

**Report on bird and other wildlife recording
at Kingfishers Bridge, Wicken, Cambridgeshire
2014**

**13th report
compiled by C James Cadbury**



Grasshopper Warbler – 2 singing in 2014

**March 2015
93 Barton Road, Cambridge CN3 9LL**

Summary of bird recording at Kingfishers Bridge, 2014

120 species and 1 hybrid recorded + 5 escapes (3 of which were hybrids). Glossy Ibis was the only new species making the total for Kingfishers Bridge 215, including 10 wildfowl escapes. 60 species bred in 2014, another 8 possibly did so. Another 52 species were recorded but did not breed.

A Bittern regularly boomed from late March until mid-April. Though there were several sightings in June, none of these was considered to be feeding flights. At dusk, 30 March, 3 birds were seen together over the Reedbed uttering croaking calls while a male continued to boom. Two flew east and were presumed to be migrating. One pair of Marsh Harriers raised 3 juveniles. Five pairs of Bearded Tits bred and there were 3 singing Cetti's Warblers. A pair of Egyptian Geese probably attempted to nest for the first time at the site. Four broods of Pochard were recorded and 3 juveniles were reared. A pair of Ruddy Ducks attempted to breed but no young were seen. Two pairs of Barn Owls nested in boxes with one pair rearing 9 young from 2 broods. Water Rails almost certainly bred.

Of the breeding waders there were 2 pairs of Oystercatchers that reared at least one young; one pair of Little Ringed Plovers (for the first time since 2008) that raised 3 young; 6-7 pairs of Lapwings but no young were probably reared; 3-4 'drumming' Snipe and 5-6 pairs of Redshank that had several broods. There was a maximum of only 55 Black-headed Gull nests and 20 juveniles. Much of the colony relocated to Burwell Fen. The usual Lesser Black-backed Gull pair established a territory on the Lake but did not nest. 12 pairs of Common Terns reared 6-7 young.

Two pairs of Kingfishers bred in the Sand Martin quarries for the second consecutive year. House Martins nested on the High Fen houses for the first time on the site in both 2013 and 2014. Sand Martins bred in the quarries but though they showed interest in the Peat Mound cliff as in 2013 they did not nest there. The highest count of singing Reed Warblers was 96 (summed maximum counts at different areas at K.B.). There were 2 singing Grasshopper Warblers but no Willow Warblers or Lesser Whitethroats. 6 singing Song Thrushes and 12 singing Reed Buntings were recorded but no breeding Skylarks, Meadow Pipits or Pied Wagtails.

Whooper Swans roosted on the Lake one night in January (4 birds) and in December (up to 20). The maximum number of Greylag Geese was only 235 and 189 for Canada Geese. No more than 224 Wigeon were counted and the maximum number of Gadwall was 98 (half of these in 2013). Teal numbers, however, reached 600 in March. There was a single record of Garganey. Coot numbers built up to 300 in August, but rapidly decreased subsequently, probably as the result of a reduction of aquatic 'weeds'.

A pair of Cranes made 2 visits, one in February and the other in April. They were probably the birds that moved to nest at another site in the county and joined the flock at the Nene Washes in autumn. Little Egrets were much in evidence in August and September when low water levels enabled fish to become easily available. A record count of 31 Cormorants was made in October when communal fishing was frequently observed, often accompanied by

Little Egrets. Although there were 2 Buzzard territories, one with fledged young, there were apparently still no nests on the site.

Roosting in the Reedbed were at least 70 Reed Buntings in October, 70 Pied Wagtails in October through to mid-November, c. 6000 Starlings and 3 Marsh Harriers in December.

More uncommon birds were 2 red head Smew in February, the first Goldeneye since 2010, a pair of Grey Partridge (first since 2009), a Great Egret in October (seventh record), 4 visits by a Glossy Ibis in July and August (spent much time at Wicken Fen and visited other sites in the county), a Spoonbill in July, a Mediterranean Gull in November, an Arctic Tern in April, and just a single Turtle Dove record. It was poor year for passage waders apart from Green Sandpipers in autumn (49 bird-days compared with 29 in 2013 and a Spotted Redshank in September (one in 2013 but the last before that in 2007). In December, an adult male and a ringtail hen Harrier and the only Water Pipit were recorded.

Records for Kingfishers Bridge, Wicken, Cambridgeshire, 2014

Recording

This is the thirteenth report on birds recorded at Kingfishers Bridge since the inception of the Wetland Creation Project in 1995. This report also includes an account of the more notable vascular plants and mammals recorded at the site.

Bird records were extracted from the diary left in the Beecroft Hide in which local ornithologists contributed their observations and from James Cadbury's personal diary. Particular frequent contributors were Andrew Green, Steve Cooper, Colin Kirtland, Owen Marks, Bruce Martin, James Page (Warden), Gavin Paterson and James Cadbury.

James Page, the Warden, again put much energy and initiative into the conservation management of the site. A particular achievement was the development of scrapes and broad channels on the Washes carried out by a contractor guided by the Warden. CCTV was set up to view the Barn Owls in the Ash tree nest box by Kingfishers Bridge house and a House Martin nest on a High Fen house. James P. was ably assisted over management tasks by Sian Moss, Sandy Boyd, Owen Marks, Bruce Martin, Stephen Tomkins and James Cadbury.

Systematic list of birds recorded at Kingfishers Bridge 2014

• Bred, + Escaped

- **Mute Swan:** 2 territorial pairs present in the breeding season; one on the Lake and the other in the Reedbed. There were 3 pairs (20.4). 1 brood of 3 young (28.6). Up to 23 white-plumaged non-breeders on the Lake in May – mid September. 1-2 cygnets on the Washes in October.

Whooper Swan: 4 roosted on the Lake (22.3.1). (10 feeding on arable Soham Mere 31.10 Marks). 12 adults from Soham Mere roosted on Lake (16.15 hrs, 13.12). 20 (4 juvs) came into roost (16.12) and again 12 with one juv. (28.12)

Great White-fronted Goose: 2 adults (3.2) 0 Marks; 2 adults (24.2 – 22.3).

