

**Systematic List of Birds of Haddenham 2012.**

Birds that have bred or otherwise been noted in the Haddenham  
(Cambridgeshire) Parish.

Detail taken from the last Report issued in 1995

**BIRDS OF HADDENHAM**

Birdlife of a Cambridgeshire Fenland Parish

By James Cater and Paul Mason. (Edited by Jake Allsop) 1995.

This list revised and edited by Paul Mason 2012.

Other sources used include Cambridgeshire Bird Club annual reports and the  
Cambirds online website. Otherwise all sightings are by HCS members and  
known reliable birders.

Nomenclature used is from Collins Bird Guide by Mullaney, Svensson,  
Zetterstrom and Grant 1999.

Systematic names are Voous. Abbreviations B...breeds in parish. BL  
breeds locally but not in parish.

SM...Summer migrant. WV. Winter visitor. SRV...Summer/Spring Rare  
Visitor.

W RV... Winter Rare Visitor PM.. Passage migrant.

A.....Present all year.

Sources.....CBC indicates Cambridge Bird Club report and will be  
followed by year. E.g. CBC 1995.

Otherwise all sightings/reports are from HCS members unless specified..

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**Diver family.....*Gavidae***

Red-Throated Diver. *Gavia Stellata.* W.RV.

Two records. One in Old West River near Earith end. CBC 1979. Also in  
same place in winter 2009.

(Birdguides report. On line.)

Great Northern Diver. *Gavia immer* W R V.

Unexpected find in Old West River near Haddenham Engine CBC 1995.

**Grebe family.....*Podicipadidae***

Little Grebe (Dabchick) *Tachybaptus fuficollis* A. B

Up to 10 pairs breed in Old Brick Pit ponds and some fen drains and farm  
reservoirs.

Great Crested Grebe. *Podiceps cristatus.* A. B  
Breeds in Old Brick Pit ponds and some farm reservoirs. 2-3 pairs.

**Cormorant family**.....*Phalacrocoracidae*  
(Great) Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax carbo* A. BL  
Common along Old West River and in Old Brick Pit ponds and overflying anywhere.

**Hérons, Storks and Ibises family**.....*Ciconiformes.*  
(Great) Bittern. *Botaurus stellaris* WRV  
Seen in vicinity of Guppy's Pond between 19-25<sup>th</sup> Jan 1992. Could easily be missed at other times due to skulking in reedbeds.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A.BL  
Mostly seen in winter in shallower fen drains.

Great (White) Egret *Egretta Alba* PM  
One reported from Old West River near Haddenham Engine flying low westward 2007. Another reported rising from a fen drain by two local residents 2009.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerex* A BL  
Regularly seen anywhere in fen drains or overhead. Sometimes visits unprotected garden ponds.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurra* PM  
One in overgrown ditches between Haddenham Engine and Flatbridge 2004

**Swan family**.....*Cygnus*  
Mute Swan *Cygnus olor.* AB  
Common, breeding in ponds and wetter fen ditches. Herds of up to 200 juvenile and immature birds can be seen in some winters,

Whooper Swan *Cygnus Cygnus* WV  
Regularly winters and herds seen on fen fields feeding mainly on sugar beet tops or spilt potatoes. Later on winter wheat fields. Overflying on occasions especially in foggy conditions.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus* .WV  
Winters in smaller numbers than Whooper and less regularly.

**Geese family** *Anser, Branta.*  
Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus.* WRV  
5 overflying 12/1/1979. Flock of 60-70 flying by Old West River 28/10/2003

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* WRV  
 3 flying along western parish boundary 6/11/93. Then a flock of 11 on arable land along Hillrow Causeway on 13/11/93.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* A BL  
 Regularly overflies in groups. Occasionally on farm reservoirs.

Canada Goose *Branta Canadensis* ABL  
 Flocks seen all year often visiting larger stretches of water. Used to breed on Guppy's Pond.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* AB  
 Annual breeding and often seen prospecting straw bale stacks in spring after which rarely seen rest of year.

**Ducks family** *Anarini*

Mallard. *Anas platyrhynchos* A.B  
 Common on all water courses and ponds. Breeds regularly in large numbers in fen drains. A winter flock of 150 was a surprising find feeding on stubble along Long Drove in 2011.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* WV  
 Occasionally seen in fen drains in winter.

Wigeon *Anas Penelope* WV  
 Seen most years around private farm reservoir near Flatbridge and on The Norlands, by Old West River.

