



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK BRECKLAND & COASTAL
2ND – 5TH MARCH 2022

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THURSDAY 3RD MARCH – *Fine and dry with sunny spells, 11C*

We had a last minute change of plan for today over breakfast, as the forecast for today and tomorrow had now switched places overnight and it appeared the best of the sunshine and slightly warmer temperatures would be today. So it was straight into the forest after breakfast, not far from our accommodation base, to go on the hunt for **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**. The riverside walk down produced a singing male **Grey Wagtail**, and lots of Redwing and Siskin were about – plus a lot of birdwatchers! We bypassed the main crowd and headed a bit further downstream, as no-one was currently watching the birds, and we wanted to check the spot where the Otters had been showing recently. It was all quite both on the river and among the trees though, but a shout soon went up from the assembled crowd back upstream and so we hot-footed it back there as quickly as we could, given the mud! A Female **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was showing in the alders across the river, but it disappeared quickly with only Ashley having glimpsed it and a big flush of Redwing going up confused the picture and we lost it. Thankfully, about fifteen minutes later, it flew across the river to our side and called, before flying back over again and perching nicely in the very top twigs of a tree so we could get the scope on her and clearly see her ladder-back and tiny bill. Eventually she flew back to our side again and this time was followed by the male, and some excellent close views followed of the **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** pair together, with calling, drumming and excavating by the male. They were probably on view on and off for about fifteen minutes, so all in all a very good showing.

Back at the van, and a coffee break before driving north to go and have a crack at **Goshawk** now the day was warming up and more blue sky was beginning to develop. Again the site was busy but we squeezed off the road and enjoyed a great hour of raptor watching. At any one time, there were often 10-15 Buzzards on view, and we had superb prolonged views of a young **Goshawk** which circled up out of the forest in front of us and soared around, indulging in occasional bouts of slow, pre-display wing beats, for about fifteen minutes. Twice it chased and tussled with a Buzzard, allowing for a great size comparison. A **Woodlark** was in song flight, and at one point was in the same scope view as the **Goshawk**! To round off, a Sparrowhawk appeared, and while we didn't quite get them in the same view, it was a good comparison.



Goshawk – good views of a young bird today

Back into the forest next to look for **Woodlark**, as we were keen to see one better and preferably on the ground. We could hear one singing soon after we stepped out of the van, and with Brimstone and Peacock butterflies floating past us as we set off for the larks, it certainly did start to feel very spring-like! We soon reached the area where the **Woodlark** was singing, and we stood and listened as it fluttered right above our heads, a second bird audible way off in the distance. A third bird then launched into song, and ended up perching in a tree where we had some decent scope views. Perhaps one to try and improve on further in the coming days!



Hawfinches – two males seen at Lynford, 3rd March

Lynford Arboretum would be our last call of the afternoon, and more great birding awaited us here! Near the car park, we joined a small crowd who were watching a pair of **Firecrest** roving through the hollies and occasionally flying higher up into the conifers. We had some really good views, with most of the group even being able to watch the male **Firecrest** through the scope! As we walked back, a third bird appeared low down in holly by the path just a few feet away and gave even better views. The main prize here though would of course be **Hawfinch**, and with the sun shining we headed to the paddock which was initially quite quiet for birds. Soon though, a penetrating 'tick' note alerted us to a **Hawfinch** perched up in one of the hornbeams, a lovely male with orange cap and steel-coloured bill. It was joined by a second bird and eventually, they dropped down to feed on the ground with some Redwings. The light was just right, and the views were really quite superb. Nearby, a roosting **Tawny Owl** slumbered in the top of a conifer, and we rounded off a very successful day with a dazzling kaleidoscope of **Yellowhammers** and **Bramblings** feeding together in the evening sunshine from the five bar gate. Top stuff!



Yellowhammers and Brambling at Lynford, 3rd March

FRIDAY 4TH MARCH – *Calm day, fine start with fog and drizzle later, 9C*

We had a change of scene today as we made our way up to the North Norfolk coast for a days birding which would be centred around trying to see the fabulous **Red-breasted Goose**, recently arrived in February with the Cley Brent Geese having spent the first part of the winter in Essex. The bird had been ranging between Blakeney and Salhouse, but showing well and entertaining it's admirers for several weeks now. We started by checking the beach road at Cley and then Salhouse marshes, but there was no sign of any Brent Geese at all here and they clearly hadn't come out of Blakeney harbour area where they had no doubt spent the night. We had a couple of **Chiffchaffs** by the Iron Road, perhaps newly arrived migrants, and a **Sparrowhawk** flew low over the fields and perched on a fence. **Marsh Harriers** were very much in evidence too, with super views of males and females close to the A149 coast road as we headed back to Cley East Bank. We opted to take a walk out here and check Arnold's Marsh area, while waiting for the Brents to arrive. A party of **Bearded Tits** showed brilliantly at the edge of the reedbed, with several dapper males clambering acrobatically to the top of the reeds at close range. The usual selection of ducks included some smart **Pintails**, and we saw and heard a large flock of **Avocets** wheeling around over the reserve having been flushed by a harrier. Arnold's produced a brief **Water Rail**, plus plenty of Dunlin and a single **Grey Plover**. The beach though, was very quiet with barely a bird to be seen on the sea, though we did have five **Snow Buntings** fly high west over us calling.

