall trees on the main island (GW).

As the year progressed two birds (a male and a female) were seen together on several occasions in the NR3 area of Norwich, which due to the timing suggest that sightings of a bird seen regularly at Hellesdon may well relate to a third individual. All of the Norwich sightings that I am aware of are shown on Figure 1. Note that many locations have hosted multiple sightings. The numbers refer to the number of birds seen at one time in that location.

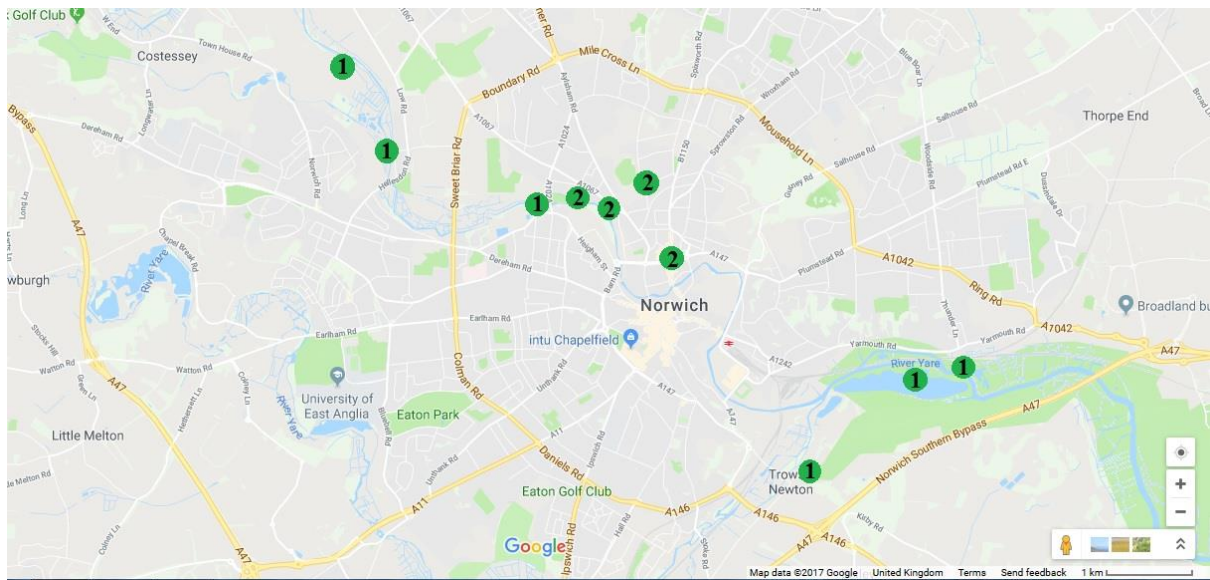


Figure 1 – Ring-necked Parakeet sighting locations in 2017 based on observations, submitted records and social media sightings.



Figure 2 – Ring-necked Parakeet at Train Wood, Norwich © Gary White

The spread of Ring-necked Parakeets is unlikely to be greeted with universal excitement because of their classification as an invasive non-native species. There is evidence that their presence can affect the feeding patterns of native birds (Peck et al, 2014) and also that they can outcompete cavity nesting birds like Nuthatches (Strubbe and Matthyson, 2009). Interestingly though, the latter authors also conclude “results indicate that there is no compelling evidence indicating that parakeets pose a threat large enough to justify an eradication campaign where they are currently present” in a second paper published the year after (Strubbe et al, 2010). A fuller discussion of the Ring-necked Parakeets and the potential issues around them can be found in Hannah Peck’s PhD thesis (see references below).

References

- CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB (2014) Bulletin of the Cambridgeshire Bird Club, May & June 2014. Available online:
www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk/bulletins/CBC434_MayJun2014.pdf
- PECK, H.L. (2013), Investigating ecological impacts of the nonnative population of rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) in the UK (available online).
- PECK H.L, PRINGLE, H.E, MARSHALL, H.H, OWENS, I.P.F. and LORD, A.M. (2014) Experimental evidence of impacts of an invasive parakeet on foraging behaviour of native birds. *Behavioural Ecology* vol 25, issue 3, pages 582-590. Available online:
<https://academic.oup.com/beheco/article/25/3/582/513558>
- STRUBBE, D. and MATTHYSEN, E. (2009) Experimental evidence for nest-site competition between invasive ring-necked parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and native nuthatches (*Sitta europaea*). *Biological Conservation* vol 142, issue 8 pages 1588-1594.
- STRUBBE, D, MATTHYSEN, E. and GRAHAM, C.H. (2010) Assessing The potential impact of invasive ring-necked parakeets *Psittacula krameri* on native nuthatches *Sitta europaea* in Belgium. *Journal of Applied Ecology* vol 47, issue 3, pages 548-557

Hawfinch irruption

James Emerson

For many inland birders the most memorable part of the autumn of 2017 will be the large-scale movement of Hawfinches through the country. The period at the end of October and the first half of November saw an unprecedented influx of Hawfinches, with the number across the country likely to be in four figures (BTO #1, 2017). The exact numbers involved are impossible to calculate as there will be repetition as the birds moved north, but the BTO reported that at the height of the influx Hawfinches were reported on 3% of complete lists on BirdTrack – 12 times the normal reporting rate (BTO #2, 2017). The reason for the influx is thought to be a shortage of food sources in eastern Europe, although more information may come out about this in due course.

In Norfolk Hawfinch sightings are typically centred around Lynford Abroretum, but with a small number of migrants recorded in autumn and occasionally birds overwintering in a handful of locations (e.g. Felbrigg Hall grounds). The extent of the invasion can best be seen by comparing the locations where birds were reported to BirdGuides in October & November 2017 (Figure 1) with the locations from the same period in 2016 (Figures 2). Analysing the sightings shown on Figure 1 there seems a clear link to river valleys and the coast, which makes sense in terms of birds using geographical features to navigate. It should however be noted that the sightings also map closely against population centres and nature reserves, perhaps simply reflecting observer bias as birders sought to see Hawfinches from their gardens and local patches.

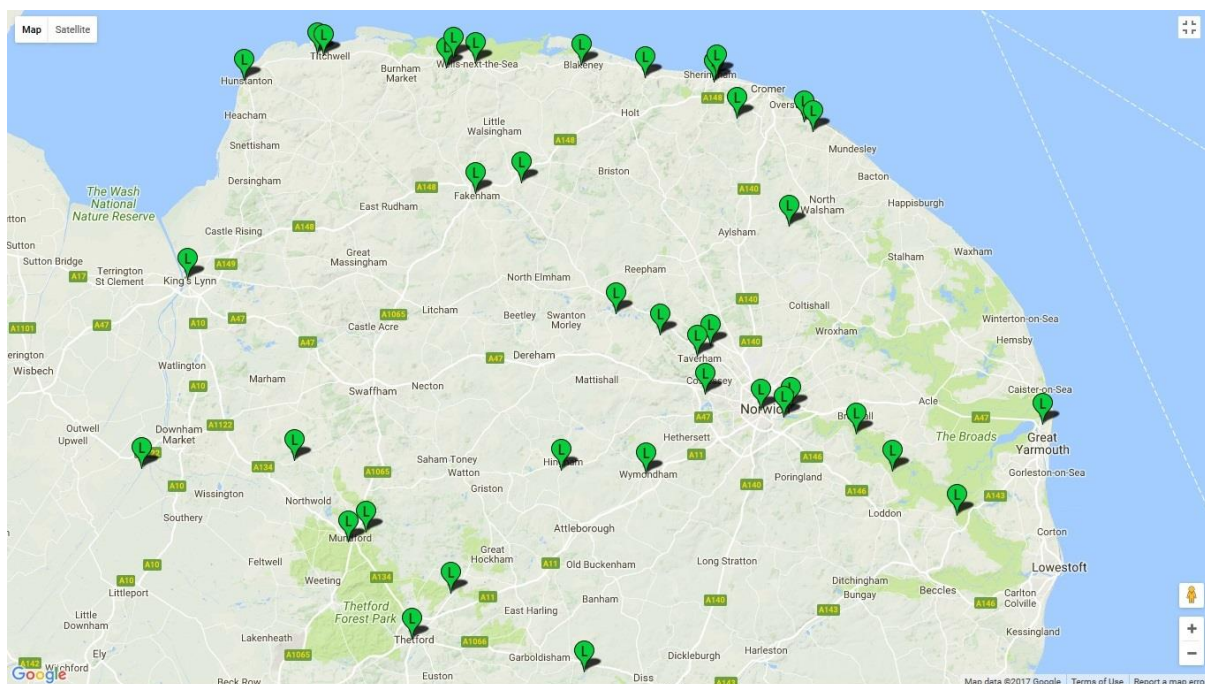


Figure 1 – map of Hawfinch sightings in October and November 2017 from BirdGuides (<https://www.birdguides.com/sightings/>)

Sightings breakdown

Site	Date	Time [after dawn]	Direction of flight	Observer
Whitlingham C.P.	17/10/17	07:50 [+24 mins]	'Flying around'	DM
Whitlingham C.P.	26/10/17	08:02 [+21 mins]	North	JL
Thorpe Marsh	26/10/17	11:22 [+3hrs 41mins]	South-west	MC
Whitlingham C.P.	28/10/17	08:09 [+24 mins]	North	JL
Whitlingham C.P.	29/10/17	07:10 [+23 mins]	Stayed in the area for 20 mins then west.	GW, JE
		08:06 [+1hr 19 mins]	West	GW, JE
Thorpe Marsh	01/11/17	16:18 [N/A]	North-west	MC
Whitlingham C.P.	05/11/17	07:03 [+3 mins]	North-west	JL
		07:10 [+10 mins]	North-west	JL

Table 1 – sightings of Hawfinches from the Whitlingham Recording Area. For observer initial codes see the acknowledgements at the end of the report.

