



WBC Sightings Report 2022

Compiled by Richard Walden

January

January is a busy month for those who like to kick off their year lists, scarce and rare birds have to be seen and time also has to be devoted to chasing species that will become plentiful later in the year. The 8 Whooper Swans remained along Lymballs Lane at Westleton and entertained a steady stream of admirers, 14 were counted at the Island Mere on the 1st a total which almost certainly included the Westleton birds. Other wildfowl in the area during the month included 2 Bewick's Swans at Minsmere and 7 at Gillingham marshes on the 15th, White-fronted Geese were seen at several locations with a peak count of 216 on Aldeburgh marshes on the 6th. A Tundra Bean Goose was seen at North Warren on the 22nd before flying off and 2 Bean Goose species were reported at Walberswick on the 31st. 24 Goosander were seen at Minsmere on the 25th which was easily the highest count of the month and a Long-tailed Duck was on Benacre pit on the 4th. A Great Northern Diver was on Oulton Broad on the 1st, proving popular with new years day listers, another was on the river Alde at Aldeburgh 3rd to the 13th at least. A Black-throated Diver was seen drifting north offshore at Dunwich on the 16th and a Red-necked Grebe was present at a private site with no general access early in the month.

On the 6th a Glossy Ibis was seen at Minsmere and what was presumably the same bird was also reported over Aldeburgh marshes, another or possibly the same bird again was at Carlton marshes from the 6th until the month's end. Several Great Egrets were reported through the month with a peak of 5 at Dunwich on the 10th, a single bird at Benacre was observed flying north a 1/2 mile offshore on the 1st. A single Spoonbill flew over Carlton marshes on the 9th. Reports of raptors were few and far between with Hen Harriers noted at Westleton and from 'the mound' in the Waveney forest at Fritton. Star bird for those that saw it was an immature White-tailed Eagle over North Warren on the 29th, Dunwich/Minsmere/Walberswick/Westleton on the 30th and Westleton again on the 31st. This bird has the identification number G463 and is from the Isle of Wight reintroduction Scheme. A Lesser Yellowlegs was discovered at Minsmere on the 16th and remained throughout the month, Jack Snipe were reported at Dunwich and Kessingland and Purple Sandpipers at Lowestoft's Ness point peaked at 8 on the 5th. A second winter Iceland Gull was somewhat erratic in its appearances in the Lowestoft area but a second winter Glaucous Gull on the Blyth estuary was more obliging, this bird could be viewed from the end of Wolsey creek opposite the Hexagonal hide of the Hen Reedbeds. Caspian Gulls were reported from the Blyth estuary and Southwold. Two Short-eared Owls which frequented the Corporation marshes at Walberswick 12th to 21st were rightly very popular.

A solitary Shorelark which lurked on Kessingland north beach 6th to 25th was sometimes surprisingly elusive, easier to see was the flock of Snow Buntings which occasionally numbered up to 100 birds. Siberian Chiffchaffs were present at Leathe's Ham, Lowestoft and Carlton marshes with 2 birds at each site, again these proved popular with many birders hoping their status would soon be elevated from subspecies to full species.

Another individual was trapped and ringed at Kessingland sewage works on the 15th. Twite continued to be seen along the beach at Dunwich with a maximum count of 11 on the 16th and 18+ Hawfinches were seen in Sotterley park on the 24th.

February

At Westleton the party of 8 Whooper Swans remained along Lymball's Lane, from mid month they were joined by 7 Bewick's Swans. Up to 3 Pink-footed Geese were present in the Aldringham and North Warren area early in the month and 161 White-fronted Geese were counted at North Warren on 17th, 2 Tundra Bean Geese were again reported at Walberswick on the 2nd. The star bird of February, a fine drake Ring-necked Duck, was discovered on an agricultural reservoir on 5th and remained until the end of the month. Viewing this bird involved a bit of a challenge and many birders who believed their tree climbing days were long behind them, suddenly found themselves half way up a Sycamore trying to balance themselves and their binoculars. 2 Scaup were also present on this reservoir and a drake Scaup was at Redgrave lake 11th to 13th at least. A female Garganey was at Carlton marshes on the 26th. On the 19th a Black-throated Diver flew north past Dunwich. A Glossy Ibis flew east over the A12 at Blythburgh on the 3rd, this bird was then discovered at Walberswick on the 6th and was still present at the end of the month, the Glossy Ibis at Carlton marshes reappeared mid month and also remained until the month end. 2 Spoonbills were at North Warren on the 8th and 3 flew over Carlton marshes on the 20th. White-tailed Eagle G463 was reported from the Westleton/Dunwich area on the 1st, Hen Harriers were seen at Westleton and from the Waveney forest 'mound' and a Merlin was seen at North Warren on the 16th. The Minsmere Lesser Yellowlegs continued throughout the month, also at Minsmere a Jack Snipe was visible (or invisible!) in front of the North hide, typically playing 'now you see me now you don't'. A maximum count of 13 Purple Sandpipers was achieved at the Ness point on the 11th and Spotted Redshanks were observed at Dunwich/Walberswick. The second winter Glaucous Gull continued to be reported at the Blyth estuary 7th to 17th and a Little Gull was on the scrape at Minsmere on the afternoon of the 22nd. A single Short-eared Owl was at Walberswick on the 14th, a Long-eared Owl was seen hunting at Spexhall on the night of the 21st.