- **Greylag Goose**

Month	1	2	3	4		7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	285	205	91	40		49	226	160	38	18	210
Date	14.1	14.2	3.3	10.4		8.7	19.8	16.9	21.10	25.11	28.12

29 pairs (26.3). Minimum 19 pairs, 105 young (15.5)

- **Canada Goose**

Month	1	2	3	4		7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	123	61	90	48		58*	102	189	48	57	164
Date	22.1	5.2	19.3	10 &19.4		8.7	25.8	16.9	12.10	25.11	24.12

(*50 juvs). Geese little in evidence in October and November. 21 pairs (26.3). Minimum 10 pairs, 93 young (15.5).

- + **Barnacle Goose:** 1 (17.8) G. Paterson

Hybrid Greylag x Canada Goose: singles (24.2, 13. 7), 2 (25.8), 1 (24.12), a family of white faced individuals with a Graylag and 4 Canadas (28.12).

- + **Hybrid Greylag x White-fronted Goose?** : One (14.10). White forehead patch and general plumage darker and browner than slightly larger Greylag.

- + **Hybrid Greylag x Snow Goose?:** one (14.1, 15.3) white patches on face, long drooping greater coverts. A different bird with white speckled head and neck, drooping coverts (14.10, 24.12).

- + **Hybrid Greylag, Barnacle Goose?:** one (19.3). White face, dark crown. About Greylag size. Apparently paired with Greylag.

- + **Domestic Goose:** one (10.8, 9 and 16.9) associated with Greylags. Size of Greylag. Overall white plumage with dark grey nape and wing covert patch.

- ? **Egyptian Goose:** a pair, 4 dates (16.2–22.4); a male on 7 dates 19.4–16.5. Frequented Island 4. Probably attempted to breed.

- **Shelduck:** first 3 (8.1). 2 pairs Jan, Feb, April and May. Up to 8 in March. Last 2 June; not again until on (24.12). 1 brood 6 young (26.5) G. Paterson.

Eurasian Wigeon

Month	1	2	3	4			9	10	11	12
Max	131	81	136	18			18	None	36	<u>224</u>
Date	24.1	19.2	9.3	5.4			9.9		25.11	30.12

Last in spring a male (10.4)

- **Gadwall**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12
Max	21	52	40	23 (18♂)	19 (16♂)	34		92	56	63	25	<u>98</u>
Date	22.1	8.2	6.3	10.4	15.5	6.6		19.8	9.9	7.10	10.11	30.12

Total of 6 broods (2.6 – 13.7) at least one of which attained near full growth. A leucistic male (10.1) G. Paterson.

- ? **Eurasian Teal**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	240	460	<u>600</u>	41	2 (1pr)	3	14	33	94	85	64	285
Date	29.1	19.2	9.3	5.4	8&16.5	23- 30.6	13.7	25. 8	9.9	7.10	10.11	30.12

3 full-grown young (13.7) and 6 birds (22.7) on Lake. May have bred.

- **Mallard**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	47	28	30	17 (13♂)	34 (26♂)	71	29	85	<u>120</u>	13	42	108
Date	24.1	24.2	8.3	19.4	21.5	28.6	13.7	17.8	16.9	12.10	28.11	30.12

9 broods (12.4 – 30.6) inc 2 broods of 10 young and one of 11 (all small)
A pied pair frequented the Contour Ditch (24.2 – 22.4)

Pintail

Month	1	2	3					8	9	10		
Max	2	<u>8</u>	6					2	4♀♀	6		
Date	12.1	19.2	3.3					25.8	30.9	7.10		

42 bird-days (10.1-15.3 inc 1 pair 5-15.3). 14 bird-days (17.8 – 7.10)

- **Northern Shoveler**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12
Max	73	92	<u>140</u>	16 (11) ♂	48	28		20	6	25	9	46
Date	25.1	5.2	6.3	20.4	16.5	6.6		17.8	23.9	12.10	25.11	30.12

2 broods, 4 young, 4 juveniles (13.7) S. Cooper.

During Feb and March the Shoveler fed in a close pack on the Lake, presumably filtering zooplankton.

Garganey: a pair on the Winter Flood (26.3) CJC was the only record.

- **Pochard**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Max	3	20(15♂)	12(9♂)	8(5♂)	6(4♂)	23(16♂)	6♂♂	3juv	9			
Date	14&22.1	8.2	3.3	5.4	26.5	20.6	13.7	10&17.8	9.9			

4 broods inc 4 juvs (13.9), 3 juvs reared

- **Tufted Duck**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	<u>55</u>	30	42	37	43(31♂)	20(15♂)	*	8+2juvs	11	12	7	5
Date	14.1	24.2	9.3	12.4	15.5	6.6		25.8	5.9	14.10	25.11	24.12

(*Brood counts only)

Total 14 broods: 6 br 30 y ($\frac{1}{8}$ grown), 10 br. 32 y ($\frac{1}{4}$ grown), 4 br. 10 y ($\frac{1}{2}$ grown), 1 br 2 y ($\frac{3}{4}$ grown), 2 juvs. These figures indicate survival at different ages. The total brood figures takes account of birds followed through different growth stages.

Goldeneye: One. imm. (14.10). The last previous records were in Feb and Nov 2010.

Smew: 2 red-heads (14.2) R. Cox. The sixth record since 1998

- ? **Ruddy Duck:** a male (8, 24 & 25.2, 3.3) a pair 21 & 22.4; a single male (19.4, 7, 11, 16 and 25.5); a female (9.6). A pair probably attempted to breed but no young seen. 2010 1 pr, 2y reared; 2012 1 pr., 2 y reared; 2013 1 pr 3 y reared.

- **Red-legged Partridge:** about 4 pairs – Peat Mounds, Lambland, New Cut and Airfield. A female with small chicks on the W Peat Mound (Gwen's Memorial Garden) (15.7)

Grey Partridge: a pair on the Airfield (19.4) J. Page. Last previous record 2009.

- **Pheasant:** a black plumaged male on Lapland and limestone mound (22.4).

