



## **‘What’s About’**

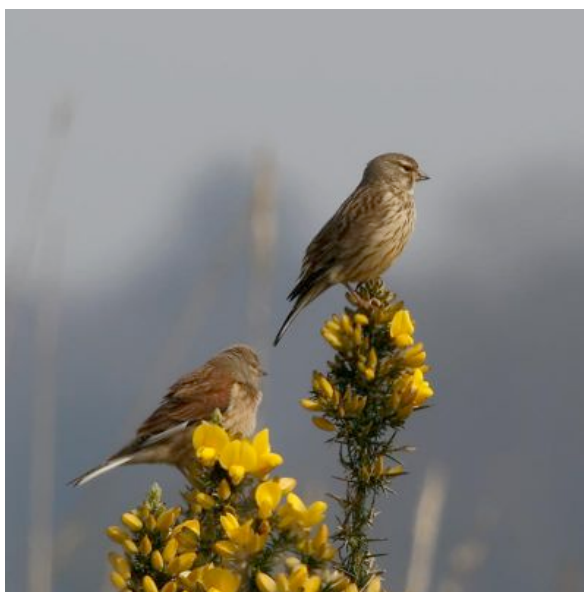
**No 51  
Spring 2019**



*Redshank photo Stan Baston*

By the end of March most breeding waders and ducks had left the river, but about 20 Mallard and 20 Teal enjoyed the shelter of the reserve lagoon and remained there into April. Eventually half a dozen Mallards, a pair of Tufted Duck, and a couple of pairs of Little Grebes and Moorhens remained on the fresh water. A pair of Mute Swans frequented the lagoon for a few weeks and dabbled at making a nest, but abandoned the idea and flew off, perhaps to nest elsewhere. An occasional Heron and a few Little Egrets fished there, and a pair of Oystercatchers took an interest in one of the islands but rejected the potential nest site - too many

predators no doubt. Two Avocets touched down on the larger island on the 21<sup>st</sup> May but immediately continued up river. Along the back hedge of the reserve at least 2 pairs of Yellowhammers could be seen and heard, whilst in the gorse and ahead of river-wall walkers, Linnets bounded from one bush to the next.



*Linnet pair Photo Chris Morton*

A Barn Owl, which often sat in its oak tree surveying the scene, was observed out hunting less often this year, but was captured in some superb photos. On several

occasions a Barn Owl has been seen hunting over Church Field



*Barn owl at the reserve fence*  
Photos Hong Leung



and fields around the Old Rectory, as well as over the land towards Howe's Farm. A Little Owl has been seen near the Newbourne / Hemley junction, around the Church Field area and on the wires alongside the golf course. A Tawny Owl called during the daytime occasionally, but the calls were prolonged near the Old Rectory 25<sup>th</sup> March and Waldringfield Heath on the 1<sup>st</sup> June.



*Swallow Photo Chris Morton*

Slightly warmer weather came to us in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March and favourable winds brought the first Chiffchaff, which was heard at the old pit opposite Plum Tree Cottage on the 20<sup>th</sup> March, and at Manor Cottage and Novocastria on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Two Chiffchaffs were singing at Manor Cottage thicket on the 26<sup>th</sup>. And two Great Crested Grebes were on the river near The Tips on the same day.

The wind turned to the north and east for a prolonged period in April. It held down the temperature and in Europe produced unusually difficult conditions for migrants moving

northwards. It was not until the 14<sup>th</sup> April that the first Swallow was seen briefly over the reserve as it made its migratory journey. By the

20<sup>th</sup> April two pairs of Swallows were examining their usual nest sites in Fishpond Road and a few House Martins were flying overhead too. As time has passed, however, it does not look as if this year has been a good one for returning Swallows and House Martins, breeding bird numbers of both species are down on previous years.

The first Cuckoo was heard at Newbourne Springs on the 17<sup>th</sup> April and one was calling on the golf course on the 19<sup>th</sup>. In April, May and early June a Cuckoo, has been heard from the direction of Newbourne Springs, the western side of the village and the golf course but has not been heard so often this year from the shrubs and reed beds along the river and I haven't heard of any reports of two Cuckoos calling in the same locality. Evidently this year's bird is a golf course specialist - long may this continue!

The early morning dog walkers heard the first Nightingale on the 18th April at Manor cottage. We are fortunate to have our Nightingales in good numbers: during the season three singing birds were heard from the thicket below Manor Cottage, the woodland at the northern end of the reserve and from the hedgerow by the reserve sluice. On the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup> May a Nightingale was singing near the river path rope swing and, unusually, it was observed for several minutes. The most recent Nightingale to be heard, but now with less intensity, was on the 11th June.

A Wheatear was on the newly cultivated potato field adjacent to Manor Cottage track on the 17<sup>th</sup> April.