A Water Pipit was frequenting an area of cut reeds at the Hen Reedbeds 12th and 13th and 3 were at Carlton Marshes on the 27th. A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Thorpeness sewage works 3rd to 8th at least with a Firecrest there on the 3rd. Twite were still being seen by those who fancied a stroll along the shingle at Dunwich with 5 on the 7th, Hawfinches continued to be seen at Sotterley with a peak of 16 on the 12th. Snow Bunting numbers were down this month compared to January but 40 were still present at Kessingland on the 10th. Raven sightings seem to be on the increase in our area with 2 at Flixton on the 14th and 2 at Minsmere on the 22nd, worth listening out for that distinctive 'cronk'.

March

During the earlier days of the month the 8 Whooper Swans and 7 Bewick's Swans continued to frequent the fields along Lymball's Lane at Westleton, the same birds were also occasionally seen at Minsmere. On the 7th fifteen Whooper Swans flew west over

Wenhaston. White-fronted Geese continued to be seen with a maximum count of 93 at North Warren on the 14th. A pair of Smew were present at Minsmere for most of the month though frequently elusive, down the road at Aldringham the drake Ring-necked Duck remained on the agricultural reservoir until the 13th at least and was accompanied by 2 Greater Scaup. March is the month when many birders look forward with anticipation to the arrival of the first Garganey, the first report concerned a female on Peto's marsh at Carlton Marshes SWT on 4th but by the end of the month several birds were seen with four pairs on Sandymount Pool at Walberswick on the 26th. Gamebirds this month were represented by a single record of 3 Grey Partridges at Ellough on the 12th, divers were also represented by a single record concerning a Black-throated Diver north at Dunwich on the 29th. Glossy Ibis is a species whose appearances are becoming far more frequent, singles spent the entire month at Carlton Marshes and Walberswick with a third bird infrequently at Minsmere from the 11th. A White Stork from the Knepp introduction scheme was at Eastbridge on the 10th and Eye on the 15th, 5 Spoonbills were at North Warren on the 8th and 3 Great Egrets at Carlton Marshes on the 14th. Raptors are represented this month by an Osprey over the Blyth estuary on 3rd, Hen Harriers at Minsmere 19th and Walberswick 26th and White-tailed Eagle over the Hen Reedbeds 17th, Mutford 28th and Minsmere 30th. Reports of Common Cranes were also received along the coastal strip during the month.

The long staying Lesser Yellowlegs remained at Minsmere though could frequently be elusive on the south levels, 5 Purple Sandpipers were at Lowestoft Ness Point on the 2nd, 2 Little Ringed Plovers at Southwold 17th and Jack Snipe at Minsmere towards the months end. A Caspian Gull was seen at Ellough on 1st with another at Lowestoft on 25th, Yellow-legged Gulls seen at Minsmere on 19th and 24th, 2 Sandwich Terns were at Covehithe on the 11th. An elusive roosting Long-eared Owl was seen near Benacre Beach farm on the 17th, Short-eared Owls were reported from Walberswick 4th, North Warren 14th, Benacre 15th. A Shorelark was at Kessingland beach from the 19th, the first Sand Martin was seen over Westwood marshes at Walberswick on the 11th and the first Swallow at Wrentham on the 31st. 5 White Wagtails were at Kessingland on the 20th and 5 Water Pipits were seen at Minsmere at dusk. A Firecrest was in the sluice bushes at Minsmere on 15th-17th whilst Ravens were noted at Minsmere and Benacre. Twite continued to be reported from Dunwich beach with a maximum of 4 on the 5th, a Hawfinch seen at Thorpeness on the 26th and 9 Crossbills at Kenton hills on the 21st. 8 Snow Buntings lingered at Dunwich on the 4th.

April

Not many wild swans lingered in to April but 2 Whooper Swans were still at Minsmere on the 3rd and 3 White-fronted Geese at North Warren on the 11th, the pair of Smew also lingered at Minsmere until the 3rd. Greater Scaup and Goosander were seen at North Warren on the 8th, a Greater Scaup was on Thorpeness Meare on the 14th and Aldringham on 24th, Garganey continued with several reports of which the maximum being 10 on Peto's marsh at Carlton Marshes on the 3rd. At Lowestoft north beach 3 Shags were observed roosting on the groyne on the 2nd, Glossy Ibis continued to be seen at Carlton Marshes, Walberswick and Minsmere with 2 at the latter site on the 28th-29th. Spoonbills were recorded over Lowestoft 3rd and 2 on 8th, North Warren 9th and 23rd, 4 north over Minsmere 24th and 3 over Minsmere and the Blyth estuary on the 26th. Raptors figured more prominently this month starting with a White-tailed Eagle over

