

# **The Birds of Whitlingham & Thorpe 2013**



Compiled by James Emerson

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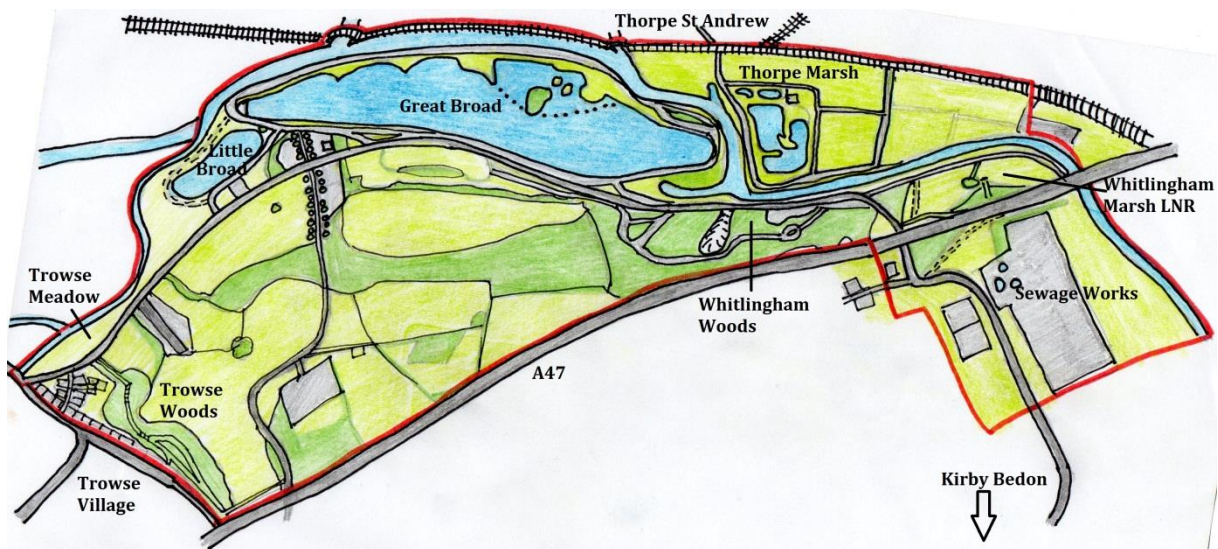
## **Get in touch**

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 2014 report, by emailing: [whitlinghambirds@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:whitlinghambirds@yahoo.co.uk).

## Introduction

This is a record of the bird species reported from the Whitlingham area (including Thorpe Marshes NWT reserve) during 2013. Despite Whitlingham and Thorpe being separated by the River Yare, the landscapes of both were heavily influenced by quarrying and there is a sizeable interchange in birds between the two sites. In addition, Thorpe Marsh can be viewed from several points on the Whitlingham side. For these reasons, Whitlingham birders have traditionally included birds seen at or over Thorpe Marsh on their patch lists, although some Thorpe birders only list on their side of the river. 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 Whitlingham recording area can be found below. The majority of the sightings have been made by the author or by other local observers, however sightings reported through the internet or bird news providers have been included for completeness. Therefore all sightings are reported 'as is'. Where a scarce species has been photographed or seen by several observers this is noted in the text. Species that are county rarities should be assessed by the [Norfolk Records Committee](#), and their verdict will be included in the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 2013, to be published in autumn 2014.

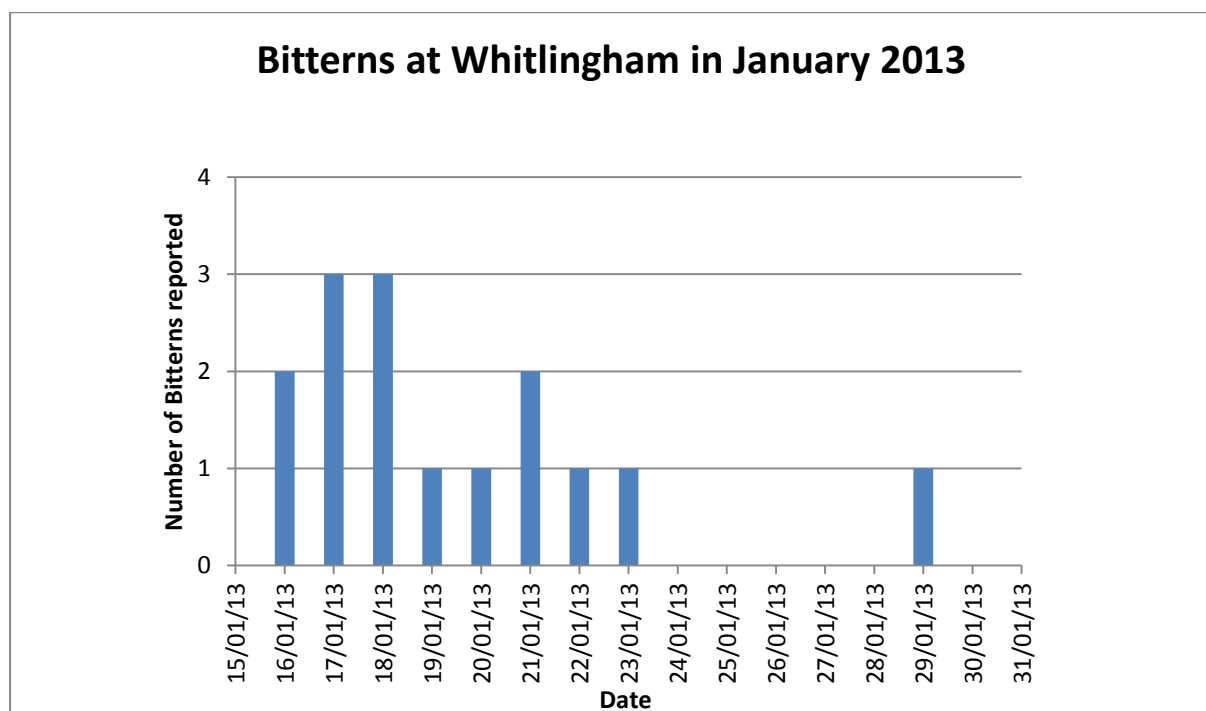


**The Whitlingham Recording area, comprising of Whitlingham C.P, Trowse Meadows, Trowse Woods, Whitlingham Marsh, Whitlingham Sewage Works, Thorpe Marsh NWT and Crown Point Estate land north of the A47.**

## Bittern influx at Whitlingham

This is the fourth successive year that Bitterns have been reported from Whitlingham. The Great Broad stays ice-free longer than the shallower water at Strumpshaw, and most of the sightings here are likely to relate to birds dispersing from the Mid-Yare during periods of hard weather (some of which have in turn arrived there as winter migrants escaping the cold of continental Europe).

