

WAVENEY BIRD CLUB

Summer 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the latest community newsletter from Waveney Bird Club. Whether you are a long-standing member, a new birder, or simply curious about the wildlife of the Waveney Valley, this issue celebrates the people, places and birds that make our local area so special.

Club News

It is now halfway through the year, and our indoor and field events have been well attended. We split the Brecks walk into two separate events and found the target species. We enjoyed a red-letter day for our Dawn Chorus walk at Minsmere with the finding of a male Woodchat Shrike whilst watching a Dartford Warbler on Dunwich Heath.

We know the AGM evening went on too long, there was too much to get through in the time and the Committee are re-thinking the format for next year. Thank you for your comments and patience.

I would encourage you to come to our annual BioBlitz day at Heveningham on 5th July. It is the chance to see the wildlife on an estate with few visitors, and we are led by the resident Ecologist, our own Harry Read. The breakfast is also very good!

At this time of year, we remember Steve Piotrowski, who passed away two years ago in June. Waveney Bird Club was one of his initiatives, and its continued success is part of his legacy.

Swifts remain one of the UK's most charismatic summer visitors, but they face serious pressures from loss of nesting sites and wider environmental change. The Swift Tower at Eastbridge is an inspiring local conservation project, designed to raise awareness and provide potential nesting opportunities for this much-loved species. The tower is now two years old and we hope this year we will have breeding Swifts.

Graham Dawson

Membership Update

Our Club is thriving, with 170 paid up members at the moment. I recently sent out final reminders and several more folk have now paid and this leaves 14 remaining. Two of those are hoping to bump into a Committee member to pay cash.

We'll take off the email addresses for those who haven't paid their 2026 subscription in July. It's always a shame to do this, and we'd prefer not to, but housekeeping is necessary. It's just £10 to be a member. We have new members joining all through the year and that's thanks to everyone who promotes the Club to those they meet out in the field. We're grateful to those who have signed up for Gift Aid. As you know we can get a tax refund of 25% for these people at no cost to yourselves.

I belong to a WhatsApp group called Save our Swifts who have offered to donate Swift nest boxes to any location; adjacent or opposite to where Swifts are nesting, as long as someone will install them. So if you'd like to take this opportunity, please let me know on cheryldeeks@gmail.com or 07743 048457.

Thanks to you all for being members. We wouldn't be the club we are without your support. June is a time we raise a glass to two of our founders, who are no longer with us. Dear Steve and Paddy.

Cheryl

Barn Owl Support Suffolk Update

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and donors, we are delighted to report that a new batch of Barn Owl boxes is currently in production. We are particularly grateful to Saxmundham Men's Shed, whose members are once again putting their skills and enthusiasm to excellent use by building these much-needed boxes for us.

The new boxes will allow us to replace older boxes that have reached the end of their working lives and, importantly, to expand our efforts across the Waveney Valley by identifying suitable new sites where Barn Owls could benefit from additional nesting opportunities. Every box installed represents another chance for a pair of Barn Owls to establish a home and successfully raise a family.



Projects such as this are only possible through the support of so many people, from those who donate funds and materials to the volunteers who help identify sites, install boxes and

monitor them throughout the breeding season. We would like to extend our thanks to everyone involved.

Following the disappointment of last year, it is particularly encouraging to report that 2026 is, so far, shaping up to be an excellent season for Suffolk's Barn Owls. Monitoring teams have been finding healthy broods across many sites, with good numbers of young birds already being recorded. As a result, volunteers have been kept exceptionally busy checking boxes, monitoring breeding activity and ringing young owls under licence as part of ongoing conservation work.

Of course, there is still a long way to go before the season is complete, and Barn Owls remain vulnerable to changes in weather and food availability. However, the signs so far are extremely positive, and it is heartening to see the species responding so well to favourable conditions.

Successes like these remind us why continued conservation work is so important. By maintaining nest boxes, creating opportunities for breeding and monitoring populations, we can help ensure that Barn Owls remain a familiar and treasured sight across our countryside. With the momentum generated this year, we hope to continue building on that success and doing everything we can to support these remarkable birds.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, whether through donations, practical help or simply by taking an interest in the welfare of our local Barn Owls. Together, we are helping to give them the best possible chance of a bright future.

Sally Nelson

Update from Waveney Ringing Group

It has been a great first half of the year, with some fantastic new ringing sites, seven new species ringed and almost 3500 birds processed, including our first Avocet and Redshank pulli, Teal, and Long-eared and Short-eared Owls.

Our weekly ringing demonstrations continue at RSPB Minsmere every Thursday and have been well attended by the public, particularly during the school holidays. Demos have also been held at some of our new sites, including Westleton Common and Martlesham Common, where we have been busy over the spring studying the Nightingale population.



We have also recently colour-ringed 110 Black-headed Gull chicks at a small colony near Flixton. The colour-rings are yellow with a black code of '20' plus two letters. Some of last year's birds from the same island have been seen at Minsmere and Orford, but most have travelled further afield to Wales, Ireland and Spain, so please contact [Jade Wilding](#) if you spot any while out and about.

Three new Trainees have joined the group recently, and we now have a total of 18 members from trainee ringers, helpers to experienced ringing trainers. One of latest recruits is Henry who is just 14 years old and very keen to learn the skills of bird ringing. If you are interested in joining us or finding out more about the work of the ringing group then please get in touch with [Roger Walsh](#).

Upcoming Events

Swift Walk, Swift Pint Bungay

Wednesday 15th July at 7pm - Leaders: Harry Read & Mark Piotrowski

A walk around Bungay counting Swifts and looking for other birds, starting from Bungay Community Centre NR35 1PU. No booking needed.

Theberton Woods

Sunday 19th July at 11am - Leader: Mark Piotrowski

Meet at The Eels Foot, Eastbridge IP16 4SN for a walk along the river to Middleton, then on to Theberton Woods for a packed lunch looking for lots of Odonata species. Further details on the [website](#), and to book contact [Wendy Bainbridge](#).

Swift Walk, Swift Pint Harleston

Wednesday 22nd July 2026 at 7pm - Leader: Roger Walsh

A walk around Harleston counting Swifts and looking for other birds, starting from Harleston Recreation Ground IP20 9DD. No booking needed.