Snape on the 1st, a male Goshawk over Carlton Marshes on 6th, a Black Kite over Minsmere at 08:52 on the 18th was tracked south where it was last seen at Stutton at 11:55, Ospreys over North Warren 26th and Minsmere 28th, male Hen Harrier at Somerleyton 27th, a Merlin at Eastbridge 11th and 6 Hobbies at Minsmere on the 29th. At least 2 Common Cranes continued to tour up and down the coast during the month. A Pacific Golden Plover on Peto's marsh at Carlton Marshes on the 3rd was a fantastic find, this bird remained on and off until the 26th adding to this reserves reputation for attracting great birds. Not to be outdone, down the road at Minsmere the Lesser Yellowlegs popped up again on the 7th remaining till at least the 24th. Other waders noted during the month included Jack Snipe at Minsmere, Spotted Redshank at North Warren with 2 at the Blyth estuary, Curlew Sandpiper at Hazlewood marshes 26th, Wood Sandpiper at Southwold 30th, Little Ringed Plover at Carlton Marshes 3rd, and 6 Purple Sandpipers at Lowestoft Ness Point on 19th. On the 29th an Arctic Skua flew north at Southwold, a ~~Glaucaous Gull~~ was at Southwold on the 17th and the Blyth estuary on the 28th, a Caspian Gull at North Warren on 9th and a Little Gull at Carlton Marshes on the 15th and 22nd. 4 Sandwich Terns were at Minsmere on the 4th with 2 Little Terns also at Minsmere on the 23rd, Black Terns were rather scarce this month so an adult on Peto's marsh at Carlton Marshes 28th-29th proved to be quite popular. 2 Turtle Doves returned to a regular site at Hulver on the 22nd and 2 Short-eared Owls were noted at Benacre on the 14th. A Hoopoe was reported at the Hen Reedbeds on the 28th but could not be relocated. A single Shorelark was on the beach at Kessingland on 8th-10th with 7 at the same site on the 30th, 3 Water Pipits were seen at the Hen Reedbeds 2nd and a single was seen at North Warren on 13th along with a Blue-headed Wagtail. This April proved to exceptional for the number of Ring Ouzel reports with several sites recording multiples, 4 at Carlton Marshes on the 25th, 4 at Southwold and 4 at Westleton on the 30th being notable. A Whinchat was seen on Lowestoft north denes on the 18th, the first Nightingale was singing at Westleton on the 11th and the first Common Redstart was seen at Westleton on the 16th. Lingering Siberian Chiffchaffs were noted at Carlton Marshes 3rd, Southwold 19th and Benacre 20th. Finally 2 Ravens were at Aldringham on 10th and Snow Bunting at Minsmere on 2nd.

May

The most notable wildfowl record of the month concerned a drake Ring-necked Duck seen on the Island mere at Minsmere on the 2nd, could this possibly have been the same bird that had been present at nearby Aldringham until at least 13th March. A few sightings of Garganey were reported with a maximum of 4 at Carlton Marshes on the 31st, a single European White-fronted Goose remained at North Warren until the 14th at least. A Quail was discovered singing on Lowestoft North denes on the morning of the 28th, it continued singing in to the evening but remained unseen throughout the day. Purple Herons were seen at Lound lakes and Minsmere on the 12th with the latter bird also seen the next day, what was very possibly the same bird as seen at Minsmere was present at Walberswick on the 26th-27th and back at Minsmere on the 29th. Spoonbills were seen at North Warren 8th, 3 north over Lowestoft Ness point 13th and 2 at Minsmere on the same day, single at Minsmere 16th, 4 at Hazlewood marshes 22nd and 2 at North Warren 27th. A Cattle Egret flew north over Minsmere on the 23rd and two were present on the South levels at Minsmere 24th. The 2 Glossy Ibis that had been present at Minsmere in late April remained in to early May, their numbers then increased during the course of the month to a total of 6 present on the last day of May. Considering the time of year raptor records were few with the best being Osprey at

Minsmere 8th, Black Kite at Wangford 14th and Honey Buzzard over Carlton Colville 27th. Common Cranes continued to be seen at several coastal sites surely involving a small core of the same 2-3 birds although 5 were seen at Dunwich on the 24th. The Lesser Yellowlegs that had been present at Minsmere was relocated on Southwold marshes on the 3rd where it remained until the 8th, 6 Wood Sandpipers were seen on Peto's marsh at Carlton Marshes on the 3rd, 3 Wood Sandpipers were present at Southwold on 12th-13th along with a single Little Stint with other Little Stints seen at Flixton gravel pits on 10th and Carlton Marshes 11th. Curlew Sandpipers were seen at Walberswick 14th with 2 at Minsmere 15-16th. A possible Pacific Golden Plover was present on Minsmere West scrape for about 80 minutes during the late afternoon of the 5th. A Glaucous Gull was seen flying north from Lowestoft North beach on the 19th, Roseate Terns were seen at Minsmere 19th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd with 2 present on the 31st, a single Great Skua flew south offshore at Minsmere on the 25th.