Two Bitterns were present along the northern edge of the Great Broad on 16<sup>th</sup> January, which was possibly the first record of multiple birds at the site. Both were still present on the 17<sup>th</sup>, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> bird seen in flight over the broad late afternoon. At one point all three birds were seen on the Great Broad on the 18<sup>th</sup>, with at least one still present until the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Two Bitterns were present on the 21<sup>st</sup> – given that one bird showed very well at times straight out from the car park it is possible that on some days having seen this bird the reed edges were not scrutinised for others. After a gap with no sightings, one bird was seen on the 29<sup>th</sup> January. Two birds were seen in April, presumably moving back to breeding grounds.



Looking for Bitterns can be difficult because of their rather secretive nature, however Whitlingham only has a limited amount of reeds, increasing the chances that of seeing one if carefully looked for. Handily the Slavonian Grebe found on the 18<sup>th</sup> was reported to the bird information services every day until the 28<sup>th</sup>, showing that birders were present at Whitlingham and reporting sightings throughout that entire period. This suggests that on days with no sightings of Bitterns it is more likely than usual that this represents a genuine absence of sightings rather than either a lack of observers present or birds not being reported.





## Colour-ringed Black-headed Gulls at Whitlingham

### Introduction

Black-headed Gull numbers at Whitlingham regularly reach 300-400 in winter. Most of these birds are likely to originate from Scandinavia or countries around the Baltic coast, and a small percentage of these are colour-ringed, and can be traced back to the country where they were ringed. At Whitlingham Black-headed Gulls spend the majority of the time 'loafing' on the broad, so the only time that rings can be read is when they are either perched on the solar boat jetty or feeding around the slipway.

### 2013 Colour-ringed Black-headed gull records

Ring number	Date seen	Place ringed	Date ringed	Distance travelled/km
ST109275	07/01/13	Kustavi, FINLAND	29/06/06	1506
S9033	07/01/13	Riga, LATVIA	05/06/09	1501
6241523	21/02/13	Odense, DENMARK	26/11/10	666
White E0NR	22/02/13	Arnhem, NETHERLANDS	29/07/11	312
White J5JR	10/11/13	Oslo, NORWAY	06/09/12	996

*Many thanks to James Appleton, who passed on details of the birds seen in the first winter period.*

### Map of origins of Black-headed Gulls seen at Whitlingham







*Norwegian bird White J5JE seen near the slipway on the Great Broad in November.*

### **In a Norfolk context**

Black-headed Gulls are a common breeding species in Norfolk, with the closest pairs to Whitlingham being found along the River Yare at Strumpshaw Fen. In winter the resident birds are joined by large numbers of migrants from eastern Europe, with the Norfolk Bird Atlas estimating a winter population of between 70,000 and 90,000 <sup>1</sup>. Colour-ringed birds ringed in at least 18 countries have been seen in Norfolk - Countries with over 50 sightings are (most first) Finland, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania and Norway <sup>2</sup>. The furthest distance travelled by a foreign ringed bird seen in Norfolk was a Russian bird seen at Walcott that travelled 2,355km <sup>2</sup>, whilst in the opposite direction a bird ringed in Norfolk in winter was seen in Russia having travelled 2,456km <sup>3</sup>.

### **References**

1. **Taylor, M. & Marchant, J.H.** 2011. Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*. In *The Norfolk Bird Atlas: summer and winter distributions 1999–2007*. pp 212–213. BTO Books, Thetford.
2. **Robinson, R.A. & Clark, J.A.** 2013. The Online Ringing Report: Bird ringing in Britain & Ireland in 2012 BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 15-August-2013) – available here: <http://blx1.bto.org/ring/countyrec/resultsall/recGBNKall.htm>
3. **Dye, K.** 1999. Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*. In *The Birds of Norfolk* (Taylor, M., Seago, M., Allard P. & Dorling D.) pp 309–311. Christopher Helm.

## 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 Thorpe Broad, however some counts differ from the figures submitted to WeBS in that they also include birds seen on nearby land. This mainly relates to the geese, which can sometimes be found on the meadow opposite the CP, and Cormorants, which sometimes roost on a pylon across the river. The counts are not necessarily high counts for the month – ad hoc and high counts are described in the individual species accounts.

Species	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Mute Swan	36	30	24	31	33	73*	106	103	33	43	28	32
Greylag Goose	12	13	8	24	56*	165*	63	4	23	8	182	41
Canada Goose	8	6	13	20	12*	37	63	6	28	6	5	5
Egyptian Goose	14	11	5	10	7	21*	49	31	29	5	7	11
Gadwall	90	42	4	3	1	0	0	0	9	9	42	215
Teal	100	9	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	55
Mallard	106	63	34	30	32	44*	99	140	86	77	72	65
Pochard	47	94	13	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	9	64
Tufted Duck	167	162	97	162	3	6	4	0	4	13	72	256
Cormorant	26	20	9	3	1	3	6	12	24	29	33	39
Grey Heron	6	0	0	1	1	0	3	6	1	3	1	2
Little Grebe	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Crested Grebe	1	6	3	5	1	4	9	7	15	11	7	6
Water Rail	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moorhen	15	9	10	16	2	8	2	11	12	10	9	8
Coot	150	151	57	13	5	8	12	10	43	27	92	168
Oystercatcher	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Lapwing	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	28	0	10	0	4
Snipe	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	25
Common Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Common Tern	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	0
Kittiwake	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-headed Gull	372	307	96	380	3	1	42	43	88	97	261	310
Common Gull	13	13	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	21	24
Lesser Black-backed Gull	3	2	2	6	14	5	18	25	9	3	24	0
Herring Gull	3	0	1	2	1	2	3	0	0	1	1	7
Kingfisher	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1

\*Goslings/ducklings seen but not included in count figures as less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  grown.



## **Review of the Year**

### **January**

A slow start to the year in terms of wildfowl, with 2 Goldeneye the only ducks of note. Over at Thorpe 200 Snipe was a very high count even by county standards, although it was only possible when the birds were spooked by a Peregrine. A Woodcock was seen at dusk flying across the A47 from Whitlingham. Heavy snow fell in the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>, followed by temperatures down to -10°C on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>. A Waxwing and Mealy Redpoll were both reported the following day, and up to three Bitterns on the Great Broad. On the 18<sup>th</sup> a Slavonian Grebe was found. The broads were almost completely frozen on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

### **February**

A flock of nine Common Cranes were seen flying over Whitlingham airspace, firstly from Trowse Ski-slope, then from Whitlingham Lane. On the third Pochard numbers had risen to 182, a new site record. A count of c525 Black-headed Gulls on Thorpe Broad in mid-February is significant.

### **March**

The first Chiffchaff of the year was at Thorpe on 17<sup>th</sup> March. Cold weather continued through the month, with no further migrants seen.

