



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK BRECKLAND & COASTAL
6th-9th MARCH 2022

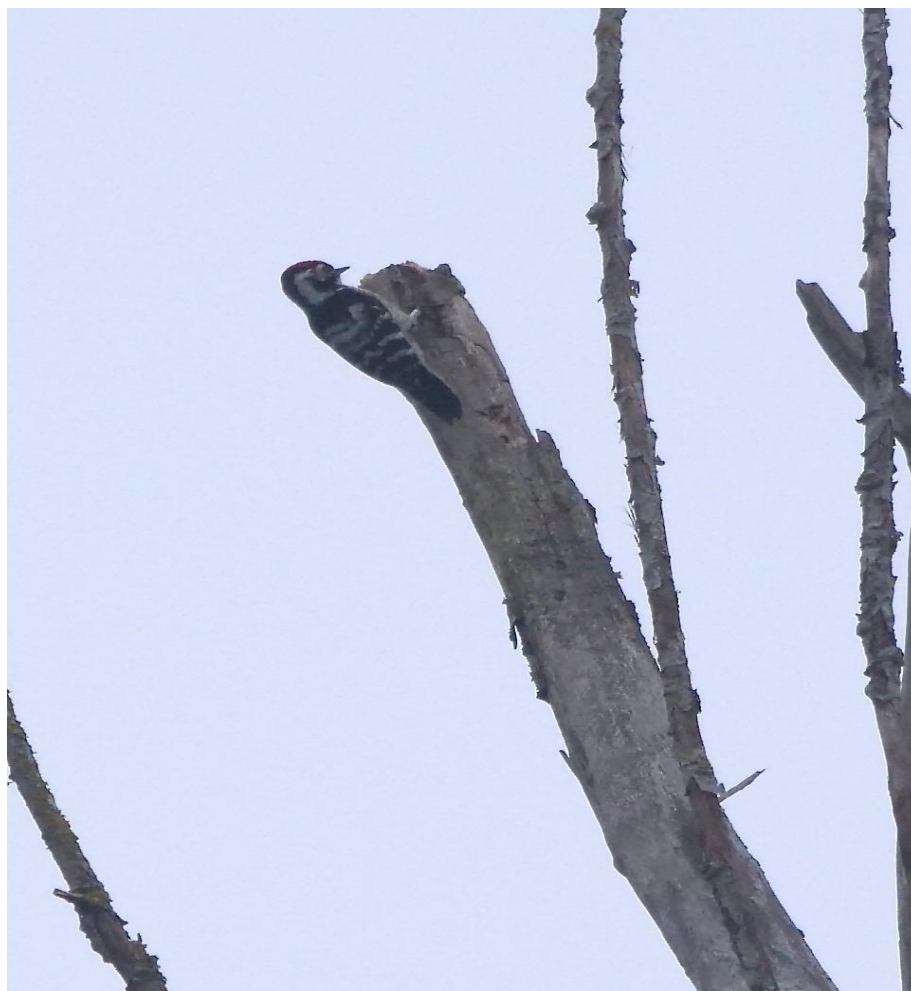
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Monday 7th MARCH

With the forecast checked the previous evening, we were faced this morning with a positive if cloudier start than expected. Unperturbed we set off for our first destination of the trip, for a hunt for Lesser spotted Woodpeckers along the banks of the River Little Ouse. We parked and headed down to join the riverside path. The local garden's owners were clearly feeding the birds with this resulting in good numbers of Siskins, Chaffinches and the odd Brambling in the nearby trees and bushes. As we joined the riverside path, almost the first bird seen was a smart male Grey wagtail, quickly followed by a Water Rail, which was watched working its way along the river edge below the bank.