On the afternoon of the 8th a Bee-eater was heard overhead at Sizewell, on the 15th 5 Bee-eaters were tracked flying north at North Warren 08:20, Sizewell at 08:30 and Minsmere at 08:50 but these sightings were eclipsed by the amazing record of 17 Bee-eaters feeding from overhead cables near Fressingfield village late in the afternoon of the same day. Another 3 Bee-eaters flew north over Westwood marshes at Walberswick on 21st. A Red-rumped Swallow was seen flying south along the cliffs at Kessingland on the 12th, the next day 2 Red-rumped Swallows flew south past Dunwich Coastguard cottages. After last months rush of Ring Ouzels 4 still remained at Minsmere on the 3rd and on the same day a Whinchat was present at North Warren, also on the 3rd a Pied Flycatcher was seen near Mount Pleasant at Westleton. Singing spring Wood Warblers are always a real pleasure to see and if you were lucky enough to catch up with any of them singles were at Sizewell and Aldeburgh on 4th and Easton Bavents on 5th. Golden Oriole day fell on the 14th with one reported at Dunwich heath, one singing by Eastbridge village in the morning and another, possibly the Eastbridge bird, heard in Minsmere South belt during the afternoon.

June

A Garganey was present at Carlton Marshes SWT on the 3rd, a Goosander which flew north past Sizewell on the 19th was an unusual date and c300 Common Scoters were noted offshore at Minsmere 25th and 29th. A singing Quail was present near Westleton common on the 12th but typically remained unseen. A Manx Shearwater which flew south past Lowestoft Ness point on the evening of the 26th was the only seabird record for the month. An adult Purple Heron was present at Minsmere 1st-6th and was watched flying high east out to sea in the evening of the latter date, Spoonbill sightings for the month included a single at Minsmere 7th, 6 on Peto's marsh at Carlton Marshes and a single at Minsmere 12th, single south over Minsmere 17th, 3 at Buss Creek Southwold 18th-19th, single North Warren 19th and a single at Benacre broad on the 25th which later that day relocated to Covehithe broad. The Glossy Ibis count at Minsmere remained at 6 until the 8th then dropped to 4 and then 2 with the last report of a single on the 21st, a single was also at Buss Creek on the 23rd. Great Egret maximum counts were 3 at Carlton Marshes on 3rd and 3 at Minsmere on 10th. The only notable raptor records for the month involved an Osprey at Lound Waterworks on 18th, an Osprey at Minsmere on 21st with Honey Buzzards seen at Eastbridge on 9th, Snape Warren on 10th, North Warren on 14th, Westleton and Aldeburgh on 15th and Minsmere on 24th. Common Crane sightings for

June involved birds heard in the reedbeds at Minsmere on the 14th and 2 over Herringfleet on the 16th. 2 Curlew Sandpipers were on the scrape at Minsmere on the 1st, a Wood Sandpiper at Minsmere on 9th, a Black-tailed Godwit of the race 'Limosa limosa limosa' at Minsmere on the 11th and 3 Spotted Redshanks also at Minsmere on the 27th. Throughout the month Little Gulls appeared in singles and doubles on Minsmere South scrape. Bird of the month was an impressive Caspian Tern at Minsmere 25th-26th, the bird spent its visit commuting between the Island mere and the South scrape where it gave observers the opportunity for some really nice views. Roseate Terns were also seen at Minsmere throughout the month with sightings on the 5th, 6th, 11th, 18th (2), 28th and 29th, an Arctic Tern was present on 12th and a Black Tern briefly on the 21st. The pleasure of seeing these scarcer terns was somewhat tempered by witnessing the distressing effects of Avian Flu on the breeding colonies of Black-headed Gulls and Common and Sandwich Terns. Reports of Bee-eaters during June involved one heard over Minsmere on the 6th, 2 south over Aldeburgh Golf Course on the 12th and another single east over Mutford on the 21st. A probable Little Swift was reported flying west over Wangford shortly after dawn on the 21st, if this bird had remained around the village it would have caused a great deal of excitement amongst the birding community. The final report involves 7 Common Crossbills which paid a brief visit to Corton woods near Lowestoft on the evening of the 23rd.

July

July generally tends to be a quiet month with little migration, although in some previous years it has been a month which produces a major rarity, this was not one of those years. Wildfowl featured poorly this month with 2 Garganey at Carlton Marshes on the 10th and an out of season Whooper Swan at Minsmere on the 17th the only reports of interest. This month's only notable seabird sighting involved a Sooty Shearwater north past the Ness Point at Lowestoft on the 28th. Spoonbills were reported throughout the month with records as follows, single north over Kessingland 4th, two south over Sizewell 6th, 4 at Hazelwood Marshes 8th, single at Minsmere 14th, single at Covehithe Broad 24th-28th then at Benacre Broad 29th and a peak count of 13 at Hazelwood Marshes on the 30th. Once considered a rarity Glossy Ibis seems to be present somewhere around the area in every month of the year now with this month's reports concerning a single at Carlton Marshes on the 2nd and a single at Botany Marsh, Snape on the 16th, a similar story also relates to Cattle Egret with a single at Minsmere on the 20th. An Osprey was seen on the Blyth estuary on the 12th where it remained until the end of the month. Three Wood Sandpipers were present at Carlton Marshes at the beginning of the month along with two Little Ringed Plovers, another two Wood Sandpipers were at Minsmere on the 20th. A Pectoral Sandpiper was seen on Hazelwood Marsh on the 23rd, fifteen Spotted Redshanks on Minsmere East scrape on the 11th was the month's peak count for this species, Curlew Sandpipers were seen at Minsmere on the 24th and 28th, a single flock of 60+ Whimbrel south past Ness point, Lowestoft on the evening of the 29th was a notable sighting. Skua sightings for July involved two Arctic Skuas north past Lowestoft on the 26th and single Arctic Skuas north past Dunwich on 26th and Southwold on the 28th. 118 Mediterranean Gulls were counted on Lowestoft North beach on the 4th and a peak count of fifteen Little Gulls at Minsmere on the 24th. A Caspian Tern was seen at Botany Marsh, Snape on the 10th before it flew off towards the Alde estuary, a juvenile Black Tern frequented Minsmere 11th - 22nd and Arctic Terns were reported from Minsmere and Southwold.

