

Hinderclay Fen Bird Report: 2007-2012

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LOHP Report, June 2012

Introduction

Hinderclay Fen is situated in north Suffolk along the Little Ouse River at OS grid reference TM025787. The site was notified as a SSSI following the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, but not re-notified following the 1985 amendment of the Act, due to dehydration, lack of management and the consequential loss of features of interest. Hinderclay Fen extends to 11.75 hectares and comprises a variety of habitats, wet fen meadow, alder carr, birch woodland, gorse scrub, patches of blackthorn, hawthorn and crab apple, oak woodland, heather, grass and lichen heaths. A former resident of Hinderclay village, Gyr Penn started management to remove scrub from the wet fen and dug pools to provide areas of open water. This restoration work was continued and extended by a group of volunteers centred on Hinderclay village and which was one of the founding groups of the LOHP in 2002. Water levels rose following closure of the water abstraction borehole near Redgrave and Lopham Fen NNR.

Bird records

This report presents bird records for Hinderclay Fen from several sources:

1. Bird ringing as part of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)'s Constant Effort Site (CES) monitoring scheme has taken place since 2007, complemented by some nest recording, as part of the BTO's Nest Records Scheme (NRS), and ringing of pulli in natural nests and nestboxes, as part of the Ringing Scheme co-ordinated by the BTO. The CES involves 12 visits annually between the start of May and end of August, timed to coincide with the bird breeding season. At Hinderclay Fen, fifteen mist nets are set along three parallel rides through the wet fen and peripheral willow and sallow scrub, and the nets are open during evening until dusk and early the following morning. The CES is run by the Little Ouse Ringing Group (LORG), formerly Market Weston Ringing Group (MWRG), the core members of which are also LOHP trustees and members. Data are presented for 2007 to 2011.
2. Hinderclay Fen was included in Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs) for the latest BTO Atlas (in prep) of breeding and wintering birds, fieldwork for which commenced in winter 2007/08, supplemented by *ad hoc* "roving" records.
3. Additional *ad hoc* records have been kept from frequent site visits.

Evidence of breeding status is presented for species listed on the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP, January 2011) and Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC species, Eaton et al. 2009) (Table 1). The most recent year and highest level breeding status recorded in the past 5 years are tabulated.

Appendix I contains CES totals for 2007 – 2011, Appendix II contains *ad hoc* records for the years from 2007 onwards, into 2012 (01/05/2007 to 31/05/2012), and Appendix III contains records from the Atlas TTVs and *ad hoc* "roving" records for all species recorded, with evidence of breeding as per the Atlas codes.

Table 1: Summary information on evidence of breeding (possible, probable, confirmed) for BAP and BoCC bird species on Hinderclay Fen for 2002 – 2011 inclusive

Species	BAP ¹	BoCC ²	Evidence ³	Year	Source ⁴	Comments
Grey Partridge	✓	Red	N	2009	<i>ad hoc</i>	
Barn Owl	✓	Amber	NE	2009	NRS	nestbox
Bullfinch	✓	Amber	FL	2008	CES	
Dunnock	✓	Amber	FL	2011	CES	
Song Thrush	✓	Red	FL	2011	CES	
Spotted Flycatcher	✓	Red	FL	2011	<i>ad hoc</i>	
Cuckoo	✓	Red	NE	2010	NRS	Reed Warbler host
Marsh Tit	✓	Red	FL	2009	NRS	nestbox
Willow Tit	✓	Red	I	2008	CES	Stage 3 BP female & CP male caught 03&05 May
Turtle Dove	✓	Red	S	2009	<i>ad hoc</i>	
Linnet	✓	Red	FL	2011	NRS	
Yellowhammer	✓	Red	I	2011	CES	Stage 5 BP 02/09/2011
Reed Bunting	✓	Amber	FL	2011	CES	

¹Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan, January 2011

²Birds of Conservation Concern, Eaton et al. 2009: Decline - Red > 50%; Amber - < 50% > 25%

³Evidence of breeding codes from BTO Atlas:

Possible breeder

H observed in suitable breeding Habitat

S Singing male

Probable breeder

P Pair in suitable nesting habitat

T permanent Territory (defended over at least one week)

D courtship and Display

N visiting probable Nest site

A Agitated behaviour

I brood patch of Incubating bird (from bird in the hand)

B nest Building or excavating nest-hole

Confirmed breeder

DD Distraction Display or injury feigning

UN Used Nest or eggshells found from this season

FL recently FLedged young or downy young

ON adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating Occupied Nest

FF adult carrying Faecal sac or Food for young

NE Nest containing Eggs

NY Nest with Young seen or heard

Non-breeder

F Flying over

M Migrant

U SUMmering non-breeder

⁴Source: Atlas/*ad hoc* records, CES/ringing, NRS

APPENDIX I

Table AI: Ringing totals (newly ringed + retraps/controls) for Hinderclay Fen, including CES and pulli

Species	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Sparrowhawk	0	3	0	0	1
Woodpigeon	0	0	1	1	0
Tawny Owl	0	1	1	1	0
Kingfisher	13	9	20	13	14
Green Woodpecker	2	0	1	3	0
Great spotted Woodpecker	1	0	0	0	1
Pied Wagtail	0	5	0	0	0
Wren	70	55	92	60	85
<i>Duncock</i>	28	10	13	28	24
Robin	34	23	35	35	42
Blackbird	24	24	38	22	36
<i>Song Thrush</i>	1	2	12	4	2
Sedge Warbler	5	21	53	58	89
Reed Warbler	149	122	76	66	163
Lesser Whitethroat	3	2	2	5	1
Whitethroat	1	3	10	20	16
Garden Warbler	12	2	1	7	8
Blackcap	31	38	69	81	124
Chiffchaff	54	68	103	150	90
Willow Warbler	10	18	12	43	36
Goldcrest	1	0	0	1	1
Long-tailed Tit	54	87	104	182	28
<i>Marsh Tit</i>	8	2	20	4	1
<i>Willow Tit</i>	0	4	0	0	0
Coal Tit	0	2	2	3	1
Blue Tit	44	90	85	147	53
Great Tit	25	52	50	73	60
Treecreeper	3	4	6	6	14
Jay	2	0	0	1	0
Chaffinch	0	2	7	3	4
<i>Linnet</i>	0	0	0	0	4
<i>Bullfinch</i>	14	10	13	5	2
Yellowhammer	0	1	0	0	1
<i>Reed Bunting</i>	8	14	9	15	21
Total	597	674	835	1038	922

Species in bold italics are Suffolk BAP species

Little Ouse Ringing Group

APPENDIX II

Appendix II: Hinderclay Fen ad hoc bird records 2007-2012 (01/05/2007 - 31/05/2012)

Separate Excel spreadsheet. BAP species are highlighted in bold font.

APPENDIX III

Appendix III: Atlas data for Hinderclay Fen, comprising Timed Tetrad Visits and Rovings for 2007 to 2009

Separate Excel spreadsheet. This Appendix covers the period in which TTVs included Hinderclay Fen. Other data, including records submitted as Atlas roving after this time, are included in Appendix II. BAP species are highlighted in bold font.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank other members of the Little Ouse Ringing Group, in particular Jacquie and Nigel Clark, for data contributed through the Constant Effort Site ringing at Hinderclay Fen.