Cormorant

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	20	18	11	7	7	8	10	23	19	<u>31</u>	16	16
Date	8.1	5.2	3 dates	22.4	11.5	23.6	13.7	17.8	9.9	12.10	11.11	24.12

The 31 (12.10) is a record count for the site. Communal fishing in the Lake during Sept and Oct.

- ? **Bittern:** commuting between Reedbed and N margin of the Lake (10.1 & 8.2), Reedbed (24.2 & 5.3), 'Booming' male Compt. 2 of Reedbed (29.3-19.4). 3 uttering croaking calls as they circled over Reedbed (30.3) – excludes 'booming' bird which remained in the Reedbed. One seen out in the open, Lambland/Cottage Flood on several dates 22.4 – 7.5. One hour watches at dusk from the Bittern Bump 22.4 & 31.5 recorded no 'booming' birds or female feeding flights. A Bittern seen around the Reedbed on several occasions in June but no 'booming' or feeding flights (J. Page). Single records (2.9 & 8.10). In spite of no feeding flights observed it is possible that there was a nest in Reedbed.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Booming males	1	4	3	1	1	-	-*	1
Nests with young	3	3	Poss	-	Poss juv	-	-	Poss

(* 2 records in June)

In recent years monitoring has indicated plenty of Rudd in the Reedbed so a Bittern could have foraged close to a nest.

Little Egret

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Dates	1	4	6	-	3	4	3	4	7	5	-	1	38
Bird-days	1	4	10		19	7	10	21	44	18		1	145
Max	1	1	5		9	3	5	9	<u>10</u>	5		1	
Date	21.1		8.3			7&28.6	30.7	24.8	5&9.9	14.10		24.12	

6 flew from N of the site to the Washes (0732-0745, 31.5) indicating a possible roost. Seen following fishing Cormorants in the Lake in Sept and Oct. Bird-day total in 2013 was 123.

Great Egret: one (19.10). Observer unknown. There were one or two at the Cam Washes and Wicken Fen in the autumn. The seventh record for Kingfishers Bridge: previously one bird July and August 2003, one bird September 2008, 4 birds, February (2), April and September 2009, one bird September 2012.

- **Grey Heron:** 2 occupied nests in the Flight Pond alders (12.3) but none on nests (19.3). One nest with a sitting bird (5.4 to at least 22.4). 2 or 3 nestlings being fed (11.5-23.6). Possibly 2 young fledged.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Nests	1	2	5	5	5	4/5	3	2*
Young reared	3	2	7+	8 4 nests	8 4 nests	4+	5	2

* One of the alders with a nest in previous years accidentally felled in the winter to allow machinery access to the Washes in the Lake. Up to 8 fishing in the Lake in September.

Glossy Ibis: an immature feeding at the S margin of the Lake (19.7) Bruce Martin, (25.7) C.J.C., (3.9), J. Page, and (20.9) D. Hammond & M Russel. First records for the site. Almost certainly the same bird recorded at Wicken Fen on a number of dates from (9.7) and sites to the west later in October.

Spoonbill: one flew in from the east circled round and continued west (1300 hrs 15.7). B.S. Martin. Fifth record for Kingfishers Bridge. Last previous record 4 & 5.10.2003.

- **Little Grebe:**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	4	12	10	4				<u>16</u>	9	5	1	2
Date	12.1	25.2	9.3	27.4				25.8	9.9	14.10	10.11	24.12

4+ breeding pairs. 1 brood with one young (26.5), 2 broods, 2 + 2 young on Lake, (30.7) B.S. Martin.

- **Great Crested Grebe:** One bird (8.1-8.3). One pair from 9.3. Nest on willow raft at N. corner of Lake (11.5 – 6.6). Adult with 1 young (23 & 30.6, possibly 6.6). An adult with a juvenile (5-16.9) but only the juvenile (23.9 & 7.10). A second breeding pair indicated by the presence of 2 separate birds (3k.3), 3 birds – a pair in addition to incubating bird (7.5) and a brood of 2 young (8.7)

- **Marsh Harrier:** an adult pair and 1 or 2 immatures present from at least mid January – end of March. Nest indicated in Compt 2 of Reedbed (16.5) A female perched in a bush, Compt 4 for about an hour (0725-0830, 31.5). Little activity (e.g. food passes) observed in June but 3 juveniles (28.6). 3 birds including 2 circling very high, possibly migrating (16.9). 4 birds (20.9). An adult female (12.10 & 4.11). 3 (inc ad ♂ & ♀) roosting in Reedbed (13.12). A male caught a gosling (24.4) Q. Marks. An imm. female eating what may have been a Teal on the Lake shore (9.8).

Hen Harrier: a ring-tail hunting over chicory crop, Padney Field (24.12); an adult ♂ over Reedbed at dusk (28.12). A roost at Wicken Fen in December

- ? **Sparrow hawk:** a few sightings in early spring, including a female in the North Pit (2.4). No young heard calling. A female caught a Starling coming in to roost (30.12)

Common Buzzard:

Month	1	3	4	6	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Dates	2	4	1	2	1	5	1	2	1	19
Bird days	2	8	1	2	1juv	11	1	2	10	38
Max		3				5		1	6	
Date		12.3				23.9			24.12	

Probably 2 territories in the vicinity: a pair to the NE of the site and the other (single bird) around the Rough and SW. Juveniles calling from the North Belt (13.8 & 5.9). 4 birds (adult(s) + 2 or 3 juvs) Poplar Plantation (23.9). 6 in air together over Shropshire's Farm N of Padney, drifted towards Kingfishers Bridge (24.12) C.J.C.

- **Water Rail:** heard in the Reedbed, the Great Drain, the reeds in N corner of the Lake, Peat Mounds ditch, New Cut, Flight Pond and North Pit in January (2 dates), February (1 date), March (3 dates), April (3 dates), May (2 dates in Reedbed with 4 birds 15.5 and 3 13.5), June (2 birds Compt 4 Reedbed 2.6), August (1), September (6 birds, Reedbed 16.9), October (2 dates), November (3 dates with 4 birds in Reedbed (20.11), December (3 dates).

- **Moorhen:** not surveyed but c. 8 pairs (28.6). Several broods.