August

Another unremarkable month for wildfowl sightings in the area with Garganey seen at Carlton Marshes on the 17th and Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 31st, the unseasonable Whooper Swan continued to linger being reported from Minsmere on the 21st. Reports of seabirds increased from the middle of the month with two Sooty Shearwaters off Lowestoft 15th, singles off Minsmere and Southwold 18th, singles off Covehithe and Lowestoft 28th, single off Southwold 30th, single off Southwold, four off Minsmere and four off Thorpeness 31st. Manx Shearwater off Lowestoft on the 29th, on the 31st a Balearic Shearwater flew south off Minsmere at 07:15 and was subsequently seen off Thorpeness at 07:21 and a Cory's Shearwater flew south off Southwold also on the 31st. Two Glossy Ibis were seen at North Warren on the 10th, four Great Egrets were at Minsmere on the 18th, Spoonbills were reported mainly from Burgh Castle, Benacre and Hazelwood Marsh with the latter site having the highest count of fifteen. The months top raptor sighting was that of a Red-footed Falcon which was watched arriving in off the sea by sea watchers at Southwold on the morning of the 31st, an Osprey was reported regularly from the Blyth estuary and two were reported from Southwold on the 15th and ringtail Hen Harrier was seen at Westleton on the 7th. On the 30th a Common Crane was seen passing offshore at Lowestoft. Wader passage picked up this month and Curlew Sandpipers were seen at a few sites with the highest counts being seven at Hazelwood Marsh on the 29th and five at Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 31st, five Little Ringed Plovers were at Minsmere on 10th, Red-necked Phalarope, two Little Stints and a Wood Sandpiper were all seen at Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 31st. Apart from a single Arctic Skua seen off Lowestoft on the 10th all other the skua reports came in a rush at the end of the month and were as follows, six Arctic Skuas south off Lowestoft on the 30th, two Long-tailed Skuas and nine Arctic Skuas south off Lowestoft, Long-tailed Skua south off Benacre, nine Long-tailed Skuas south off Covehithe, eleven Long-tailed Skuas south off Southwold, eleven Long-tailed Skuas south off Minsmere and three Long-tailed Skuas south and four Arctic Skuas north off Thorpeness, all on the 31st and certainly involving some duplicity in counts. Four Caspian Gulls were at Southwold harbour mouth on the 15th and 19th, twenty Little Gulls were at Minsmere on the 21st. On the 15th a Caspian Tern was seen to roost on Breydon Water, twelve Black Terns flew south off Minsmere on the 15th, five south off Lowestoft on the 22nd with a further thirteen south on 23rd. After all the excitement of Bee-eaters breeding in North Norfolk this year Suffolk also got in on the action with four south over the Minsmere North wall on the 14th. Wrynecks also appeared in the county this month being reported at Saxmundham 25th and Dunwich 27th. Passerine migration this month was probably the best for a few years now starting off with two Wood Warblers at Aldeburgh on the 4th, Whinchat began to appear at coastal locations with peak counts of four at Southwold and five at Aldeburgh Town marshes. It was Pied Flycatchers which really stole the show starting with odd ones and twos from the 12th, on the 19th sightings really kicked off when an incredible 69 were reported from coastal locations stretching from Aldeburgh to Lowestoft with the Kessingland to Lowestoft stretch hosting the vast majority. On a more sober note only a single Common Redstart was reported at Benacre 22nd-27th.

