

SUMMER

2010

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As we approach the end of the first year of trading for Oriole Birding, we would like to say a huge thank you to all who have travelled with us and for helping us to succeed beyond our wildest imagination. In fact one of the reasons that this newsletter hasn't appeared before now is that we simply haven't been able to find time to fit it in to our hectic schedule, so apologies if we have missed out your particular holiday in our review of the year until now.

We hope that you have all enjoyed your holidays as much as we have had in birding with you and look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones again in 2011.

Good Birding  
Neil & Ashley

# FEATURED 2011 TOUR

## ADVENTURES ON THE HIGH SEAS

### BOB FLOOD REPORTS BACK FROM OUR REVAMPED MADEIRA TOUR



I have just returned from a truly wonderful seven days birding trip to Madeira, effectively a reconnaissance trip for next year's Oriole Birding tour in May. This trip promises some of the world's rarest seabird species, visits to seabird breeding colonies, three land endemic ticks, and much more. The setting is a dream location with a beautiful mountainous terrain and a gorgeous climate. The focal point of the trip was three short range pelagic trips in search of the enigmatic Zino's Petrel. The chances of seeing a Zino's Petrel at sea is high following a collaborative research program between Hadoram Shirihai and our hosts Madeira Wind Birds. At sea hotspots have been discovered and we visited three of these. I have rarely felt as excited as on the afternoon of the first pelagic trip. We set off to the north at 2 pm and as we steamed out we encountered rafts of Cory's Shearwater [common throughout]. We found a Desertas Petrel, one of the main target birds, sat amongst the rafts then flying off giving excellent flight views. We saw three more Desertas Petrels on this trip and Desertas Petrel on each of the following two trips, several at point blank range. Most performed superbly for photographers. Soon we were setting up a chum slick. I was really impressed with the quantity and quality

of the chum that made for three incredibly successful pelagic trips. Very soon Bulwer's Petrels inspected the slick and were present throughout making spectacular close passes. Storm-petrels performed well with one or more of White-faced, Madeiran, Wilson's and European Storm-petrels present most of the time. This provided a great opportunity to hone storm-petrel identification skills. Sandwiches were provided at 16.00 and dinner at 19.00. There was hardly time to tuck in with new birds arriving from time to time. Just as dinner was served two adult-looking Sabine's Gulls turned up and spent the next half-hour flying around within arms-reach or sat on the sea nearby. I made a second attempt to eat my dinner but dropped everything when a Zino's Petrel flew in. I felt shivers run down my spine as I watched this individual from a critically endangered population of perhaps 200-300 birds. We arrived back at the marina at about 10 pm still buzzing. Could it get any better? The next day we steamed southwest of the Desertas Islands. Again we saw Desertas Petrels and White-faced Storm-petrels graced the waters around us for most the afternoon and evening. Bulwer's Petrels were with us most of the time and they seemed fearless of the boat. Photographers were very busy. At about 7.30 pm the incredible happened. I was watching a flock of 30+ European Storm-petrels when I noticed a dark storm-petrel; a quick look and I shouted, 'Swinhoe's Storm-petrel.' Incredibly this event was recorded on video and you can watch it at [http://www.madeirabirds.com/swinhoes\\_storm\\_petrel\\_off\\_madeira](http://www.madeirabirds.com/swinhoes_storm_petrel_off_madeira) The Swinhoe's fed in the slick at close range for 45 minutes! Watch out for the article in *Birding World*. Zino's Petrel one evening, Swinhoe's Petrel the next evening; probably the two most enigmatic North Atlantic seabirds within 24 hours of each other! Nowhere else in the Western Palearctic could this have happened! The third pelagic trip provided incredible views of White-faced and Madeiran Storm-petrels, a Desertas Petrel flew around us for several minutes, and numerous Cory's Shearwaters. Manx Shearwaters were seen on each trip. Although we did not see Barolo's Shearwater on the pelagic trips, several were seen from headland watches and off the Porto Santo ferry. We called into the Desertas Islands after the Swinhoe's to listen to Cory's Shearwater, Bulwer's Petrel and Madeiran Storm-petrel calling at night at their nest sites. The pilgrimage to the Zino's Petrel colony later in the week was a must. The setting is spectacular. At dusk we walked the trail to Pico de Areirio [20 minutes]. We were above the cloud cover with several other peaks towering out of the clouds, all illuminated by moonlight. When dark fell the mournful calls of Zino's were heard and shadowy shapes seen. I took my night vision optics and enjoyed views of Zino's overhead in courtship flight. No words could capture the magic of this evening. A day's land birding on Madeira makes a pleasant break from the excitement at sea. The unique laurel cloud forests provide a fine setting in which to look for the three main land endemics. An early morning trip to Ribeiro Frio beating the tourists is rewarded with Trocaz Pigeon, Madeiran Firecrest and Madeiran Chaffinch. Spectacled Warbler was readily found on the island along with local forms of Common Buzzard, Common Kestrel, Robin, Blackcap and others. Berthelot's Pipits were easy in suitable locations and Plain and Pallid Swifts were seen from time to time, over hill tops and town. Canaries were everywhere and Waxbills were found. Funchal harbour provided Roseate Terns as expected. A day trip to Porto Santo was great fun with more opportunities to observe seabirds from the ferry including good views of Barolo's Shearwater. Land birds included Rock and Spanish Sparrows. The Oriole Birding tour to Madeira in 2011 promises to be 'bird-filled and fun-packed.' The tour includes the unique opportunity to watch rare and enigmatic seabirds at an unbelievably close range. I simply cannot wait to return to Madeira next year and invite you to join me and to become one of the few people ever to have seen Zino's Petrel at sea. Places are limited to eight, so to join Bob for this superb tour on **28th May – 4th June 2011**, please book early. Tour Cost **£1599.00**. Single Room Supplement **£100.00**.