- **Coot:**

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Max	69	55	22	23	39	116	228	<u>301</u>	70	14	nil	14
Date	14.1	3.2	26.3	19.4	8 & 31.5	28.6	13.7	19.8	5.9	7.10	4 & 10.11	30.12

Numbers on the Lake rapidly decreased in September (only 17 16.9) probably due to a reduction in the aquatic weeds in the Lake and possibly the presence of an Otter (not seen until 10.11) or shooting on the Day's land close to the washes late October and early November.

7 broods on the Lake (31.5 – 30.6), 2 broods Winter Flood (2.6), 1 brood Flight Pond (6.6), 1 brood Reedbed (31.5).

Crane: 2 flying over Reedbed (16.2) J. Page. One flushed from Confused Flood but returned to settle in Compt 4 of Reedbed. Possibly a second bird present, heard calling softly (10.4) J. Page. No further sightings in spite of concerted watches from Limestone Mound by N. Sills, B. S. Martin & C.J.C. (22.4). Probably the pair that moved to another Cambs site.

- **Oystercatcher:** first returning bird (16.2). There was a pair at the Lake and a single bird on the Washes scrape (18.2). 4 birds (24.2, 22.4, 28 & 30.6). A pair with young in the Wader Meadow (2 & 6.6). Still 4 birds (8.7) and 3 (15.7).

Avocet: 4 birds (4.5), G, J & M Paterson, was the only record.

European Golden Plover: 40 over (6.3), 10 (25.8), 5 (12.10 National Survey), 80 over (4.11), 250 over (10.11). Probably feeding on arable to the north.

- **Little Ringed Plover:** a pair frequented Island 9 on the Lake (1- 20.6). Male displaying (1.6), 7 adults (28.6), 5 (29.6), 2 adults & 3 juveniles (13.7) A. Cooper *et al.* Suspect displaced from another site. Bred each year 1996-99 and then again 2004-08.

Ringed Plover: one over (5.9), 4 over (16.9).

- **Lapwing:** 3-4 pairs on territory Wader Meadow and Winter Flood with a nest and 2 birds scraping (8 & 9.3). 7-8 pairs attempted to breed – Winter Flood (2 pairs, 2 broods),

Wader Meadow (3/4 pairs, 3/4 broods), Confused Flood (1 pair but did not remain), Lambland (1 possible pair), Washes (1 pair). By 2.6 one of the Wader Meadow pairs had moved their brood to the W. end of the Reedbed. No flying young seen.
Max late winter 452 (16.2); max post breeding – 688 (15.7), 550 (9.9), 400 (14.10), 500 (10.11).

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
pairs attempting	12	7	7-8	15	12	8	3-4	7-8	66-69
Young reared	3	c5	very few if any	c6	2+	5	3	0	24(0.4/pr)

Dunlin: 3 (11.5) was the only record

Ruff: autumn passage 3(2.9), 1 (20.9), 2 (5 & 7.10)

- **Common Snipe:** passage in March with 12 feeding on S. shore of the Lake (15.3), 10 (19.3), 33 (23.3) and 5 (28.3). Autumn passage: 4 (9.9), 11 (16.9), 8 (30.9), 4 (20.9), 15 (15.10), 4 (12.10), 2 4.11) and 6 at dusk (20.11, 24.12). Possible breeding birds 'chipping' or 'drumming' - Winter Flood (12.3, 15.5, & 2.6), Reedbed (2 on 30.3) and Washes (19.3).

Black-tailed Godwit: passage birds, one (24.2), on Washes 100+ (12.4), 200 (18.4) G. Paterson, one (19.4). In autumn 7 over (25.8), one (7.10).

Whimbrel: one (16.5) B.S Martin.

Curlew: one over (31.5) C.J.C.

Common Sandpiper: the same individual on 3 dates in April (17, 19, & 20.4). Singles on 3 dates in late summer (30.7, 17.8, & 19.8).

Green Sandpiper: no spring records. On at least 13 dates in late summer and autumn, 49 bird days (30.7-20.11) with max 8. (30.7 & 23.9) S. Cooper, O. Marks.

Spotted Redshank: One (5.9) O. Marks, B.S. Marks & C.J.C. Last previous records March 2013 and August 2007.

Greenshank: singles (21.4) B. S. Martin and (20.9) D. Hammond & M. Russell.

- **Redshank:** 5 (8.3) was the earliest in spring. 5-6 apparently breeding pairs – Winter Flood (2), Wader Meadow (2), Washes (1or2), Confused Flood (1 temporary). There were broods on the Winter Flood and Wader Meadow. In late June a brood was taken to the New Cut bordering the Washes. One bird (13.7) and 2 (18.11).
- **Black-headed Gull:** numbers built up to 188 birds at the Lake (1830 hrs, 22.4) Mostly nested on Islands 8 and 9 with very few on Island 4. 10 nests (19.4), 11 (22.4), 49 (7.9), 52 with 50 Island 8 (16.5), but only 33 (6.6). Most nests on Island 9 (23.6) when 2 downy chicks seen. 6 nests Island 9 and 3 young Island 4 (30.6). 72 adults and 20 juveniles (13.7). 13 juveniles 22.7. Max. 55 nests, 20 juveniles. Indications that a predator had access to the

islands after mid-May. Exodus of much of the colony to Burwell Fen. 20 following Cormorants fishing in the Lake (30.9). **2012:** 882 nests; **2013:** 34 nests, c. 7 juveniles reared

Mediterranean Gull: one first winter (10.11) C.J.C.

Little Gull: at least 10 over the Lake (1245 hrs, 21.4), S. Cooper. Still 6 at 1330 when they departed, B.S. Martin.

Common Gull: very few, inc. 2 (13.7)

Lesser Black-backed Gull: a territorial pair, Island 9 at the Lake (12.3-10.4) but did not nest. They had departed before 24.4. Bred unsuccessfully 2013. 40 from North (2002 hrs. 2.4) but 23 departed soon afterwards. 16 from east to roost on nearby Shropshire's Reservoir (2039 hrs, 22.4).

Yellow-legged Gull: an adult at the Lake (17.3).