### **April**

Just east of the sewage works a flock of 84 Lapwings was present on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Two Chiffchaffs were singing on 7<sup>th</sup> April, and there was an arrival of migrants around the 10<sup>th</sup>, including LRPs, Sand Martins, Swallows and more Chiffchaffs. A large flock of gulls on the 13<sup>th</sup> held a Kittiwake, whilst nearby at Strumpshaw there were up to four Med Gulls, one of which paid a short visit to Whitlingham (date not known). On the 15<sup>th</sup> a singing Nightingale was in the conservation area. There was a day of high Arctic Tern passage on the 18<sup>th</sup>, with a record flock of 18 passing through early afternoon, many of which lingered into the evening. A Wheatear at Thorpe on the 27<sup>th</sup> followed an arrival of hundreds on the east coast the previous day.

### **May**

The first week of May saw the arrival of Garden Warblers and Lesser Whitethroats, whilst there were also sightings of Cuckoo, Hobby and Common Sandpiper. On the 13<sup>th</sup> the rarest bird of the year was present, a Red-rumped Swallow that unfortunately was only seen for around 15 minutes. Swift numbers peaked at c1000 on the same day, whilst by mid-month three singing Nightingales had been heard.

## **June**

Still one singing Nightingale mid-month. Cygnets were finally seen on 22<sup>nd</sup>, along with a calling Cuckoo and more Common Terns.

## **July**

A brood of Tufted Ducks seen at Thorpe Broad was unusual although not unexpected. A prolonged hot spell meant that the C.P. was very busy, culminating in a Dragon-boat race on the 21<sup>st</sup>. A Garden Warbler was singing loudly on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **August**

Few notable sightings in what is the busiest month for Whitlingham in terms of visitor numbers and activities on the broad. Mallard numbers peaked for the year at 140, whilst there was also an increase in Lawing numbers at Thorpe. There was little wader passage, with one Common Sandpiper at Thorpe mid-month, along with a Clouded Yellow butterfly.

## **September**

There was a large drop-off in the number of Mute Swans, whilst Gadwall, Pochard and Teal were seen again having been absent over the summer. Great-crested Grebe numbers reached 15, an unusually high count for the time of year. On the 15<sup>th</sup> large numbers of Swallows and House Martins were feeding up over the broad prior to beginning their migration.

## **October**

Rough weather and flooding mid-month saw a number of sea-birds blown inland in other counties, but nothing unusual was noted from Whitlingham. The first Common Gulls were back on the 12<sup>th</sup>, along with flyover Redwings and Redpoll *sp.*

## **November**

Wildfowl continued to arrive but in low numbers. Six Shoveler and two Teal were on the Great Broad, along with two Little Grebes. A colour-ringed Black-headed Gull present on the slipway was traced back to a ringing scheme in Oslo. There was also a large influx of Greylag Geese, with around 450 present at one point.

## **December**

Severe storms caused flooding along the east coast but Whitlingham escaped unscathed, with just some minor flooding at Thorpe Marsh, where two Peregrines were seen hunting mid-month. By the end of December there were at least 110 Snipe at Thorpe, whilst at Whitlingham Gadwall numbers had reached 250 and two Wigeon were present.

## Whitlingham and Thorpe Classified List

This list follows the latest taxonomical order taken from the British Ornithologists Union (BOU), available here: <http://www.bou.org.uk/thebritishlist/British-List.pdf>. Descriptions of abundance refer to the chances of encountering a species if visiting at the appropriate time of year rather than the number of individuals present.

### **Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

*Common resident*



At least four pairs nested in the area, one on the Little Broad (first seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> March), two on the Great Broad and one at Thorpe Broad. There was no sign of any cygnets from the Little Broad nest, but the two Great Broad broods were visible on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, one of five and one of two. The pair at Thorpe only raised one cygnet, which was present on the broad in late-July. The highest site count of the year

was 105 in mid-July. A metal ring read in December showed that the bird had been ringed at Whitlingham in June 2011.

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

*Occasional flyovers*

Two records from the first winter period, a flock heard flying over in the fog on the 6<sup>th</sup> January and a flock seen flying over during the cold spell on 17<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

*Occasional flyovers*

A flock seen flying over in January was the only record received, however given the frequency that flocks are seen and heard over Norwich this is likely to be a significant under-representation of this species.

### **Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

*Common resident*



A flock of 36 on Whitlingham Meadows on 16<sup>th</sup> February were an addition to the resident birds. The first brood of the year was of two young goslings on 4<sup>th</sup> May. On 6<sup>th</sup> May there was another brood of two, and a 'creche' of 13 goslings. By 12<sup>th</sup> May there were another four broods, 3,3,5 and 5, and another young brood of three were seen on 18<sup>th</sup> May. In total this represents at least eight breeding pairs, possibly the highest number here. Interestingly two pairs of Canada Geese ended up raising Greylag goslings during June (presumably these birds were transferred during joint creching when the chicks were young). A mostly white but otherwise normal Greylag seen in mid-June and several times afterwards may have had a pigment deficiency. A high count of c450 was made in November.



**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

*Common resident*



A count of 33 on 16<sup>th</sup> February was 27 up on the previous week, coinciding with the arrival of a similar sized flock of Greylag Geese. The first brood was seen on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and featured eight goslings, whilst the second brood hatched on 6<sup>th</sup> May (nine goslings) and a third brood, also of nine was seen on 19<sup>th</sup>. Numbers peaked at 63 in July.

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

*Common resident.*



On 3<sup>rd</sup> February a particularly pale bird was present (see photo), lacking the dark pigment on the head, back and sides (but still with black primaries). First broods (six & eight goslings) were seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> March (when it was snowing). One brood disappeared, and of the second only two goslings had survived up to 4<sup>th</sup> April, with one reaching near-adulthood (2<sup>nd</sup> May). Either a late or second brood of five goslings was first seen on 30<sup>th</sup> May and were still present in mid-June. The highest count of the year was 49 in July. A metal-ringed bird from January was ringed at Whitlingham in June 2010.

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

*Scarce spring visitor*

Only one record this year, a bird seen at Thorpe in early June.