Interpreting the sightings

Whitlingham has little habitat that would attract Hawfinches for long, so it was of no surprise that the sightings relate to flyover or short-staying birds rather than of birds feeding on the woodland floor. Most of the sightings occurred in the first 30 minutes after dawn, but when considering this it should be taken into account that much of the observer effort was focussed on the period from just before dawn until 60-90 minutes afterwards. The bird that flew over on 28th Oct flew over with some Redwings, but otherwise the birds were seen singly.

The first bird on 29th Oct appeared to emerge from willows at the east end of the Little Broad, suggesting that it may have roosted there overnight. It was still in the area for around 20 minutes before flying westwards. This could also have been the case with the bird seen on 17th Oct, which also spent some time flying around before exiting. Generally the Hawfinches flew either north/north-west, or west along the river, with the exception of the bird reported from Thorpe Marshes on 26th Oct that flew south-west.

Most observations were made from the west end of the Great Broad, but that is more about observer preference than it being a particular hotspot. The benches there provide somewhere to sit, a reasonable vista and are close to the car park.

References

BTO #1 <http://btomigrationblog.blogspot.co.uk/2017/10/hawfinches-galore.html>

BTO #2 (2017) <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/news-archive/2017/record-hawfinch-arrival>

Visible Migration at Whitlingham – a new dimension to birding here

Justin Lansdell

The study of visible migration first kicked off in earnest in Britain during the 1970's when pioneering birders discovered passage through the Pennine Valleys and the legendary DIMW Wallace was discovering the joy of watching diurnal passage of common migrants over Regents Park in Central London.

In East Norfolk it remains restricted to a few devotees with very little attempted inland*, and at Whitlingham our records of diurnal passage were anecdotal rather than disciplined until I made a few exploratory early morning watches in early November 2016. Without a strongly contoured valley or coastline to channel passage I was pleasantly surprised to record decent counts of Woodpigeons and Fieldfares, plus Wigeon and Bramblings, both scarce birds at Whitlingham. Birds seemed to arrive from the east or north-east with many following the Yare, and I settled on the benches between the Little and Great Broads as a watchpoint where a good vista to the north and east is possible. The scene was set for more concerted effort in autumn 2017.

Between 9th October and 18th November 2017 I undertook twelve early morning watches of 30-120 minutes from dawn to attempt to try to understand the best conditions and, of course, see some birds.

During these, I found the following:

- Most species prefer a headwind and thus a W to SW wind generally delivers best counts of staple species – Meadow Pipits, thrushes and finches.
- Peak Woodpigeon counts need an element of N in the wind – with WNW through to N offering the largest counts.
- On benign mornings little movement occurs.
- Even in fresh headwinds movement occurs although calls are harder to hear.
- Movement is best observed on overcast days when movement is at lower altitude and birds easier to pick up.
- It can be difficult to isolate genuine migration from local movements for some common, mobile and low flying species such as Goldfinches and Siskins.
- Numbers are generally much lower than on the east coast but, perhaps surprisingly, there is often no correlation between Whitlingham and other sites in East Anglia, even on what the commonest species is on a given day!

All my counts can be found at <http://www.trektellen.nl/?language=english&> but highlights were as follows:

- Grey Heron – 1 obvious migrant high W 18th Nov
- Little Egret – 1 W on 11th Nov
- Wigeon – 2 NE on 24th Oct, 12 W then E on 28th Oct, 30 W on 31st Oct
- Goosander – 3 W at dawn on 2nd Nov
- Lapwing – peak of 5 SW and 23 NW on 31st Oct
- Woodpigeon – peak of 543 W/SW on 26th Oct
- Fieldfare – Peaks of 10 SW on 23rd Oct and 18 N on 18th Nov
- Redwing – peak of 168 SW on 21st Oct
- Starling – peaks of 600 SW on 16th Oct and 1468 W on 31st Oct
- Hawfinch – 1 NNW at 08.02 on 26th Oct, 1 N at 08.09 on 28th Oct, 2 NW at 07.03 and 07.10 on 5th Nov. Part of an unprecedented nationwide movement.
- Bullfinch – 2 high SW on 21st Oct, 1 High W on 2nd Nov, on both occasions obvious migrants.
- Brambling – 1 SW on 16th Oct, 5 SW on 24th Oct, 1 SW on 26th Oct
- Redpoll sp – peaks of 27 SW on 24th Oct and 12 SW on 26th Oct
- Siskin – peak of 34 SW on 11th Nov.
- Yellowhammer – 1 SW on 21st Oct, 2 SW on 11th Nov, both mid morning after the main timed session.

James conducted watches on two other dates and recorded the following additional highlights:

- Pink-footed Goose – 100 west then 9 east on 27th Oct
- Hawfinch – 2 W on 29th Oct
- Bullfinch – 1 high north on 29th Oct

Certainly interest in the subject is growing, the potential to broaden our understanding of passage through Whitlingham is huge and I look forward to trying much harder in 2018 while potentially widening the range of dates. Is it possible the spring passage of Pipits and Finches so obvious on the east coast is replicated here? After all Yellow Wagtails often get caught up in such movements and until now we have considered that a very rare bird at Whitlingham.....

* [Editors note – I am only aware of one paper discussing vis-mig in inland Norfolk:
GARDINER, A. (2011), Visible autumn migration over west Norwich 2003-2011. *Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 2011*, volume 45, pages 17-28]

Ringed wildfowl at Whitlingham in 2017

James Emerson

The following wildfowl with a Whitlingham connection have been reported this year. Naturally the majority of species are reported from Whitlingham itself – if you have reported a species at another location and found out that it was ringed or controlled at Whitlingham then I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Canada Goose

A metal ringed bird ringed at Whitlingham on 7th Oct 2016 was reported there on 3rd Aug. A second bird, ringed at Whitlingham on 13th July 2010 was also present on 3rd Aug.

Greylag Goose

Neck-collared Greylag Goose Orange FKC was ringed as an adult at Thetford and noted at Whitlingham in June 2016. It was seen in January with a large Greylag flock and several White-fronted Geese at Wolterton Hall in North Norfolk (per the North East Norfolk Bird Club monthly bulletin) and returned to Whitlingham again this year where it was seen on the slipway with other Greylags on 5th July 2017.



There was an interesting sighting of a metal-ringed Greylag Goose on 5th May. It had been ringed at Whitlingham in April 2016 but was sighted at Wensum Park, 3km downriver.

More typically another metal-ringed bird seen at Whitlingham on 7th June was ringed there on 2nd Jan 2014.

Mute Swan

One new colour-ringed Mute Swan was seen this year, Orange 4BZF. It was seen around moorings near the Rushcutters Pub, and had been ringed at Wroxham Bridge on 28th Jan 2016. The observer notes that this was the fourth Wroxham-ringed Mute Swan that he has seen in the Thorpe St Andrews area, and wonders if any local birders have seen Mute Swans flying over Mousehold or Thorpe St Andrews, or if birds make their way down the Yare valley before switching to the Bure. I would of course be interested in the details if anyone visiting Wroxham sees a ringed bird that has visited Whitlingham or Thorpe.

One metal-ringed bird was reported this year, it was ringed at Whitlingham on 28th Dec 2010 and reported there on 10th Sept.

Egyptian Goose

The only ring read this year was a metal ringed bird seen on 17th April and ringed at Whitlingham on 17th Dec 2010. The longevity record for an Egyptian Goose is 12 years 11 months (see BTO online ringing report - <https://app.bto.org/ring/countyrec/resultsall/rec1700all.htm>) so it has a way to go before breaking any records.

Mallard

The ring was read on a metal-ringed drake seen at Thorpe River Green, but the ringing data is not yet available.

Coot

There was no sign of last years Norwegian-ringed Coot during 2017.

Still more ringed Black-headed Gulls at Whitlingham

James Emerson

This brief report is the fifth in a series of annual articles documenting the ringed Black-headed Gulls that have been reported from Whitlingham or across the river at Thorpe River Green. For further information about the origins of these birds see the article 'Colour-ringed Black-headed Gulls at Whitlingham' from the 2013 Whitlingham Bird Report.

Whilst most of the ringed gulls reported this year were returning birds, there were three new additions, colour-ringed gulls from Poland and Latvia (both 'new' countries) and a metal-ringed bird from Finland.

Ring number	Date first seen	Place ringed	Date ringed	Distance travelled /Km	Seen previously?
White A341	17/01/17	Neumunster, GERMANY	16/12/12	600	Yes (2014 onwards)
Green J6U2	19/01/17	Østfold, NORWAY	18/06/06	954	Yes (2015 onwards *)
Yellow KHS6	25/01/17	Lake Babite, LATVIA	20/06/16	1509	NEW
White J0AJ	29/01/17	Akershus, NORWAY	06/05/12	976	Yes (2014 on)
Metal ST272401	28/02/17	Eura, FINLAND	24/06/09	1560	Yes (2014)
Metal 6241523	02/03/17	Odense, DENMARK	26/11/10	666	Yes (2013)

Table 1 – Ringed Black-headed Gulls seen in the first winter period (Jan-Feb) 2017

* The Norwegian ringed bird Green J6U2 was present at Thorpe river green during January and February, and was reported by several observers. When the details were submitted to the ringing scheme it became evident that this individual had actually been present in the same area for the previous two winters. Scrutiny of the report revealed that it had been reported using the metal ring, number 6206183 – presumably the colour ring had been added later to an already metal-ringed bird.

