

The Natural History of Shotesham in the year 2000

Compiled by Frank Mitchell

The Natural History of Shotesham (Norfolk) in 2000. (1st October 1999 to 30th September 2000)

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1. Background to the project

People who are interested in natural history have often developed the habit of keeping notes of their observations. As we approached Millennium year I began to think that it would be good to have a proper written record of the fauna and flora of the village as an historical marker which might be of interest to people living in the parish in the future.

I already knew of a few people in the village with similar interests to me in the natural world and decided that it would be worth putting the word about to see if we could get a big enough team together to collect a useful amount of information.

I was completely bowled over by the response. In a parish containing only just over 200 houses we started our recording year with a team of over 35 people who all displayed enormous enthusiasm. There was no doubt that the project was on.

The first task was to try to be realistic about what we could achieve, even with such a strong team. The temptation was to record “everything”, whether it moved or not. It soon became clear that we needed to be more selective and to be guided by people’s particular interests and to be realistic about the amount of time that busy people could devote even to a project they were very positive about. By a combination of design and accident the project gradually shaped up as follows:

- **Birds:** We were able to achieve good coverage. There were several enthusiastic and competent bird watchers in the group. I think we were able to achieve a comprehensive record of the birds that are resident in the village and a nearly comprehensive one of the winter and summer visitors.

- **Flowers:** Wild flower recording was the next most popular area. Again we were fortunate to have several enthusiastic and knowledgeable botanists who put in a huge amount of effort. Even so, it soon became clear that the parish was too large for all areas to be studied in any depth. We have therefore ended up with good all year round coverage of the “Stubbs Green” area and one thorough survey of St Mary’s Churchyard in June. Recording of wild flowers in the rest of the parish has been more casual and spasmodic. (For this purpose the term “Stubbs Green” has been used to define an area roughly bounded by Market Lane, Water Lane, Wash Lane and the western boundary of the Great Wood.)

- **Mammals, amphibians and reptiles:** These were casually recorded by most of the observers and the list probably covers all, or nearly all, of the species present.

- **Butterflies:** Only 3 or 4 people consistently recorded butterflies but I am satisfied that we have recorded the common species fairly thoroughly. I’d be surprised if we didn’t miss some species (for instance I would be surprised if we don’t have a hairstreak of some variety or at least one small heath!) It was a poor insect year generally because of the cool wet summer and it is encouraging that we had 22 species with us during the year

- **Dragonflies and Damselflies:** Compared with recent summers this was a very poor dragonfly year and the records demonstrate both a lack of dragonflies and a lack of knowledgeable dragonfly observers.

- **Trees and hedgerows:** During the year we have started a systematic survey of the hedgerows of the parish. It is clear already that there are a number of ancient and important hedgerows. In spite of the loss of many miles of hedgerows in previous decades we still have many miles left and the survey will continue over several years. It will not form part of this report, but will be recorded separately in due course.

- **Other aspects:** Some notes on the lower vertebrates are included as an appendix to the report.

I would like to finish this section by thanking everyone who took part in the project during the year. I believe that we have been very successful in achieving what we set out to do. I think that the record that follows speaks for itself. It would not have been possible without a lot of effort from a lot of people.

I am also pleased to say that we all seem to have enjoyed taking part in the project, not only in observing and recording, but also in getting together and sharing ideas and stories. I am happy to say that we will continue to meet and to work on aspects of natural history during 2001 at least.

2. The contributors

I am most grateful to the following people who all contributed to the project. If I have missed anyone I apologise!

Betty Albany
David Beamish
John and Cathy Beeson
Judy Bullock
Ivor and Noreen Downing
Bernie Fenn
Rosemary Gough
Jimmy Hazell
Ken Holbeck
Peter and Caroline Holmes
John and Thelma Hope
Ed Howard
Wanda Innes
Heather Jackson
Dick Jeeves
Hugo and Anna (daughter) Johnson
Stephen and Wendy King
David Merrick
Frank and Diane Mitchell
Rosemary Page-Davies
Andrew Pleavin
Colin and Diana Pordham
Colin Purdom
David and Janet Sochon
Philippa and David Taitt
Pat Waterfall
Raz Woolacott

3. The parish and its habitats

Shotesham is a South Norfolk village in an area dominated by intense arable farming. This is typified by large ploughed fields in which the main crops are grains (mainly wheat and barley) and sugar beet. I think it is fair to say that these fields are in themselves a poor habitat for wildlife.

There is considerable debate about the relationship between farming and wildlife and I am not enough of an expert to be able to make any kind of definitive statements. As an amateur naturalist I would just like to make the following observations which might help to give an historical perspective to the report.

- There seems little doubt that farming practices have a major impact on wildlife, locally and nationally.
- The search for higher crop yields has meant that much of the impact over the last 30-40 years has been harmful to wildlife. Fields have become much bigger, hedgerows have been grubbed out and wetlands have been drained. Herbicide sprays have eliminated many wildflowers and therefore the seeds that provided food for birds and small mammals in the winter. Insects have lost many of their food plants and themselves been the target of pesticide sprays.
- The result of these pressures is most dramatically seen in terms of farmland bird populations, many of which have declined dramatically over recent years. Some examples are Grey Partridge 43% down in the last 5 years, Linnet (-14%), Bullfinch (-28%), Corn Bunting (-26%)*. Populations of a number of other farmland species such as Tree Sparrow, Skylark and Song Thrush have fallen drastically over the last 25 years but fortunately at least seem to have stabilised in the last couple of years.

* Source: *British Trust for Ornithology Breeding Birds Survey*

- There are many other pressures on wildlife apart from farming. Human population growth and use of land for housing and recreation has reduced habitat and increased disturbance. Road traffic has increased enormously and a lot of wildlife perishes on the roads.
- Whilst there is much to regret and much still to worry about, there are also many welcome changes taking place. Nationally and within the European Community, priorities for farming are changing. Schemes such as countryside stewardship provide financial support for farmers who wish to manage their land in a more wildlife-friendly way. Local farmers are adopting a number of measures such as the laying down of set-aside land; the leaving of some uncultivated and unsprayed field margins and the creation of "beetle banks". These are very welcome developments and it will be interesting to see what impact they have over the next few years.