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

*Scarce winter visitor*

One on the Great Broad on 16<sup>th</sup> January, with 24 the next day (a relatively high count for the site), dropping down to seven on the 18<sup>th</sup> and up to 16 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. There were no further sightings until 28<sup>th</sup> December, when a male and female were on the Great Broad.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

*Common winter visitor*



Around 100 were present at Whitlingham at the start of January. 178 were counted at Thorpe Broad on the 20<sup>th</sup> January, with 100+ still present there at the start of February. A pair was present on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and two pairs on 4<sup>th</sup>, one pair still on 18<sup>th</sup> May. A lone bird was present near the main slipway on 30<sup>th</sup> May, before a three month gap until birds were seen again in September. By November numbers had reached 140, peaking at around 250 in late December. These birds typically favoured an area of weed at the western end of the Little Broad.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

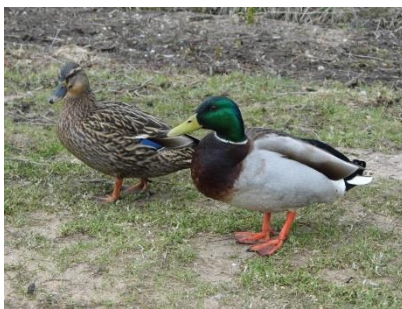
*Common winter visitor.*



Around 50 birds present at the start of January, rising to 90 by mid-month. Numbers had risen to 150 on the 18<sup>th</sup>, all huddled in a group in the conservation area bay. After that Teal continued to be seen in low numbers, especially around the edges of Thorpe Broad and the flood nearby, with ten still present late-April. There were no mid-summer sightings, with one then seen in September. By December numbers had begun to increase, with at least 55 present on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

*Common resident.*



106 present at Whitlingham at the start of the year, comprising of the c30 resident birds and topped up with winter migrants. Of the residents a number are domestic-plumaged birds. The first brood of the year were born to a mostly black 'domestic-type' bird and first seen on 2<sup>nd</sup> May with eleven ducklings. This had dropped to four juvenile birds by 30<sup>th</sup> May. A further two broods, one of five and one of 8+ were seen in late May. Numbers peaked in August with 140 birds present.

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

*Scarce winter visitor*



Scarcer than normal in the first winter period, with five first seen on 11<sup>th</sup> January and then seen on and off throughout the month, with six present on the 21<sup>st</sup> Jan. Then no sightings until four present at Thorpe Broad in late March. A pair present on 18<sup>th</sup> May was unusually late. There were no further sightings until mid-November, when three were present on the Great Broad. Six were then present on the Little Broad in December.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

*Common winter visitor*



Around 35 present at the start of January. A count of 132 during a spell when the Great Broad was mostly frozen (26<sup>th</sup> January) was particularly high, but was eclipsed on 3<sup>rd</sup> February when 182 were present, 39 higher than the previous record highest count. Numbers halved to 92 by 9<sup>th</sup> February. Two still on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 36 on 4<sup>th</sup> April and seven (6 males) on 6<sup>th</sup> May. First of the second winter period seen on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, with around 50 present mid-December.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

*Common winter visitor*



Seen in every month of the year, but much more numerous in winter. Around 190 at start of January, well down on the c450 seen at the same time last year. Still around ten present in May, with six present in June and four in mid-July. At Thorpe a brood of six was on Thorpe Broad in July, all of which reached adulthood and re-located to Whitlingham. Sightings were made in each month of the year, with numbers up to 250 by mid-December.

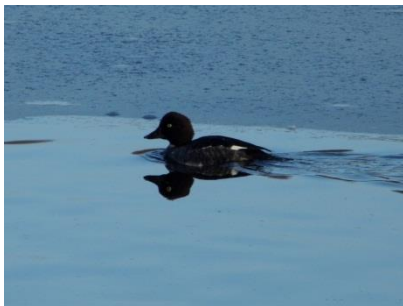
**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

*Rare winter visitor*

A female was reported at dusk on 17<sup>th</sup> January, and a drake reported from Thorpe Broad on 24<sup>th</sup> January, neither seen the next day.

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

*Scarce winter visitor*



A minimum of five present in January, although not seen at the same time. These consisted of two females and a 1<sup>st</sup>-winter drake on the Great Broad, and two adult drakes first seen at Thorpe before transferring to Whitlingham. Three drakes were seen at Thorpe Broad in mid-April, a similar occurrence to 2012 when a 1<sup>st</sup>-winter drake was also present at Thorpe in April.

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

*Common resident*

Present at Whitlingham and Thorpe in low numbers. Most sightings were from the meadows and farmland south of Whitlingham Lane, with a pair in Whitlingham Woods in late March. In late December two males were at either end of a roof of one of the houses on Whitlingham Lane, presumably disputing territory.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

*Common winter visitor*



A few birds resident, but most birds occur over winter, consisting of a mixture of *P.c.carbo* and *P.c.sinensis*. In the evening there is a roost in trees on the large island on the Great Broad, where the largest count was 62 on the 21<sup>st</sup> January. Numbers had dropped to single figures by April, with three in June. In the second winter period numbers reached 39 by mid-December.



**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

*Rare winter visitor*



Seen at Whitlingham for the fourth year in a row, when two were present along the northern edge of the Great Broad on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Another bird flew in on the 17<sup>th</sup> and all three were seen together on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Two Bitterns seen in flight on 16<sup>th</sup> April (presumably moving back from wintering grounds) was an unusual record for the time of year. For a full list of sightings see the article on page 4.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

*Occasional flyovers*



Little Egrets are now resident in the Mid-Yare and west of Norwich, so presumably it is only the level of disturbance keeping them away from colonising the Whitlingham area. One flew over the Great Broad heading west on 7<sup>th</sup> April. One was present on the river between Whitlingham and Thorpe at the end of July until it was flushed by a passing boat.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

*Common resident*



Usually one or two present, with a higher density in winter. Six were present on 12<sup>th</sup> January (1 on the Little Broad, 5 on the Great Broad). After that there were usually only one or two present, with six again in August.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

*Common winter visitor*

Scarcer than usual in the first winter period, with a high of three on 18<sup>th</sup> January, still present on 9<sup>th</sup> February. One for several weeks on Thorpe Broad mid-late March was unusual for that site. One in mid-April was a bit unusual. After this there were no reports until 8<sup>th</sup> December.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

*Resident*



One had assumed summer plumage on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Courtship display seen during April, with pairs on the Great Broad and at Thorpe Broad. In June there were two pairs on the Great Broad, but no sign of any young until August, when three large juveniles were on the river, still being fed by an adult. Highest count was 15 present in September.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegina*

*Rare winter visitor*

One was reported on the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> December, but wasn't seen again. This would be the first sighting since February 2010.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

*Rare winter visitor*



One found on the 18<sup>th</sup> January and present until at least 28<sup>th</sup> January on the Great Broad. (2012 addition – A Slavonian Grebe was present on Thorpe Broad during the afternoon of the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2012. This bird was included in the monthly summary, but was accidentally omitted from the systematic list).