Back at the van we moved to the visitor centre for a comfort stop and coffee, and we could now see the first small flocks of **Brent Geese** flying east from Blakeney and dropping at Salhouse. We swung operation Redbreast back into action and headed back to the Iron Road, where a small crowd had established following news that the **Red-breasted Goose** had indeed dropped in there. Soon we were enjoying great scope views of this fabulous little goose as it preened on Swan Lake with the flock of Dark-bellied Brent Geese. We could see it calling as it strutted its stuff among the Brent but

the wind was in the wrong direction for us to be able to hear it. Still a superb bird and one which had been top of everyone's wants lists.



Red-breasted Goose, Salthouse 4th March

A bit of a change of plan next and a foray to West Runton, as the wintering **Short-toed Lark** which had been very difficult to observe, mainly in flight only over a stubble field at distance, was now showing better. It's chosen field had been ploughed and drilled making spotting the bird and watching it on the ground a whole lot easier. We walked east from the beach car park to the NW corner of the tilled field and soon picked the **Short-toed Lark** up – despite the distance its smaller size, more elongated shape, paler underparts and finch-like bill compared to the numerous Skylarks present made it easy to pick out. Twice the flock flew and moved closer, so that in the end our scope views of the bird were really quite acceptable! Lunch followed back at the beach car park, then on for another lark.

The day took a turn for the worse at this point though as we drove west towards Holkham into a murky fog bank and persistent drizzle – the weather front which had been promised, but which we'd hoped might hang back til dark! Still, we wanted to try for the Shorelarks so we headed out to the east side of Holkham Gap. The cordon area favoured by the birds though had been flooded on the last tide and was too wet for them – they had most likely moved to drier feeding along the tideline at Burnham Overy. A brace of **Grey Partridge** and flock of **Black-tailed Godwits** were added by Lady Anne's Drive, but it really was so dark, misty and horrible now that we opted to curtail our afternoon and head back to the digs.

SATURDAY 5TH MARCH – Overcast with light to moderate rain all day, 8C

A grim day of weather for our second foray around the Brecks today, effecting our ability to try for more views of some of the key species which thankfully, we had already seen on Thursday. With such a cold, damp start we decided to head to SWT Lackford Lakes, where at least the hides would afford some shelter. Lots of wildfowl here included good flocks of Tufted Duck and Pochard, several Great Crested Grebes and hordes of displaying Teal which were great to see. A few Gadwall, Wigeon and Shoveler were also seen, plus lots of Lapwing, and about fifteen **Snipe** which gave good views on The Slough. Wandering through the woodland to plover lake, we saw a couple of Treecreepers and then a **Kingfisher** which whizzed past us and landed in a tangle overhanging the water. There were also several **Chiffchaffs** about, with at least five around the site including two singing males. After coffee and cake in the centre, we pushed on to a site to check for Stone Curlews – still a bit early, and with the weather as it was, we didn't hold out much hope! Sure enough we failed to find any, and a brief **Goshawk** over the woods plus our first Stonechat of the trip was about the best if it. We ended on a high though, heading back into the forest to check one of the rides for **Crossbills**. It has been a very poor winter for them and up to this point, we hadn't seen a single one in the forest for about a year! But we'd received a good tip off on a previous day and sure enough found a pair of **Crossbills** which showed really well for us, breaking off cones and working away at them with the cone held down against the branch by the foot. The scales coming off the seed husks were floating down past us on the breeze! Several times we saw the male feed the female, so clearly a well established pair that were hopefully yet to get down to nesting as other pairs would already have fledged young by now. The haunting call of a **Goshawk** coming from deep in the forest nearby was a reminder that this super predator is never far away from you these days while birding in the brecks! Back to Mundford then for an early finish, at the end of an enjoyable few days.