Although the arable farmland is a very significant feature in Shotesham, we are very fortunate to live in a parish which contains a rich variety of habitats. For instance:

- There are several smaller farms, with mixed regimes including dairy and beef cattle, hay pasture, horses etc.

- Clearly the most significant feature is Shotesham Common which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There is a second area of common land at Stubbs Green.
- There are several areas of deciduous woodland, with Hornbeam, Oak and Ash as the dominant trees. The 2 main areas are the Great Wood and the Little Wood (not much smaller though!) and there are several other small patches of woodland.
- Shotesham Park
- The River Tas forms the western boundary of the parish and is fed by Shotesham Beck, which runs through almost the whole length of the parish.
- There are a number of ponds, including the main village pond opposite the Globe pub and several small marlpits, some of which are in poor condition.
- The two churchyards provide valuable protected habitat, particularly for wild flowers.
- A number of roadside verges are protected as Roadside Nature Reserves and provide valuable habitat particularly for plants and insects.

4. Species reports

4.1. Bird report

Numbers in italics below are an estimate of the population size.

1. Cormorant

Scarce winter visitor 1-10

Only 4 records at Old Rectory pond in November, Shotesham Park in November and December, and over the Common in January. We don't have enough area of water to attract cormorants on any larger scale.

2. Grey Heron

Visitor throughout the year. Does not breed in the parish 1-10

One or two records in most months. The opportunist fisherman was seen looking for prey at all types of water. One at Old Rectory pond was "fishing for perch, roach and eels". At a small pond at The Grove the catch was one stickleback. Also seen fishing on the Beck and the River. The nearest heronry is probably at Earsham.

3. Canada Goose

Small introduced breeding population. 10-100

A few pairs nest at Old Hall Farm and Knights Lawn. Groups of Canada geese fly over the village regularly, honking evocatively. The largest number recorded was a group of 19 flying over The Grove on 20th November.

4. Barnacle Goose

Very scarce late summer visitors 1-10

6 visited the Old Rectory Pond for 2 days in June. "The Birds of Norfolk" confirms that there is an increasing feral population in Norfolk, including populations in the Yare valley and a flock of about 100 based at the Otter Trust at Earsham which regularly disappear for weeks at a time!

5. Greylag Goose

Small introduced breeding population. 10-100

A similar story to the Canada Geese. A small number breed and are seen flying around the parish. The maximum flock recorded was 15 at Hawes Green in January.

6. Mute Swan

Very infrequent winter visitor 1-10

The only 2 records were on 1st January at Shotesham Ford and 1st March in Shotesham Park.

7. Shelduck

Small breeding population and winter visitors 1-10

One on The Old Rectory pond on 29th October was the earliest ever record there. 2 pairs usually breed in rabbit burrows at Old Hall Farm

8. Mallard

Small breeding population supplemented by winter visitors 10-100

The largest count was 30 on Rectory pond on 1st December. Breeding was confirmed by a brood of 8 on the Old Rectory pond in April.

9. Teal

Winter visitors 10-100

Recorded each month from October to March at Hawes Green (flying overhead) and in Shotesham Park. Maximum count was 40 in November.

10. Gadwall

Winter visitors in small numbers 1-10

Recorded from November to January in Shotesham Park, with a maximum of 10 in December.

11. Tufted Duck

Infrequent winter and summer visitors in small numbers 1-10

2 visited the pond at Owls Corner in Shotesham Park in December and one was seen at the Old Rectory pond on 14th June

12. Sparrowhawk

Resident and presumably breeding 1-10?

Individuals seen in almost every month. A number of these were attracted by birds visiting bird tables, to the displeasure of some of the human residents! Records of prey included Blue Tit, Collared Dove, Blackbird, Goldfinch and interestingly 2 records of Sparrowhawks tearing at rabbit corpses, one at Willowbrook and one at the Old Rectory.

Sparrowhawks have made a good recovery since some of the worst pesticides were banned, and there is some heated debate about their impact on songbirds at a time when populations of many species are declining seriously. What with domestic cats, road deaths and of course, primarily, loss of habitat our small birds are having a hard time.

13. Buzzard

Very occasional winter and summer visitor 1-10

One was being mobbed by a Kestrel over the Great Wood in October, one was seen over Baxters Lane in December and another in June

14. Kestrel

Small resident population 10-100?

Kestrels have a small but apparently healthy population with several breeding pairs. Recorded in every month at all parts including Hawes Green, The Old Rectory, Baxters Lane, Willowbrook and Naidens Lane. One was seen to take a Pied Wagtail at The Old Rectory in July.

15. Red-legged Partridge

Common introduced game bird 100-1000

Much more common than the native Partridge with winter flocks of up to 35. Many of these are farm reared.

16. (Grey) Partridge

Resident 10-100

Possibly under recorded because of confusion with its French cousin. However a number of people are very fond of the Grey Partridge and know one when they see it. The maximum count was 11 at Hawes Green in October.

17. Pheasant

Resident 100-1000

Common, though mainly reared as game birds. However some breed in the wild, such as the one sitting on 8 eggs on 13th May on Chapel Lane. Others become very tame such as "Charlie", resident at the Old Rectory!

18. Water Rail

Uncommon winter visitor 1-10

Although rarely seen because of its "skulking" behaviour, the Water Rail is known to winter over a wide area of Norfolk. It was pleasing to hear that 3 were seen in Shotesham Park in January

19. Moorhen

Resident and breeding. 10-100

Regularly seen at areas of suitable habitat. A small group fed regularly on fallen apples at Grove Farm. One recorder noted that there was a marked decline in numbers at Shotesham Park since the arrival of mink there.