# IN THE FIELD

**JANUARY** saw us head off to **The Netherlands** unaware that we were in the grip of the coldest winter for over thirty years. Naturally, this meant that the vast numbers of wildfowl were somewhat reduced and that many areas were frozen solid, though we still enjoyed some large flocks of **Barnacle, Pink-footed** and **Greater White-fronted Geese**, while **Whooper Swans, Smew, Common Goldeneye** and **Greater Scaup** were among the more interesting species of diving ducks still present in good numbers and a small flock of **Tundra Bean Geese** was an unexpected bonus. Exceptionally close **Hen Harriers, Merlin** and **Short-eared Owl** provided the main raptor interest, while **Crested** and **Bearded Tits, Short-toed Treecreeper, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** were the principal passerines and a stunning and very showy overwintering **Baltimore Oriole** got the trip to a cracking start.

Our **Norfolk Winter Wonderland** tour always produces the goods and this year was no exception with the weather turning out to be much better than forecast and birds in profusion amid stunning winter scenery. The excellent Whitlingham Lane Country Park was one of our top birding spots this winter, with a huge selection of wildfowl utilizing the unfrozen water including **Greater Scaup, Smew, Goosander** and **Great Northern Diver**. Passerines were hard to come by in woodland areas though we did locate **Hawfinches** and **Common Crossbills**; it was the coastal areas again that came into their own with flocks of **Snow Bunting, Twite, Shore Lark** and **Water Pipit**. Elsewhere flocks of geese were as ever impressive, and supplement by scarcer species such as **Taiga Bean Goose**, while wild swans were easily seen this year and the **Common Cranes** in the Broads gave great views. Throw in magical moments with **Hen Harriers** and some lovely **Long-tailed Ducks**, and this was a very successful tour!

**FEBRUARY** saw our first ever visit to the **United Arab Emirates** and despite some unseasonal weather at times, we enjoyed some high quality birding and great fun. Our man on the ground Neil Tovey did a fantastic job in ensuring that very little was missed and as ever, we contributed to the local interest by finding the fifteenth **Wire-tailed Swallow** for the region and sixth **Black-legged Kittiwake**, which actually caused more interest among the locals!! **Greater Spotted** and **Eastern Imperial Eagles** are much sought after birds here and we had fantastic views of both, while a fine supporting cast included **White-cheeked, Swift** and **Lesser Crested Terns, Menetries, Clamorous Reed, Hume's Leaf and Syke's Warblers, Collared Kingfisher, Lichtenstein's** and **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Egyptian Nightjar**, a huge **Pharaoh Eagle Owl, Shikra, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Indian Roller, Variable, Red-tailed** and **Hume's Wheatears**, thousands of **Socotra Cormorants, Sooty and Caspian Gulls** and **Black-crowned Finch Lark**. An excellent selection of shorebirds included large numbers of much wanted **Crab Plovers, Terek Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, Marsh Sandpipers** and **Indian Pond** and **Striated Herons**. The second of our **Norfolk Winter Wonderland** tours was also a great success, and a similar spread of birds was noted to that seen on the January tour. Some of the different species noted included **Green Sandpiper, Velvet Scoter, Greater Snow Goose, Mediterranean Gull, Red-necked Grebe, Great Bittern** and **Rough-legged Buzzard**. Two customized Norfolk tours during February also scored highly, with a female **Ring-necked Duck** appearing on the first trip and the second included incredible views of a family of **Otters** at Strumpshaw Fen which disturbed a **Great Bittern** out of the reeds in front of the hide!