Ring number	Date first seen	Place ringed	Date ringed	Distance travelled / Km	Seen previously?
Metal ring ST263009	11/11/17	FINLAND	TBC	TBC	NEW
Green J6U2	11/11/17	Østfold, NORWAY	18/06/06	954	Yes (2015 onwards *)
White J0AJ	11/11/17	Akershus, NORWAY	06/05/12	976	Yes (2014 on)
Yellow T2X8	11/11/17	Zachodniopomorskie, POLAND	May 2017	868	NEW
Metal ST272401	02/12/17	Eura, FINLAND	24/06/09	1560	Yes (2014)

Table 2 – Ringed Black-headed Gulls seen in the second winter period (Oct-Dec) 2017

The regularly returning bird White J5JE, ringed in Oslo, was not reported from Whitlingham in the second winter period. It was last seen at Whitlingham in November 2016, but was reported back in Norway in spring 2017 so might just have chosen different wintering grounds or just not have been seen this year.



Black-headed Gull Yellow T2X8 left and Green J6U2 right (photos Justin Lansdell)

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Justin Lansdell for supplying much of the 2017 information, to the various ringers involved and to the other birds who reported sightings of some of the birds, including Mark Eldridge, Nick Elsey and David Norgate.

Whitlingham Wildfowl Survey

Complete wildfowl counts were made once per month by the author to contribute to the BTOs Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). The data here is based on the combined counts for Whitlingham Little Broad, Great Broad and St Andrews Broad, however some counts differ from the figures submitted to WeBS in that they also include birds seen on nearby land. The counts are not necessarily high counts for the month – ad hoc and high counts are described in the individual species accounts.

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mute Swan	35	26	21	23	27*	63*	85*	43	30	24	19	32
[Black Swan]	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greylag Goose	44	1	13	25	23*	89	26	4	3	96	6	33
Canada Goose	6	4	18	9	4	64	32	3	4	3	3	3
Egyptian Goose	2	2	0	2	1	10	33	16	3	2	2	4
Shelduck	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wigeon	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gadwall	258	130	33	11	1	0	0	0	0	6	143	256
Teal	15	21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	151
Mallard	58	65	38	36	59*	26	155	137	76	57	65	87
[Muscovy Duck]	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Shoveler	8	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	11
Pochard	26	27	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	48
Tufted Duck	394	216	147	105	2	2	0	0	6	4	343	326
Scaup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant	43	22	13	3	5	2	4	7	0	66	47	30
Grey Heron	6	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	3	6	4
Little Grebe	11	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	5
Great-crested Grebe	3	4	4	7	2	3	1	0	0	6	6	6
Water Rail	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Moorhen	16	12	18	15	3	2	3	2	2	5	9	9
Coot	339	179	39	14	1	4	21	17	22	58	146	151
Lapwing	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Common Snipe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Green Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Tern	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-headed Gull	263	283	156	18	3	0	2	6	0	60	358	474
Common Gull	15	23	11	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7	12
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	2	4	26	44	28	35	44	14	26	2	0
Herring Gull	29	12	23	60	6	4	2	0	0	0	21	39
Kingfisher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2
Pochard x Ferruginous Duck	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pintail x Mallard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0

*Goslings/ducklings seen but not included in count figures as less than ¾ grown.

Whitlingham and Thorpe Classified List

The systematic list in this bird report follows the latest taxonomical order taken from the British Ornithologists Union (BOU), available to view or download here: <https://www.bou.org.uk/british-list/>. The most recent update to the British list occurred on 6th December 2017. The order of the wildfowl has been adjusted, with the most notable change to the order this year being the elevation of the geese above the swans. Brent Goose is now the first species on the British List.

In addition to the revised order, several species have had the genus changed as a result of genetic research since the last report. The ones here to be aware of are Garganey, Shoveler, Gadwall, Wigeon, Sandwich Tern, Mediterranean Gull and Jackdaw.

As of 1st Jan 2018 the British List will follow the taxonomic decisions of the the IOC (<http://www.worldbirdnames.org/>), which has resulted in several species being split or lumped. Fortunately these changes do not have any impact on the species included in this report. The IOC list has a number of 'international English' names that are not in common usage in the UK, for example Common Loon (Great Northern Diver) and Brant Goose (Brent Goose). I intend to continue to use the English names currently in common usage.

The description on the right refers to the chances of encountering a species if visiting at the appropriate time of year (common/scarse/rare) along with whether it is resident, a migrant, usually seen as a flyover or if it is only an occasional visitor.

Sightings of birds that are locally scarce or rare, particularly early or late reports or unusually high counts have initials after them – these relate to observers, a list of which can be found at the end of the classified list.

* **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla* *Rare winter visitor*

Two reported from St Andrew's Broad on 12th March (MC).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* *Common resident*



Occurred in single figures for 7 out of 12 months, with a summer peak of 64 on 11th June and an influx taking numbers to 107 on 30th June, the same day as high Greylag and Mute Swan counts. As usual three birds fully resident with others flying in and out throughout the year. One brood of two young goslings seen on 1st May.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common resident



In keeping with the previous year Greylag numbers were relatively low for much of the year with occasional influxes and post-breeding peaks of 94 in May, 132 in June and 84 in July. A very high count of 368 on 30th June must have included a large number of birds from elsewhere, whilst 260 were at St Andrews Broad on 3rd Sept and a flock of 96 were seen on the Great Broad on 8th Oct. At least five broods hatched (6,4,4,4 and 3 goslings), the first of which was noted on 21st April. Once again orange neck-collared bird FKC was present during the summer (see article on page 13 for details).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Occasional flyover



In the first winter period a flock of c300 was noted flying NW over Thorpe Marshes on 16th Jan. In the autumn flocks of 45 and 55 flew west, followed by nine flying east, on 27th Oct, and flocks of 70 and 30 flew over on 11th Nov.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Common resident



The highest counts this year were of 135 on 30th June and 123 on 20th July. Two broods fledged young at Whitlingham this year (both initially 4 cygnets, first noted on 15th May). There was no sign of the 'Polish' bird that fledged at Thorpe last year, and no cygnets were seen from that pair. Further downriver the second pair that also had a Polish cygnet in 2016 did have another two, of which one died shortly afterwards and the other was seen on the river from Thorpe Marshes on 11th Aug.

*** Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*

Scarce flyover species

A flock of around 50 were seen flying east over Thorpe Marshes on 20th Feb (MC). Flocks flew NE over Norwich in the early morning for several days after this, so probably flew over Whitlingham on these too.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Common resident.



Numbers peaked at 36 on 30th June, with 35 still present in July. Twelve at St Andrews Broad on 3rd Sept was a high count for that site. Only one pair bred, the first goslings of the year being seen on 17th Apr, a week later than in 2016.

A pale adult bird with no dark facial patch was present on several dates.

Photo: Gary White

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Scarce spring visitor

Typical spring sightings of one on St Andrews Broad on 28th Mar and one flying west over the Great Broad on 14th May. Winter records are infrequent here, so records of perhaps the same bird on the Great Broad on 1st Dec and at St Andrews Broad on 16th Dec were of note.

*** Garganey** *Spatula querquedula*

Rare spring migrant

A drake flew west over St Andrews Broad on 21st Apr (MC). This species was semi-regular here in the early 2000s but has been absent for several years.

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Regular winter visitor



Low numbers at the start of the year, with five at St Andrews Broad in Jan increasing to 13 on 23rd and 24th Mar (a record count for that month). There must have been at least 14 birds in the area as across both days five females and nine drakes were seen. Last sighting of spring six on 4th Apr. In the autumn four at St Andrews Broad on 10th Aug numbers reaching 21 on 11th Nov and peaking at 25 on 30th Dec.

Gadwall *Spatula strepera*

Common winter visitor



Around the start of the year about 200 were present, peaking at 262 on 14th Jan. Birds were mostly on the Great Broad but 106 counted on St Andrews Broad on 25th Jan. No sign of any breeding or overwintering this year, with four on the Great Broad on 1st May the last of spring. Occasional sightings in summer included seven on the Great Broad on 25th July and one at St Andrews Broad on 8th Aug, but there were no further sightings

until 13 returning birds on St Andrews Broad on 31st Aug. Numbers reached 33 on 29th Sept, increased slowly to 94 across Thorpe and Whitlingham on 11th Nov and 139 on 12th Dec.

Photo: Gary White

Wigeon *Spatula penelope*

Scarce winter visitor



Scarce in the first winter period, first noted when one present on the Great Broad on 29th Jan. A flock of 18 at St Andrews Broad on the 12th Mar was unusual for the time of year, and 13 of them were on the Great Broad on 16th Mar. One drake was still present on 23rd Mar and 6th Apr (perhaps the same bird seen on 29th Apr, also at St Andrews Broad). The first of the autumn was seen on 24th Sept, with nine on 25th and again on 6th

Oct. Between 1 and 3 seen sporadically throughout the last three months, including a drake on St Andrews Broad on 26th Dec. A flock of 30 were seen flying over on 31st Oct during an early morning visual migration session.

Photo: Gary White

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common resident.



Present all year round, little evidence of extra birds over winter but a summer peak mirroring the typical pattern shown by the geese. 62 birds present on the Great Broad during Jan, with numbers peaking at 130 on 25th July. Other high counts include 96 on 3rd Aug, 115 on St Andrews Broad on 3rd Sept and 128 on 29th Oct.