20. Coot

Resident and breeding in small numbers. 1-10

One pair bred at Stubbs Green pond. Others feed regularly in winter with the moorhens at Grove Farm.

21. Lapwing

Small breeding population plus winter visitors. 10-100

Recorded in every month. Maximum winter numbers were 80 in November and 50 in February. There were small breeding populations at the St Mary's set-aside and Baxters Lane.

These beautiful birds are under severe threat because of loss of breeding habitat. The Birds of Norfolk states that "Lapwings prefer a mosaic of grassland and arable land on which to rear their young. Intensification has led to the loss of rotations, particularly those involving grass leys, which the Lapwing so benefited from. Now many Lapwings breed in sub-optimal habitats where the number of young raised does not compensate for winter mortality"

We will have to watch, and hope that changes in agricultural practices may begin to help.

22. Jack Snipe

Occasional winter visitor 1-10

Just one record in March at Knights Lawn

23. Snipe

Winter visitor in small numbers 1-10

One or two seen in October, December and January.

Last year a male was “drumming” over the common and it may be that we have one or two breeding in the damp areas.

24. Woodcock

Winter visitor 10-100 and probable breeder 1-10

The maximum winter count was 10 in Shotesham Park. One was flushed from a large Oak Tree near Baxters Lane. There were no records of “roding” (territorial flights) this year but this may easily have been missed.

25. Black Headed Gull

Winter visitor, sometimes in large numbers. 100-1000

The biggest flock recorded was 250 in October. Most evenings in the winter there was a steady stream of birds often adding up to a couple of hundred birds over an hour or so heading east to roost.

26. Lesser Black Backed Gull

Winter visitor in small numbers. 1-10

Recorded in ones and twos only through the winter months. In September there were about 50 with a large number of Black Headed Gulls on a newly ploughed field just outside the parish boundary.

27. Herring Gull

Spasmodic visitor, mainly in the winter. 10-100

Apart from 30 at Shotesham Park in October, there were only a couple of records of Herring Gulls in the winter plus two birds at Baxters Lane in June.

28. Great Black Backed Gull

Occasional winter visitor 1-10

The only records, all in October were 5 and then another 2 at Hawes Green.

29. Common Gull

Winter visitor 10-100

Recorded each month from November to February. Number varied from 4 in December to 20 in January

30. Wood Pigeon

Winter visitor 100-1000

Recorded every month from October to April, with flocks of around 200 in October gradually reducing over the months. I am sure that we have breeding Woodpigeons, but we did not have a single record after May. Did we just forget to make a note of them?

31. Stock Dove

Winter visitor 10-100

Present throughout the winter. There were 35 on the common in November and 30 on a field behind The Grove in January. They are known to breed throughout Norfolk, but again we have no records from April to September.

32. Collard Dove

Resident and breeding 10-100

The first Collared Doves bred in Norfolk in 1956 having started to colonise westwards from Asia in the 1930s. They are now very familiar, but usually in this area at least, seem to stay in small groups which appear to be quite settled in their home areas. It is difficult to estimate total numbers, but the maximum record was only 7 birds in one place.

33. Turtle Dove

Summer visitor. Small breeding population. 1-10

At least 3 pairs were in the parish during the spring and summer. Turtle Doves are migrants from Africa and sadly are another species which is declining rapidly in numbers. They feed on weed seeds, which are also becoming scarcer.

34. Cuckoo.

Summer visitor, presumably breeding in or near the parish 1-10

The only records were 2 at the end of April and 3 on the 15th May, presumably the same bird heard by 3 people. The decline of many of its host species must have contributed to the rapid decline of the Cuckoo. I am sure it is not just nostalgia that makes me think that the sound of the Cuckoo was a familiar one throughout the summer not so long ago. Apparently the Cuckoo's other main requirement is a diet of hairy caterpillars.

35. Barn Owl

Resident? Breeder? 1-10

Hopefully the Barn Owl has been slightly under recorded, with only 2 records submitted. Norfolk is still a stronghold for the Barn Owl and certainly Shotesham had one or two pairs in previous years. Presumably the conversion of old barns into houses has had some impact (Some of our best recorders live in converted barns – no criticism implied!)

36. Little Owl

Resident and breeding 10-100?

Possibly one of the more successful birds of late. Little Owls are probably recorded more than others because of their habit of flying, (and particularly sitting on telegraph poles) during daylight. Recorded throughout the year and throughout the parish (Shotesham Park, Hawes Green, The Common, Chapel Lane, The Grove)

37. Tawny owl

Resident and breeding 10-100?

Recorded in Shotesham Park, The Great Wood, Chapel Lane and The Grove. Several pairs can be heard hooting on a quiet night. Presumably they benefit from the stability of habitat in the deciduous woods.

38. Swift

Summer visitor. Breeds 100-1000

I do not have any comparative data but have the impression that Swifts are thriving in the village. Plenty of old houses with pantiled roofs provide good breeding sites and presumably we still have plenty of small airborne insects. This is one species where it is easy to give firm dates for arrival and departure. This year they arrived on the 5th May and had almost all gone by the 17th August.

39. Kingfisher

Winter and spring visitor. Probably breeds in or near to the parish. 1-10

Seen each month from October to May, either at the Beck (up as far as the Old Rectory pond) and on the river, at the ford, or in Shotesham Park. Kingfishers wander fairly widely out of the breeding season and as there was only one seen at a time, it is hard to know how many may be living locally. Kingfishers can be badly hit by cold winters and have probably done relatively well over recent years with a series of mild winters.

40. Green Woodpecker

Resident. Breeds 10-100

One species which does seem to have done well in recent years the Green Woodpecker is becoming increasingly familiar in fields and gardens. Set aside and uncultivated field margins have presumably provided good habitat for the ants, which are its primary food.