**MARCH** and both of us were in **Israel** for our annual jaunt to the renowned migration area around Eilat. Numbers of birds were fewer than usual this year, but almost all specialities were present and views of **Nubian Nightjar** were the best ever. As ever raptors proved popular with several male **Pallid Harriers, Booted, Short-tailed, Steppe** and **Lesser Spotted Eagles**, and Black Kites all passed in reasonable numbers, while **Barbary Falcon, Long-legged Buzzard, Osprey** and **Lesser Kestrel** were also noted. **White-tailed** and **Caspian Plovers** were the wader highlights, while good numbers of **Cream-coloured Coursers, Spotted Sandgrouse, Common Cranes** and **McQueen's Bustards** were seen during our day in the Negev Desert. **Menetries Warbler** was the pick of the passerines, six **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** added a welcome splash of colour, while the ubiquitous **Little Green Bee-eaters, Namaqua Dove, Desert** and **Trumpeter Finches, Ruppell's Warbler, Pied Kingfisher, Little Green Bee-eaters, Masked Shrike, Bluethroat, Palestine Sunbird** and **Blackstart** were as popular as ever, and in a good year, we had superb views of **Temminck's Horned** and **Thick-billed Larks**. The **Norfolk Brecks** and **Coast** tour at the end of the month allowed a small group the chance to catch up with some great birds as many of the wintering species such as **Hawfinch** and **Shore Lark** were still around. In addition, a handsome **Glaucous Gull** put in an appearance and we also saw **Firecrest** and **Northern Goshawk** down in Thetford Forest.

**APRIL** literally left us under a cloud for much of the month as the Icelandic Volcanic Ash cloud threatened to derail the holiday plans of several groups. However, we were lucky and ultimately no disruption was involved to any of our tours. **Northern Cyprus** is a wonderful destination and once again, a fine selection of birds and wildlife were recorded. The endemic **Cyprus Pied Wheatear** and **Cyprus Warbler** are always popular and were present in good numbers, but it is the migration here that really sets the pulses racing and this year provided some superb birding as birds passed in very good numbers. **European Roller, European Bee-eater, Red-footed Falcon, Turtle Dove, Alpine Swift, Red-rumped Swallow, Greater Short-toed Lark, Red-backed Shrike, Yellow Wagtail, Eurasian Hobby, Glossy Ibis, Spur-winged Plover, Garganey, Little Stint, Ruff**, were the most prominent migrants, while a fine selection of other highlights included **Tawny** and **Red-throated Pipits, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, White Stork, Lesser Grey Shrike, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Black Francolin, Eleonora's Falcon, Masked Shrike, Barred Warblers, Pallid Harriers, White-winged Black Terns, Little Crake, Little Bittern, Collared** and **Semi-collared Flycatchers** and **Bonelli's Eagle**, all of which goes to show what a splendid tour this is.

Our **Speyside** tour did get slightly affected towards the end with participants unable to fly back to London, but hopefully the wonderful wildlife and spectacular setting of snow topped mountains in clear blue skies helped to make up for the inconvenience. Grouse are always among the most wanted species on this tour, but they can be tricky, so it was a relief when **Capercaillie, Rock Ptarmigan** and **Black** and **Red Grouse** were all seen early in the tour, as were **Golden** and **White-tailed Eagles**, as well as the finding of two superb **White-billed Divers**. Good numbers of **Long-tailed Duck, Velvet Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Slavonian Grebes** and **Twite** were also noted, while other notable species included immaculately breeding plumaged **Red-throated, Black-throated** and **Great Northern Divers, Snow Buntings, Ring Ouzel** and **Osprey**, while **Crested Tit, Scottish Crossbill** rounded the Scottish part of the tour nicely. Back at Leighton Moss, **Bearded Tit, Spotted Redshank, Little Egret** and several **Marsh Harriers** completed an excellent tour.