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

*Occasional flyovers*

One flew over Thorpe Marsh on the afternoon of 10<sup>th</sup> April following a spell of Red Kite passage around Norfolk. This species is increasing in number in Norfolk, so this may be an under-representation of this species, particularly as there were a number of sightings in 2012.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

*Occasional flyovers*

Most sightings presumably refer to birds flying upriver from strongholds in the Mid-Yare valley, although there is evidence of light spring passage in some years. A male was seen hunting over Thorpe Marsh on 27<sup>th</sup> March. A female was seen over Whitlingham twice in mid-April and a male was seen on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Presumably there also more unreported sightings of this species, particularly from Thorpe.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

*Rare winter visitor*

A ringtail seen at Thorpe Marsh in the afternoon of 20<sup>th</sup> January was only the second recent record here, which is possibly surprising given that Hen Harriers roost at Strumpshaw each winter. Another Hen Harrier, presumably a migrant, was then seen over Thorpe Marsh on 27<sup>th</sup> April.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

*Resident*

A pair often seen at Thorpe Marsh, the female of which is a particularly large bird. Another pair at Whitlingham probably has a territory that includes Trowse.

**Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

*Occasional flyovers*

One flew over Whitlingham from Thorpe St Andrews being mobbed by Jackdaws. Three birds were seen flying over the Great Broad on 30<sup>th</sup> May, apparently a passage bird being seen off by a resident pair. On both occasions the presence of Buzzards was first noted by hearing a 'mewing' call. There were several other sightings throughout the year.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

*Resident*



Often seen hunting over Thorpe Marsh, with another over Thorpe St Andrew and the west end of the Great Broad. In mid-May a male was seen on several occasions flying through the Swifts as if hunting, although not coming close to catching any.

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

*Scarce spring migrant*

One hunting between Thorpe Marsh and Whitlingham on the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> April and two seen in the next week. After that one seen intermittently throughout May, sometimes making unsuccessful passes at the amassed Swifts, possibly a result of the wet spring causing late emergence of dragonflies.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

*Occasional flyovers*

A pair breeding on Norwich Cathedral laid four eggs in late March, which hatched at the start of May. Given that they have been seen carrying Moorhens back to the nesting platform it is likely that they may either hunt near Whitlingham or fly over to Postwick Marshes. Despite this few sightings received: One seen early in January catching a Snipe at Thorpe Marsh, another sighting over Trowse Meadows on 28<sup>th</sup> March and two were seen hunting over Thorpe Marsh on 14<sup>th</sup> December, passing over rafts of gulls before and then over the marsh.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

*Secretive resident*



A minimum of three at Whitlingham C.P, one at Whitlingham Marsh and one at Thorpe Marsh in the first winter period. This is probably an undercount due to this species secretive nature. This species is usually only seen in winter, but one showed very well at Thorpe Broad on 10<sup>th</sup> April.



**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

*Common resident*



Common and probably under-recorded due to their skulking nature. Two broods were seen on the 15<sup>th</sup> April but not again. Another brood was more confiding, spending a lot of time around the main slipway.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

*Resident/Common winter visitor*



A small number are resident, but the species is probably best described as a winter visitor, with 300 at start of the year. One was on a nest on 18<sup>th</sup> May, with four young seen in June. Numbers steadily increased throughout autumn, with c170 present in mid-December.

**Crane** *Grus grus*

*Local vagrant*

A flock of nine were seen flying over the Whitlingham area on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, observed from both the Ski-slope and Whitlingham Lane. The flock was also seen further west near Morrison's supermarket on the edge of Norwich. A flock of six was also seen west of the city, which may have been a group that had split off from the Whitlingham birds, or could be further evidence of a movement of Cranes on that date.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

*Scarce spring visitor*



First recorded on the spit at Thorpe on 4<sup>th</sup> March. A pair were seen to commute between Thorpe Marsh and Whitlingham sewage works in late March, and two were again present at Thorpe in July.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

*Common winter visitor*



Seen throughout the year, but most common in autumn and winter. Up to eight were seen at Thorpe in the first winter period. Four seen in paddocks to the east of Whitlingham sewage works in late March, and 84 seen on farmland just east of the Whitlingham recording area on 5<sup>th</sup>

April. After a gap birds were once again present at Thorpe in July, then seen on and off for the rest of the year.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

*Scarce spring visitor*



A pair on the shingle edge of the broad on 10<sup>th</sup> April, and reported sporadically in the weeks afterwards, with at least one present on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

*Spring migrant*



First noted at Thorpe Marsh on 21<sup>st</sup> April, with two present on the 25<sup>th</sup> and one still in the area on 4<sup>th</sup> May. One on the Great Broad on the 18<sup>th</sup> May was seen from the bird screen, bobbing on the edge of the main island. What was presumably this bird was also seen occasionally at Thorpe in May. The only bird seen on return passage was one at Thorpe Broad in mid-August.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

*Spring migrant*



High water levels at Thorpe Marsh may have deterred early migrants from landing (or being seen!), but four were present on 7<sup>th</sup> April, with at least one seen subsequently and still present on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

*Scarce passage migrant*

Two sightings from Thorpe Marsh this year, a typical early spring record on 4<sup>th</sup> March, and another in early June.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

*Scarce winter visitor*

One was seen flying over the A47 from Whitlingham on 5<sup>th</sup> January. Similar sightings were listed in Appendix A in 2012, but in retrospect these should have been included in the main systematic list. One was seen probing for food in the small wooded area in the north-east corner of the Great Broad on 18<sup>th</sup> January in snowy conditions.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

*Common winter visitor*

Lots of Snipe present in the first winter period, with over 40 seen at Thorpe Marsh at the start of January. A few days later a hunting Peregrine flushed Snipe from the marsh (catching one of them), revealing an estimated 200 birds. This is a record count from the site, although the observer noted that without the threat of the Peregrine only nine birds had been visible, showing how difficult it is to count Snipe here on a casual visit. In mid-December a flock of around 25 were seen in flight at Thorpe, again being accompanied by a hunting Peregrine, whilst on the 29<sup>th</sup> at least 110 were present.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

*Common spring migrant*



First seen on 27<sup>th</sup> April, a fairly typical first date here. After that terns were surprisingly scarce in early spring, with two or three seen on several occasions in May. Up to four were present from late June, including a copulating pair. A juvenile bird was then seen on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

*Scarce spring migrant*



A day of widespread Arctic Tern migration throughout the country on 18<sup>th</sup> April saw a new site record of 18 birds early afternoon, two of which were still present the next morning. The previous record was 15, seen when the site was still working gravel pits in 1998.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

*Local vagrant*

An adult on the Great Broad with a large flock of Black-headed Gulls on 13<sup>th</sup> April was a rare inland record and possibly a first record for the site. It occurred at a similar period to a number of inland Tern and Gull arrivals, including Little Gulls at Colney and Barton Broad, and four Med Gulls at Strumpshaw.

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

*Common resident*



Resident, with much larger numbers in winter. 260+ present on 9<sup>th</sup> February. Colour-ringed birds from five different countries were reported, for details see page 5. The highest count of the year was the 525 present at Thorpe Broad in mid-February, mostly loafing on the ice. In the second winter period numbers reached 300 in December.