Recorded in every month and an adult was feeding young (on ants) at Baxters Lane in May.

41. Great Spotted Woodpecker

Resident. Breeds 10-100

Seem to be doing well with records in every month. Many have adapted to peanuts as one food source and this may be an important survival factor especially at times of very hard weather (not that we get a lot of that these days). Two birds were squabbling over a peanut supply at Baxters Lane one day, causing the comment that "they may pair for life but they don't eat out together!"

42. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Resident, breeds in very small numbers 1-10

One pair is known to breed in the village. No other records so they may be the only ones, although the species is shy and easily overlooked.

43. Skylark

Resident, breeding and winter visitor 10-100

Fortunately we can still hear the Skylark in various parts of the village. Although the population is lower than in the past, we seem to be relatively fortunate compared with many other parts of the country. There is some hope that uncultivated field margins will help to maintain the Skylark population.

The biggest winter flock recorded was one of 40-50 birds. It seems that wintering numbers have fallen considerably. One of the recorders who has lived and farmed in the village for a long time comments "They certainly seem to be less common in winter, probably due to changes in cropping patterns, i.e. the swing to autumn as opposed to spring cropping"

44. Swallow

Summer visitor, breeds 10-100

We still have several pairs breeding in the barns and outbuildings in the village. The breeding population has certainly fallen, presumably at least partly due to barns being converted into homes for humans.

The last birds of the 1999 autumn were groups of 20 and 12 on the 3rd and 4th October. The first spring record was 9th April

45. House Martin

Summer visitor, breeds 10-100

The House Martin builds under eaves and fortunately there are plenty of those about. In spite of the poor weather House Martins seemed to breed well in 2000 and several pairs which I watch brought off 3 broods. I have been trying to entice them to breed on my house by providing artificial nests. Sadly they ignore them totally!

The last autumn birds in 1999 (which was a less good breeding season) were 50 over The Grove on the 3rd October, so just into the counting year. They were a little later than the Swallows in the spring, with an odd sighting on 16th April, but many birds not back on territory until May.

46 Meadow Pipit

Winter visitor

Only one record which was a bird feeding on a ploughed field near to the Little Wood in February. I can't help thinking that others have been around during the winter but not really registered with me.

47 Grey Wagtail

Resident(?) and breeding. 1-10

Several records during the autumn and winter, included 2 at Shotesham Ford, 2 at Old Hall Farm and one on The Street all in October. The population in winter in Norfolk is

quite small so this number of records is very encouraging. In May a pair were nest building at The Old Rectory.

48 Pied Wagtail

Resident and presumably breeding 10-100?

Seen in every month in ones and twos across the area. This implies that they breed in the parish although there were no definite records submitted to confirm it.

49. Wren

Resident and breeding 100-1000?

Wrens have benefited from a series of mild winters and seem to be doing well in the parish. Were recorded in every month and several family groups were seen. There were a couple of observations of communal roosting in nest boxes, including 7 at Willowbrook in November.

50. Waxwing

Occasional winter visitor 1-10

The only record this year were 3 in a garden at Baxters Lane for 15 minutes on 20th December. I don't think this was a big Waxwing year generally.

51. Dunnock

Resident and breeding 10-1000

Happily, another of our small garden birds which seems to be doing all right. Seen in every month all across the parish

52. Garden Warbler

Summer visitor 10-100

Several males were singing from late April. Seem to appreciate some of our old high field hedges Not easy to see unless you recognise the song, so may have been under-recorded.

53. Blackcap

Summer visitor 10-100

Another species that likes mature hedges and scrubby woodland. More common than its close relative the Garden Warbler. First arrival noted on the 28th April. No records of birds over-wintering, although this is an increasing trend nationally.

54. Whitethroat

Summer visitor 10-100

A familiar bird in the hedgerows throughout the parish. The first of the year was on the 29th April. I wouldn't be surprised if we had one or two Lesser Whitethroats as well, as I think we have the right sort of habitat and I saw one in the previous year. However there were no records this year. I suspect if we had a ringer in the village one might well turn up in a mist net one day.

55. Willow Warbler.

Summer visitor 10-100 (perhaps less).

Recorded through out the summer but in a disappointingly small number of sites. The first was singing on Chapel Lane on 17th April. Probably slightly under-recorded but every bird watcher knows the song.

56. Chiffchaff

Summer visitor. 10-100

An even more distinctive song but again surprisingly few individuals recorded on territories. Possibly only about 10 pairs across the parish? Perhaps we do not have a lot of suitable territory. We have miles of good hedges and a reasonable amount of semi-mature woodland but relatively little scrub and young birch/willow and virtually no coppice.

57. Goldcrest

Winter visitor. Possible breeder. 1-10?

Small groups of two or three were seen or heard in each month from October to January and again in July. I have no evidence of any staying to breed but I would be surprised if we didn't have one or two nests in the woods.

58. Spotted Flycatcher

Resident, breeder 10-100

A late bird was in Shotesham Park in October 99 and several pairs nested in various parts of the parish.

59 Wheatear

Spring passage visitor 1-10

A female feeding on the manure heap on Market Lane on 22nd April was obviously just passing through.

60 Robin

Resident, breeder 100-1000?

Life would be much poorer without our garden Robins singing throughout the winter. Many records from across the parish suggest that the Robin is doing quite well.

61. Fieldfare

Winter visitor 100-1000

Not a huge Fieldfare winter. Recent previous winters have brought flocks of several hundred. This year the first arrivals were about 30 on the 12th of October. Peak counts were of about 100 in November, December and January. The last of the year were a small group on 1st April

62. Blackbird

Resident and winter visitor 100-1000

Recorded throughout the year across the whole area with a good number of successful nests. It is hard to say if numbers of resident birds are decreasing in line with national trends. There was a noticeable influx of birds in December and January. Some days they seemed to be everywhere. Fallen apples were a great attraction with 14 birds at a Priory Lane garden in December and a similar number at Grove Farm in January.