**Extremadura** is one of Europe's most beautiful and unspoilt regions which as well as the superb birding on the doorstep, allows participants to enjoy the wonderful home cooking and wines at our small hotel. Raptors always feature highly on this tour and this year provided a fine selection including **Black-shouldered Kites, Lesser Kestrel, Griffon, Egyptian** and **Black Vultures, Red** and **Black Kites, Booted** and **Short-toed Eagles, Osprey, Marsh** and **Montagu's Harriers**, while other notable soaring birds included **Great White Egret** and **Black** and **White Storks. European Bee-eaters, Common Hoopoe, European Roller** and **Golden Oriole** provided dazzling splashes of colour, while other notable species included **Collared Pratincole, Savi's, Great Reed** and **Spectacled Warblers, Purple Swamp-hen, Little Bittern, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Gull-billed Tern, Azure-winged Magpie**, and of course **Great Bustard**. Add to this wonderful displays of wild flowers and you can see why this tour is always so popular.

Neil spent much of **MAY** in the superb migration area of Beidaihe in **China**. With such a long haul destination, many of the species are new to the group, so highlights were many. Very good numbers of dazzling **Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian Blue Robin, Yellow-rumped, Mugimaki** and **Taiga Flycatchers** were present, while a fine selection of warblers included many **Yellow-browed, Pallas's, Arctic, Eastern Crowned, Thick-billed, Black-crowned Reed, Dusky, Lanceolated** and **Two-barred Greenish** as well as a few **Radde's, Yellow-streaked, Pale-legged, Chinese** and **Claudia's Leaf Warblers**. Thrushes are always popular and we did exceptionally well this year as good numbers of several species were present including many **Siberian, Eye-browed, Dusky** and **White's** along with **Chinese Song Thrush, White-throated Rock, Grey-backed, Grey-sided** and a cracking **Naumann's**. A long list of other interesting passerines included gorgeous **Elegant, Siberian Meadow, Pallas's Reed** and **Chestnut Buntings**, a stunning male **Blue** and **White Flycatcher, Crested Kingfisher**, a rare **Grey-crowned Warbler, Black** and **Hair-crested Drogos, Red-flanked Bluetail, Blunt-winged Warbler, Russet Sparrows** and **Chinese Nuthatch**. As ever shorebirds were a real feature of this tour and good numbers of stunningly plumaged **Pacific Golden Plover, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed, Curlew** and **Marsh Sandpipers** were alongside fewer but none the less attractive **Great Knot, Far Eastern Curlew, Grey-headed Lapwing, Lesser** and **Greater Sand Plovers** but the highlights were undoubtedly **Long-billed Plover, Swinhoe's Snipe** and at least three stunning **Ibisbill, Brown Hawk** and **Oriental Scops Owl** gave excellent views, as did **Indian Cuckoo, Yellow-legged Buttonquail, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Black-capped Kingfisher, Saunder's Gulls, Grey Nightjar** and **Swinhoe's Egret**, while **Black-naped Oriole, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Oriental Turtle Dove** and **Chinese Pond Heron** were common.

**May** of course is not just about one tour and participants on our **Norfolk Spring Migration** tour were treated to fantastic birding. Numbers of migrants were quite good and while highlights are too numerous to list in full, we saw some great birds including **Ring Ouzel, Nightingale, Temminck's Stint** [found by our group], **Garganey, Little Gull, Dartford Warbler, Red Kite, Common Crane, Stone Curlew, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Common Redstart, Common Crossbill, Firecrest, Montagu's Harrier, Wood Lark and Tree Pipit!**

Later in the month the six day **Norfolk Complete Tour** recorded all of the target breeding species except Honey Buzzard, plus a good selection of migrants including **Grasshopper Warbler, Red-necked Grebe, Curlew and Wood Sandpipers, Garganey, European Nightjar, Temminck's Stint and Eurasian Spoonbill**, plus a singing male **White-spotted Bluethroat** which will surely remain one of the birds of the year for many.