We continued passing several other birdwatchers who said the birds had been seen but only briefly, positive news at least! The weather by this time was still not as expected, with a few spots of rain now in the air! We continued on meeting a local chap who had seen the male in the trees on the other side of the river ten minutes previously. We stood with him and waited, which proved a good strategy with the bird eventually found in the top of one of the trees. Not the easiest of birds to get everyone on so it met with mixed success before it disappeared from view. A short while later it appeared again, this time choosing to take off and fly over us, at least now we had all seen it! It disappeared into the back of the plantation, so we continued our walk along the path. At this point our luck changed, with the bird calling nearby us and again after some patient searching, we found it at the top of a bare tree, enabling the scopes to be trained on it giving everyone nice views.



Male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

A short walk to look for a reported Otter proved unsuccessful, so we turned to start our walk back to the bus. A Mandarin flew past, followed a short while later by a noisy small flock of around ten birds. We took a slightly different route back hoping to find Woodlark, which proved unsuccessful, at least initially. A Goshawk was a much-appreciated bonus here though, flying over in front of us, before heading out over the nearby woodland. As we approached the van a pair of stonechats appeared, and the distant fluty song of a Woodlark could be heard ahead of us. We continued towards the sound which, as frustratingly often happens, as we got closer it stopped! Unperturbed we scanned the area noting several Jays and Mistle thrushes on the ground before the first Woodlark was discovered, one of pair with both eventually showing well through the scopes. We started back towards the bus, our walk halted by another singing Woodlark, this one closer. A scan of the nearby trees revealed the bird sat on a prominent branch, scope views again followed with the bird eventually with taking off and flying above us in full song !

A quick speculative look in a nearby churchyard produced the hoped for Firecrest, a confiding vocal bird, which interacted with a nearby singing Goldcrest giving a useful comparison and nice views.



The showy male Firecrest

Lunch by this time was beckoning so we headed off to a near raptor watchpoint. It wasn't really the ideal time of day, but the sun had come out by now, so it was felt it was worth a try. There was plenty of Buzzard action plus a Red Kite, but no sign of anything else of note.

Our last destination today was back toward the hotel at nearby Lynford Arboretum. We walked through the Arboretum enjoying views of the mix of birds visiting the feeding site at the rear of the walled garden, which included Yellowhammers, Bramblings, Marsh and Coal Tit.

As we walked away from the feeding site a soaring raptor high above us caught our attention, a second Goshawk, a young bird, soaring high above the trees, which we watched drifting off out of view. We then headed down towards a fenced in area known as the paddocks, in search of another target bird, Hawfinch, with birds known to favour the Hornbeam trees in the centre.

After scanning the ground and the trees unsuccessfully we moved along the path to get another viewing angle on the area. This proved a good move with a male bird found sat out on a branch in the sun, clearly happy, we enjoyed some splendid views. We walked around the paddock discovering a second perched Hawfinch this time a female.

We finished the day with a walk around Lynford Water, an area of reclaimed gravel pits where we added species such as Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe and Cormorant onto the day list plus the first drumming Great spotted Woodpecker for the trip.

Tuesday 8th March

A 'day out' to the North Norfolk coast for us today, with a few special target species in our sights. We headed initially to Cley and Salthouse hoping there would be news on the Red-breasted Goose that had been in the area recently. There was no news, so we headed onto nearby West Runton to look for a wintering Short-toed Lark. We parked at the cliff top car park, where Gary eventually worked out how to use the overly complicated parking machine, before we moved on to take the coastal path running alongside a recently planted wheat field. We scan through the handful of Skylarks on view, noting small numbers of Ringed Plover, Turnstone and a single Oystercatcher amongst them. A distant larger group of Skylarks could be seen at the furthest edge of the field, so we walked along the edge to view them. We managed to get reasonably close and started our search with the birds appearing settled, this suddenly changed with the flock taking off and heading over us landing in a field further to the east! The Lark had been picked up in flight by Gary so we knew it was in there so the group joined some other birders by the road to continue searching in the field they'd flown into, whilst Gary walked back to get the van. On returning to the group a further quick search ensued but with our parking not ideal and time slipping by, we admitted defeat and headed back to Cley.