63. Redwing

Winter visitor 10-100

The first arrivals were a group of 20 on 28th October. After that they were rarely seen in groups of more than 5 or 6. Were much less common than Fieldfares this year.

64. Song Thrush

Resident, breeder 10-100

There seemed to be indications of a slight recovery in Song Thrush numbers this year. We have all seen the population decline drastically over the last 10 years. It would be nice to think that the worst is over.

As with Blackbirds there may have been some winter movement with 6 being seen regularly in one large garden in November. One seemed to have a definite taste for sweet varieties of fallen apples as opposed to the Blackbirds who preferred the Bramleys!

65 Mistle Thrush

Resident, breeder 10-100?

Records throughout the year in ones and twos. There were several families but it is difficult to estimate the number across the parish.

66. Long-tailed Tit

Resident, breeder 100-1000?

Always a delight and especially so in winter with large parties working their way along the hedgerows. Groups of 15-20 were widely reported. Like the Wren they have benefited by a series of mild winters and the population seems strong. They seem to have recently developed a taste for peanuts and fat and have become regular visitors to some gardens.

67. Marsh Tit

Resident, breeder 10-100

Resident in small numbers but probably under-recorded because of its liking for woodland habitats. Also hard to distinguish from the Willow Tit except by call. One pair were regular visitors to the birdtable in a woodland garden.

68. Willow Tit

Resident, breeder 10-100?

Only a couple of definite records in October and December but almost certainly resident. The same comments apply as for the Marsh Tit.

69. Coal Tit

Resident, breeder 1-10?

Another fairly scarce resident, mostly seen in gardens in ones and twos.

70. Blue Tit

Resident, breeder 100-1000

Seems to be thriving. Garden feeding is probably a very significant factor for the Blue Tit. Many records across all parts of the area with up to 20 at a time in one garden in January.

71. Great Tit

Resident, breeder 100-1000

Similar comments to the Blue Tit. Keep up the feeding!

72. Nuthatch

Presumably resident, breeder 1-10?

Considering how noisy the Nuthatch is and the way it takes to peanut feeders I was very surprised not to have any records until January, when one (reliable) observer saw 6 in various parts of the Little Wood. As far as I know Nuthatches are fairly sedentary so they must be resident there, but in spite of regular walks in that area I have never seen or heard them. One in Shotesham Park in March was the only other record.

73. Treecreeper

Resident. Presumably breeder. 10-100?

Generally rather inconspicuous and often confined to mature woodland, the Treecreeper is not often seen. However 2 visited some mature Oaks on Priors Lane in the early winter and a couple were seen working up trees at Old Fall Farm. Impossible to estimate numbers.

74. Corn Bunting

Winter visitor

It was very pleasing to have a (reliable) record of 30+ feeding in Shotesham Park. This is another farmland species which is declining drastically in the UK.

75. Yellowhammer

Resident, breeder 10-100 and winter visitor

There were a number of records of winter flocks with number from about 12 to 50. Usually in mixed flocks with Greenfinches and Chaffinches but on one occasion they were with a group of Siskins at Baxters Lane. Several breeding pairs, taking advantage of our excellent mature hedges.

76. Chaffinch

Resident, breeder 10-100 and winter visitor

Records in every month including some fairly small winter flocks (up to 50) and a number of breeding pairs. Frequent visitor to gardens and bird tables

77 Brambling

Winter visitor

Just one record of a mixed flock of about 50 Brambling, Yellowhammer and Greenfinch at Old Hall Farm.

78. Greenfinch

Resident, breeder 10-100 and winter visitor

A common garden bird with records throughout the area and the year. Very fond of peanuts and sunflower seeds. Also a member of mixed winter flocks, though not in great numbers.

79. Siskin

Winter visitor

Most records were at one garden at Baxters Lane, with small numbers (3-6) paying occasional visits from October to January. Also a mixed flock of 14-16 Yellowhammers and Siskins on 25th in the same area.

80. Goldfinch

Resident and breeding

A familiar bird throughout the year but usually in small numbers.

81. Linnet

Resident, breeder 10-100 and possibly winter visitor

Several small breeding colonies in the old hedgerows. Maximum counts were 20 in October and January

82. Bullfinch

Resident, breeder 10-100? Maybe less

Only a few records throughout the year including at least one breeding pair. Have Bullfinches declined locally?

83. House sparrow

Resident, breeder 100-1000

Nationally the House Sparrow population has declined seriously. Here in Shotesham the picture seems to be mixed. We have some good local flocks, which are very loyal to their area and also many areas where a sparrow is a rare sight. My garden has a regular flock of 40+. This may be related to the fact that we provide a regular grain supply, which in theory at least is for the hens.

Large winter flocks on the stubble fields are a thing of the past.

84. Starling

Resident, breeder 100-1000

Said to be declining drastically across the country. It is difficult to know locally. There were plenty of records across the area all year round, although no mention of any winter roosts or particularly large winter flocks.

85. Jay

Resident, breeder 10-100

Regularly seen across the area in ones and twos.

86. Magpie

Resident, breeder 10-100

Regularly seen across the area in ones and twos and in family groups of up to 5 or 6.

87. Jackdaw

Resident, breeder and feeding visitor throughout the year

Usually seen in mixed flocks with Rooks. Often fly in from the east with Rooks in the early morning presumably from a roost outside of the parish. A mixed group of about 200 in a field near Saxlingham boundary in the winter was not unusual.

88. Rook

Resident, breeder 10-100

We have a couple of small rookeries and as mentioned above, have a good number of visitors from rookeries outside of the parish too.

89. Carrion Crow

Resident, breeder 10-100

Regularly seen across the area in ones and twos

90. Hooded Crow

Vagrant

One was seen (by a reliable observer) being mobbed by Rooks in a field near to Market Lane on 23rd February.