Rounding off the month, the first of two **North East England** tours was a resounding success with **Icterine Warbler** and **Red-backed Shrike** supplementing a wealth of seabirds including the elegant **Roseate Tern. Black Grouse** were seen well on both tours and while we didn't make it out to Coquet Island on the second trip, we did note another **Red-backed Shrike**, unseasonal **Glaucous Gull** and had superb views of a **Eurasian Woodcock** out in the open with a well grown youngster. A singing male **Marsh Warbler** on the last day, and a **Long-eared Owl** perched on a fencepost in broad daylight, were two of the highlights of the spring on this ever excellent tour. next year!

**JUNE** is here, so it must be **Poland!!** Despite higher than average numbers of mosquitoes this year, we enjoyed some fabulous birding and much better weather than last year. Eight species of woodpecker included superb views of **White-backed, Middle Spotted, Three-toed, Syrian, Grey-headed and Wryneck**, while this year was particularly memorable for the huge numbers of **White-winged Black Terns** present. **Great Snipe** put on a superb show with at least nine birds on the lek, **Hazel Grouse** was a bonus bird as June is not the best time of year for them, while **River, Aquatic, Icterine, Barred, Savi's and Marsh Warblers** all showed well and we were incredibly lucky to find an extremely showy **Corn Crane** that allowed us full views as it ran around a field calling before it flew straight towards us – amazing!! A stunning male **Citrine Wagtail** showed very well, as did a singing male **Ortolan Bunting, Thrush Nightingale, Red-breasted Flycatcher** and **White-spotted Bluethroat** while numerous **Common Rosefinch, Golden Oriole, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Col-lared Flycatcher, Red-backed Shrike, White Stork and Hawfinch** were popular with the group. Common Cranes, Black Stork, Montagu's Harriers, our first European Roller and a wide variety of Lepidoptera, Odonata and mammals completed the picture.

Our inaugural **South Wales Summer Wildlife** tours were a tremendous success with a great variety of species seen. **European Honey Buzzard, Peregrine, Little Ringed Plover, Dartford Warbler** and **Red-billed Chough** provided the birding highlights, while a wide selection of other taxa included **Bottle-nosed Dolphins, Atlantic Grey Seal, High Brown, Dark Green and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, Grayling, Golden-ringed, Emperor and Hairy Dragonflies**, the rare **Southern Damsel fly and Fen, Early Marsh, Southern and Northern Marsh, Common and Heath Spotted and Pyramidal Orchids, Broad-leaved Wintergreen, Marsh Helleborine**, the very rare **Sea Stock and Ivy Broomrape** among others.

As ever **Mull & Iona** is a popular tour and this year was blessed with good weather too enabling fantastic views of **White-tailed and Golden Eagles** at eyries, while **Osprey, Black Guillemot, Hen Harrier, Twite, Common Redpoll, Manx Shearwaters, Great Skua, Dark Green Fritillary, Keeled Skimmer, Northern Marsh Orchid** and several **Otters** providing a superb supporting cast to the raptors.

Our **Norfolk Rare Breeders** tours as ever provided our groups with the opportunity to catch up with some of the UK's rarest breeding birds in one weekend. **Golden Oriole, Montagu's Harriers, European Nightjar, Wood Lark, Bearded Tit, Pied Avocet, Great Bittern, Firecrest, Stone Curlew, Dartford Warbler, Eurasian Hobby** and **European Honey Buzzard** can all be expected and with the exception of the latter, our groups enjoyed superb views of them all again this year.

**ICELAND** in late June and early July is a wonderful place to be and our tour this year enjoyed some really spectacular wildlife. Cetaceans are always high on the must see list here and they didn't disappoint as a large pod of **Orcas** were watched for over an hour and we also had close up views of **Sperm and Minke Whales, White-beaked Dolphins and Harbour Porpoise**, while other mammals included **Field Mouse and Atlantic Grey Seals**. The birding was as ever brilliant with mind boggling numbers of **Arctic Terns, Northern Fulmars, Atlantic Puffins, Common Eider and Black-legged Kittiwake**, while smaller numbers of the attendant **Arctic and Great Skuas, Black and Brunnich's Guillemots, and Glaucous and Iceland Gulls** and a lone **Pomarine Skua** represent the seabirds. Water-fowl such as **Great Northern and Red-throated Divers, Slavonian Grebes, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, Northern Pintail and Greater Scaup** but its **Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye** that are the real prizes and we see good numbers of them both including a single flock sixty five drakes of the latter alongside numerous **Whooper Swans and Pink-footed Geese**. Everywhere you go in Iceland there are the cries of beautifully plumaged waders and **Black-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Snipe, European Golden Plover, Eurasian Curlew, European Oystercatcher, Common Redshank, Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel and Purple Sandpiper** were recorded in many places, while the lakes hold breeding and very tame **Red-necked Phalaropes** which were present in good numbers and in resplendent breeding dress. **Snow Bunting, Common Redpoll, Redwing and Northern Wheatear** were the passerine highlights while raptors totalled a couple of magnificent **Gyr Falcons, Merlin** and **Short-eared Owl**. As if this wasn't enough, the amazing scenery, geological, geographical and historical interest and fine, clean air, all go to make this one of the most enjoyable tours available.