As we drove through Salthouse a flock of a hundred or so Brent Geese could be seen close to the road, so we pulled up onto the bank to scan through them. Some of the flock were hidden in a ditch so we waited for all the birds to appear. There was no sign of the hoped for Red-breasted Goose in with them, but an adult Black Brant was a welcome and unexpected bonus.

Arriving at Cley we parked at Walsey Hills and walked out long the iconic East Bank, which gave us views over the reedbeds on our left and flooded fields to our right.

It was a bit breezy for our walk, but the sun was out, and we enjoyed nice views of the commoner expected species such as Teal, Wigeon Pintail and Shoveler on the field pools. A series of 'pinging' calls erupted from the Reedbed on the other side of the path and several of the group were quick enough to glimpse the culprit, a Bearded Reedling, as it shot over the top of the reeds, quickly dropping back out of view. As we approached the end of the path, the large open area of shallow water known as Arnold's Marsh came into view. A selection of waders was on there, the most numerous being Dunlin, with a few Ringed and Grey Plover, Redshank and Curlew. Two gulls were asleep on one of the islands, a young Herring Gull and a bonus in the form of an Iceland Gull, the 2CY bird that had spent the winter in the area.

We retraced our steps back along the path, adding a white male Ruff to the list, before heading to the nearby Visitors Centre to have lunch



2CY Iceland Gull, asleep with its commoner cousin.

Whilst eating lunch we enjoyed views out over the main part of the reserve, with the pools in view revealing again the commoner ducks but also a large flock of Avocet, which when spooked by a passing Harrier revealed a single Black-tailed Godwit amongst them. A Great White Egret flew across as we finished eating, a signal to reboard the bus.

Holkham was our next and final destination for the day and with only negative news regarding the Shorelarks, we headed out to view the marsh from the hides on the southern side of the pines. A scan over the marsh to the east of our parking spot revealed healthy numbers of Wigeon and Teal, plus a small flock of seven Pink-footed Geese. Several Snipe were picked out along the edge of a nearby pool, with closer inspection revealing a dozen or so birds present and whilst watching these a pair of Grey partridges came into view on the edge of the field.



A pair of Grey Partridge

With the wind stronger than anticipated we decided to head straight to the furthest hide, pausing briefly to view a Treecreeper and noting calling Coal Tits and Goldcrests. Mid-way to the hide a news update revealed the Shorelarks had been re-found, so now the pressure was really on! Arriving at the hide, we climbed the steps to view the marsh. We didn't have to wait long before we'd found our first Spoonbill which was sweeping its bill back and forth, feeding just alongside below us.



Spoonbill in the afternoon sunshine

We noted several more Spoonbills, plus another Great White Egret and the hoped for Russian White-fronted Geese.

We returned back along the track and a check of the time revealed if we were quick we could fit in the Shorelarks too. We headed out to the area they had been reported in, to be met by a small group of people who been searching with no success. They said the birds had been seen half an hour earlier on the far side of the cordon and after we searched and not found them, we decided to walk round to that side. This proved a good move with one being found almost immediately, with a second popping its head up nearby. We enjoyed good views, taking turns to view through the scopes before turning on our heels and heading back to the bus and journeying back to the Crown.

Wednesday 9th March

We woke to a forecast of a fine morning for our second day in the forest, with us choosing a slightly different part to start in. Any early morning cloud was starting to burn off, as walked along one of the fire tracks deeper into the forest. Siskins were immediately audible flying over and around us, with the sound getting more intense as we walked, and we quickly realised there were good numbers of Bramblings and Chaffinches in the area too.

What we hadn't factored in or expected, was the local military jets seemingly taking our arrival as a signal to make as much noise as possible! Fortunately, they eventually took off and headed largely out of the area, which allowed us to focus on our task of finding some Crossbills. They were crossbills present but not particularly vocal with some brief calling and song, this encouraged us to search though and eventually a series views of at least two birds was achieved.