4.2 Wildflowers

188 species recorded

Name of family	Name of Species	Place
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Common	Botanical	Common	Botanical	"Stubbs Green"	St Mary's Church	Other
Buttercup	Ranunculaceae	Travellers Joy (Old Man's Beard)	Clematis vitalba			0
		Wood Anemone	Anemone nemorosa	0		
		Meadow buttercup	Ranunculus Acris	0	0	0
		Bulbous Buttercup	Ranunculus bulbosus	0		
		Dark Hair Crowfoot	Ranunculus trichophyllus	0		
		Celery Leaved Crowfoot	Ranunculus scleratus	0		
		Lesser Celandine	Ranunculus ficaria	0		0
		Marsh Marigold	Caltha palustris			0
		Winter Aconite	Eranthis hyemalis			0
Poppy	Papaveraceae	Common Poppy	Papaver rhoeas	0		0
		Greater Celandine	Chelidonium majus			0
Fumitory	Fumariaceae	Yellow Corydalis	Corydalis lutea			0
		Fumitory	Fumaria officinalis			0
Cabbage	Cruciferae	Water Cress	Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum	0		
		Winter Cress (Yellow Rocket)	Barbarea vulgaris	0		
		Lady's Smock	Cardamine pratensis	0		0
		Hairy Bittercress	Cardamine hirsuta	0		
		Coral Root	Cardamine bulbifera			0
		Dame's Violet	Hesperis matonalis	0		
		Garlic Mustard	Alliaria petiolata	0		0
		Charlock	Sinapsis arvensis	0		0
		Shepherd's Purse	Capsella bursa-pastoris	0		
Violet	Violaceae	Dog Violet	Viola canina	0		0
		Sweet violet (& white)	Viola odorata	0		0
		Field pansy	Viola arvensis	0		
Campion	Caryophyllaceae	White Campion	Silene alba	0		0
		Red Campion	Silene dioica	0		
		Ragged Robin	Lychnis flos-cuculi	0		
		Corncockle	Agrostemma githago		0	
		Common Mouse-ear	Cerastium fontanum	0	0	
		Chickweed	Stellaria media	0		0
		Greater Stitchwort	Stellaria holostea		0	0
		Lesser Stitchwort	Stellaria graminea	0		
St John's Wort	Hypericaceae	Hairy St John's Wort	Hypericum hirsutum	0		
Mallow	Malvaceae	Common Mallow	Malva Sylvestris	0		0
Geranium	Geraniaceae	Hedgerow (Pyrenean) Cranesbill	Geranium pyrenaicum	0	0	0
		Cut-leaved Cranesbill	Geranium dissectum	0	0	
		Small Flowered Cranesbill	Geranium pusillum	0		
		Dove's Foot Cranesbill	Geranium columbinum	0		
		Herb Robert	Geranium robertianum	0	0	0
Balsam	Balsaminaceae	Indian Balsam	Impatiens glandulifera			0
Spindle	Celastraceae	Spindle	Euonymus europaeus			0
Pea	Papilionaceae	Dyer's Greenweed	Genista Tinctoria			0
		Black Medick	Medicago lupulina	0		
		Red Clover	Trifolium pratense	0	0	0
		Sulphur Clover	Trifolium ochroleucon	0		

		Alsike Clover	Trifolium hybridum	0		
		White (Dutch) Clover	Trifolium repens	0		
		Hop Trefoil	Trifolium campestre	0		
		Lesser Yellow Trefoil	Trifolium dubium			0
		Bird's Foot Trefoil	Lotus corniculatus	0	0	0
		Smooth Tare	Vicia tetrasperma	0		
		Tufted Vetch	Vicia cracca	0		0
		Bush vetch	Vicia sepum	0	0	
		Common Vetch	Vicia sativa	0		
		(Yellow) Meadow Vetchling	Lathyrus pratensis	0	0	
Rose	Rosaceae	Meadowsweet	Filipendula ulmaria	0		0
		Salad Burnet	Poterium sanguisorba	0		
		Common Agrimony	Agrimonia eupatoria	0		0
		Barren Strawberry	Potentilla sterilis	0		
		Silverweed	Potentilla anserina	0		
		Creeping Cinquefoil	Potentilla reptans	0	0	0
		Bramble	Rubus fruticosus	0		
		Wood Avens	Geum urbanum	0		
		Water Avens	Geum rivale			0
		Mare's tail	Hippuris vulgaris	0		
Purple Loosestrife	Lythraceae	Purple Loosestrife	Lythrum salicaria	0		
Willowherb	Onagraceae	Rose Bay	Chamaenerion angustifolium	0		0
		Great Willow Herb	Epilobium hirsutum	0		0
		Enchanter's Nightshade	Circaea lutetiana	0		
Gourd	Cucurbitaceae	White Bryony	Bryonia dioica	0		
Carrot	Umbellifereae	Hemlock	Conium maculatum			0
		Alexanders	Smyrniolum olusatrum			0
		Narrow-leaved Water Parsnip	Berula erecta	0		
		Ground Elder	Aegopodium podagraria	0		0
		Chervil	Chaerophyllum temulentum	0		
		Cow Parsley	Anthriscus sylvestris	0	0	0
		Pepper Saxifrage	Silaum silaus	0		
		Angelica	Angelica sylvestris			0
		Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium	0	0	0
		Wild carrot	Daucus carota			0
		(Upright) Hedge Parsley	Torilis japonica	0		0
Ivy	Araliaceae	Ivy	Hedera helix		0	0
	Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle	Lonicera periclymenum	0		0
Bedstraw	Rubiaceae	Crosswort	Cruciata laevipes		0	
		Lady's Bedstraw	Galium verum	0		0
		Hedge Bedstraw	Galium mollugo	0		0
		Goose Grass (Cleavers)	Galium aparine	0	0	0
		Sweet Woodruff	Galium odoratum	0		
		Field Madder	Sherardia arvensis	0		
Teasel	Dipsaceae	Teasel	Dipsacus fullonum	0		0
		Field Scabious	Knautia arvensis	0		0
Daisy	Compositae	Hemp Agrimony	Eupatorium cannabinum			0
		Daisy	Bellis perennis	0	0	0
		Marsh Cudweed	Gnaphalium uliginosum	0		
		Fleabane	Pulicaria dysenterica	0		0
		Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	0	0	0