A minimum of four broods were raised at Whitlingham (14, 11, 7 and 5) plus at least one brood raised at Thorpe Marshes.

*** Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Rare winter visitor

One seen on St Andrews Broad on 1st Feb (RMc)

Teal *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor.



Most records from St Andrews Broad, where 133 present on 20th Jan. Numbers dropped sharply to 27 on 13th Feb and four still present there on 4th Apr.

Two present on St Andrews Broad on 22nd Aug and six there two days later, with 36 on 27th Sept. The largest count of the 2nd winter period was 148 during a cold spell on 9th Dec.

Photo: Gary White

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common winter visitor



Up to 26 on the Great Broad in January, but after that most double-figure counts came from St Andrews Broad, starting with 24 on 16th Feb. A drake on St Andrews Broad on 21st July was unusual. In the second winter period not recorded until two at Thorpe on 19th Oct, but then up to 69 present on St Andrews Broad. A female Ferruginous Duck x Pochard hybrid was also present with the flock. **Photo: Gary White**

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Common winter visitor



High numbers present on the Great Broad at the start of the year, usually 350+, peaking at 422 on 14th Jan. 279 were seen on St Andrews Broad on 16th Feb, with birds alternating between Whitlingham and Thorpe. Monthly high counts included 206 on St Andrews Broad on 12th Mar and 92 still present on 12th Apr. With no sign of any birds breeding this year, numbers only climbed back into double figures on 31st Aug, with a joint Whitlingham and Thorpe count of 173 on 22nd Oct, followed by 239 on 17th Nov and finally 334 on the Great Broad on 5th Dec. **Photo: Gary White**

*** Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Rare winter visitor



The 1st-winter male present from December 2016 remained for the first few days of January. On 2nd Jan a further two birds were also present (JE & GW), the first time that multiple birds have been reported here. The three birds were all at slightly different stages of moult. The third of these individuals was also seen on 4th Jan (ME), whilst one of the 1st-winter drakes was seen on St Andrews Broad on 8th Jan (MC). A female was also reported on St Andrews Broad on 16th Feb (MC).

*** Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce passage migrant



A drake present on St Andrews Broad on 11th and 12th Apr (JL), a fortnight later than the bird here in 2016.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor



Scarcer than normal this year. A female was present at Whitlingham on 4th Jan with possibly the same bird at Thorpe on 25th Jan. The first birds of the second winter period were two on St Andrew's Broad on 31st Oct, whilst three on the Great Broad on 11th Nov included an adult drake.

Photo: Gary White

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Scarce winter visitor



Four sighting this year. In spring three birds were seen flying up off St Andrews Broad and heading east on 1st Apr. In the second winter period three flew over Whitlingham early morning on 2nd Nov, three drakes were seen and photographed on St Andrews Broad on 24th Nov and a drake was present on St Andrews Broad on 16th Dec.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Occasional visitor

One present on 14th Oct, calling from the field south of Whitlingham Lane.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Fairly common resident

Resident at Whitlingham and Thorpe Marshes although typically elusive and mostly heard rather than seen.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Common winter visitor



The highest count of the year was of 11 on the Great Broad on 14th Jan, whilst four were present on St Andrews Broad on 30th and 31st Jan, and again on 18th Feb. Three still present there on 2nd Mar and two on 4th Apr.

In the second winter period one was back on the Great Broad on 26th Sept, then 7 there from mid-November until the year end.

Photo: Gary White

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident



Typically between 2 and 8 present on the Great Broad, with a maximum of 11 present on 29th Oct. A pair displaying on St Andrews Broad from 14th Feb were seen on a nest on 31st Mar, two chicks fledged but latterly only one chick seen on several dates on May. A late nesting pair were on a nest on the Great Broad on 11th June, with a large begging first-year seen on 8th Nov.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

*** Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce winter visitor

One reported from St Andrews Broad on 31st Jan (MC).

[Editors note: This bird was reported to the bird news services at the time, however birders looking for it the following day saw a Black-necked Grebe and naturally assumed that this was the bird being referred to. Having clarified with the observer, apparently the Black-necked Grebe had been present but unreported from 27th Jan and there was also a Slavonian Grebe on 31st]

*** Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Rare winter visitor



Following reports of a Slavonian Grebe on 31st Jan (see entry above), several birders went to St Andrews Broad and saw this Black-necked Grebe. It remained until 14th Feb and was seen and photographed by many observers. Latterly I have been told it was first seen on 27th Jan. This was the first recording area record of this species since the 2009/10 winter when all five grebes were seen at Whitlingham.

Photo: Gary White

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce but annual winter visitor



One heard flying over Thorpe Marshes on 18th Jan, before sightings on the Great Broad on 27th and 29th Jan. One was also reported from S Andrews Broad on 3rd Feb, with two there on 6th, 9th and 10th Feb and one over north-east on 14th Mar. Last bird of the winter reported flying over Thorpe Marshes on 2nd Apr.

At least one bird was present on the Great Broad in the second winter period, with sightings on 30th Oct, 15th Nov and 19th Dec. A record of one calling over Thorpe Marshes after dark on 15th Nov presumably involved the Whitlingham individual seen on the same date.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common resident



Typically between two and four seen around the Great Broad, although six present on 14th Jan. A pair with a nest was seen within the recording area during May, with a pair and two attendant young at Thorpe on 20th May presumably from this nest.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

***Great White Egret** *Casmerodius alba*

Former county rarity

One reported from the Great Broad mid-morning on 23rd Oct, before being flushed by a boat (per BirdGuides). This sighting might relate to the bird that regularly winters at Colney GPs moving along the valley, but it was not reported there in the period directly after this sighting. I would welcome any further information or photographs of this bird.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Regular flyovers



Single birds seen on many occasions, either flying over or at Thorpe Marshes. Sightings of more than one bird included two flying east over the Great Broad on 11th Feb, two over Thorpe Marshes on 6th, 12th, 13th and 14th Mar, two over Thorpe Marshes on 7th Apr and three over Thorpe Marshes on 23rd Mar. Four west over the Great Broad on 19th Mar represents the highest count here.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common winter visitor



Numbers in January up to 41 on the 14th. Large numbers in the autumn, including the rafting behaviour noted in 2016, with flocks regularly moving around the Great Broad. The highest count of the year was 102 on 29th Oct, whilst the roost count of 93 on 22nd Oct was coincidentally the same number as in Oct 2016 and is the joint 3rd highest count here.

Photo: Gary White

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Resident

Resident but not seen regularly. A record of two pairs displaying seen from Thorpe Marshes on 21st Mar.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Occasional flyovers

A scattering of records throughout the year, mostly from Thorpe Marshes and a mixture of male and females so at least two birds involved. These include a female on 27th Jan, several sightings in late March and throughout April, and a male on 30th July. One seen on the ground at Thorpe Marshes on 13th Dec.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Scarce flyovers

A poor year for this species despite regular sightings from around the outskirts of Norwich. The only sighting from within the recording area was one flying west over Thorpe Marshes on 30th May.

[In addition recorded just outside the recording area twice – one flew over Thunder Lane in Thorpe St Andrew on 27th May and another seen from the A47 near Trowse on 8th Dec]

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Resident nearby

Regularly seen either over or from the recording area. Sightings include a displaying bird on 9th Mar and three on 28th Mar. Four seen from Thorpe Marshes on 11th Apr and 10th May. Eight reported from Thorpe Marshes on 20th May presumably involved a combination of migrant birds and/or repetition.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Secretive resident/winter visitor



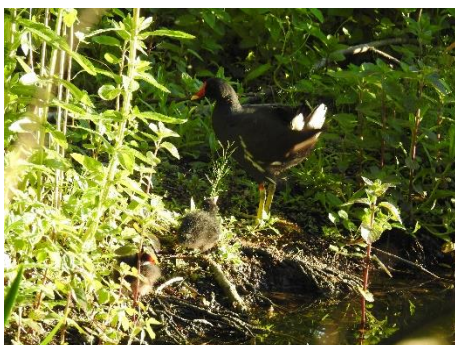
As usual recorded from both broads at Whitlingham and Thorpe Marsh, with most records at the latter and relating to 'squealing' birds. A count of 9 on the Great Broad on 29th Jan was of note, four of them seen chasing each other whilst another five were heard around the broad.

Most records from winter, but two pairs present at Thorpe Marshes on 4th Apr. It's likely that two pairs bred this year, as two 'begging' young were heard on 2nd May and a pair with 2+ young were seen at Thorpe Marshes on 31st May, probably too small to refer to the first pair.

Photo: Gary White

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

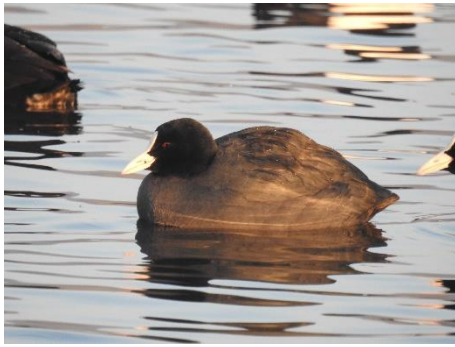
Common resident



An unremarkable year, with 13 on 14th Jan the highest Great Broad count, but many undoubtedly missed. At least one brood noted, with young chicks seen on 27th May.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Resident/Common winter visitor



Numbers above 300 for much of January, peaking at 352 on 10th. Three nests reported from St Andrews Broad in April. Numbers slow to pick up in the second winter period, finally reaching three figures on 31st Oct when 102 present on the Great Broad and a high count of 186 on 31st Dec, well below the previous winter.