Pintail *Anas acuta.* WV  
 Historical records show many in receding flood waters 1947. 4 flew over Aldreth 8/1/95

Garganey. *Anas querquedula* SV past B  
 Historical records show that the 1947 floods attracted several birds some of which bred. CBC.

Pochard *Athya farina* WV  
 Pochard wintered on Guppy's Pond 1994-5 winter but not recorded since.

Tufted Duck *Athya fuligula* AB  
 2-4 pairs breed most years in larger fen drains. In winter larger groups found in drains and farm reservoirs.

Goosander *Mergus merganser.* WV rare  
 One shot in flight near Aldreth 4/1/82. In 1994 during December 3 flushed on two occasions from Old West River.

**RAPTORS**

White-tailed Eagle *aliaetus albicilla.*

Archaeological records have revealed bones of this species in piles with other species. Results of Iron and Bronze Age people hunting them.

Osprey *Pandion heliatus* PM

One at Guppy's Pond early 1980s. Another over Aldreth Road orchards 12/4/90. Yet another spent 2 days at Guppy's Pond October 2006. In April 2009 one was observed fishing in the Old West River.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* A

Was very rare but now seen occasionally mostly in spring and early summer.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A.B

Regularly seen all year on fens. Bred 2009 in Oilseed Rape. 2 young reared.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* WPV

Regular winter visitor. During winters of 1993-6 a roost was established in a neglected field near Flatbridge Farm and from 1-4 birds of both sexes used it from about late November to early March each year. The field was then ploughed up and the old patterns of single hunting birds resumed. In 2011-2 winter at least one female or ringtail and one adult male were seen on separate occasions.

Montague's Harrier *Circus pygargus* PM

Seen occasionally as passage migrant. Latest observation 6/9/2009. Juvenile over Old West River going south.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* PM very rare

One male stayed 3 days 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Ranged from North Fen to Old West river banks as it hunted and was enjoyed by 100s of visiting birders. Very rare appearance.

**Buzzard family** *Buteo*

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* RWV rare

2 birds wintered 1994-5. Mostly seen from near Aldreth High Bridge to Flatbridge Farm. Both sides of Old West River.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* A. B

Previous to about 2000 was uncommon visitor. Now regularly seen and breeds.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* PM rare

This email was received from Tim Benton. "20th September 2008 @ 2.30pm while sitting in our garden at Paddock Way, Margaret picked up on a Dark Phase Honey Buzzard drifting quite low, easy to see through bins, up Chewells Lane towards the water tower and beyond towards Cottenham." . Also this email received from Simon Stirrup..." While visiting the Garden Centre at Wilburton yesterday (minus bins) I had a Honey Buzzard circling low overhead and slowly drifting SE" Simon. This may well have referred

to the same bird but as there was an unusual mass migration south of this species that year so of course it could have been another.

**Hawks family**

*Accipiters*

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* A.B

Regular seen in gardens and possibly 7 pairs breed.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* RPM

Rare passage visitor in spring. Mostly seen overhead. Last records in 2010 & 2011.

Red-tailed Hawk ....In 2009 an escaped bird with jesses on was near Aldreth for several days.

**Falcon family**

*Falco*

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A.B

Regular breeder possibly around 8 pairs every year.

Merlin. *Falco columbariu.* WV

Regular in winter in fenland. Feeds largely on Skylark, finch and bunting flocks.

Hobby *Falco subbeteo* S.B.

Was previously rare visitor but from 1995 on seen regularly and since 2000 breeds every year. 2 young ringed 2011.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* A

Seen regularly. More in winter but increasingly in summer. May breed locally outside parish.

**Partridge & Pheasant family**

*Phasianidae*

Red-legged Partridge. *Alectoris rufa.* A. B

Regular in fen fields and less so in higher land areas. Mostly in pairs but occasionally in coveys of up to 10 in winter.

Grey Partridge *Perdis Perdis* A.B

Regular in fen areas but not often recorded on higher land. Breeding success varies but in 2010-1 thought be good. Winter coveys of up to 19 noted in some years.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix* S B?

A summer visitor but irregular. Mostly heard calling. May breed on occasions but difficult to prove.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* A.B

Common everywhere. Abberations sometimes occur like Albino and Melanistic birds.

**Rail and Crake family***Rallidae*Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

WV B

Occasionally in ditches in winter and bred in 1999 in a semi-dried out pond/old brick pit near North Fen Drove.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

A. B

Common in fen drains and ponds elsewhere.

Coot *Fulica atra*

A B

Common on Guppy's and other ponds and farm reservoirs. Also breeds along Old West River.