Herring Gull: few

Great Black-backed Gull: 54 had roosted on the Lake (0750 hrs, 22.1, before any had departed to feed). Only 14 at this roost (0720 hrs, 29.1). A roost of 34 inc. 18 adults (28.12).

- **Common Tern:** first arrival (10.4). There were 11 nests on Island 9 at the Lake (21.5), 9 (31.5), 12 (6- 23.6), c. 9 pairs Island 9 (8.7). 10 adults +6 juveniles (13.7), 14 adults, Island 9 (22.7), 18 adults + 3 juveniles (30.7), 1 adult + 1 juvenile attempting to fish (10.8), 23 (17.8) and a single bird (25.8) was the last. Total: 12 pairs reared 6 or 7 juveniles. **2012:** c. 6 pairs nested, number of juveniles reared unknown. **2013:** 9-10 pairs attempted, 5+ juveniles reared.

Arctic Tern: one passed through heading north (27. 4) O. and M. Marks.

- **Stock Dove:** at least 4 pairs in the breeding season – Home Wood/W. Sand Martin Quarry, Peat Mounds/Wader Meadows, North Belt and river bank/Poplar Plantation. (A flock of 30 Dimmock's Cote Quarry, 5.3).

- **Wood Pigeon:** not surveyed. 250 at pre-roost North Belt moved to Poplar Plantation (1555 hrs. 13.12).

- **Collared dove:** 4 (2 singing) High Fen Barn (15.5). 18 Red Barn Farm and 2 High Fen Barn (4.11)

Turtle Dove: one singing Home Wood (31.5 and 1.6) were the only records. A single record in May 2013.

- **Common Cuckoo:** one male singing 17.4 – at least 23.6. It ranged widely using song-posts in the Poplar Plantation, North Belt (E), Home Wood, the Flight Pond area and possibly the Rough though this might have been a second male. Two males seen together (16.5) B.S. Martin. A female in the Poplar Plantation (2.6). In 2013 at least one, possibly two males.

- **Barn Owl:** two pairs bred. One in the box on the Ash by Kingfishers Bridge House had 5 young but reared only 3 from the first brood. 6 young were raised in the second box. The adults seen hunting during the day on several occasions. Probably a juvenile flushed from the hedge at the Kingfisher Bridge end of Fen Drove (14.10). One hunting along the Counter Drain beside the Reedbed and another over Lapland (1637 & 1641 hrs 10.11). The second pair laid in a box on the Washes but the outcome was unknown. The box on the ash tree fitted with a CCTV camera. Two pairs nested in boxes in 2013 but no young were reared.

- **Tawny Owl:** 3 territories. W. end of Long Wood (30.3), North Pit (10 & 22.4) and North Belt east (10.4). No young recorded.

- **Little Owl:** a pair probably bred in the SE corner of the site (J. Page).

Swift: poorly recorded. 16 on Lake (8.5) and 10 (11.5).

- **Kingfisher:** 2 pairs bred and had young in both of the Sand Martin Quarries. The adults from the SW Quarry nest frequently seen commuting to feed on the W side of the Lake. 2 pairs bred in 2013.

- **Green Woodpecker:** about 6 territories – SE Belt, North Belt, North Pit/Kingfishers Bridge garden, Peat Mounds to river, Rough and Poplar Plantation. The birds on the Airfield were probably from the Kingfishers Bridge territory.

- **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** drumming around High Fen Barn, the Poplar Plantation and North Belt. With willows felled along the bank of the New Cut and river one territory lost. Only 3 certain territories. No nests located.

- **Kestrel:** 2 pairs. One had a territory around Kingfishers Bridge house, Lambland, Winter Flood and Wood Meadow; the other between Red Barn and High Fen Farms and Confused Flood. The first pair reared 3 young (13.7).

Merlin: one (29.12) A. Dunn was the only record.

Hobby: singles on 4 dates in May (4-16.5) and 2 dates in September (2 & 30.9).

Peregrine: one calling over the Confused Flood (10.4) C.J.C. One (16.12) C.J.C. and (30.12) O & M. Marks

- **Magpie:** 2 pairs bred; numbers controlled by Larson trapping and shooting.

- **Jay:** at least 3 pairs bred: numbers controlled by shooting.

Jackdaw: probably did not breed on the site. Several hundred with **Rooks** headed S. toward Wicken at 16.20 (10.11). On 13 December, 400 S to Wicken, (1600 hrs) + 370 in Poplar Plantation (16.22) of which 200 flew S to Wicken. (1630 hrs).

- **Carrion Crow:** a post-roost of 78 on the Wader Meadow (0725 hrs, 29.1). On 15.3 up to 104 assembled on the Wader Meadow before roosting in the Poplar Plantation. There were 19 birds at 1730 hrs and 104 at 1815 hrs. Still 49 at 1847 hrs. 150 counted at N. end

of Poplar Plantation (1610 hrs, 13.12). 140 (1631 hrs, 29.12). Breeding controlled by shooting and cage trapping but at least one pair reared 2 juveniles (10.9).

- **Goldcrest:** one singing Home Wood (8.5 & 7.6). May have attempted to breed. Present in conifers around High Fen Barn (30.9) and in Peat Mound hedge (18.11) O. Marks.

- **Blue Tit:** not surveyed.

- **Great Tit:** not surveyed.

- **Bearded Tit:** a pair feeding young, Compt 2 of Reedbed (21.4) B.S. Martin. 5 pairs feeding young (probably all still in nest) in Reedbed – Compt 2 (N). Compt 3 (N). Compts 4/3 (E), Compts 4/5, Compts 2/5 (S) (15.5) C.J.C. 4 fledged juveniles Compt 2 (NE) (31.5). 3 juveniles Compt 4 (6.6). A party Compt 1 (16.9). 20 exhibiting irruptive behaviour in Reedbed 0915-1000 hrs (30.9) O. Marks & C.J.C. Several in reeds on S. Shore of the Lake (14.10). 5 including an adult male, moving through reeds in ditch between Peat Mounds and river (18.11). At least 5 pairs bred in 2014.