September

The first of the autumn geese was a flock of fifteen Pink-footed Geese at Minsmere on the 17th, what was presumably the over summering Whooper Swan was seen at Botany Marsh, Snape on the 19th, Minsmere on the 20th returning back to Botany Marsh on the 21st. A Quail was flushed from the clifftop at Hopton and flew inland on the 4th. After a bit of an absence from reports divers began to reappear this month with Great Northern Divers seen flying south off Southwold on 17th, Slaughden on 19th and north off Kessingland on the 21st. Sooty Shearwater sightings were as follows, singles north Covehithe and Sizewell and three north Southwold 1st, single north at Southwold 16th, single north at Slaughden 20th. Single Manx Shearwaters flew past Southwold on the 10th and Lowestoft on the 19th, the second Cory's Shearwater of the year flew south past Southwold on the 6th, a European Storm Petrel was seen flying north past Corton on the 19th. Cattle Egrets were seen at North Warren 13th-21st, Spoonbills were again reported from a few sites with maximum counts of 11 at Hazelwood Marsh on the 9th and nine at Botany Marsh 19th-21st. Ospreys were reported regularly during the month at the Blyth estuary and along the river Alde, others were reported at Minsmere on the 3rd and 10th, Carlton Marshes on the 10th, Benacre on 11th and 22nd. On the morning of the 27th a Honey Buzzard flew west over Carlton Colville followed by a further four in the afternoon, a single drifted south over Minsmere on the morning of the 2nd. A few reports of Merlins included one chasing a passerine offshore at Minsmere. A Corncrake was flushed on a footpath by Tinkers's marsh, Walberswick on the 25th though subsequently not seen again, this is a highly sought after species for many Suffolk county listers. The Red-necked Phalarope seen at Aldeburgh Town marshes in late August was still present on the 1st, this site also hosted a single Pectoral Sandpiper on the 18th with two present 19th-21st, the highest count of Curlew Sandpipers in the county this year was also here with sixteen juveniles on the 4th along with a Wood Sandpiper, four Little Stints at the same locality on the 8th. A Grey Phalarope was present at North Warren 27th-30th and another was watched on the sea at Benacre on the 28th, a Lesser Golden Plover seen at Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 5th flew off before it's exact identification could be determined. Reports of skuas continued in to this month and were as follows: Long-tailed Skua, singles Lowestoft and Covehithe, two Southwold, three Sizewell 1st, singles Southwold and Sizewell 2nd, single Lowestoft 3rd, single Southwold and two Slaughden 6th, two Lowestoft 17th, singles Lowestoft and Slaughden 19th, single Lowestoft 24th, single Corton 25th. Pomarine Skua, single Southwold 6th, two Lowestoft 17th, single Lowestoft 18th, single Lowestoft 19th, two Southwold 30th. Arctic Skua, two Lowestoft and two Southwold 1st, four Sizewell 2nd, single Lowestoft 19th, single Minsmere 24th. Most worrying is that there were no reports of Great Skua, this species has been hit hard by Avian Flu at it's scottish colonies. There were very few reports of terns this month, Black Tern seen at Southwold 12th and two Arctic Terns off Minsmere 28th. It is tempting to think that the eight Bee-eaters that flew south over Minsmere on the 9th, were the same birds that had left their breeding site in North Norfolk a few days before. Another single Bee-eater was observed flying south over Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 15th, and the day before a Hoopoe was seen briefly at Walberswick before flying off. A Wryneck was present at Benacre 2nd-4th, others were seen at Lowestoft 4th, Westleton 6th, Minsmere 10th-19th, North Warren 13th and Walberswick 14th. Whinchats are always an autumn favourite and peak counts for this month involved seven at Easton Bavents 1st and eleven at Aldeburgh Town marshes 9th, highest count for Common Redstart was three at Southwold on the 4th, for Black Redstart it was seven at Sizewell on the 15th. Ring Ouzels was seen at Southwold on the 9th and 30th. September is the

month when birders look forward to the arrival of the first Yellow-browed Warblers, this year it was Sizewell on the 19th followed by Corton 21st-28th, Kessingland, Benacre and Southwold 25th, Kirkley Cemetery, Lowestoft and two at Benacre 26th and single at Benacre 30th. Radde's Warblers were seen at Kessingland sewage works (trapped) 29th and Benacre 30th. This month's peak count of Pied Flycatchers was five at Southwold on the 4th, with numbers well down on the August count. Red-backed Shrikes were seen at Benacre 10th-11th, with a long stayer at Walberswick 14th-22nd. A Corn Bunting, now sadly a rare bird in north-east Suffolk, was seen flying south at Southwold on the 12th. A solitary Snow Bunting was at Kessingland on the 16th.