**Crane family.***Gruidae*Common Crane *Grus grus*

A

Historical records exist from Iron/Bronze/Roman times. Could easily be seen more in future. 1 sighting of a bird on Wilburton-Haddenham parish border in 2011.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*

An escaped bird was found injured near Aldreth in 1987. Taken in to care but later died.

**Wader family***Charadriiformes*Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

S.B

1-2 pairs regular in summer and breed mostly in sugar beet crops mainly near Old West River.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

PM

Only record is 1 overflying 25/August/1992 (M J Read).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

PM.

Many recorded during 1947 flood period CBC. 1 on ploughed land by Long Drove 3/5/1987. 1 on Flatbridge Farm reservoir on 8/8/ 2002.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

RSV

A trip of 7 was reported from Dairyhouse Drove on 13/10/1986.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

WV

Regular Autumn/Winter in flocks sometimes in excess of 5000. Mostly smaller numbers from 100-1000.

American Golden Plover*Pluvialis dominica*

WV

very rare.

1 only record. With Golden Plovers in flock by Cross Drove, Holme Fen 31st Oct to Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>2003

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

B

A few pairs breed in agricultural crops like sugar beet and potatoes with mixed success. Larger flocks arrive from Eastern Europe in winter often numbering 3-4000.

Little Stint                      *Calidris minus*                      RPM

During 1947 floods was attracted to margins of receding water CBC. Occasionally seen since when fields have been flooded after excessive rain periods.

Curlew Sandpiper                      *Calidris ferruginea*                      PM

Records from 1947 floods are 4 seen along Hillrow Causeway as water receded 6/6.1947. CBC

Dunlin                      *Calidris alpina*                      RWV

Many recorded during 1947 flood period CBC. The 1993-4 period of very heavy rain left several fields with largish puddles and these birds used them until water dried out. Up to 22 were recorded at times from Dec-Feb. In 1995 there was 1 with a large flock of Golden Plovers near Dambank on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and on 5<sup>th</sup> February there were 5. This sort of behaviour occurs when the nearby Ouse Washes are flooded bank to bank.

Ruff/Reeve                      *Philomachus pugnax*                      RWV

Similar to Dunlin birds will occasionally appear on flooded patches in bare agricultural fields in winter. In 1993 there were up to 6 in differing places.

Jack Snipe                      *Lymnocyptes minimus*                      WV

Mostly flushed from wet ditches or puddles in grassy fields or washland e.g. The Norlands by the Old west River.

Snipe                      *Gallinago gallinago*                      WV. PM

Mostly in autumn winter period. Often flushed from wet ditches. Sometimes seen feeding amongst Golden Plover flocks. Specific records are 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1988... 40 feeding in flooded field near Bury Lane 14<sup>th</sup> November 1991, 20 feeding in flooded field by Newtown. 4 near Guppy's Pond on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1993 and 6 there in February 1995. Most interesting record is of one amid a large number of Fieldfares feeding on fallen apples during the excessively cold period in February 2012. Sometimes found in wet field along Pingle Lane which is just in to the neighbouring Wentworth parish.

Woodcock                      *Scolopax rusticola*                      WV

Regularly flushed in winter from ditches and damp areas including in orchards and gardens.

Black-tailed Godwit.                      *Limosa limosa*                      W VR

Believed to have bred during receding 1947 floods. (Recorded by

Wentworth Day in History of the Fens.) Overflies irregularly.

Whimbrel      *Numenius phaeopus*      PM

Sometimes overflies during migration periods. Usually first heard uttering typical 7 note call. 3 seen to land in field off Dambank 2009.

Curlew      *Numenius arquata*      PMK. WV

Sometimes overflying but also known to land in wet patches in arable fields in winter.

Redshank      *Tringa titanus*      PM

Very occasionally flushed from fen ditches. Reported to have bred during aftermath of 1947 floods. CBC.

Greenshank      *Tringa nebularia*      PM

Usually overflying but occasionally known in farm reservoirs mostly in autumn when water is shallow. In 1987 there were 8 in such a site near Hinton Hall.

Green Sandpiper      *Tringa ochropus*      WV

Regularly seen in winter in main fen drains on the muddy edges. Easily flushed and recognised by bright white rump as it flies away.

Common Sandpiper      *Tringa hypoleus*      PM

Annual visitor in spring and autumn migrations. Farm reservoirs and muddy edges in places like Guppy's pond etc. Guppy's Pond had an annual visitor on and about May 18<sup>th</sup> for 2001, 2002, and 2003. Showing possible site faithfulness even on migration.