	2001	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Breeding pairs	1-2	2-5	5-6	3-4	3	2-3	None	1	5
Fledged broods	1	1+	2	2	0	1		1	2+
Juveniles	3-4	20+	2-3	several		3	*	5	7+

* 2012 up to 20 birds in October but may have come from elsewhere.

Skylark (Red listed): again none present in the breeding season. Last possible breeding record was one singing over the Confused Flood (1.6-14.7 2008). Small numbers on passage.

- **Sand Martin:** 200 over the Lake (18.4) and 70 (20.4) G. Paterson. Attempted to breed in the two Sand Martin cliffs – 20 pairs SW quarry and 10 pairs E quarry. Up to 30 birds showed interest in the E. Peat Mounds cliff (15.5) where c. 30 pairs bred in 2011. 100+ over the Lake (17.8).

- **Barn Swallow:** one pair nested in Kingfishers Bridge garage as usual. Another pair probably bred at Judd's house, High Fen Farm.

- **House Martin:** 5 nests on houses at High Fen Farm. Nested for the first time at Kingfishers Bridge in 2013 but not recorded in the report. CCTV camera at one of the nests.

- **Long-tailed Tit:** at least 2 pairs in the breeding season – North Pit and New Cut. A pair with 5 fledged young N. Pit (15.5). A flock of 25 in the Poplar Plantation (25.11). O. Marks

- **Cetti's Warbler:** one singing Peat Mounds ditch (10.1). 3 singing males late March-June – Flight Pond, North Pit and the Rough. One singing on the margins of Dimmock's Cote Quarry (2.4)* outside site.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
singing males	(1*)	1	3-4	3+	4	4	3	3(+1*)

- **Chiffchaff:** over wintering birds – 2 river bank (22.1). 1 New Cut (22.1 & 19.2). One singing North Pit (12.3). 7 singing in the breeding season – Home Wood (2), North Pit (2), Peat Mounds hedge (1), the Rough (1), Fen Drove (1) from 2.4. Broods North Pit and Peat Mounds hedge. One Kingfishers Bridge garden (4.11) O. Marks.

(**Willow Warbler:** none recorded in 2014. 3 in 2011, 3 in 2012 but none in 2013.)

- **Blackcap:** First 19.4. 11 singing males in the breeding season – High Fen Farm, Kingfishers Bridge garden. Home Wood (2, W & E), North Pit (4, 15.5), North Belt, E, East Belt (2). 9 singing 2011; 8, 2012; 12, 2013.

Garden Warbler: one singing Home Wood (15.5) was the only record. 4 singing 2011; 2 2012; 1 non-breeding 2013.

(**Lesser Whitethroat:** none recorded in 2014.)

	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
suspected breeding males	2	1	1?	2	2	3	-	1	3	-	4	-	-	-	-

- **Common Whitethroat:** at least 5 singing – West Peat Mound (2), Flight Pond and Peat Mounds Hedge (probably same at Peat Mound), Compt 3. Reedbed (1), Compt 5, Reedbed (1), East Belt (1). 8 in 2011, 1 or 2 in 2012, 1+2 non-breeding 2013.
- **Grasshopper Warbler (Red Listed):** 2 singing – Flight Pond and W. End of the Rough (24.4-15.5) J. Page. None 2011, 1 possible 2012 and 2, 2013.
- **Sedge Warbler:** 11 singing with 10 in Reedbed (15.5) and 1 Peat Mounds ditch (7.5). Reedbed not covered in first half of May. 21 in 2011; 12, 2012 and 12, 2013.
- **Reed Warbler:**

Reedbed Compts	1	2	3	4	5	Great Ditch	Peat Marsh ditch	Winter Flood	N & W Lake shore	N & S Pits	Max
15.5	11	<u>19</u>	6	<u>14</u>	<u>7</u>	3	<u>2</u>	nc	nc	<u>4</u>	66
31.5	<u>13</u>	7	<u>14</u>	8	4	<u>4</u>	1	nc	nc	nc	51
2.6	nc	nc	8 part	9	nc	nc	nc	<u>3</u>	<u>16</u>	4	
Highest count	13	19	14	14	7	4	2	3	16	4	96

Maximum singing totals – 65 in 2011, 46 in 2012, 43 in 2013 and 96 in 2014.

(**Tree Creeper**: no records as in 2013).

- **Wren**: at least 18 singing – High Fen Farm (2), Home Wood (2), North Pit (2), New Cut (2), Fen Drove (1), the Rough (2), Peat Mounds Hedge (1), Poplar Plantation (1), river bank (2), North Belt (3). 17 in 2011, at least 22 in 2012, 11 (incomplete) in 2013.

Starling (Red-listed): no breeding records. 400 over (10.1). 1000 went down into Reedbed to roost (1615 hrs, 13.12), 2000 at roost 1610 hrs (16.12), 6000 at roost Compt 3, Reedbed 1610 hrs (28.12) C.J.C.; 5000(30.12) O & M Marks.

- **Blackbird**: not surveyed.

Fieldfare: largest number in spring 60 (12.3) and 180 (23.3). In early winter 120 (18.11), 60 (25.11).

Redwing: 6 singing in Poplar Plantation (12.3). Maximum in early winter 40 (25.11) but an abundance of hawthorn berries.

- **Song Thrush** (Red listed): 6 singing - Home Wood, High Fen Farm, Peat Mounds hedge, the Rough, North Belt, East Belt. 11 in 2011, 4 (probably incomplete) in 2012, 6 in 2013.

Spotted Flycatcher: no records again. Last 2010 and before that 2006.

- **Robin**: 9 singing in incomplete survey - High Fen Farm (2), Home Wood (2), North Pit (2), Poplar Plantation N (1), the Rough (1), Peat Mounds hedge/New Cut (1).

Stonechat: one New Cut (30.9) O. Marks; 2 (15.10); a pair Peat Mounds (4.11). One record 2011, none 2012, 3 in 2013.

Wheatear: on passage – one car park (21.4) G. Paterson; one (5.5) N. Sills.

- **Duncock**: not surveyed. One frequently singing Peat Mounds hedge; one Home Wood; one singing from willows at N. end of Confused Flood (30.9).