		Corn Chamomile	Anthemis arvensis	○		○
		(Sweet) Chamomile	Chamaemelum nobile	○		
		Ox-eye Daisy	Chrysanthemum leucanthemum	○	○	
		Tansy	Chrysanthemum vulgare	○		
		Scentless Mayweed (Chamomile)	Tripleurospermum maritimum	○		
		Pineappleweed	Matricaria matricarioides	○		
		Mugwort	Artemisia vulgaris			○
		Coltsfoot	Tussilago farfara	○		○
		Butterbur	Petasites hybridus	○		○
		Groundsel	Senecio vulgaris	○		○
		Oxford Ragwort	Senecio squalidus	○		
		Ragwort	Senecio jacobaea	○		○
		Common Burdock	Arctium pubens	○		
		Lesser Burdock	Arctium minus	○		
		Wetted Thistle	Carduus acanthoides	○		
		Spear Thistle	Cirsium vulgare		○	
		Marsh Thistle	Cirsium palustre	○		
		Meadow Thistle	Cirsium dissectum			○
		Creeping Thistle	Cirsium arvense		○	○
		Scottish (Cotton) Thistle	Onopordon acanthium	○		
		(Black) Knapweed	Centaurea nigra	○	○	○
		Chicory	Cichorium intybus	○		
		Nipplewort	Lapsana communis	○		
		Bristly Ox-tongue	Picris echioides	○		
		Smooth Hawk's Beard	Crepis capillaris	○		
		Orange Hawkweed	Hieracium aurantiacum			○
		Rough Hawkbit	Leontodon hispidus		○	
		Dandelion	Taraxacum officinale	○		○
		Prickly Sowthistle	Sonchus asper	○	○	○
		Perennial (corn) Sow Thistle	Sonchus arvensis	○		
Bellflower	Campanulaceae	Harebell	Campanula rotundifolia			○
Primrose	Primulaceae	Primrose	Primula vulgaris	○	○	○
		Cowslip	Primula veris	○	○	○
		False Oxlip	Primula vulgaris x veris			○
		Yellow Pimpernell	Lysimachia nemorum	○		
		Scarlet Pimpernell	Aragallis arvensis	○		○
Gentian	Gentianaceae	Common Centaury	Centaurium erythraea	○		
Borage	Boraginaceae	Vipers Bugloss	Echium vulgare	○		○
		Lesser Bugloss	Lycopsis arvensis			○
		Common forget-me-not	Myosotis arvensis			○
		Early Forget-me-not	Myosotis ramosissima	○		
Bindweed	Convolvulaceae	Great Bindweed	Calystegia silvatica	○		
		Lesser Bindweed	Convolvulus arvensis			○
Nightshade	Solanaceae	Woody nightshade	Solanum dulcamara	○		○
		Black Nightshade	Solanum nigra			
Figwort	Scrophulariaceae	Common Mullein	Verbascum thapsus			○
		Ivy-leaved Toadflax	Cymbalaria muralis			○
		Water Figwort	Scrophularia aquatica	○		○
		Figwort	Scrophularia nodosa	○		
		Common Field speedwell	Veronica persica	○		○
		Germander Speedwell	Veronica chamaedrys	○	○	

		Pink Water Speedwell	Veronica catenata	○		
		Thyme-leaved Speedwell	Veronica serpyllifolia	○		
		Red Bartsia	Odontites verna			○
Labiates	Labiataeae	Water Mint	Mentha aquatica			○
		Corn Mint	Mentha arvensis	○		
		Ground Ivy	Glechoma hederacea	○	○	○
		Meadow Clary	salvia pratensis	○		
		Self-heal	Prunella vulgaris	○	○	
		Wood (Hedge) Woundwort	Stachys sylvatica	○		○
		Marsh Woundwort	Stachys palustris	○		
		Field Woundwort	Stachys arvensis			○
		Horehound	Ballota nigra	○	○	○
		Purple Deadnettle	Lamium purpureum	○		
		White Deadnettle	Lamium album	○		○
		Bugle	Ajuga reptans	○		
Plantain	Plantaginaceae	Great Plantain	Plantago major		○	
		Hoary Plantain	Plantago media		○	
		Ribwort Plantain	Plantago lanceolata	○	○	○
Dock	Polygonaceae	Common Knotgrass	Polygon aviculae	○		
		Common Persicaria (Redshank)	Polygonum persicaria	○		
		Broad Leaved Dock	Rumex obtusifolius	○		○
		Curled Dock	Rumex crispus	○		
		Common Sorrel	Rumex acetosa	○	○	○
		Sheep's Sorrel	Rumex acetosella	○		
Mistletoe	Loranthaceae	Mistletoe	Viscum album			○
Spurge	Euphorbiaceae	Dog's Mercury	Mercurialis perennis	○	○	○
Hemp	Cannabinaceae	Hop	Humulus lupulus			○
Nettle	Urticaceae	Stinging nettle	Utrica dioica		○	○
Water Plantain	Alismataceae	Water Plantain	Alisma plantago-aquatica	○		
Orchid	Orchidaceae	Twayblade	Listera ovata			
		Pyramidal Orchid	Anacamptis pyramidalis			
		Early Purple Orchid	Orchis mascula			
		Heath spotted orchid	Dactylorhiza maculata			
		Common spotted orchid	Dactylorhiza fuchsii			
Daffodil	Amaryllidaceae	Snowdrop	Galanthus nivalus			○
Yam	Dioscoreaceae	Black bryony	Tamus communis	○		○
Lily	Liliaceae	Bluebell	Endymion non-scriptus	○		
Reed Mace	Typhaceae	Bulrush	Typha latifolia	○		
Bur-reed	Sparganiaceae	Branched Bur-reed	Sparganium emersum	○		
Arum	Aracea	Lords and ladies	arum maculata	○	○	○

4.3 Mammals

Fox

Seen regularly throughout the year.