**Skua family**      *Stercoraridae*

Arctic Skua      *Stercoarius parasiticus*      Rare PM

1 seen to fly south in autumn 2006 at western end of parish. Likely to be missed in any year as they migrate parallel to nearby Ouse Washes.

**Gull family**      *Laridae*

Mediterranean Gull      *Larus melanocephalus*      WV      Rare

Only recorded 16/1/1995 amongst Black-headed gulls alongside Long Drove.

Herring Gull      *Larus argentus*      WV

In winter included with other gull flocks feeding in fen fields.

Yellowlegged Gull.      *Larus cachinnans*      WV

As with Herring Gulls but less common.

Little Gull      *Larus minutus*      PV Rare

Only known record is of 1 along Old West River 26/8/1984.

Blackheaded Gull.      *Larus ridibundus*      All year BL



Very common in the entire parish.

Common Gull                      *Larus canus*                                      WV

Common in winter only. Usually with flocks of other gulls feeding mainly on fen fields. Overflies regularly in winter with other gulls returning to night roosts on Ouse Washes from Milton and Landbeach Refuse Tips.

Lesser Blackbacked Gull                      *Larus fuscus*                                      All year

As with Common Gull.

Greater Blackbacked Gull                      *Larus Marinus*                                      WV

Occurs in mainly fen arable fields in winter among mixed flocks of other gulls. Also overflies when going to and from night-time roost sites on Ouse washes in winter.

During Late November and through December 2003 very large numbers of gulls mainly Blackheaded but also Common, Lesser Blackbacks, Greater Blackbacks and some Herrings (leaving aside more obscure sub species) descended on various individual fields in a sort of rotation and fed avidly raising a query as to why. In subsequently transpired that these fields were being "injected" with a sewage slurry, mainly human, in what is an environmentally friendly, non-odorous way. It is supposed that the gulls were finding a supply of worms that had built up in the rotting material. This was observed mostly in Aldreth, Haddenham and Wilburton Fens on land farmed by one agribusiness company.

**Tern family**                                      *Sterninae*

Sandwich Tern                      *Sterna sandvicensis*                                      PM

Occasional overfliers could easily be missed unless they call. 2 known cases were on one on 2/8/1993 going south. Another on 22/6/1995 ....one going north.

Common Tern                      *Sterna hirundo*                                      SV BL

Regularly seen in summer flying along Old West River. Visits Guppy's Pond and other farm reservoir type waters where hunts for fish.

Black Tern                      *Chidonius niger*                                      PM V rare.

Only record is of 14 present at Guppy's Pond in May 1981. Per Nicholas Guppy the then owner of the site.

**PIGEON and DOVE family**                                      *Colombidae*

Stock Dove                      *Colomba oenas*                                      A.B

Breeds regularly, sometimes in Barn Owl boxes. Flocks up to 200 can often be seen in winter.

Wood Pigeon                      *Colomba palumbus*                                      A.B

The most common pigeon everywhere in parish.

Collared Dove                      *Streptopelia decoacta*                                      A.B

Common in all habitats especially around houses and gardens. Probably less in 21<sup>st</sup> century than previously because livestock farmyards are scarce and

farm buildings, which are now sealed and more hygienic. Therefore cereals are not spilt and available for the birds to forage.

Turtle Dove                      *Streptopelia turtur*                      S.B

Regular summer visitor mainly to fen areas. Breeds in varying numbers, more some years than others. On Aug 26<sup>th</sup> 2003 in Galls Fen 20 Turtle Doves were gathered probably as a precursor to migration.

**Cuckoo family**    *Cuculidae*

Common Cuckoo                      *Cuculus canorus*                      S.B

Smaller numbers than in past years. Perhaps 1-3 males arrive around April 23-25. Females arrive about a week later. Reed Warbler nests with young cuckoos in have been found around Guppy's and other ponds on occasions.

**Owl family**    *Strigiformes*

Tawny Owl                      *Strix aluco*                      A.B

Breeds regular in most parts of the parish. Probably up to 7 pairs annually including the Parish Church tower.

Eagle Owl                      *Bubo bubo*

An escaped bird spent about a month in Pingle Lane trees in 1998. It sometimes attacked smaller dogs and was eventually shot.

Long-eared Owl                      *Asio otus*                      WV mainly

More common in winter than now in 2012. Birds were noted in 1984/5/6/7/8, 1990/1/2/3 but have been rare since. In 2001 a bird was found roosting in a hedge between Butlers Lane and Two Pot Farm. Only summer records are from 1993 when a bird roosted near Mingay Farm. In May 1995 a bird hunted along the Old West River Bank and was later seen perched on some farm machinery and in 2001 a day flying bird flew into a window in Hillrow.