- **House sparrow** (Red listed): not surveyed, but several around Red Barn Farm.

Yellow Wagtail: on passage – one (19.4) and 3 (21.4).

(**Grey Wagtail**: no records for the third consecutive year - 2 Nov 2011, none 2012 or 2013).

Pied Wagtail: no records in the breeding season. Roosting in the Reedbed – 44 (5.10) S. Cooper; 70+ (1630 hrs 10.11) C.J.C. but none roosting (13.12).

Meadow Pipit: no evidence of breeding again (5th consecutive year). A flock of 20 (15.1). 45 roosting in Reedbed (5.10) S. Cooper.

Water Pipit: one Lake shore and Winter Flood (24.12) C.J.C. Last Dec 2012.

- **Chaffinch:** not surveyed. No sizeable flocks.
(**Brambling:** no records as in 2011 and 2013).
- **? Greenfinch:** one singing High Fen Farm (31.5).
(**Siskin:** no records)
(**Redpoll sp:** no records)
- **Bullfinch:** inadequately surveyed but present in the breeding season in the North Pit and on Fen Drove.
(**Yellowhammer:** no records as in 2013).
- **Reed Bunting:** 12 singing with up to 9 in the Reedbed, one Confused Flood and 2 Winter Flood. (Singing in the Reedbed, 7 in 2011; 3 in 2013. Roosting in the Reedbed – 70+ (5.10) S. Cooper. None seen at 'Stand and Deliver' chicory crop, Padney Field in December.

Bred 60 ssp.; possibly bred 8, recorded but did not breed 52, hybrid 1, escapes 3 + 2 hybrids.
Total records 120 + 1 hybrid, 3 + 2 hybrid escapes.

Table 1: Breeding birds Kingfishers Bridge, Wicken, 2014

Mute Swan	2 pairs	1 brood	3 small y, 2 reared
Greylag Goose	29 pairs	(19 broods)	105 y
Canada Goose	21 pairs	(10 broods)	93 y
Egyptian Goose	1 pair	Attempted ?	No young
Shelduck	2 pairs	1 brood	6 small y
Gadwall	16 ♂♂	6 broods	
Teal	1 possible pair	1 brood	3 y reared
Mallard	13 ♂♂	9 broods	
Shoveler	11 ♂♂	2 broods	
Pochard	4 or 5 ♂♂	4 broods	3 y reared
Tufted Duck	31 ♂♂	14 broods	
Ruddy Duck	1 pair attempted ?	No y	
Red-legged Partridge	4+ pairs	1+ brood	
Pheasant	nc		
Bittern	1 ♂ boomer	Possibly bred	
Grey Heron	2 nests	1 brood	2 y reared
Little Grebe	4+ pairs	2 broods	
Great Crested Grebe	1 or 2 pairs	1 brood	1 y reared
Marsh Harrier	1 pair	1 brood	3 y reared
Sparrowhawk	1 pair?	No y	
(Buzzard)	2 territories	No nest on site	2 or 3 y reared)
Kestrel	2 pairs	1 brood	3 y reared
Water Rail	2 or 3 pairs	?	
Moorhen	8+ pairs	Several	
Coot	?	11 broods	
Oystercatcher	2 pairs	1 brood	
Little Ringed Plover	1 pair	1 brood	3 y reared
Lapwing	7-8 pairs	5 broods	No y reared
Snipe	3-4 displaying	?	
Redshank	5-6 pairs	Several	
Black-headed Gull	55 nests		20 y reared
(Lesser B-b Gull)	1 pair	No nest)	
Common Tern	12 nests		6-7 y reared
Stock Dove	4+ pairs	?	?
Wood Pigeon	nc		
Collared Dove	2+ pairs	?	
Cuckoo	1 possibly 2 ♂♂		
Barn Owl	2 pairs	3 nestings	9 y reared by 1 pr (2 broods)
Tawny Owl	3 territories	?	No young?
Little Owl	1 pair possibly bred	?	
Kingfisher	2 pairs	Both bred	
Green Woodpecker	6 pairs	?	
Gt sp Woodpecker	3 pairs	?	
Magpie*	2 pairs	?	*Numbers controlled
Jay*	3 pairs	?	
Carrion Crow*	1 pair		2 y reared *Numbers controlled
Goldcrest	1 pair?	?	
Blue Tit	nc		
Great Tit	nc		
Bearded Tit	5 pairs		4+ y reared
Sand Martin	c30 pairs	?	
Swallow	1 or 2 pairs	?	
House Martin	5 pairs	?	

Table 1: Breeding birds Kingfishers Bridge, Wicken, 2014

Long-tailed Tit	2+ pairs		5+ y reared
Cetti's Warbler	3 ♂♂	?	
Chiffchaff	7 singing	?	2+ broods
Blackcap	11 singing	?	
(Garden Warbler	1 singing once)		
Whitethroat	5+ singing	?	
Grasshopper Warbler	2 singing	?	
Sedge Warbler	11+ singing	?	
Reed Warbler	96 singing	?	
Wren	18+ singing	?	
Blackbird	nc		
Song Thrush	6 singing	?	
Mistle Thrush	2 singing	?	
Robin	9+ singing	?	
Dunnock	nc		
House Sparrow	Probably bred		
Chaffinch	nc		
Greenfinch	1 singing, possibly bred	?	
Bullfinch	2+ pairs	?	
Reed Bunting	12 singing	?	

Total 60 spp bred on the Kingfishers Bridge site, 8 possibly did so.