Whilst we had been looking at least one Goshawk had over flown the ride and a vocal bird was calling periodically from the depths of a pine block nearby and with the sun now out we headed onto a clearing to look for some more. We stood overlooking the clearing, having gain a degree of height to look over the trees. A pair of Stonechats appeared nearby, being joined by a rather smart Yellowhammer and several Buzzards had started appearing over the trees.

At this stage, the group split with half walking onto to view some drinking pools whilst the rest of us decided to wait and look a bit longer. The latter proved a good move, with an adult Goshawk appearing a short while later, initially over the more distant trees. We watched the bird through the telescope realising it was coming closer, and although it didn't fly right over us it finally appeared over the ride we had walked along, giving us satisfactory binocular views.



Adult Goshawk over the forest ride

We walked down to catch up with the others, with us all taking a short cut through the wood to re-join our original path, adding a perched Great Spotted Woodpecker enroute. We spent some time again looking for Crossbills, which proved successful with a perched bird found, enabling most of the group to get on it before it flew off.

With lunchtime approaching we headed back to our previous days Goshawk site, which was by the roadside, and we could sit and have lunch whilst waiting to see if any birds appeared.

We were once again met by Buzzards, with up to six in the air at one point and it wasn't long too long before the first Goshawk was seen. Fairly distant but it stayed in view long enough for everyone to see it, with it or another appearing a short while later.

After lunch we headed back down towards the hotel and Lynford Arboretum, stopping on the way to check some nearby pig fields for any early returning Stone Curlews. We met with a blank on that front, encountering only the expected corvids and Gulls, Lesser-blacked, Common and Black-headed plus Lapwing, Oystercatcher and Shelduck.

We arrived at the Arboretum and as we parked and climbed out the van literally the first bird seen was a Firecrest, flitting around a nearby bare birch sapling, how lucky was that! We continued on to view the feeding tunnel again with a local birder beckoning us to walk quicker, there was clearly something of note there! The bird in question was a stunning male Hawfinch feeding on the ground at the back edge of the tunnel. Seemingly quite settled we enjoyed good scope views of it, with an obvious increase in the other birds visiting the area, especially Bramblings, with again some smart male birds on show.



Male Hawfinch at the feeding site

As we had missed connecting with a local roosting Tawny owl on our first visit we decided to try again, which proved a smart move with the bird now the other side of the tree but in almost full view.



Roosting Tawny Owl

With time ticking away we had a quick look in the paddock again for any Hawfinch, to no avail. We returned to the bus and onto the hotel, detouring slightly to Brandon to drop Roger at the train station. The tour concluded at this point with us all saying our goodbyes and starting our journeys home.

Species Checklist

#	Common Name	Scientific name		7	8	9		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>			+			
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>		+	▪	H		
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		7	8	9		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>					
Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)							
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>					
Laridae (Gulls and Terns)							
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	7	8	9	Comments	
78	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>					
79	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>					
80	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>					
Columbidae and Cuculidae (Pigeons, Doves and Cuckoos)							
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>		▪	▪	▪		
Tytonidae and Strigidae (Owls)								
85	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>						
86	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>				+		
87	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>						
88	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>						
Alcedinidae and Picidae (Kingfishers and Woodpeckers)								
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				
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>Parus ater</i>		▪	+	▪		
103	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		▪		H		
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			
114	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		▪	+	▪		
115	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>						
#	Common Name	Scientific name		7	8	9		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>		▪	+	+		
Troglodytidae, Sittidae and Certhiidae (Wrens, Nuthatches and Treecreepers)								
120	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		▪	▪	▪		
121	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		▪		H		
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>		▪		▪		

<i>Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)</i>							
152	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>					
#	Common Name	Scientific name	7	8	9	Comments	
153	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		▪	+		
154	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		+			
155	Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>					
#	Additional species		7	8	9	Comments	
1	Mandarin Duck		+				
2	Black Brant			+			
3	Iceland Gull			+			
4	White-fronted Goose			+			
	<i>Short-toed Lark</i>			▪		Leader Only	

Other Wildlife

Muntjac Deer
Roe Deer
Grey Squirrel
Brown Hare

Red Admiral