

## Birds of the Parish 2022

600 bird boxes have now been put up in the citizen science project to encourage vulnerable bird species, forging important relationships with the landowners and farmers across West Norfolk. The bird's comings and goings, behaviour are recorded by ringing and support landowner in their work encouraging vulnerable species, grant applications and awards.

Even with the 600 nest boxes provided on the farms it was apparent that nest sites were still a premium when Blue tits took to laying in Great tit nests. Like a Cuckoo.

HP Avian Influenza, or Bird flu as it is commonly known, has been prevalent in the county and the studies provided a measure of how the bird population was responding. Rigorous sanitization and mitigation was initiated to help the birds in line with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) mandatory requirements.

Updates to land-owners on unexplained bird casualties were provided as well as *weights and conditions of birds as an early warning system.*

Spring saw peaks of 17 magnificent Red Kite at some places and they now roost on the edge of the village in Poplar trees.

The Red Kite's return to healthy numbers in Norfolk has been a huge success story. With numbers dangerously low across the UK in the 1980s, a gradual reintroduction of the raptor across the UK has been particularly successful in Norfolk. Nationwide, the Red Kite now has green conservation status, although it remains globally threatened and in a reversal of roles young chicks are taken under licence to help Spanish populations reboot.



Three decades ago and the fields around West Norfolk would have been home to hundreds of beautiful Lapwing. The birds have a green and purple iridescent plumage, distinctive crest and an immediately recognisable 'pee-wit' cry. Over the past few years, loss of habitat has led to a sharp decline in numbers and the farmland bird is now on the conservation red list. However, in Norfolk it

has enjoyed quite a return of late and they now nest again in some fields.



The evocative call of the Stone Curlew was heard



Picture above: A pair of Stone Curlew chicks lie hidden in a sugar beet field.

Long eared owls bred for the first time in seven years and nest platforms are being put out for them for 2023 to increase breeding success.

A male Woodlark started singing on 3 April from the same oilseed rape field that it has been observed in the previous year.

Tree Sparrows used the nest boxes for the first time and a Willow tit sang nearby but didn't breed.

House Sparrow sing their hearts out around the village with many people spending a fortune feeding them and providing nest sites. As a result this species can be seen in flocks of upto 60 birds in the parish while they are completely absent from former residencies in Norfolk.

"Many thanks to landowners and all those who have helped, encouraged, sponsored the bird nest and recording activities. Here's to a wonderful and exciting 2023"