Photo: Gary White

*** Common Crane** *Grus grus*

Rare flyover

Sightings are becoming slightly more regular as birds wander away from the broads in spring, touring the county. A flock of nine flew east over Thorpe Marshes on 20th Apr (RC), and were also seen flying over Norwich beforehand and Strumpshaw afterwards. A single bird was also seen flying east over Thorpe Marshes on 2nd May (RC).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Regular spring visitor

Seemingly less regular than normal, although when all observers sightings were included this wasn't the case. It is possible they were less obvious due in part to one of their favoured areas, the central shingle 'arm' of the broad often being flooded. First noted on 18th Feb, then two were seen on a range of dates throughout March, April and early May, with four on 21st and 29th Mar. After that two over on 20th May, two on 21st July and four on several days at the start of August.

*** Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce spring migrant

One heard flying over on 11th Apr (MC), a typical spring date. Six present at Thorpe Marshes on 26th Aug (TH) is the largest flock seen here in recent years and is also a departure from the more frequent March/April sightings.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Common winter visitor

Several flocks seen flying over Whitlingham, including 28 on 4th Jan and another 28 on 31st Oct. At Thorpe Marshes 51 on 16th Feb, otherwise numbers building in summer, with several counts of between 40 and 53 at the end of July. The largest numbers occurred in autumn, when 60 on 2nd Aug, 66 on 11th and 14th Sept, 88 on 22nd Sept and 60 on 15th Oct.

*** Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Rare flyover

Four reported this year, all of singles flying over Thorpe Marshes. These relate to birds over west on 20th Jan, south-west on 27th Jan, heard flying over north 9th Mar and one south on 18th July (all MC).

* **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Rare flyover

A report of one heard flying over on 21st Mar (MC)

* **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Rare flyover

A report of one flying over on 14th Aug (MC)

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce spring visitor

One seen at Thorpe Marshes on 28th Mar, with a pair noted there from 2nd Apr [a pair, probably the same birds had been seen at an undisclosed location nearby from 18th Mar]. There were several more sightings of a pair during April, with an extra male noted on 6th, 7th and 13th, but quiet after the 20th. During May one seen on 3rd and 2 pairs on 10th. In addition to the spring sightings one was also reported from the shore of St Andrews Broad on 21st July.

* **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Occasional passage migrant

Five records, all from Thorpe Marshes. One heard flying over on 31st Mar, one flew north on 22nd Apr, one flew west on 25th Apr, one over south on 27th Jun and one over south-east on 22nd July (all MC).

* **Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Occasional flyover

One flew north over Thorpe Marshes on 2nd Apr (MC) and two flew west over Whitlingham on 28th June (JL).

* **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

Rare flyover

Reports of one heard over Thorpe Marshes on 31st Mar and another north-west over Thorpe Marshes on 20th Apr (both MC).

* **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

Scarce passage migrant

Four records, all from Thorpe Marshes. One was reported at St Andrews Broad on 2nd Mar (MC) and another was heard flying west on 13th Mar (MC). One at St Andrews Broad on 7th July was seen by two observers (CD) and a photograph can be seen on the [honeyguides website](#) by scrolling down to the entry for 07/07/17. Another was reported south over Thorpe Marshes on 17th July (MC).

* **Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Very rare visitor

One seen at Thorpe Marshes on 7th May (SW) appears to be the first site record. It was seen along the western shore of the broad in the evening, but sadly wasn't present the following morning.

*** Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Scarce passage migrant



Aug (MC) **Photo: Gary White**

Several records during the first half of the year. One flew over Thorpe Marshes on 6th Jan (TH), with one at the same site on 6th Mar (MC) and photographed on 23rd Mar (RC, MC). Birds flying over Thorpe Marshes noted on 13th and 18th Apr (MC). One showed well on the slipway at Whitlingham on 23rd Apr (GW) – see photo on left, with presumably the same bird present at Thorpe on 30th Apr (ME). Finally one south over Thorpe Marshes on 18th July (MC) and one flew over SE on 28th

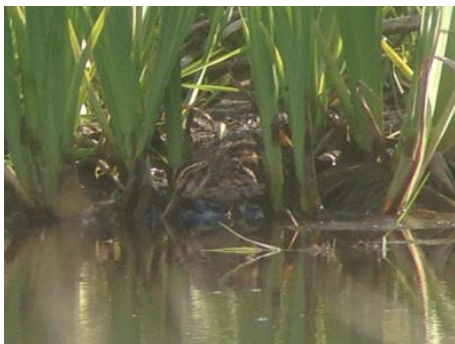
Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Scarce winter visitor

Probably present within the private areas of woodland around the site during the winter but only seen when flushed or flying off at dusk. Sightings include five flying into Thorpe Marshes on 5th Jan and one seen in scrub near St Andrews Broad on 9th Apr. Records from autumn also from Thorpe Marshes, with one on 31st Oct then on several dates in Nov, and two on 13th Nov, 15th Nov and 28th Dec and four on 14th Dec.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Scarce winter visitor



Seen at Thorpe Marshes in both winter periods, when probably present constantly although not usually visible. Sightings of single birds include 3rd, 6th and 25th Jan, 18th Feb, 12th, 24th Mar, 2nd Apr, 6th Apr and 11th Apr (the latter photographed). The only report of multiple birds was of two flushed on 3rd Mar and 2 on 24th Nov. In the autumn one on 29th Sept then on multiple dates in Nov and Dec. **Photo: Ricky Cleverley**

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common winter visitor



Present at Thorpe Marshes during both winter periods but numbers hard to estimate. Dusk counts included 54 on 8th Jan, 50+ departing on 18th Feb and 43 on 12th Mar. At least three still present on 29th Apr. A sighting at Thorpe Marshes on 31st July was perhaps unusual. Birds were seen again from 21st Sept, with counts of up to 58 reported at dusk later in winter.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Spring migrant



The first bird of spring was recorded at Thorpe Marshes on 20th Apr, with two present on the following days. Further sightings from Thorpe and Whitlingham over the following fortnight, concluding with three at Thorpe on 5th May and two there on 10th May.

One at Thorpe on 21st July signalled return passage, with others there on 2nd Aug, 8th Sept and 11th Sept.

One was also at the Great Broad on 3rd Aug.

Photo: Gary White

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Spring migrant



Two wintering birds flew out from Great Broad on 20th Jan. A scattering of spring records, with singles recorded at Thorpe Marshes on 18th Feb, 26th Mar, 9th Apr, 13th Apr, 2nd May and 31st May. During July one was present at Thorpe Marshes between 20th-30th July, with perhaps the same bird also seen on 10th, 18th and 24th Aug and another on 29th Sept. One at Thorpe Marshes on 14th Nov is presumably wintering nearby.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Scarce passage migrant

This account includes details of 10 sightings, which would be an unusually good year for this species (2015: 1 record, 2016: 3 records) however I would assume that some, if not all of the spring records refer to one long-staying individual. Interestingly the pattern of sightings roughly mirrors the Green Sandpiper records. In spring, the typical period for occurrences, records received of singles from Thorpe Marshes, on 24th Mar, 26th Mar, 2nd Apr, 8th Apr, 13th Apr and 6th May. In July one was seen at Thorpe Marshes on 17th, 20th and 30th with two on the 8th Aug an unusual record as most sightings here are of singles.

*** Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Rare spring migrant

Three reports this year, all of birds flying over Thorpe Marshes. A bird flew over north on 30th May, one over south-east on 26th June and one east on 14th Aug (all MC).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce spring migrant

One flew over Thorpe Marshes on 19th Apr and another was seen at Thorpe on 30th Apr, fairly typical dates for this species.

*** Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Rare storm-driven visitor



This dead 1st-winter Kittiwake was a surprise find at the east end of the Great Broad on 3rd Dec (JE, RMc). It is the third confirmed record for the recording area. Birders were present on the previous two days so it probably wasn't present for long before expiring.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common resident



Numbers in the first winter period around 300, with up to 475 in December. A flock of 161 (including 14 juveniles) was counted from St Andrews Broad on 31st July, and is unusual as numbers are typically less than 20 here in mid summer. These birds were presumably from local breeding colonies rather than European arrivals.

As usual a range of ringed birds seen at Whitlingham and across the river at Thorpe Green – see article on page 15 for details.

*** Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Scarce spring migrant



Four sightings this year. The first was an adult seen and photographed at the east end of the Great Broad on 28th Mar (JL), followed by a first-summer reported from St Andrews Broad on 29th Mar (MC), an adult there on 11th Apr (MC) and another one also at St Andrews Broad on 30th Apr (ME), the latter sighting being on the same day as the Black Tern passage. **Photo: Justin Lansdell**

*** Mediterranean Gull** *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus*

Scarce winter visitor

A calling adult flew over Whitlingham on 29th Mar (ME) and a juvenile reported at St Andrews Broad on 24th Aug (MC).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common winter visitor



As usual present during winter in fairly low number, peaking at 36 during a freeze on 22nd Jan. Birds this year included two colour-ringed birds. A white ringed one seen standing on ice was not fully read but may have come from a ringing scheme in Germany, whilst a green-ringed bird was ringed as a 1st-winter in Sandnes, Norway on 11th Nov 2015. **Photo: Gary White**

*** Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Scarce migrant

Only two records this year, on the Great Broad on 24th Apr (PW) and 13th Dec (ME).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common winter visitor



Present in winter and at pre-roost gatherings in autumn. The clearance of the edges of St Andrews Broad mean that more gulls now use it, with 47 noted on 27th Oct. One colour-ringed bird noted, red VKB, a returning bird ringed in Suffolk on 25th Jan.