October

A juvenile Whooper Swan flew over Westleton Heath on the 27th, a single Tundra Bean Goose flew over Carlton Marshes on the 29th, a Velvet Scoter flew south past Southwold 2nd and a Goosander was at Minsmere 18th. A Black-throated Diver flew south past Southwold 19th and another flew north past Sizewell on the same day, a Great Northern Diver flew past Slaughden on the 23rd and another was on the Alde estuary 26th. A Black-necked Grebe was seen at Snape 19th, Red-necked Grebes were seen past Southwold and Slaughden on 20th. A Pterodroma Petrel species flew north past Southwold, Lowestoft and Corton on 9th, Sooty Shearwater reports were two past Southwold 9th, seven past Southwold, three past Minsmere, two past Thorpeness and one past Slaughden all on 19th. Manx Shearwater sightings involved one past Southwold 9th, one past Lowestoft 15th and one past Southwold 19th. Two Cattle Egrets were seen at Burgh Castle on the 3rd and a single was at Benacre on the 24th. A Glossy Ibis was present at Carlton Marshes 9th-18th, singles flew over Minsmere on the 20th, Benacre and Southwold 22nd. Five Great Egrets were observed flying in off the sea together at Corton on the 23rd. A spate of Honey Buzzard records occurred early in the month with singles over Kessingland 4th, single over Reydon 7th and a single over Lowestoft 8th. Ospreys were seen at Fritton Lake 7th, Walberswick 14th, Alde estuary 15th intermittently until 29th. A Merlin was seen at Walberswick on the 14th and a late Hobby at the Alde estuary 15th. Two Common Cranes flew south over Easton Broad on 8th and nine flew north-west over Eastbridge on 18th. The Grey Phalarope at North Warren lingered through from September until the 3rd, a Pectoral Sandpiper was seen at Walberswick on the 1st, two Little Stints flew past Southwold on the 9th and two Jack Snipe were seen at North Warren on 22nd and another two at Minsmere on 30th. A small late flourish of skuas occurred mid month with three Pomarine Skuas and a Long-tailed skua past Southwold on 9th, 3 Pomarine Skuas, seven Arctic Skuas and five Great Skuas past Southwold on the 19th, one Pomarine Skua, nine Arctic Skuas and one Great Skua past Minsmere on the 19th, single Pomarine Skua and eleven Arctic Skuas past Thorpeness on 19th and one Pomarine Skua and five Arctic Skuas past Slaughden also on the 19th, obviously some duplicity amongst these sightings. The weather system that brought all the skuas also delivered a couple of Sabine's Gulls with one north past Southwold on the 19th and one north past Aldeburgh on the 20th. Three Caspian Gulls were seen at Southwold harbour on the 21st and 149 Little Gulls flew south past Slaughden on the 20th. On the 19th single Puffins were observed flying past Minsmere, Thorpeness and Slaughden, another individual drifted close inshore past Southwold on 20th and another single flew past Lowestoft on 22nd. Short-eared Owls were noted at Kessingland 1st, Slaughden 2nd, three at Southwold 19th, Southwold and Minsmere 20th and Minsmere 31st, a probable Long-eared Owl was seen at Corton on 23rd. In the last week of November

there was a nationwide influx of Pallid Swifts which our area was lucky to be a part of, late morning on the 24th one was observed by Covehithe church and was later seen over the Benacre area, in the late afternoon one was observed in the vicinity of the Birds Eye factory at Lowestoft and was presumed to have gone to roost in the area. On the morning of the 25th the Lowestoft bird was again seen around the Birds Eye factory and later was giving good views over the Sparrows Nest park and the North denes. What may well rate as bird of the year was the third county record of an Alpine Accentor discovered by the Martello tower at Slaughden during the afternoon of the 27th, this very obliging bird then delighted crowds of admirers until it departed early in the morning of the 29th. Three Ring Ouzels were at Benacre on the 23rd. Yellow-browed Warblers were recorded throughout the month at various locations, a Pallas's Warbler was seen at Walberswick on 23rd and Dusky Warblers were seen at Southwold 20th-28th and Benacre 23rd. There was an influx of Firecrests from mid month with several sites recording multiples, six at Southwold on the 21st was probably the maximum count. A Great Grey Shrike was seen in the early morning of the 7th at Easton Bavents but very quickly moved on. Raven sightings in the area are on the increase and four south over Minsmere on the 6th was a notable sighting. On the morning of the 17th a juvenile Rose-coloured Starling was seen with Common Starlings at Benacre sluice before flying north. A Little Bunting was seen late afternoon of the 19th at Sizewell before flying off, two Lapland Buntings were seen at Thorpeness on the 20th.

November

Swans arrived in very small numbers this month with ten Bewick's Swans south past Southwold on the 4th and four over Carlton Marshes on the 5th. Five Whooper Swans were seen on Barsham marshes on the 10th and two at Benacre on the 18th. Fifty Pink-footed Geese flew over Minsmere on 4th and Tundra Bean Geese were seen at Aldringham (3) on the 13th, Lowestoft (4) on the 18th and Walberswick (5) on the 29th, twenty-four European White-fronted Geese were at Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 28th. A large southerly offshore movement of Dark-bellied Brent Geese occurred on the 13th with 3295 counted at Minsmere and 5280 counted at Slaughden in 2.5 hours, Pale-bellied Brent Geese were also observed hidden amongst these hordes with two past Lowestoft on the 13th and a single on the 14th. Sea watchers were also recording Velvet Scoters during the month with two past Lowestoft on 19th, singles past Minsmere, Sizewell and Thorpeness also on 19th and two past Easton Bavents on the 25th. Two Goosanders were seen on Thorpeness Meare on the 24th. Diver sightings for the month were as follows. Black-throated Diver singles at Lowestoft and Minsmere on 14th and Thorpeness on the 19th and 20th and Sizewell 21st. Great Northern Diver Lowestoft 18th, river Alde 19th AND 24TH, Lowestoft 20th, Oulton Broad 21st, Lake Lothing, Lowestoft 24th-27th with a Red-throated Diver. A Slavonian Grebe was seen on the Alde estuary on the 13th and the 19th. A Great Egret and a Glossy Ibis were seen at North Warren on the 4th with another Glossy Ibis at Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 28th and a Cattle Egret at Dingle marshes on the 9th. An Osprey was seen at the Alde estuary on the 2nd and a late bird was seen at Benacre on the 22nd, Hen Harriers were reported from the Alde estuary 10th, Minsmere 20th and 22nd, a Rough-legged Buzzard was reported over Lowestoft on the 15th and Merlins were seen at Eastbridge on 10th and North Warren on the 25th. On the 2nd a Little Stint was at Minsmere and on the morning of the 4th a Grey Phalarope flew north past Minsmere with another being reported there on the 19th, two Purple Sandpipers were at Southwold on the 9th and six were at the Ness Point at lowestoft on