Short-eared Owl                      *Asio flammeus*                      WV

Was seen regularly, sometimes up to 7 birds, every winter hunting ditches in fen areas. Recently several winters have produced no records. The reason is unclear as the habitats have not changed.

Barn Owl                      *Tyto alba*                      A. B

Probably up to 15 pairs breed in or very near the parish annually, mostly in specially erected boxes. Regularly seen hunting at all times.

Little Owl                      *Athene noctua*                      B

Up to 7 pairs breed most years. Usual places are isolated trees in fens especially crack willows.

**Swift family**    *Apodidae*

Swift                      *Apus apus*                      SV. B

7-9 pairs breed annually in houses in the High Street. 2 pairs in the parish

church and some in Hillrow and Aldreth.

**Kingfisher family** *Alcedinidae*

Hoopoe *Upopa epops* Rare SV

In the early 1970s a bird was seen near Aldreth who subsequently saw another in the late 1970s in a garden in Cherry Orchard, Haddenham. In June 1991 one was described by a resident of Hardwicke Fields as being on ground nearby.

The latest record was one found by Robert Norman in his orchard on 4/10/1993 and it stayed until the 6<sup>th</sup>. It was seen by several local birders.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* A.B

Regularly breeds in area of Guppy's Pond and along the Old West River. In winter can be found fishing along larger fen drains.

**Woodpecker family** *Picadae*

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* rare P.M

In 1981 one was caught by a cat on the village green and rescued, taken into care and later released. In September 10-12<sup>th</sup> 2003 1 stayed in a garden in the Guppy's Pond area for three days.

Green Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* A. B

Probably about 4-5 pairs breed in orchards, Hinton Hedges, Aldreth and Flat Bridge. Can be heard all over the parish, even in gardens where it often feeds on lawns harvesting ants.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* A. B

5-6 pairs breed mostly in similar places as Green Woodpecker. Often seen coming to garden bird tables in winter.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* WV

now rare.

Did breed in 1970 but since then only rare appearances. During Elm disease period they were occasional seen feeding on the dead trees. Best records are 1985 Bury Lane, 1988 in an old orchard near Water Tower where a nest hole was later found in an apple tree. 1993 one seen near Guppy's Pond. This could have been the same bird seen 4 days later in a Hillrow garden

**Lark family** *Alaudidae*

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* B

Possibly 50-70 pairs breed both in fen arable crops and grassy fields on higher land.



Yellow Wagtail                      *Motacilla flava*                      S.B

An estimated 15-20 pairs breed most years in fen areas with the largest concentration in fen areas nearest to Old West river. They have learnt to use arable crops like peas, potatoes and sugar beet. Occasionally one of a pair can be seen to be of the Blue-headed race from mainland Europe. Others can migrate through in late April and in August-September southward migrating flocks will feed among cattle, darting between their legs for disturbed insects.

Grey Wagtail                      *Motacilla cinerea*                      WV

Most winters 1 can be found feeding on the filter beds of the local sewage plant in company with Pied Wagtails and Meadow Pipits. Odd ones have been found round muck heaps in fen fields.

**Wren family**    *Troglodytidae*

Wren    *Troglodytes troglodytes*                      A.B

Can use almost any habitat but mostly in gardens.

**Waxwing family**    *Bombycillinae*

Waxwing    *Bombycilla garrulous.*                      WV

Mostly noticed since 1995. Parties of 1-4 in gardens along Hop Row in December 1997 and 4 by Guppy's Pond in March 2001, Hillrow, Aldreth and Station Road in 2001. The in winter of 2010-2011 there were 25 in gardens near Aldreth Ponds and 4 in an orchard along Aldreth Road on December 31<sup>st</sup> which stayed there until January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Another party of about 15 were found in Station Road by Chewells Close on Feb 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Accentor family**    *Prunellidae*

Dunnock (Hedge Sparrow)                      *Prunella modularis*                      A.B

Found in many bushy situations including gardens.

**Thrush family**    *Turdidae*

Robin                      *Erithicus rubicula*                      A.B

Britain's favourite bird appears anywhere in Haddenham parish where there are bushes.

Nightingale    *Luscinia megarhynchos*                      PM very rare

1 lucky birder remembers hearing a bird singing at night coming from the vicinity of the New Cut drain near to Butlers Lane in 1952.