A lone Curlew was calling from the river on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, and a Whimbrel on the 28<sup>th</sup> April and 6<sup>th</sup> May, and two Greenshank were over the river on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

A report on the 10<sup>th</sup> May from Celia Mason in Hemley, where 'Shelduck are doing their pairing routines on the field in front of our house. It's a very slow and delicate process - quite unlike the pigeons on the telegraph line outside my office, which functions as a singles bar'.

A Red Kite was over Ramsholt marshes on the 12<sup>th</sup> May.

Young Robins and Long-tailed Tits - about 12 - were noticed in Christine's garden on the 14<sup>th</sup> May.

A Turtle Dove was calling at Newbourne Springs on the 15<sup>th</sup> May and from the wood near Street Farm, Newbourne on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May. A Turtle Dove was sitting on the wires close to the pit opposite Plum Tree Cottage on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June another was heard from below Hemley Hall on the same day.

Two Yellow Wagtails and two Pied Wagtails were seen in the potato field near the Chapel cross-roads on the 15<sup>th</sup> May. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> the Yellow Wagtails were accompanied by a juvenile.

A Swift was overhead in Fishpond Road on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, two on the 16<sup>th</sup>, then five on the 21<sup>st</sup> and singles or pairs and small groups of 4 or 5 birds have been seen fairly often subsequently. Do you know if Swifts are nesting in the village this year?

House Martins were around Sunnyhill on the 17<sup>th</sup> May. A House Martin nest, newly built on a house in School Road, was destroyed by a Crow in late May.

Once the Buzzards had paired up they stopped calling so much , so perhaps became less evident, but two were over Church Field on the 21<sup>st</sup> May.

A Bullfinch pair was in Fishpond Road on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June and a male was seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Two Foxes were seen on the reserve on the 29<sup>th</sup> April.

Hares have been noticed in the fields around and about, with 7 in a small field towards Woodbridge.

A road casualty Hedgehog was found near the playing field on the 21<sup>st</sup> May. At least one Hedgehog has been seen in Mill Road since that date.

On the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> June an adult Badger was seen to swim across the Deben from the Sutton side, possibly via the island, although it being almost high water the island was more or less flooded. The Badger made its way through the floating dinghies to the beach by the Harbourmasters' shed and on the beach turned



*Badger heading for the dinghies and beach      Photo Clive Quantrill*

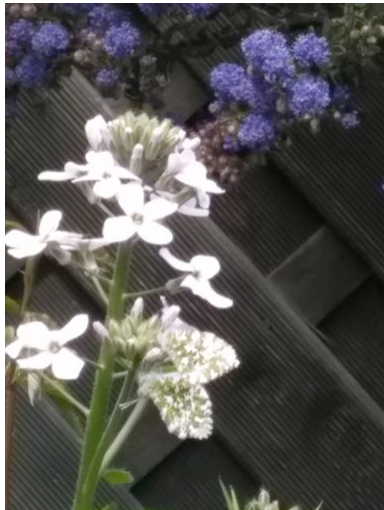
towards the steps. It being Sunday, however, the beach was packed with visitors blocking the badger's way. People towards the boatyard increased the problem for the badger, so through a convenient hole in the paling fence it continued its journey by scaling the cliff. Many photos must have been taken, thanks to Clive Quantrill for providing this one, taken from a boat out in the fairway.

Warmer weather in Late March brought out hibernating butterflies. Peacock, Comma, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Brimstone have been seen. Orange-tips and Holly Blues have been quite numerous and now the summer butterflies - Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and Common Blue are beginning to emerge.



*Peacock      Photo Rolls Barclay*





**Orange-tip**  
pairing on Sweet  
Rocket Photo  
Christine Fisher  
Kay



**Brimstone**  
nectaring on  
Campion Photo  
Jon Wilkins

Two Bumblebee nests along Woodbridge Road were dug out over night by badgers on the 27<sup>th</sup> May. Bees flying around the entrance hole of bird nest boxes are likely to be Tree Bumblebees, a species that came into the country in the early 2000's. They just want to get on with life and are no trouble for most of the time but if the nest box is shaken they will sting to defend their nest.

A male Stag Beetle carcass, eaten out probably by a Magpie, of which there seem to be many around here this year, was found in a garden in Fishpond Road on 29<sup>th</sup> May. A male Stag Beetle road casualty was found just along Woodbridge Road on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

Several parasitic Broomrape plants have been seen on Church Field and a few Bee Orchids, which did not grow until the recent rain, are flowering.



*Sent in on 1<sup>st</sup> April, this Kite observed at the cross-roads was better known as Kiteus Scariur !*  
*Thank you, Alexis!*



For this edition I am grateful to the following contributors: Chris Baldry, Rolls Barclay, Stan Baston, Joe and Kit Clark, Pam Crawley, Janet Elliott, Rosalind Erskine, Serena Gold, Christine Fisher Kay, Chris and Tony Lyon, Anne Maddison, Anthony and Celia Mason, Chris Morton, John Ogden, Sally Redfern, Alexis and John Smith, Clive Quantrill, Linda and Jon Wilkins, Neil Winship, Jill Winter.

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