Table 2: Maximum winter and autumn counts of waterfowl at Kingfishers Bridge, 2014

	January – 15 March	September-December
Mute Swan	4	15 (5.9)
Whooper Swan	4 (23.1)	20 (16.12)
White-fronted Goose	2 (3.2, 24.2-22.3)	-
Greylag Goose	235 (14.1)	210 (28.12)
Canada Goose	123 (22.1)	189 (16.9)
Hybrid Greylag & Canada Goose	1 (24.2)	4 (28.12)
Egyptian Goose	2 (16.2, 3.3)	-
Shelduck	7 (9.3)	1 (24.12)
Wigeon	136 (9.3)	224 (30.12)
Gadwall	52 (8.2)	98 (30.12)
Teal	600 (9.3)	285 (30.12)
Mallard	30 (8.3)	120 (16.9)
Pintail	8 (19.2)	6 (7.10)
Shoveler	140 (6.3)	46 (30.12)
Pochard	20 (8.2)	9 (9.9)
Tufted Duck	55 (14.1)	12 (14.10)
Goldeneye	-	1 (14.10)
Smew	2 (14.2)	-
Ruddy Duck	1 (8, 24 & 25.2, 3.3)	-
Cormorant	20 (8.1)	31 (12.10)
Bittern	1 (10.1, 8 & 24.2, 5.3)	1 (2.9 & 7.10)
Little Egret	5 (8.3)	10 (5 & 9.9)
Great Egret	-	1 (19.10)
Grey Heron	4 (12.3)	8 (23.9)
Glossy Ibis	-	1 (3 & 20.9)
Little Grebe	12 (25.2)	9 (9.9)
Gt Crested Grebe	2 (9.3)	2 (5-16.9)
Water Rail	1 (5 dates)	6 (16.9)
Moorhen	nc	nc
Coot	69 (14.1)	70 (5.9)
Crane	2 (16.2)	-
Oystercatcher	4 (24.2)	-
Golden Plover	40 (6.3)	250 (10.11)
Ringed Plover	-	4 (16.9)
Lapwing	452 (16.2)	550 (9.9)
Ruff	-	3 (2.9)
Snipe	12 (15.3)	15 (5.10)
Black-tailed Godwit	1 (24.2)	1 (7.10)
Green Sandpiper	-	8 (23.9)
Greenshank	-	1 (20.9)
Redshank	5 (8.3)	2 (18.11)
Great B-b Gull	54 (22.1)	34 (28.12)

Vascular plant records Kingfishers Bridge 2014

Crassula helmsii New Zealand Pig-weed (naturalised invasive). Now well established on the Wader Meadow where it has become dominant along the wet shallow depression at the N. end. Continues to form a mat along the S. shore of the Lake. No attempts to control it.

Doctylorhiza praetermissa Southern Marsh Orchid: 52 inflorescences in S. corner of the Fen Area TL 546732 (31.5) where 157 in 2013. None seen on SE bank of Compt 1 of Reedbed where 8 spikes in 2013.

Hydrocotyle ranunculoides Water Pennywort (invasive alien) choked the New Cut drain and has spread through a pipe at the N. end of the Washes into the main ditch where it is now abundant. In Nov 2014 in the New Cut a mat of **Water-cress Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum** about 50m in extent was overtopping the **Hydrocotyle** and apparently killing it. A successional event with encouraging implications. There are still patches close to the bank of the adjoining R. Cam, including an inlet at the extreme NW corner of the site. (TL 539736).

Nepeta cataria Catmint. 5 large plants at edge of drive by Peat Mounds, TL 543729 (22.7). Plenty of seed set (5.9).

Parientaria judaica Wall Pelitory. One plant at drive edge of the kitchen garden, TL 546728 (4.11). A new plant for the Kingfishers Bridge site.

Samolus valerandii Brookweed. Locally abundant in draw-down areas where **Crassula** sparse on S. shore of the Lake, TL542734 (7.10)

Selinum carvifolia Cambridge Milk-parsley (Rare, and probably Endangered). 27 plants, 9 flowering stems, 17 umbels among **Juncus subnodulosus** in the Fen Area near the boundary of the area that was mown and raked in the autumn of 2013 (13.8). S Tompkins and C.J.C. 107 plants, 174 umbels in 2012; 32 plants, 71 umbels in 2013. Introduced with fen litter (1996) and more than 100 seedlings (1997) from Chippenham Fen but not recorded again until 2006 (9 plants). After an encouraging increase seems to be decreasing, probably as the result of competition with the **Juncus**. Fen area mown again in autumn 2014 but only lightly trampled by water buffalo.

Senecio paludosus Fen Ragwort (v. Rare and critically Endangered). One spike 1.5m tall with 28 fruiting capitula and a side shoot still in flower, S. corner of the Fen Area, Compt 5 of Reedbed TL 5463773205 (13.8, 5.9). Introduced at this site as 2 plants grown by Lindsay Rolf from seed from indigenous Stuntney population in Sept. 2007. Not seen in 2013; one shoot in 2012 but this was damaged.

Serratula tinctoria Saw-wort. 42 flowering shoots in S. corner of the Fen Area TL 546732 (13.8). 20 flowering shoots in 2012.

Teucrium scordium Water Germander. c 840 shoots (counts of 800, 810 and 910) about 20% flowering and growing up to 40 cm in height in a limited are of the North Pit where it is indigenous. Associated with **Phragmites**, **Eupatorium**, **Carex riparia**, **Epilobium parviflorum**, **Berula erecta**, **Galium palustre**, **Solanum dulcamara**, **Rumex hydropalathum**, and the moss **Plagiomnium elatum** in abundance. Not in the most swampy part of the Pit.

Has increased in response to autumn cutting of vegetation with 498 shoots in 2012 and 558 (9% flowering) in 2013 TL 540728. This area was dry in summer 2014.

Continues to spread and dominate the wettest are of the Winter Flood. Also well established in the Wader Meadow but the Crassula has checked its spread on the S. shore of the Lake.

See Beecroft, R.C, Cadbury, C.J. and Tomkins, S.P. (2013). Towards a recovery programme for wetland plants at the Kingfishers Bridge Reserve. *Nature in Cambridgeshire* 55: 60-71. Covers Water Germander, Cambridge Milk –parsley and Fen Ragwort.

Mammals recorded at Kingfishers Bridge, 2014

Otter

Presumably a male on account of large size seen swimming across the Lake from the W. End, briefly landing on Island 3 before disappearing behind Island 4 (1540 hrs, 10.11) C.J.C.. Though evidence of Otters (spraints) have been seen on several occasions in the past this may be the first sighting. No sign that the constructed holt on the bank of the R. Cam had been used in 2014.