Finally as we head into **JULY** and go to print with this newsletter as well as add the finishing touches to our new brochure, which we hope will be available as usual during late August, Ashley has just returned from an absolutely superb tour to **The New Forest** in the company of 'bugging' expert Adrian Riley. Mainly focusing on Butterflies, Dragonflies and Damselflies, this tour also scored highly with birds noting **Dartford Warbler, Northern Goshawk, Honey Buzzard, Wood Warbler** and huge numbers of **Common Redstarts**. The weather helped us immensely to connect with all our target insects, including **Southern, Small Red and Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies, Common Hawker, Downy Emerald, Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Beautiful Demoiselle and Keeled Skimmer**, while butterflies were represented by **Dark Green and Silver-washed Fritillaries, Purple Emperor, Marbled White, White Admiral and both Purple and White-letter Hairstreaks**. We strongly recommend you read the full tour report on our website for this inaugural trip, and book early for what we hope will be a popular return visit next year!



# MYSTERY BIRD COMPETITION

The prize for the lucky winner of this issue's mystery bird competition is a signed copy of James McCallum's beautifully illustrated book *Arctic Flight* which encapsulates James' time spent on a remote research station in deepest

Photograph Soner Bekir



Siberia. Entries are by email only at [info@oriolebirding.com](mailto:info@oriolebirding.com).

The judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

## TOUR AVAILABILITY UPDATE

We still have limited availability for most tours this coming autumn and winter.

Regular updates are posted on the **Latest News** section of our website [www.oriolebirding.com](http://www.oriolebirding.com) so please keep checking if you're looking for a holiday or mini break.

Current availability on guaranteed departures is as follows:

Norfolk Shorebirds 22nd - 27th August - Two Places

Norfolk Autumn - Full [contact us for information on extra dates]

Fair Isle 10th - 19th September - Three Places

The Gambia 26th November - 3rd December - Two Places

Norfolk Late Migrants 31st October - 5th November - Two Places

Hungary Autumn 23rd - 27th October - Three Places

West Cornwall - Full [contact us for information on extra dates]

# BETTER BIRDING – AUTUMN 2010

The return passage of waders through our coastal wetlands and inland water bodies is just getting under way as we head towards mid-July, and believe it or not this southbound movement marks the start of the Autumn migration before we've hardly had the chance to write up our notes from the Spring!

Non-breeding waders, particularly of species such as Red Knot, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Spotted Redshank and Green Sandpiper make up the bulk of these early migrants, and the latter three species in particular can still be in breeding plumage giving you a great chance to catch up with them in all their finery. Many of these birds are first-summers however, so expect a confusing array of plumages among any flocks you find and bear in mind that some could be completely in non-breeding dress.



Adult Non-Breeding Curlew Sandpiper Paul Roberts



Juvenile Curlew Sandpiper Barry Stewart

Dunlin flocks will build at coastal sites such as Cley and Titchwell this month, and give the observer the chance to pick out an adult Curlew Sandpiper. Be sure not to overlook this elegant wader, with bill, legs, neck and body all slightly longer than its commoner cousin, often with just a splash of red left on the belly at this time of year. Be mindful though, of the larger and longer billed races of Dunlin which can pass through among nominate *schinzii*, and confuse the unwary observer!

So Oriole Birding recommends you check your tide times and get out there, even though it is mid-summer, you might just be in for a treat.

If you get bogged down with your wader identification, don't despair! We still have spaces available on our forthcoming **Norfolk Shorebirds** tour at the end of August, so why not give us a call!