Black Redstart                      *Phoenicurus ochruros*                      PM

2 visited an Aldreth garden on 29/10/1984. 1 found among machinery at a

farm along Aldreth road. 27/4/2007.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* PM

Recorded in several years since first noted on 26/9/1986 when a male and female were feeding off fence wires along Bury Lane. On 26/8/1989 when a female/juvenile was in the ballast hole by the Old Burial Ground. There have been several since with the latest being a juvenile near Flatbridge Farm in early September 2008 and a very smart male near Aldreth from Sept 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2010. Spring birds are not often seen but a full plumage male was seen briefly near Butlers Lane on April 28/4/2007.

(Northern) Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* PM

Regular every year in both migration periods, in varying numbers. Nearly always in arable fen fields that show bare soil. Some years only one or two can be found but others up to 25-8. Long Drove, Dambank and Adventurers Doves are best places north of Hillrow Causeway. Galls Drove, Back Drove and Foulmire Drove are best in North Fen. In 2011 up to 10 were on one field along Dambank on Sept 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> sheltering from very high winds accompanied by 3 Whinchats.

There are two races involved. The nominate race which breeds in Europe and in Pennines north to Scotland. The other is colloquially known as Greenland Wheatear *O.o.leuchoa*. This bird seems brighter, bolder and has amore upright posture. It also seems more confiding. It breeds from Iceland, Greenland to North-east Canada.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* PM

Small numbers pass through in most years. Fewer are found during spring migration period than autumn. Some were recorded in the aftermath of the 1947 floods (CBC). Apart from a spring bird by Lakes Drove in 2006 the rest have been between Aug 20<sup>th</sup> and Oct 10<sup>th</sup> with 3 overstayng with the Wheatear 2011 stopover period mentioned above. If there is little wind Whinchats will often use tall seeded beet tops, tall oilseed rape stubble etc to forage out from to catch their insect prey.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* WV

Now a regular winter visitor to fen situations. They generally arrive in late September-early October and stay until late March. Almost any ditch or drove margin with tall herbage is used. They prefer Reedmace (Bulrush) seedheads to perch on and seek out prey. Very often in pairs.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* A.B

A common bird in the 1940s which now has declined and mainly, but not exclusively, found around gardens. First noted when singing from a high tree in early January sometimes with lark and cats, can rear three broods annually.

Redwing                      *Turdus iliacus*                      WV

Arrives about October when found mostly feeding on Hawthorn berries. Often feeds with Fieldfares but in far smaller numbers. Leaves again in March to early April during which period passage birds seem to be more obvious.

Mistle Thrush                      *Turdus viscivorus*                      A. B

Mostly found in pairs except in winter when small flocks of up to 20 can be seen feeding mostly in grass fields catching worms etc. In most years around 8 pairs breed with foraging birds often seen in Aldreth near the ponds. Also sometimes 3 pairs breed in Aldreth Road orchards. They did suffer in 2011 when no successful pairs were found due, it is thought, to the very hard dry conditions prevalent at that time.

Fieldfare                      *Turdus pilarus*                      WV

Arrives mostly in Sept-October period. Large numbers can be found feeding on berries in hedgerows and then in large flocks out on ploughed fields. In 2012 the bitter cold days of mid-February it was estimated that 5000 fed on fallen apples in Aldreth road orchard and yet more in the Hinton Hall orchards.

Blackbird                      *Turdus merula*                      A.B

A common bird anywhere there are a few trees and especially in gardens. In winter they are joined by winter visiting continental birds recognised by their brown/black beaks and scalloped wing feathering. These latter are mainly in the orchards from Oct-March.

Ring Ouzel                      *Turdus torquatus*                      PM rare

Only 2 recorded cases but as this bird can easily skulk there could have been more. 1<sup>st</sup> record in October 1994 in Aldreth Road eating berries in a garden. 2<sup>nd</sup> record in 2007 when a juvenile was observed near Houghill Drove.

**WARBLER family**

*Sylviidae*

**Sylvia** sub family

Garden Warbler.                      *Sylvia borin*                      SV. B

About 8-10 pairs breed but not as name indicates, in gardens but out in the countryside in thick shrubby places and especially seems to like Blackthorn.

Blackcap                      *Sylvia atrocapilla*                      SV. B

Some winter and can often approach garden feeders. These are thought to wintering central European breeders. Our own breeding birds migrate back from places Mediterranean countries. Probably 20 pairs breed in places with taller trees. Hinton Hedges, The Petrus and Nineacre Wood are good places.