the 17th. A late Wood Sandpiper was seen at Aldeburgh Town marshes on the 19th. Skua sightings tailed off in November with just a Pomarine Skua being reported at Southwold on the 4th. A Caspian Gull and two Yellow-legged Gulls were present at Minsmere on the 10th with seven Caspian Gulls at the same location on the 27th, a late Sandwich Tern flew south past Lowestoft Ness Point on the 15th. November is normally the month for Little Auk sightings especially in winds laying in the north to east quadrant, only four were reported this month with singles north past Lowestoft and Southwold on the 19th and south past Gorleston on the same day and south past Sizewell 21st. A Long-eared Owl was at Gunton Warren on the 13th and nearby on the same day a Short-eared Owl flew north over the North Denes. A Hoopoe was seen at Framlingham in the afternoon of the 24th. On the morning of the 10th three Red-rumped Swallows were discovered at Walberswick accompanied by three Barn Swallows and a House Martin, shortly after their discovery they all drifted off south and were later relocated at Dunwich beach car park, they then all flew back north and were rediscovered back over the Walberswick/Southwold harbour area late afternoon and presumably roosted somewhere in the vicinity of Walberswick. These birds remained around Walberswick delighting observers until mid morning of the 13th when they drifted off and did not return. Interestingly single Red-rumped Swallows were also seen Kessingland and Aldeburgh on the morning of the 11th, and a late Barn Swallow flew south over Aldeburgh on the 26th. During the afternoon of the 3rd a Yellow Wagtail species was discovered on Peto's Marsh at Carlton Marshes, this bird remained until the 5th when its identification was confirmed as Eastern Yellow Wagtail. Nine Water Pipits were also present on Peto's Marsh at Carlton Marshes on the 5th. A probable Desert Wheatear was seen briefly at Covehithe cliffs on the 2nd when it flew towards the church but could not be relocated. 30+ Snow Buntings were at Kessingland on the 9th with twenty-three at Benacre on the 18th, a single Twite was seen at Dunwich on the 9th.

December

Winter swans were few and far between this month, Whooper Swans were present around Minsmere during the month with a maximum of four on the 17th and two flew over Benacre on the 16th. Bewick's Swans were even scarcer with only two reports, a single in off the sea at Lowestoft on the 18th and a single south over Minsmere on the 24th. One hundred plus European White-fronted Geese were present at North Warren mid month with four Pink-footed Geese also present, thirty-five Pink-footed Geese flew over Beccles on the 14th and another five were seen on Reydon marshes on the 18th. Four Velvet Scoters were offshore at Minsmere on the 13th, these birds probably accounted for a number of sightings mainly off Dunwich over the following days where up to three hundred Common Scoters were also present. Goosanders were seen mainly at Minsmere and Thorpeness Meare, the maximum count being eleven at the latter site. A single red-headed Smew was seen on the Island Mere at Minsmere on the 23rd. A Great Northern Diver was seen at the Alde estuary on the 6th, a Red-necked Grebe was present on Thorpeness Meare on the 1st and a Slavonian Grebe was seen the river Alde on the 5th and the 11th. On the 8th a Glossy Ibis was discovered on the saltings at Slaughden where it remained until the 17th at least, on the 6th a very unseasonable Osprey was reported over fishing lakes at Henstead. Up to three Purple Sandpipers frequented the rocky sea defences north of Southwold pier during the month. A Pomarine Skua which flew north off Southwold on the 3rd was the only skua species reported this month, also on the 3rd off Southwold a juvenile Glaucous Gull lingered distantly offshore. On the 4th the scrape at

Minsmere hosted five Caspian Gulls and a Yellow-legged Gull. Two Little Auks flew north past Southwold on the morning of the 2nd with another single on the 4th, seven on the 5th and one on the 19th, on the 4th a Puffin was observed on the sea off Southwold and a Razorbill was seen off Dunwich on the 17th. This months star Alcid was a winter plumaged Black Guillemot first noted close inshore at Minsmere on the 17th, this bird was subsequently relocated off Kessingland on the 19th and later the same day off Lowestoft. Reports of Short-eared Owls during the month came from Carlton Marshes 6th, Benacre 7th and Minsmere 20th. An Eastern Yellow Wagtail was seen at Carlton Marshes on the 20th, two Water Pipits were at Minsmere on the 20th. Waxwings are everybody's favourite and much anticipated in December and the new year, reports for this month came from Lowestoft with three on the 4th, a single at Minsmere on the 8th, a single at Carlton Colville 9th-14th, two at Aldeburgh on the 11th, two at Minsmere on the 16th, twenty-three at Lowestoft on the 17th, five at Carlton Colville on the 25th-26th and a single at Reydon 27th-31st. Two Ravens were seen over Westleton Heath on the 17th and a single over Bungay on the 20th. Two Hawfinches were seen by the church in Sotterley park on the 24th, c50 Snow buntings were seen at Kessingland on the 5th.