Photo: Gary White

*** Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

Scarce visitor



Only one record this year, a 2nd-winter seen and photographed on the Great Broad on 31st Dec (GW). [Note that whilst we feel the headshape, bill colour and plumage fits this species and plumage it is not an age group we see often here so if you are a laridophile and have a different view then please let me know]

Photo: Gary White

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Common summer visitor



Common during the summer, with one or two lingering through the winter. The highest count noted was 120 on 2nd Oct.

*** Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis***

Rare passage migrant

Two reported from Whitlingham C.P. on 27th March (per bird news services). This is a rare species here so I would welcome and further details or photos of these birds.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Common spring migrant



One flew over St Andrews Broad on 13th Apr, an early date. Next seen at Whitlingham on 23rd Apr, with four at St Andrews Broad on the following day. Up to 12 passed through Whitlingham on 1st May, then six on 10th May and small numbers present throughout May and June, last noted on 25th July.

Photo: Gary White

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Scarce spring migrant



One present on the Great Broad on 23rd April, with a concentrated period of passage from 28th April when up to 13 birds present and 1st May when another eight present. Last seen on 7th May, when two seen at the Great Broad.

*** Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

Scarce passage migrant



Five seen briefly over St Andrews Broad on 30th Apr (ME), followed by a single seen and photographed at Whitlingham on 2nd May (GW).

Photo: Gary White

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Common resident

As usual sightings limited to flyovers from the areas that border Trowse, Norwich and Thorpe St Andrew.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce resident

Regular sightings from Thorpe Marshes, with sightings of seven on 21st Apr and 12 on 2nd Nov the highest counts. Birds also noted from the meadows south of Whitlingham Lane.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Common resident

Ubiquitous across the recording area. Some large counts from autumn visible migration watches, including 558 counted in one hour on 26th Oct.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Scarce – resident nearby

Only a scattering of records, albeit with the usual proviso that this species wouldn't be deemed noteworthy elsewhere in the city. A pair were present in a garden along Whitlingham Lane on 14th Jan, on several dates in April, two on 16th July, four around the Great Broad on 12th Oct, and two more were seen flying along the railway line at Thorpe Marshes on 21st Dec.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce spring migrant

Only a handful of records this year, one at Thorpe Marshes on 23rd April then birds seen at Whitlingham on 14th May and 3rd June.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident

A few records, mostly during winter. At Thorpe birds were seen at dusk on 8th, 24th and 27th Jan, 18th Feb, then again on 26th May and 28th Dec. Across the river one was seen at Whitlingham Marsh on 5th Apr.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Scarce resident

Generally under-recorded, although a report of three pairs heard from Thorpe Marshes on 27th Mar and 6th Apr probably represents the maximum number of territories for the area. Apart from that, one heard calling from Whitlingham Woods on 5th Jan, 5th Apr and 11th Apr and several records from Thorpe Marshes during November.

Swift *Apus apus*

Common spring visitor

First of the year recorded on 26th April, a fairly normal arrival date. Seen during the first half of May with a high of 360 on 5th May. Three-figure counts were also made on 31st May and 7th June. Bird recorded in smaller numbers on several dates in July. In the autumn several records from August including 5 on the 26th, two over the Great Broad on 10th Sept and finally one at Thorpe Marshes on 13th Sept.

The Broads Authority installed a Swift nesting tower in the barn car park at Whitlingham, which played out Swift calls throughout the spring. As expected no birds attempted to nest this year, but the hope is that some will in 2018 or 2019.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Scarce resident



Sightings throughout the year, although fewer records in late spring. Most records of singles, but a pair noted on several occasions at St Andrews Broad and multiple birds present on the Great Broad, with a maximum of five noted on 7th June and 29th Oct.

Photo: Gary White.

*** Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus minor*

Rare former resident

This species was resident in the Whitlingham area until the early 2000s, but has suffered a severe range contraction and is now very scarce in Norfolk. Recent bird reports tend to only feature a handful of records from the Brecks, but there are occasionally reports online of birds at Cringleford, and Lesser-spotted Woodpeckers are apparently still present in woods at High Ash Farm (only a few miles away) as reported on Chris Skinner's Radio Norfolk show.

This year a report was received of one visiting feeders in a garden adjacent to Trowse Woods on 2nd Mar (JLe). Lesser-spotted Woodpeckers are now a description species in Norfolk, so this sighting would need to be assessed by the county rarities committee, but is a reminder that suitable habitats should still be checked, particularly in February and March.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*

Resident



Birds noted attending the feeders of the garden mentioned above, plus seen regularly in the wooded areas around Whitlingham C.P. and the wooded edge of the railway line north of Thorpe Marshes.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Resident

Distribution the same as Great-spotted Woodpecker, but sightings more concentrated in spring and birds typically heard only.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident

A pair resident at Thorpe Marshes or at least nearby, but few sightings from Whitlingham C.P. this year. A sighting of three at Thorpe Marshes on 13th Oct included one local bird and two others flying over.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce spring migrant



Sightings mostly during May when birds seen at Thorpe Marshes on 1st, 10th, 19th, 21st, and 22nd. One flew over the Great Broad on 7th June, then further records from Thorpe Marshes on 26th June and on 20th and 29th Sept.

Photo: Gary White

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Regular flyovers

Once again a pair bred at Norwich cathedral, but still few records of birds hunting over the recording area. Two reported at Thorpe Marshes on 10th and 21st May, with sightings of singles there on 20th May and 21st Dec.

*** Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

County rarity

A new species for the area, with three records (21st May, 26th Sept and 12th Oct) that might all relate to the same individual. See article on page 5 for full details.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Common resident



Present all year round but more obvious in autumn/winter.

The bird pictured here at Thorpe Marshes was observed, along with its partner, checking the reeds for nests before taking an egg from a Linnet nest in nearby brambles on 12th May.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Common resident

Present throughout the recording area. Roost counts not made in mid-winter, but 46 noted going to roost on 19th Mar and 52 on 2nd Oct.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Common resident

A large roost of birds in trees on the main island included 400 on 2nd Oct, 350 on 23rd Mar and 270 on 19th Mar.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident

Commonly encountered, particularly around the south shore of the Great Broad.

*** Waxwing** *Garrulus garrulus*

Scarce winter flyover

One reported at Thorpe Marshes on 8th and 17th Jan, plus four over on 18th Jan, one over on 2nd Feb and five over on 13th Mar (all MC).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Scarce resident

A scattering of records from around the Great Broad for this unobtrusive species. In addition occasional records from Thorpe Marshes, including three on 31st Aug.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Scarce resident

Recorded from Whitlingham C.P, Whitlingham Woods and Thorpe Marshes, but fewer sightings from the former site than in past years and more often heard than seen.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common resident

Common throughout the recording area.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident

Common throughout the recording area.

*** Bearded Tit** *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare irruptive visitor



Reports of two birds heard from an area of reedbed at Thorpe Marshes on 17th Nov, 24th Nov, 18th Dec and 28th Dec (all MC). Multiple visits were made by observers attempting to see these birds, and one was seen from the same area on a walk by Strumpshaw Fen reserve volunteers on 13th Dec (BL), photographed on 22nd Dec (JL) and also seen on 23rd Dec (PW). There was no sign of the second bird on these occasions. [A record of two

heard from Griffin Fen on 26th Oct (MC) presumably relates to the same birds as later reported in the reedbed at Thorpe Marshes]

Photo: Justin Lansdell

*** Woodlark** *Lullula arborea*

Rare flyover

Report of one over south-west on 26th Oct (MC)

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Scarce winter visitor

In spring one flew over the Great Broad on 12th Mar and one over Thorpe Marshes on 4th Apr. More sightings of birds flying over during autumn, mostly between mid October and mid November. Highest counts were nine over 14th Oct and eight over Thorpe Marshes on 26th Oct.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia**Common spring visitor*

Present over St Andrews Broad from 2nd Apr, with 30 on the 22nd. At Whitlingham 75 were over the Great Broad with lots of Swallows on 26th Apr. The last spring sighting was at the Great Broad on 7th May, then a gap until singles noted over St Andrews Broad on 2nd and 18th Aug. The last sightings of the year were singles at the Great Broad on 10th Sept and Thorpe Marshes on 14th Sept.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica**Common summer visitor*

Three at St Andrews Broad on 2nd Apr were the first of the year, with small numbers seen on several dates throughout April until a large arrival of c225 over the Great Broad on 26th. In the autumn 20 noted at St Andrews Broad on 18th Aug, with two present on 31st Aug. During September 40 noted at Thorpe Marshes on 18th Sept, with the last one seen there on 27th Sept.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum**Common spring visitor*

Two over St Andrews Broad on 21st Apr, with several present for the rest of the month and into May. There were a few sightings during June, including six on 7th and two on 30th. A flock of 60 were present at St Andrews Broad on 31st Aug, followed by 100 over the Great Broad on 6th Sept and 130 at St Andrews Broad on 14th Sept (the largest flock of the year), with seven still on 20th Sept.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti**Common resident*

Still doing well in the area. Up to eight singing males around Whitlingham C.P. and similar numbers at Thorpe Marshes. Usually only heard, but the one pictured here showed well.