Lesser Whitethroat                      *Sylvia curruca*                      SV. B

This summer visitor likes taller unkempt hedgerows to nest in. Around 7-9 breed. Hinton Hedges, the Old Railway lines and North Fen Drove are typical sites.

Common Whitethroat                      *Sylvia communis*                      SV. B

Probably Haddenham and Aldreths most common summer warbler. Needs only a patch of nettles with a bramble bush nearby to sing from. In 2011 it was estimated that over 45 singing males sang from likely nest sits all around the parish.

**Acrocephalus** sub family

*Acrocephalidae*

Sedge Warbler

*Acrocephalus schoenobaceus*

SV. B

Another summer visiting warbler which seems to like untidy ditches and watery edges to nest in. Found in such conditions near the Aldreth High Bridge mostly. Also some sites in North Fen ditches.

Reed Warbler

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

SV.B

Found breeding in summer in Phragmites reed near Aldreth High Bridge, Guppy's Pond, fields in Rally field and isolated drain sides in North Fen.

**Locustella** sub family

*Locustella*

Grasshopper Warbler

*Locustella naeva*

SV may breed.

A difficult bird to know whether it has bred or not. It may have done in mixed reed/sedge habitat on southern side of Old West river (on Willingham side) but has been recorded singing from Aldreth Causeway in late 1990s. The latest was actually found/heard singing from a ditch in Grunty Fen in June 2011. It was possibly a passage bird as no evidence of breeding was found.



**Phylloscopus** sub family *Phylloscopidae*

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilis* SV B

Breeds in lightly wooded places with scrubby base. Surprisingly few of this species breed despite it being nationally very common. Probably only 4-5 pairs breed in the parish.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*. SV. B can over-winter.

Often first seen using garden feeders in winter. These are probably east European breeders. Our breeding birds are first noted in tall wooded areas recognised by their distinctive chiff chaff chiff chaff song. Possibly 4-5 pairs breed and the best place to find them is Hinton Hedges/Fairchild's Meadows trees.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* A.B

A few birds can breed some years as in conifer trees in High Street gardens and Lode Way. Mostly a winter visitor from Scandinavia, sometimes in large numbers but 2010-2012 there were very few.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* PM

Singles found in March-April found in any open bushy areas. 1997 and 2010 were the last records but this species is easily overlooked.

**FLYCATCHER family** *Musciicapidae*

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscipapa striata* SV has bred.

In 1980s up to 50 scattered pairs bred annually all over parish. Now in 2011 none were found. Single passage birds can sometimes be observed like in 2010 1 was in old cemetery next to The Green. Another in Station Road and again near Guppy's Pond. Family parties are sometimes seen in autumn in gardens but they could have been reared away from the parish. The last known regular breeding site was in a sheltered garden on Station Road.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* PM

The last county breeding record of this species was in neighbouring parish of Willingham in 1920. Since then only passage birds are noted and in this parish specimens have occurred as follows.....

13<sup>th</sup> August 1983.....a female/immature seen in an Aldreth garden for two days, A brilliant summer plumaged male in Bury Lane on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1987 and another unsexed bird was at 1 Lode Way garden. The last was on September 7<sup>th</sup> 2003 in tall hedgerows near Flatbridge Farm. It stayed for 2 days and was accompanied by 3 Spotted Flycatchers.

**TIT family** *Paridae*

Great Tit *Parus major* A.B

Very common in gardens and all hedgerow and orchard sites where there are suitable nest holes and boxes.

Coal Tit                      *Parus ater*                      A.B

Was considered unusual but recently increased in number. Probably breeds in gardens with conifer trees mostly behind west side of High Street. Increasingly also noted at garden feeding stations.

Blue Tit                      *Parus caeruleus*                      A.B

Very common breeding bird using nestboxes in gardens and orchards and in Nineacre Wood, Hinton Hedges and The Ventrus Wood and churchyards..

Long-tailed Tit                      *Aegithalos caudatus*                      A.B

Regular parties, sometimes up to 15-20 seen in winter seen in hedgerows and gardens. Nests in thick dense bushes in all hedgerow type sites.

**Treecreeper** family                      *Certhidae*

Treecreeper                      *Certhia familiaris*                      A. Has Bred

Uncommonly seen, mostly in winter, in tall old tree sites like Hinton Hedges. Successful breeding occurred in 1990 in willows by Aldreth Ponds and could use other similar willow trees elsewhere in parish. A family party was also noted on willows near Flatbridge in November 2003. They are very unobtrusive in behaviour so may have bred more often.