#	Common Name	Scientific name		3	4	5		Comments
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)								
1	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>			▪			
2	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		▪	▪	▪		
3	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		▪	▪	▪		
4	Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>			H			
5	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		▪	▪	▪		
6	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>				▪		
7	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		▪	▪	▪		
8	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>						
9	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			▪	▪		
10	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			▪	▪		
11	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			▪	▪		
12	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		▪	▪	▪		
13	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			▪			
14	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>			▪	▪		
15	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			▪	▪		
16	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>						
17	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		▪		▪		
18	Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>						
19	Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>						

20	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>					
21	Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>					
22	Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>					
23	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>					
Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)							
24	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		■	■	■	
25	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>			■		
26	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		■	■	■	
Gaviidae and Procellariidae (Divers and Shearwaters)							
28	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>					
29	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>					
Podicipedidae (Grebes)							
30	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			■	■	
31	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		■		■	
32	Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>					
Threskiornithidae and Ardeidae (Spoonbills, Herons, Egrets and Bitterns)							
33	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>					
34	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>					
35	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		■		■	
36	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			■	■	

#	Common Name	Scientific name		3	4	5	Comments
Sulidae and Phalacrocoracidae (Gannets, Cormorants and Shags)							
37	Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>					
38	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		■	■	■	
Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)							
39	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		■	■		
40	Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		■		■	
41	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			■		
42	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>					
43	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>					
44	Rough-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>					
45	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		■	■	■	
Rallidae (Rails, Coots and allies)							
46	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			■		
47	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			■	■	
48	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		■	■	■	
Burhinidae, Recurvirostridae and Charadriidae (Thick-knees, Avocets, Plovers and Allies)							
49	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>					
50	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>			■	■	
51	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>			■		
52	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		■	■	■	
53	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>					
54	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			■		
55	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					

56	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>						
<i>Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)</i>								
57	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			▪	▪		
58	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>						
59	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			▪			
60	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			▪			
61	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>						
62	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>						
63	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>						
64	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			▪			
65	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>						
66	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			▪	▪		
67	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>						
68	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			▪	▪		
69	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>						
70	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>						
<i>Laridae (Gulls and Terns)</i>								
71	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		▪	▪	▪		
72	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>						
73	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		▪	▪	▪		
74	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>						
75	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>			▪			
76	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>			▪	▪		
77	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			▪			
#	Common Name	Scientific name	3	4	5			Comments
78	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>						
79	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>						
80	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>						
<i>Columbidae and Cuculidae (Pigeons, Doves and Cuckoos)</i>								
81	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>						
82	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		▪				
83	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		▪	▪	▪		
84	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		▪	▪	▪		
<i>Tytonidae and Strigidae (Owls)</i>								
85	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>						
86	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>		▪	H			
87	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>						
88	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>						
<i>Alcedinidae and Picidae (Kingfishers and Woodpeckers)</i>								
89	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				▪		
90	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>		▪				
91	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		▪		H		
92	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		H		H		

	Falconidae (Falcons)						
93	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		▪		▪	
94	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>					
95	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					
	Lanidae and Corvidae (Shrikes, Crows, Jays, and Magpies)						
96	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>					
97	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>					
98	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		▪	▪	▪	
99	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		▪	▪	▪	
100	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
101	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		▪	▪	▪	
	Paridae and Panuridae (Tits and Reedlings)						
102	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		▪		▪	
103	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		▪			
104	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		▪		▪	
105	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		▪		▪	
106	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>			▪		
	Alaudidae (Larks)						
107	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		▪			
108	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
109	Shore Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>					
	Hirundinidae (Swallows)						
110	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>					
111	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>					
112	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>					
	Scotocercidae, Aegithalidae and Phylloscopidae (Bush Warblers, Bushtits and Leaf Warblers)						
113	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H	H	H	
114	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		▪		▪	
115	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			▪	▪	
#	Common Name	Scientific name		3	4	5	Comments
	Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)						
116	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>					
117	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>					
	Regulidae (Kinglets)						
118	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>		▪			
119	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		▪		H	
	Troglodytidae, Sittidae and Certhiidae (Wrens, Nuthatches and Treecreepers)						
120	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		▪	▪	▪	
121	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		▪			
122	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		▪		▪	
	Turdidae and Sturnidae (Thrushes and Starlings)						
123	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		▪	▪	▪	
124	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>					
125	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		▪	▪	▪	

126	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>					
127	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>		▪			
128	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		▪		▪	
129	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		▪			
Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)							
130	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		▪	▪	▪	
131	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>					
132	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>				▪	
133	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					
Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)							
134	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
135	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>					
Prunellidae (Accentors)							
136	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)							
137	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		▪		▪	
138	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		▪	▪		
139	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			▪		
140	Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>					
Fringillidae (Finches)							
141	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		▪	▪	▪	
142	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>		▪			
143	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>		▪			
144	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>					
145	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		▪		▪	
146	Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>					
147	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		▪			
148	Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>					
149	Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				▪	
150	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
151	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		▪		▪	
Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)							
152	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>					
#	Common Name	Scientific name		3	4	5	Comments
153	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		▪			
154	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>			H	▪	
155	Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>			▪		
#	Additional species			3	4	5	Comments
1	Red-breasted Goose				▪		
2	Short-toed Lark				▪		