Photo: Gary White

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus**Common resident*

Common throughout the recording area. As usual roving flocks present in autumn, with 40+ seen across Whitlingham C.P. on several dates.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common summer visitor



Two reported giving brief song at Thorpe Marshes on 24th Mar (MC) [Editors note – this is a week earlier than birds are usually noted in Norfolk, for comparison first singing birds at Whitlingham 2016: 3rd April, 2015: 2nd April]

At Whitlingham C.P. one heard singing on 31st Mar, with two singing from 4th Apr and more by mid month. Birds still present at Thorpe Marshes on 31st Aug, where two

birds reported on 29th Sept were rather late.

Photo: Gary White

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Common summer visitor



Three overwintering birds at Thorpe Marshes seen on 8th, 19th and 23rd Jan and 6th Feb. One singing at Thorpe Marshes on 10th Mar might have been new in. Two singing there on the 12th backs this up with 14 at Whitlingham on the same date. Birds still being noted through Sept, with a singing bird at Thorpe Marshes on 29th Sept. In the second winter period up to three reported at Thorpe Marshes during November and one

at Whitlingham during the same period.

Photo: Gary White

*** Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

County rarity

Reports, presumably all of the same individual, from Thorpe Marshes on 5th, 8th, 24th and 25th Jan then again on 10th Mar and in song 28th Mar. Reported again in the second winter period on 2nd and 3rd Nov (all MC). As far as I'm aware this bird has not been submitted to the county rarities committee.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor



Early returning this year, with one reported singing periodically at Thorpe Marshes from 28th Mar onwards. Numbers continued to rise during April, with birds widespread in suitable habitat by 1st May. At Whitlingham first noted on 5th April and regularly heard throughout April and May.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common summer visitor

A bird reported from Thorpe Marshes on 4th Apr (MC) [Editors note: This is a very early date for this species – previous Whitlingham first dates 2016: 16th Apr, 2015: 15th Apr]

The first one singing at Whitlingham C.P. on 16th Apr was a more typical arrival date, which along with a Lesser Whitethroat on the same day completed the set of the regular eight warblers here. A very late bird reported from Thorpe Marshes from 21st Sept.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Scarce summer visitor



A bird first reported reeling at Thorpe Marshes on 9th Apr, earlier than the past few years. Typically during late April and early May two birds were reeling from Thorpe Marshes with another one audible to the east on Griffin Fen, although seven were reported on 24th Apr (MC). None heard during June when presumably the birds were feeding young, before two were again heard reeling on 6th July. Six were heard reeling in the

area on 25th July (WW), which represents a large number of birds presumably attempting second broods.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common summer visitor



An overwintering bird reported from Thorpe Marshes on 30th Jan, with presumably the same bird on 16th Feb and 21st Mar. One singing on 29th Mar was probably the same individual, but could conceivably be a migrant. Three in song at Thorpe Marshes on 4th Apr would have been summer arrivals. Birds still present in September, including four at Thorpe Marshes on 8th Sept and one at Whitlingham on 10th. One was also seen at Thorpe

Marshes on 21st and 22nd Sept.

Photo: Gary White

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Scarce summer visitor

One singing at Thorpe Marshes on 24th Apr and again on several occasions until 15th May. A singing bird on 25th July perhaps suggested that a pair had bred earlier in the year and were attempting a second brood, although there were no sightings after the May report. At Whitlingham first seen on 2nd May, with two heard present at the end of the month and also on 30th June. One singing again there on 25th July.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce summer visitor

Back at Whitlingham on 17th April, an early date, and also seen on several dates until 7th May. One seen at Thorpe Marshes on 24th Apr was presumably just passing through.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor



One singing at Thorpe Marshes on 8th Apr, with several back from the 22nd. First noted back at Whitlingham on 17th Apr, although possibly present but unrecorded before that. Highest numbers reported in late May, and last noted at 25th July.

Photo: Gary White

*** Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce visitor

Three records, presumably the same individual seen at Thorpe Marshes on 8th and 15th Feb (both MC), and a singing bird in Whitlingham Woods on 5th Apr (GW). Now seemingly an annual spring visitor, albeit usually only recorded for one day at a time. Whether this represents birds singing briefly whilst passing through, or moving around the area looking to set up a territory is unclear.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Common resident

Present in Whitlingham Woods and also seen on occasion around Whitlingham C.P. In addition up to six reported from Thorpe Marshes during November.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common resident

Widespread and common throughout the recording area.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Scarce resident

As usual heard calling from Whitlingham Woods and Trowse Woods. Away from these strongholds two present with the tit flock along Bungalow Lane on 26th Sept.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident



Low numbers present throughout the recording area. A brood of three newly fledged birds (including the one pictured here) were seen at Thorpe Marshes in early March.

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris**Common resident*

Occasionally seen flying over from Thorpe St Andrews or on the meadows south of Whitlingham Lane. A flock of 130 appeared to roost at Thorpe Marshes on 1st Nov. Large numbers limited to birds flying over at dawn or dusk, for example 600 over shortly after dawn on 16th Oct. Later in the month large flocks were seen flying east over Thorpe Marshes before dusk, presumably heading to roost in the mid-Yare valley, including 2000+ on 3rd Nov.

*** Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus**Rare migrant*

One flew west over Thorpe Marshes on 18th Apr (MC) and a pair flew over Thorpe Marshes towards Whitlingham on 26th Apr (DN). In the autumn one seen in scrub east of Bungalow Lane on 16th Oct (MC), with what was possibly the same bird seen several days later a bit further east at Postwick.

Blackbird *Turdus merula**Common resident*

Common throughout the recording area.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris**Common winter visitor*

A poor first winter period for this species. A flock of 53 north over Thorpe Marshes on 12th Mar and 60 west over Thorpe Marshes on 7th Nov were the only counts of note.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus**Common winter visitor*

Most records of birds flying over, and last seen in spring on 2nd April when 26 at Whitlingham. Over 190 flew north over Thorpe Marshes on 12th Mar. In autumn one over Thorpe Marshes on 27th Sept was the first one of winter. Several double-figure counts flying over at dawn during October, including c80 on 27th.

Photo: Gary White

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos**Common resident*

Present throughout the recording area, although perhaps lower numbers of singing birds than in recent years.

Photo Gary White

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Scarce resident



Present although unobtrusive at Whitlingham all year round, but noted from Thorpe Marshes on 13th and 18th Feb, with one singing from the end of Bungalow Lane throughout mid March.

Photo: Gary White

*** Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

Scarce migrant and former breeder

One reported singing from Thorpe Marshes on 15th May (MC) although no signs of breeding taking place. A second sighting from Thorpe Marshes on 18th Sept (MC) was presumably a bird migrating through.

Robin *Erithacus rubicula*

Common resident

Common throughout the recording area.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce possible breeder

First heard back at Whitlingham when one was heard singing from the usual area on 17th Apr, and still present on 28th. Two were heard on 2nd May, and a third bird was heard on 5th May. The only sighting outside of April and May was of one singing on 7th June.

*** Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Rare migrant

An unusual record of a juvenile/1st-summer present briefly at Thorpe Marshes on 17th July (CD). This bird was seen on a guided walk and a photograph can be seen on Chris's [Honeyguides website](#). Given that the breeding population of this species in Norfolk is largely confined to the Brecks, this was presumably a bird moving along the river valley.

*** Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Rare passage migrant



There were two records this year, both photographed. The first was on 10th May at Thorpe Marshes (SW) and the second, also at Thorpe Marshes, was present on 1st & 2nd Sept (RC).

Photo: Ricky Cleverley

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce winter migrant



The wintering pair at Thorpe Marshes were still present throughout January and February, although not seen on every visit. Several sightings were received at the start of March, and then after a gap again on 28th Mar.

In the autumn a male was seen again on 7th and 15th Oct, before a pair were seen on 27th. The female was only seen until 3rd Nov, after which only the male was encountered.

Photo: Justin Lansdell

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Rare spring migrant



One seen on the shore of St Andrews Broad on 11th Apr (MC). One present at Whitlingham C.P. on 29th April (WW) was seen by several observers.

[Editors note: A pair of Wheatears were seen and photographed nearby at Postwick on 26th April, and it is likely that one of these birds accounts for one or both of the recording area sightings. Another was also seen

and photographed there on 18th May.]

Photo Ricky Cleverley (taken at Postwick)

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Common resident



Common throughout the recording area.

Photo: Gary White

*** Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

Scarce spring flyover

Two flyover birds seen this year, on 29th Apr and 25th July (both WW).

[Another bird was seen flying over Postwick on 18th May (DN), just outside the recording area]

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Scarce resident

Established back in the area as a resident species, although still only seen periodically at Whitlingham. In February a small roost of birds at Thorpe Marshes reached 8 on several dates mid-month. A roost of up to 12 birds was seen at Thorpe Marshes by two observers in late Oct/early Nov.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Common resident



Resident and often encountered around the visitors barn. A brood raised around the main slipway provided entertainment as they flew around the Alders like clumsy Long-tailed Tits. A pre-roost gathering of around 120 was seen at Thorpe Marsesh on 23rd Oct.

Photo: Gary White

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Passage migrant/winter visitor

Low numbers seen at Thorpe Marshes throughout the year. In the first winter period a very large roost of at least 97 birds was reported on 17th Jan. A reasonable roost gathering occurred in October, with several counts of 20-30 and numbers increased into November, with one huge roost of 165 reported on 6th Nov.

*** Tree Pipit** *Anthus fluvialis*

Rare flyover

A report of one south flying over Thorpe Marshes on 28th Sept (MC)

*** Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

Rare winter visitor

Again lots of records from Thorpe Marshes. As explained in the 2016 report, Water Pipits are unlikely to be seen on a casual visit to Thorpe Marshes - almost all of these reports relate to birds flying into roost with Meadow Pipits late in the day.