Roe deer

Occasional sightings.

Muntjac deer

Occasional sightings.

Grey squirrel

Resident and familiar in the woods and gardens.

Weasel

Several records from around the parish.

Stoat

In January one was seen rolling a hen's egg about 20 yards across paving and taking it into a hole under the wall. Another One in February was eating a freshly killed blackbird.

Brown rat

Lots of individuals killed on the roads. 5 were found to have drowned in a bucket of water in a geese enclosure. The proverbial "drowned rats"?

Mink

Seen for the first time this year on the river. A maximum of 8 were at Shotesham Park in October.

Hedgehog

Seem to be holding their own in spite of the number of road casualties.

Rabbit

Another year of myxomatosis following a large increase in the population.

Hare

Numbers seemed low early in the year. The maximum count recorded at any time in the year was 4 in one field. 2 were seen "boxing" in January.

Field Mouse

Occasional records.

House Mouse

Occasional records, but a familiar and of course successful species.

Shrew

Occasional records. Mostly brought in by cats.

Pygmy shrew

One record.

Short tailed field vole

One corpse!

Moles

Common, though rarely seen.

Pippistrelle bat

This was the only species positively identified, mainly due to our lack of expertise. Other species are known to be around.

4.4 Butterflies

In spite of the fact that 2000 was not a good butterfly year, the following were all recorded in the

parish:

Wall

Speckled Wood

Gatekeeper

Meadow Brown

Ringlet

Painted Lady

Red Admiral

Small Tortoiseshell

Peacock

Comma

White Admiral

Common Blue

Holly Blue

Small Copper

Large White

Small White

Green Veined White

Orange Tip

Clouded Yellow

Brimstone

Small Skipper

Large Skipper

4.5 Dragonflies and Damselflies

A particularly poor dragonfly year only produced:

Emperor

Common Darter

Broad-bodied Chaser

Southern Hawker

Blue Damselfly (uncertain species)

Large Red Damselfly

4.6 Amphibians and Reptiles

Frog

Breeding in several ponds.

Toad

A few individuals noticed including, sadly, several road casualties.

Smooth Newt

Breeding in several ponds.

Crested Newt

Known to be in the area (protected species).

Slow worm

Occasional sighting near to St Mary's church.

Grass Snake

At least 2 seen, including a young snake swimming in the Beck.

Weather summary for each month

(With grateful thanks to Ed Howard for daily records throughout the year)

Basically – a wet and mild year!

October

A mild month throughout. The month started wet followed by 10 days which were dry with easterly winds. For the rest of the month the winds moved to SW with heavy rain on the 21st and 22nd.

Rainfall for month 60 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 5 to 12 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 11 to 18 °C

November

A dryer month with SW winds continuing until the 8th. This was followed by a colder spell for a few days with winds from the north, returning to the familiar mild SW for the last third of the month.

Rainfall for month 36 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 1 to 11 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 5 to 16 °C

December

A dry month generally except for 37mm of rain which fell in 4 days from the 11th to the 14th (as snow on the 13th)

Rainfall for month 48 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures -2 to 8 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 2 to 12 °C

January

A dry month. Mild, starting with two glorious sunny days on the 1st and 2nd to kick off the Millennium.

Rainfall for month 17 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures -2 to 9 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 4 to 11 °C

February

The month started with mild SW winds followed by a brief glimpse of winter with 2 days of frosts. Things soon warmed up again and we were back to 10°C by the 23rd

Rainfall for month 37 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures -2 to 6 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 6 to 10 °C

March

A very dry month and generally mild again after just a couple of frosty days early in the month. Temperatures up to 14 °C on the 8th.

Rainfall for month 11 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures -2 to 8 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 4 to 14 °C

April

Just 2 frosty days on the 5th and 6th. Then mild with a high of 17 °C on several days from the 19th onwards. Fairly wet throughout.

Rainfall for month 60 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures -2 to 10 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 4 to 17 °C

May

Dry for the first half of the month with temperatures climbing to 25 °C on the 16th. Then it rained for the rest of the month with 90mm falling in the last 2 weeks.

Rainfall for month 90 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 6 to 13 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 11 to 25 °C

June

A relatively dry and warm month, becoming extremely warm (31 °C) on the 19th.

Rainfall for month 25 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 6 to 17 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 15 to 31°C

July

A cool month and relatively dry. Most of the month's rain fell on just 3 wet days. A north wind kept temperatures down and several days only reached 12 °C.

Rainfall for month 62 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 10 to 15 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 13 to 21 °C

August

A decent month with SW winds keeping temperatures up in the low 20's most days. There were 6 days with rain giving 24 mm in all.

Rainfall for month 24 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 7 to 17 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 17 to 26 °C

September

Southerly winds (from SE to SW) kept temperatures up to moderate levels although it was cloudy throughout. Most of the rain fell on 5 wet days.

Rainfall for month 68 mm
Range of daily minimum temperatures 9 to 14 °C
Range of daily maximum temperatures 15 to 24 °C

The future

We are planning to continue meeting as a group and during the next year will be doing some detailed recording of particular areas, probably starting with the Common. We will also continue the work that has already started on recording the trees and hedgerows. It may be that we will be able to publish a supplementary report at some stage. If you are interested in natural history and would like to share in the activities of the group please contact me, Frank Mitchell at 8 The Grove, Shotesham. Telephone 558545.

Report on lower vertebrates

Thanks to Colin Purdom for supplying the following report.