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

*Scarce spring migrant*

As with 2012, several seen during the same day as the Arctic Tern passage, but there were no lingering birds.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

*Rare spring migrant*

A summer plumaged adult was seen with Common Gulls on the Great Broad in April. This was probably one of the birds seen at Strumpshaw in mid-April (two adults were amongst four birds present), when a large movement of Black-headed and Common Gulls was also noted in the mid-Yare.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

*Common winter visitor*



Fairly common in winter. A roost of c600 at Whitlingham was noted on the 21<sup>st</sup> January. Another large flock was noted in early-mid April, presumably prior to leaving the county. The first birds of the second winter period were at Thorpe Broad on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

*Common summer visitor*



A few present all year round, although most common in summer. One present in early January, building up to around 30 loafing birds in May. One was seen to have a red leg ring, but it was too far away to read.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*

*Fairly common migrant*



Fairly common, especially in autumn/winter. Several present in early January, with one colour-ringed bird seen and traced to the ringing scheme at Havergate Island, Suffolk. Another ringed bird was too far to read the ring but was probably from the same scheme. Several larger *argentatus* race birds were present on Thorpe Broad on 8<sup>th</sup> December.



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

*Scarce migrant*

An adult on the Cormorant posts on 18<sup>th</sup> January. Large gulls often collect on farmland south of Norwich and at a nearby pig farm, so it is likely that this bird had moved off those areas as a result of the frozen/snow covered ground.

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

*Scarce migrant*



Two present on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, one each at Thorpe and Whitlingham (ominously with blood on the beak!). One also seen on 13<sup>th</sup> April. Two birds present on 8<sup>th</sup> December, an adult and a 1<sup>st</sup>-winter. The adult (or another) was still present on 28<sup>th</sup> December.

**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

*Common resident*

Flocks from Norwich and Thorpe seen in flight throughout the year. Nearby at Trowse a flock roosts on a roof between the railway and May Gurney building.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

*Scarce resident*

Present at Thorpe Marsh and Whitlingham Meadows. Four were present in the stubble field south of the country park during the spring. A maximum of eight were seen at Thorpe Marsh

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

*Common resident*

Common resident and breeder, seen on almost every visit.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

*Scarce resident*

Present on Whitlingham Lane in January, although few records from the actual country park. A pair are often present on buildings between the railway bridge and Trowse Common.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

*Rare spring migrant*

Only one record, one flew over the Great Broad on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

*Scarce spring migrant*

First of the year seen over the Great Broad on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and one present in the area until at least 11<sup>th</sup> May. There were several sightings from Thorpe throughout May, but fewer sightings than in 2012.

**Swift** *Apus apus*

*Common summer visitor*



12 were seen over the Great Broad on 25<sup>th</sup> April, a slightly early arrival, with 30+ present on 27<sup>th</sup> April, flying low in overcast conditions. There was a further arrival on 10<sup>th</sup> May, when around 50 birds present over the broad with c350 present on 12<sup>th</sup> May, rising to c1000 the next day. Many of these birds appeared to have carried on west, with many flocks of 50-100 noted over the city in the next week,

suggesting that the c600 at Whitlingham later in the month may have been the next wave of arrivals. An aberrant Swift with large areas of white was seen on 30<sup>th</sup> May, and may have been the same bird noted the previous week. The last sighting of the summer was one over Thorpe Marsh on 21<sup>st</sup> August.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

*Scarce resident*

One seen along the south shore of the Great Broad by a local jogger in January, then several sightings from the Little Broad and Great Broad during spring. Four on the river near the Watersports Centre in early September presumably indicate breeding (and because of the date, perhaps a second brood?) A pair were also seen on and off throughout the year at Trowse Meadows.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

*Scarce resident*

Resident. Birds seen (but more often heard) throughout the year. The most reliable area is the meadows alongside the Lime Tree Avenue.

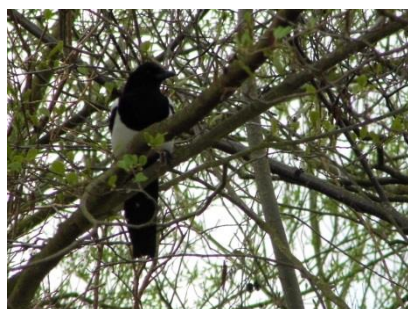
**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus major*

*Scarce resident*

Resident and presumed breeder. Regular birds seen and heard in the trees along the railway line at Thorpe, in a tall tree near the houses on Whitlingham Lane and in the wooded edge of Trowse Meadow.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

*Common resident*



Common resident. 100+ in the roost in early January, but more typically small numbers seen in trees around the Great Broad.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

*Common resident*

Common resident at Whitlingham and Thorpe Marsh, seen throughout the year.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

*Common resident*

Common resident, often seen on Whitlingham Meadows or over the trees nearby. This flock are particularly useful in warning of passing large raptors!

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

*Scarce resident*

Only regularly found at the sewage works. Elsewhere two flew over Whitlingham Marsh on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

*Common resident*



Common resident, often found around the edge of the Great Broad. A pair bred in trees on the main island.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

*Common resident*

Common resident. Numbers seem to have picked up following a decrease a few years ago. As well as the main population in Whitlingham Woods, birds were also seen in the Little Broad Alders and along the north shore of the Little Broad during the first winter period.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

*Common resident*

Common resident and breeder, seen on most visits.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

*Common resident*

Common resident and breeder. At least one brood successfully fledged from the wooded area east of the main car park.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

*Scarce resident*

One was with the tit flock on Whitlingham Lane near the east end of Trowse Meadow in early January, and one was seen with a tit flock near the bird screen at Thorpe in February. A few other scattered sightings from Whitlingham C.P. throughout the year.

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris**Scarce resident*

Occasional sightings throughout the year. A pair were feeding on insects in the brake crevices of a willow at Whitlingham Marsh on the 7<sup>th</sup> January, whilst birds were also present at the east end of Whitlingham C.P.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia**Common spring visitor*

The first of the year were five at Thorpe Marsh on 10<sup>th</sup> April, with possibly the same birds at Whitlingham the next day. Birds were seen throughout May, but there were no further reports after early June.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica**Common summer visitor*

A flock of around eight with Sand Martins over Whitlingham Broad on 11<sup>th</sup> April. This was later than average, but actually earlier than 2012. Some reasonable flocks of hirundines present, particularly in the evenings during early to mid-May. Swallows were last seen on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbicum**Common spring visitor*

Reported from both Whitlingham and Thorpe Marsh on 13<sup>th</sup> April, a fairly typical first date for this species. Present in a mixed hirundines and Swift flock on 12<sup>th</sup> May and again in June, but few sightings until September when Swallows and House Martins were numerous over the Great Broad in the first half of the month.

