

WEDNESDAY 23RD MAY: A light southerly wind and warm sunny weather prevailed for our day at Spurn Head. The walk from the observatory down to Chalk Bank and the heligoland trap produced a good selection of species, the highlight being the gathering of summer plumaged waders on the shore at high tide. These included c50 stunning Grey Plover, 500+ Sanderling, c1000 Dunlin, c30 Turnstone, c500 Bar-tailed Godwit and 4 Whimbrel. Migrants noted along the point included 25+ Common Whitethroat, 6 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Greenland Wheatear and 2 smart Spotted Flycatchers. 3 Little Tern and 3 Common Scoter were also noted, and an enormous hatch of millions of brown-tailed moth caterpillars were doing their best to destroy the vegetation! After lunch, we wandered down to Beacon Ponds where a Lesser Whitethroat was feeding along the lane and Tree Sparrow and Sand Martin were also seen. At the ponds, a Little Egret was present along with several pairs of Little Terns and our first Sandwich Terns. En route back to West Carlton, a stop by the Out Newton wind farm produced Yellow Wagtail and Corn Bunting, while a pair of Tawny Owls gave brilliant views around the farm after dinner this evening!

THURSDAY 24TH MAY: Sunny spells and a W breeze made for pleasant conditions for our walk around Flamborough Head this morning. Seabirds around the head included our first PUFFINS, Guillemot, Razorbill, Gannet, Fulmar, Shag and Kittiwake. The fields by the head held large numbers of Skylark and Linnet, with 6 Wheatear and 5+ Common Whitethroat also noted. Willow Warbler and 3 Yellow Wagtail were noted on the walk, with close up views of nesting Fulmar and a superb female BLACK REDSTART found by the old lighthouse being highlights of the morning. The Redstart performed very well as it flitted along the walls of a derelict building in the sunshine. After lunch we made our way down to the cliffs at RSPB Bempton reserve, and spent time admiring the thousands of seabirds present. Particularly good views were had of PUFFIN, Razorbill, Gannet and bridled Guillemot, while Willow Warbler, Tree Sparrow and Common Whitethroat were among passerines noted. On our way home, 2 Great Crested Grebe were added to the list at Hornsea Mere.

FRIDAY 25TH MAY: Driving north to Co Durham today we headed through the belt of rain affecting southern Britain and into sunny weather to its north. Our first stop at Widdybank Fell, amid some of the most beautiful scenery in England, we took a walk to look for breeding waders on the moor. Lapwing, Redshank and Curlew were all very numerous and we also had good views of Common Sandpiper, Grey Wagtail and DIPPER on the stream. In the Langdon Beck area, the highlight of our day came in the form of 7 superb cock BLACK GROUSE in the meadows, while nearby on the moorland, 3 RED GROUSE were soon added to our growing trip list. Our final port of call before heading north again to our hotel in Rothbury, Northumberland, was the beautiful Tunstall Reservoir. A walk through the oak woodland here proved productive as always and the highlight was the stunning close range views we obtained of two male WOOD WARBLERS, singing and chasing each other around just inches away at times! Our attention was only diverted when a smart male COMMON REDSTART flicked into view on an open branch before disappearing into the trees once more. Marsh Tit, Great-spotted Woodpecker, 2 Spotted Flycatcher and Common Sandpiper were also noted, with one group member picking up a Kingfisher.

SATURDAY 26TH MAY: One of the best days in the field of 2007 today, with our morning in the beautiful Harthope valley culminating in the afternoon with a magical trip to the Farne Islands. The Harthope always produces good birds, and this year was no exception. The alder woodland held 4 Treecreeper, Garden Warbler, Cuckoo, Siskin and Spotted Flycatcher, and in the open areas we soon added 5 Stonechat and 3 WHINCHAT, 4 ad and young RED GROUSE, Sparrowhawk, Grey Wagtail, Willow Warbler, Sand Martin, Raven and Common Buzzard. A MERLIN was seen circling distantly over the hillside and a male RING OUZEL was then located on a distant hillside. However, a calling bird indicated one much closer and a superb singing male was located in a silver birch tree nearby – it was while watching this bird that a displaying SHORT-EARED OWL flapped into view in the background and capped off a brilliant two hours birdwatching. At Seahouses on the coast, our first Common Eider and Rock Pipit were noted along with Ringed Plover and Turnstone, and after lunch we boarded 'Glad Tidings' for our 2.5 hr trip round the Farne Islands. After sailing round the Longstone lighthouse, visiting the seal colony and the impressive stacks of Staple Island, all bulging with nesting seabirds, we docked at Inner farne for an hour ashore. As always, the incredible experience of the Arctic Tern colony, along with close views of Guillemot, Razorbill, Puffin, Kittiwake, Shag, Eider, Common and Sandwich Terns, some at touching distance, was enjoyed by all.

SUNDAY 27TH MAY: We had a great start to the day and end to the week with super views of a pair of LESSER SCAUP this morning on Creswell Pond. We obtained good views from the roadside of these American vagrants as they fed with Tufted Ducks on the north pool. 5 Little Gulls were also present with Shoveler, Wigeon, Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting and Wheatear also seen. At nearby East Chevington, a good selection included Garden Warbler, Willow Warbler, Stonechat, Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler, Fulmar, 2 Arctic Tern, 2 Common Tern, 20+ sandwich Tern, Whimbrel and 2 Great Crested Grebe. Unfortunately, our boat trip to Coquet Island was cancelled due to strong winds, though a seawatch from the beach provided distant views of the the Roseate Terns. 4 Manx Shearwater and a Red-throated Diver were also seen by some. A stop in at Hauxley reserve produced no new birds but Tree Sparrow was seen and several Northern Marsh Orchid were in flower.