- Jan: One on 3rd, 10th, 16th and 31st. Two on 5th, 6th, 20th and 23rd. 3 on 17th and 18th (all MC)
- Feb: One on 1st, 7th, 14th, 21st and 22nd. Two on 3rd (all MC)
- Mar: One on 2nd, 7th, 15th, 23rd and 24th (all MC) plus one seen during the afternoon on 20th (DL)
- Oct: One on 16th and 31st (both MC).
- Nov: One on 3rd 6th 9th 15th & 20th and four on 2nd (all MC)
- Dec: One on 14th Dec (MC)

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident

Widely seen throughout the recording area.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Scarce winter visitor



Scarce in the first winter period, with singles at Thorpe Marshes on 18th and 23rd Jan, then again on 7th Feb. Three flew over Thorpe Marshes on 14th Mar and one over on 24th Mar. One visiting a garden backing onto Trowse Woods in March, with a flock of 21 at Whitlingham on 2nd Apr and 16 still on 9th Apr. In autumn all sightings related to birds flying over, mostly singles although five over on 24th Oct and 7th Nov.

Photo: Gary White

*** Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Very rare visitor

One reported flying west over Thorpe Marshes on 3rd Feb (MC). The unprecedented autumn migration of this species through England resulted in a series of records at Whitlingham and Thorpe in late October – see article for details.

[One also seen in trees north of the railway line on 24th Sept (MC)]

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Scarce resident

A pair with four young were seen from Bungalow Lane on 21st July. In addition to the resident birds, single birds apparently migrating overhead were seen on several days in late October and early November.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Fairly common resident

A flock of around 35 went to roost in trees between the two broads on 14th Jan – some of these trees have since been cut down. Otherwise sightings throughout the year but seemingly becoming less common.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Scarce resident



Five at Thorpe Marshes on 30th Jan and 12 there on 1st Mar. Three singing males were observed on numerous dates during April, with at least two pairs nesting at Thorpe Marshes this year. One of these nests saw eggs predated by Jays. Two singing males were also present at Whitlingham In March, but no evidence of breeding was noted.

Photo: Gary White

*** Common (=Mealy) Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor



One reported from Thorpe Marshes on 6th Jan (MC) and another photographed with a flock of 31 Lesser Redpolls at Whitlingham C.P. on 26th Dec (GW).

Photo: Gary White

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cannabina*

Fairly scarce winter visitor



Present in low numbers during January, including six on 28th. One was still present at Whitlingham on 2nd Apr. A flock returned on 26th Oct, with 24 present on 31st. Up to 30 then present until the year end, although not seen very regularly, with a maximum of 58 seen on 14th Nov.

Photo: Gary White

Redpoll sp. (*Acanthis* sp)

Scarce winter visitor

Some Redpolls, particularly when recorded flying over, where only recorded as far as Redpoll sp. This included 1 over Thorpe Marshes on 1st Mar, another over Thorpe Marshes on 9th Apr and 27 over Whitlingham in 75 minutes on 24th Oct. A few sightings flying over Thorpe Marshes in November too, including 11 on 7th Nov.

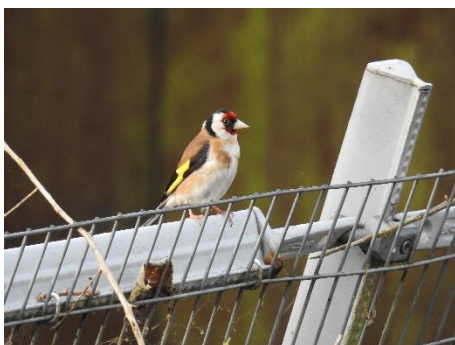
*** Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Rare visitor

One calling from the small wooded area north-east of the Great Broad on 16th Mar (GW). Although fairly regular passing through the mid-Yare this species is very uncommon and/or under-recorded here.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident



Small flocks present all year, and also combining with one of the flocks of Siskins during December. 50 over during an early morning vis-mig session on 22nd Oct was of note.

Photo: Gary White

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Common winter visitor



Single figures seen during January, with numbers building during Feb, with around 80 on site on 18th Feb. Last seen at Whitlingham on 26th Mar. In the second winter period first seen on 18th Sept, with a mixture of settled and migrating birds seen during October and November. Numbers reached 90+ by the end of the year.

Photo: Gary White

*** Yellowhammer**

Scarce flyover

One flew over the Great Broad on 2nd Apr (GW) and then recorded twice flying over during vis-mig sessions in autumn, one on 22nd Oct (JL) and then three (two then a single) on 11th Nov (JL).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common summer visitor



Recorded almost throughout the year, with four in song at Thorpe Marshes on 21st Feb and birds back on territories across the site by 10th Mar. One was still at Whitlingham on 2nd Nov and six at Thorpe Marshes on 3rd Nov. Two still at Thorpe Marshes on 28th Dec.

Photo: Gary White

Total: 156 species

Appendix A – Unrecorded but likely species

These species are birds that are either seen in most years but not reported during 2016, or birds that were seen very close to Whitlingham and/or flying in the direction of the Whitlingham without being actually observed there.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Fairly regular winter visitor

Fairly regular in recent years, but no records this year.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce migrant

One seen flying over the A146/outer ring road junction in the direction of Whitlingham on 18th May (per bird news services). There no reports of presence or absence from Whitlingham, but there was no sign of it over Thorpe Marshes shortly afterwards.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

County rarity

One seen over the A47 along the southern edge of the Whitlingham Recording Area on 29th April [DB]. Two birders were present around the Great Broad and didn't see it go over (because of the large Jackdaw flock it would have almost certainly been noisily mobbed), so it probably continued to follow the course of the A47. This sighting presumably relates to the same individual that spent time in the Bure valley from 21st April and relocated to Buckenham Marshes on 3rd May

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Scarce flyover

Occasionally seen in flight and occurs nearby at Postwick, but no reports this year.

Appendix B – Escapes and birds of dubious origin

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Occasional visitor



One on the Great Broad on 9th Apr probably hadn't flown in from Australia – perhaps the resident Strumpshaw Fen bird?

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Semi-resident at Thorpe Green

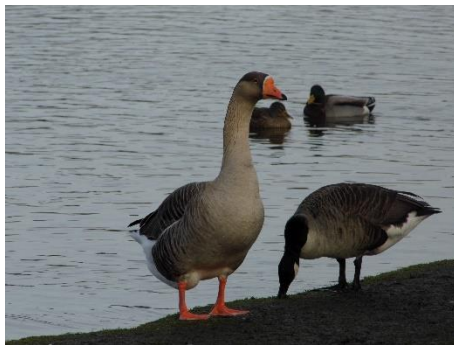


This bird spent most of the year at Thorpe Green, but was sometimes visible from Whitlingham when it took to the river.

Appendix C – Hybrids & domestic wildfowl

Greylag x Chinese Goose (aka domestic Swan Goose)

Resident



This long staying bird is still present on the Great Broad, and is often in the company of a second bird that looks like a Greylag Goose with the exception of a darker hind-neck that hints at Chinese Goose ancestry.

Greylag x Canada Goose

Occasional visitor

Three of this hybrid present with a flock of Canada Geese on 5th July.

Pintail x Mallard

Resident bird



This now resident hybrid spent most of the year at Thorpe River Green, but was present on the Great Broad during September and on several other occasions.

Pochard x Ferruginous Duck

Returning wintering bird



The returning female Pochard x Ferruginous Duck was present during both winter periods. In January it was most commonly on the Great Broad but was also seen at St Andrews Broad during February. In the winter it was seen at St Andrews Broad from 1st Nov onwards

Photo taken by Justin Lansdell

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to everyone who has reported birds from the Whitlingham area this year, be it directly to myself, to the bird news services or by posted sightings on websites such as [BirdForum](#) or Twitter. In particular I would like to thank the following for providing records or information:

D. Bryant (DB), M. Chipperfield (MC), R. Chittenden, R. Cleverley (RC), L. DeMille, C. Durdin (CD), M. Eldridge (ME), N. Elsey, J. Gearty (JG), J. Halls, T. Hodge (TH), J. Lansdell (JL), B. Lewis (BL), J. Lewis (JLe), D. Lyness (DL), A. Manvell, D. McGibbons (DM), R. McIntyre (RMc), R. Moores, A. Musgrove, D. Russell, A. Schuetzle, C. Thornton, W. Walmsley (WW) S. White (SW), G. White (GW) and P. Woolnough (PW).

My thanks also go to the Broads Authority staff at Whitlingham, and the people that I have spoken to whilst in the field, and to Josh at [BirdGuides](#) for allowing use of their data.

Local information

The following websites regularly contain sightings from the Whitlingham area:

<http://jamesbirdsandbeer.blogspot.co.uk/> (The author's blog, containing updates from Whitlingham & Thorpe, and a site guide and a site bird list)

<http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/thorpemarshes.htm> (Thorpe Marshes NWT unofficial site)

<http://yarevalleywildlife.synthasite.com/> (Yare Valley Birding website)

<http://shakysbirdingblog.blogspot.co.uk/> (Ricky Cleverley's Blog containing updates from Thorpe Marsh)

<http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=249220> (The Norwich thread of BirdForum)

Bird information services

Several sightings and dates relate to sightings reported to the bird information services. If you are fortunate enough to find a rare or locally scarce bird, please report it to one of them. Contact websites and phone numbers of the main providers can be found below.

[Rare Bird Alert](#) (0207 0382820), [BirdGuides](#) (0333 5772473) or [BirdLine East Anglia](#) (07941 333970).