**Shrike** family                      *Lanidae*

Red-backed Shrike                      *Lanus collario*                      PM

Regrettably there are only records from 1920 when they were regular breeders in Wilburton and Haddenham. C Warren of Wilburton informed CBC that about 20 pairs nested,

Great Grey Shrike                      *Lanus excubitor*                      WV

The only record was 1 in March 1994 which was seen chasing sparrows in Lode Way. This is probably the same as one seen in neighbouring Wilburton parish since about November 1993.

**Crow** family                      *Corvidae*

Magpie                      *Pica pica*                      A. B

From 1945-1950 they were uncommon breeders due to elimination by gamekeepers of that period. In 1951 a pair wer found breeding on North Hill, Hillrow and since then numbers increased exponentially. Now regular breeders all round the parish and occasionally groups of 10-15 can be seen in winter periods.

Jay                      *Garrulus glandarius*                      A. B  
Not as common as Magpie and more confined to orchard areas but not exclusively.

Nutcracker                      *Nucifraga caryocatactes*                      Very rare vagrant  
This rare bird only arrives in the UK when there are mass explosions in their eastern European populations. The last time this occurred was in 1968 and a convincing description of one on a lawn at High Ridge Farm comes from that period when hundreds were recorded nationally.

Jackdaw                      *Corvus monedula*                      A.B  
Very common everywhere in the parish. Nests in old chimneys and holes in trees etc. Often noted flying out to the fen fields where they forage and in winter flocks number into the hundreds sometimes mixed in with Rooks and young Crows.

Rook                      *Corvus frugileus*                      A.BL  
Flocks from rookeries in Sutton and elsewhere nearby can be seen flying over and feeding in fen areas.

Carrion Crow                      *Corvus corone*                      B  
About 60 pairs breed in tall trees in parish, sometimes isolated in fenland itself. In winter juvenile crows congregate in flocks of well over 300 birds in winter. These are seen mainly in the fens.

**Starling** family                      *Sturnidae*  
Starling                      *Sturnus vulgarus*                      B  
Breeds in holes in trees, sometimes old woodpecker holes, all around the parish. Also sometimes uses crevices in houses etc. Local birds are augmented by large flocks from eastern European countries in winter. Very common.

**Sparrow** family                      *Passeridae*  
House Sparrow                      *Passer domesticus*                      A.B  
Not as common as it was even 20 years ago. Breeds around houses and farm buildings. In earlier days when there was more in the way of livestock kept in buildings the birds could become a pest when eating animal food. Since farm storage buildings are now hermetically sealed numbers of this species has declined. However there are still sufficient to form winter roosts in thick hedgerows of 80-90 at times. These roosts have been noted in Station Road, Bull Lane and Duck Lane. And elsewhere.

Tree Sparrow.                      *Passer montanus*                      A. Has bred  
This delightful bird has declined greatly and although it used to breed around old farmyards in the past, using space under some pantiles, it no

longer does. Nowadays usually only noted feeding in small numbers at garden feeders in winter.

**Finch family** *Fringillidae*

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* B

Common in gardens and fields all around the parish. Nests in hedgerow bushes and often in isolated tree/bush situations along fen droves.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* WV

A winter visitor in small numbers. Sometimes seen with flocks of wintering Chaffinches that have come from eastern Europe. Occasionally at garden feeders.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* A.B

An estimated 60-70 pairs breed mainly in bushes and hedgerows around fields on the higher land, Has been known rarely to nest in low herbage in fen areas. In winter flocks from eastern Europe can number up to and over 200 mainly in fen areas.

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* Has bred

Nowadays only seen in winter/early spring periods coming to garden feeders in small numbers. Visits Aldreth road and other orchards in very snowy periods.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* A.B

Common in all places. Breeds in bushes in gardens and hedgerows and even isolated bushes in fens. Regular visitor to garden feeding stations all year round. In winter out on the fens charms of over 100 can be seen at times feeding on seedheads of many plants especially Teasel and Thistles.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* A.B

Common bird in all the parish but numbers have fallen due to a disease affecting especially young birds. Trichomonosis affects their beaks leading to death. It does affect other garden birds but Greenfinches seem to have suffered in greater numbers. Hopefully they will adopt immunity.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus* WV

Usually seen in very small numbers at feeding stations in winter. Occasionally flocks will overfly in autumn and are usually detected by their contact calls.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* A.B

Up to about the 1940s could be a pest in apple orchards where flocks would feed on flowering buds. Those are now thought to have been winter visitors from eastern Europe. Nowadays only breeds in small numbers ( probably