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** *Cecropis daurica**County vagrant*

The first Whitlingham record of this species was seen amongst a huge flock of Swifts and hirundines early on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May. It was watched for around fifteen minutes but not subsequently relocated. The timing of the record is interesting, as a Red-rumped Swallow was seen at Colney GPs (west of Norwich) in 2012 on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, highlighting this as the period to focus efforts in 2014! This bird has been accepted by the Norfolk Rarities Committee. Any first-hand details of this sighting would be welcome.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis**Scarce winter visitor*

Seen on several occasions flying over Whitlingham during February.

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

Common resident and presumed breeder at Whitlingham and Thorpe. One was singing at Thorpe on the 5<sup>th</sup> January, whilst at Whitlingham birds were heard singing from April to October, with small bits of sub-song in late December.



**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

*Common resident*



Common resident and probable breeder, often seen in the trees around the main car park and in Alders around the site.

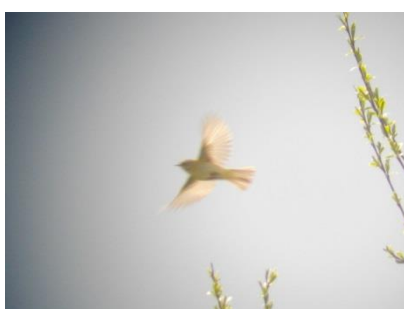
**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Common summer visitor*

First one of the year seen at Thorpe Marsh on 17<sup>th</sup> March, with a three week gap until 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> April when an apparent arrival of birds, with one singing bird in Whitlingham Woods (6<sup>th</sup>), two singing birds at Whitlingham C.P and one in song at Thorpe Marsh (7<sup>th</sup>). By 11<sup>th</sup> there were six singing birds at Whitlingham. The latest singing bird was heard on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

*Common summer visitor*



First of the year singing at Whitlingham C.P. on 15<sup>th</sup> April, two weeks later than usual. Heard on most visits until the end of June, although undoubtedly present after that.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

*Common summer visitor*

No records from the first winter period. There was an arrival in spring once the winds had swung round to a southerly direction, with several singing males on 15<sup>th</sup> April.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

*Scarce summer visitor*

Two singing at the east end of the Great Broad on 4<sup>th</sup> May, a similar date to 2012. In all a minimum of four were present at Whitlingham, with another present at Thorpe in late spring.

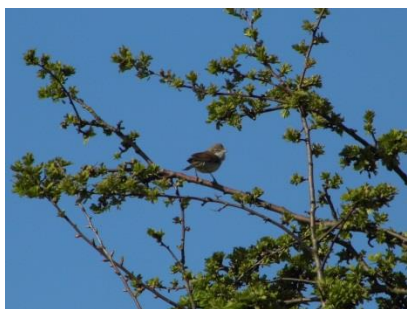
**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

*Scarce summer visitor*

Present at both Thorpe and the east end of Whitlingham C.P. on 29<sup>th</sup> April, slightly earlier than 2012. There was no further sign of any after mid-May, which is in keeping with the secretive nature of the species here.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

*Common summer visitor*



First reported back on 18<sup>th</sup> April at both Whitlingham and Thorpe. 12+ present around the Great Broad on 4<sup>th</sup> May, mostly in the conservation area, with at least seven present at Thorpe by late spring.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

*Scarce summer visitor*

One heard reeling at Thorpe on two occasions in May, however unlike recent years there were no reports from later in the year.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Common summer visitor*

One singing on the south edge of the Great Broad on 13<sup>th</sup> April, around a week later arriving than last year. Several more present in the second half of April and into May. A count of 12 was made at Thorpe in early June.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*Common summer visitor*

First birds of spring singing at Whitlingham and Thorpe on 27<sup>th</sup> April, a week or so later than usual.

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulous*

*Occasional winter visitor*

One reported on Whitlingham Lane on 16<sup>th</sup> January. A flock was present in Thorpe for much of the first winter period, so this probably is an under-representation of this species.

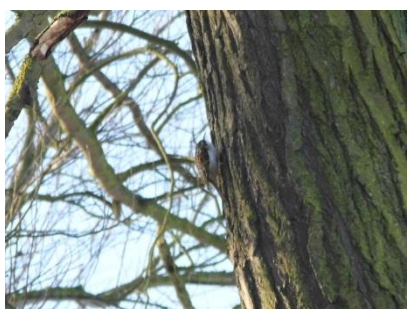
**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

*Scarce resident*

One heard calling from the southern half of the Lime tree avenue on 9<sup>th</sup> February, and the following week two were seen in tall trees between the second car park and the Little Broad. Also two calling males in Trowse Woods in mid-March. Quiet over the summer, but one again heard near the second car park in December.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

*Common resident*



One on a willow tree in the north-east corner of the Great Broad and two (presumably a pair) near the Little Broad on 9<sup>th</sup> February. One was also seen near the bird screen at Thorpe Marsh with a roving tit flock in February.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

*Common resident*

Common resident and presumed breeder.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

*Common resident*

Starlings are probably resident nearby, but can be found fairly often probing in the meadows with the Jackdaws.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

*Common resident*

Common resident and breeder, seen on every visit.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

*Common winter visitor*

Scarce in the first winter period. A small flock seen flying over Trowse Meadow on 16<sup>th</sup> January. At least three were present in riverside trees at Carey's Meadow on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, just outside the Whitlingham recording area but moving towards it!

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

*Common resident*

A scarce resident. One was in scrub near the bird screen at Thorpe in January, and further birds were singing along Whitlingham Lane.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

*Common winter visitor*

Less birds than typically seen in the first winter period, with a single bird in the conservation area and a small flock in trees near the sewage works in early January. A few birds were present nearby into early April, and a flock of 60-70 birds was chattering in trees along the north shore of the broad on April 11<sup>th</sup>, and a flock of at least 30 were still present on 13<sup>th</sup> April. First sightings of the second winter period were on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

*Scarce resident*



Following a dearth of sightings in 2012, two were seen regularly on Whitlingham Meadows at the start of the year, and after a gap of a couple of months they were seen again on 6<sup>th</sup> May. No sightings over the summer, but two were seen flying over the river towards the Little Broad in mid-December.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

*Scarce summer visitor*

Again no sign of any around the car park area during June, but one sighting from the conservation area scrub in early September.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubicula*

*Common resident*



Common resident and breeder, particularly noticeable in winter.

**Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

*Scarce spring visitor*

One arrived on 15<sup>th</sup> April and could be heard and seen intermittently until the 21<sup>st</sup> at least. Presumably the same bird was heard singing (although with reduced gusto) until at least 12<sup>th</sup> May. As with last year, the singing was strong enough to carry across the river and be heard at Thorpe Marsh early on in the birds stay. Remarkably in mid-May two more singing males were found, singing loudly from areas of scrub. One of these was still singing occasionally in mid-June. Given the national declines in Nightingale numbers, maintaining suitable habitat should be a priority here.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

*Scarce spring visitor*

One seen on the shingle edge of Thorpe Broad on 27<sup>th</sup> April. The previous day had seen a large arrival of Wheatears on the east coast, with 100+ at several sites. Despite searching the farmland and short-cut grassy areas of Whitlingham C.P. on the same date, none were seen there.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

*Common resident*

Resident and presumed breeder.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flavissima*

*Scarce spring migrant*

A typical record, one seen flying over Thorpe Marsh in mid-April.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

*Former resident, now irregular*

One reported on the exposed margins of the river between Whitlingham and Thorpe on 16<sup>th</sup> January. This species continues to do well within the city centre but as yet has not recolonized the area of river from Trowse to Thorpe.



**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

*Common resident*



Resident, often seen around the main car park and slipway. One on the shingle edge of Thorpe Broad in April was appeared to be a female White Wagtail.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

*Common resident*

Common resident, often seen feeding on the slipway near the car park.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

*Rare winter visitor*

One heard calling from the east end of the Great Broad on 19<sup>th</sup> October. This species is either under-represented or under-recorded at Whitlingham, with very few records in recent years.

**Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*

*Common resident*



This species seems to be recovering in numbers after a decline several years ago. A small group were at Thorpe in early January in scrub along the riverbank, and there were regular sightings from Whitlingham throughout spring.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

*Common resident*



Small flocks seen and heard throughout the year. In the first winter period most commonly found in the Alders along the Little Broad along with Siskin and Redpoll.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

*Common winter visitor*



Common in the first winter period, with small flocks seen flying around the site on most visits. Due to the active feeding nature of this species accurate counts are tricky, however an estimate of 80 were feeding in the Alders south of the Little Broad on 9<sup>th</sup> February. One was still present on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

*Scarce winter visitor*

One seen in flight from Whitlingham towards Thorpe Marsh in mid-February. A notable flock of 38 were present near the picnic meadow on 4<sup>th</sup> March. Seen again in November.

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cannabina*

*Common winter visitor*



Around 10 seen throughout the first winter period at Whitlingham, with possibly the same birds seen near the railway line at Thorpe during January. In April two were still present near the Little broad on the 4<sup>th</sup>, along with a flock of c15 in the north-east corner of the C.P. Two also heard flying over Thorpe marsh on April 10<sup>th</sup>. A flyover Redpoll *sp.* On 12<sup>th</sup> October was probably this species.

**Mealy Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*

*Scarce winter visitor*

One reported with Siskin and Lesser Redpoll flock during the cold spell on 16<sup>th</sup> January, whilst a pink male seen with c10 Lesser Redpolls on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 9<sup>th</sup> February was presumably the same bird. The Siskin and Redpoll flock regularly splits into smaller groups that disperse around the local area, explaining the lack of sightings in between the two dates.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

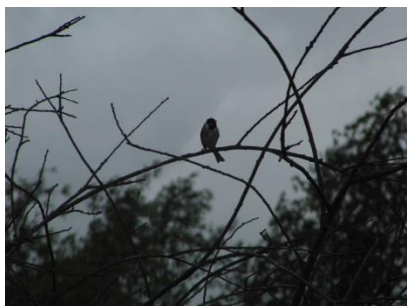
*Scarce resident*



A pair in the conservation area in January were probably the resident birds that move between the north shore of the Great Broad and Carey's Meadow in Thorpe St Andrews. One was also seen or heard in one of the gardens along Whitlingham Lane, close to the Little Broad on several dates in early spring.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

*Common winter visitor*



Often Reed Buntings move onto nearby farmland over the winter, but this year several were still present in January at Thorpe Marsh, seen feeding on the shingle path. Three males were singing on Thorpe Marsh by the third week of February, whilst the first Whitlingham singing birds were in April.

**Total: 120 species**

### **Appendix A – Unrecorded but likely species**

These species are birds that are either seen in most years but not reported during 2013, or birds that were seen very close to Whitlingham and/or flying in the direction of the Whitlingham without being actually observed there.

**Whooper Swan** – Likely flyover in winter.

**Goosander** – near annual at Whitlingham, but sensitive to disturbance which may explain the lack of records.

**Common Scoter** – Several in recent years – although one was present for over a week last year, typically Common Scoter have been short-staying at Whitlingham so mid-week birds may well have gone unnoticed.

**Whimbrel** – Several seen flying over Norwich.

**Tawny Owl** – Resident nearby, lack of night visits explain lack of records.

**Barn Owl** – Probably still present on private land at the sewage works.

**Crossbill** – This year has seen a large number of Crossbills in Norfolk, including some further along the river at Strumpshaw. It is likely that some have flown over Whitlingham at some point!

## **Appendix B – Escapes and birds of dubious origin**

### **White Stork**

One seen flying over Thorpe. This could have been a genuine wild bird, however given Thrigby keep a free flying bird there is enough doubt over the origin of this bird to include it in the appendices. Incidentally there is a record of White Stork from Whitlingham, with one over-wintering in 1963/64 (accepted by the BBRC – note White Stork was a national rarity at the time).

## **Appendix C – Hybrids & domestic wildfowl**



**Lesser White-fronted x Ross' Goose** – The regular hybrid was absent for much of the year, but seen in February making a lot of noise on the Great Broad, presumably hoping to attract a mate.

**[Domestic Goose** *Anser anser* (domestic)

*Resident]*

In addition to the Greylags, three 'farmyard geese' are also resident, two white ones and a grey-and-white goose with blue eyes. This is in addition to the Swan x Greylag Goose hybrid family.

**Greylag x Swan Goose** – Resident family of Swan Goose hybrids present for most of the year, usually around the slipway.

**Tufted Duck x Pochard** – A drake 'Lesser Scaup-type' hybrid was present on Thorpe Broad in mid-February. This bird resembled the one seen in February 2012 at Whitlingham, however given that this is apparently the most commonly encountered duck hybrid it is not necessarily the same individual.



## 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](#). In particular I would like to thank the following for providing me with records: J. Appleton, P. Chapman, G. Clarke, R. Cleverley, C. Durdin, C. Emerson, A. Greenizen, J. Lansdell, A. Musgrove, A. Pointer, B. Robertson, S. Sayers, L. Wake and P. Woolnough. My thanks also go to the Broads Authority staff at Whitlingham, and the people that I have spoken to whilst in the field.

## 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 Marsh NWT unofficial site)

<http://yarevalleywildlife.synthasite.com/bird-notes-2012.php> (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&page=9> (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), [BirdNet](#) (0115 8712888) or [BirdLine East Anglia](#) (07941 333970).