



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK SPRING MIGRATION
24TH – 27TH APRIL 2025

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THURSDAY 24TH APRIL

We met this evening at your hotel, for our welcome chat and for dinner. The latter soon dispelled any doubt that you would be wonderfully well fed throughout your tour.

FRIDAY 25TH APRIL – *Clear and sunny, though with a moderate cool breeze*

This morning we went to the Whincover sea wall which leads out to the west end of Burnham Overy Dunes. Despite the presence of a handsome **Whimbrel** in the first grassy field, a singing **Lesser Whitethroat** and several singing **Sedge Warblers**, it was cold and felt unpromising. Aware that there was a drake **American Wigeon**, plus other goodies, at Cley, we decided to change our plan, calling briefly at Lady Anne's Drive, Holkham, to see what might be in the grazing marshes.

Good decision: we quickly found the **American Wigeon** among **Eurasian Wigeon**, close to the Iron Road. There were **Teal**, **Shoveler** and **Shelduck** here too, in front of a handsome group of **Icelandic Black-tailed Godwits**. A **Great Egret** was feeding in a ditch and you were introduced to the culinary delights of **Wild Celery** and **Sea Beet**. (I'll make botanists of all you birders in the end.)

From here we went a short distance inland to a heathland area. As predicted, we heard our first **Willow Warbler** before we had even left the van, the first of a few we heard and saw here. While Nick began explaining the formation and management of heaths, one of the sharp-eared members of the group picked up the distant purr of a **Turtle Dove**. We abandoned our introduction to heathland and were rewarded with flight views of a pair of doves. A short distance further on we saw a second male **Turtle Dove** singing in a tree and had excellent scope views of him.

In the most reliable **Dartford Warbler** territory, we soon found a cock **Stonechat**. True to form, we did see **Dartford Warblers** with him, and some saw them well, but they were clearly feeding chicks and their behaviour was very furtive.

Not furtive was the magnificent female **Northern Goshawk** we saw here. Nick had wandered a few metres away, in search of warblers, but – seeing all the local **Woodpigeons** scatter in fear – came back saying, 'There's either a Peregrine or a Goshawk.' No sooner had he said the words than he spotted a female **Goshawk** overhead. She circled above us, before executing a terrifying display dive into nearby woodland. Thrilling! A singing **Woodlark** only added to the drama.

Following lunch at NWT Cley Marshes, we went onto the reserve. Perhaps the biggest highlight in **Daukes's Hide** was the pair of **Barn Swallows** nesting in the rafters. However, there was plenty to see on the scrapes too, including **Ruff** moulting into breeding plumage, sitting **Avocets**, several pairs of **Little Ringed Plovers**, a **Common Sandpiper**, a dozing **Spoonbill** and an active pair of **Marsh Harriers**.

Our second last port of call was the Iron Road where, in addition to this morning's drake **American Wigeon**, which we saw even better, we had wonderful views of a breeding plumage **Glossy Ibis**, and a yelping **Mediterranean Gull**, with ice-white wings flew overhead.

Having had a request for Little Owls, we called at Binham Priory on our way back to your hotel. We saw no owls but were pleased with both the architecture and the chalk grassland flora of this exceptional place.

SATURDAY 26th APRIL – *Clear and sunny, with a moderate cool breeze*

Some of you came this morning with the news that, following Nick's advice, you had been to Choseley yesterday evening and had luck with **Yellowhammer**, **Grey Partridge** and, rarest of all, **Corn Bunting**.

Having turned back yesterday morning, this morning we returned to Whincover and made it out to Burnham Overy Dunes. Today there were plenty of **Whimbrel** in the grassy fields, accompanied by one or two **Curlews**, for ease of comparison. There were plenty of **Northern Wheatears** here too, and a positive embarrassment of singing **Sedge Warblers**. Everyone's first **Swifts** of the year were overhead.

We were quite far out along the sea wall when news came from Oriole Birding co-owner Nick Parsons that he was watching the long-staying **Hoopoe** in the dunes. We decided it would be rude not to join him. Unfortunately the **Hoopoe** was rather mobile and – most annoyingly – only the two Oriole Nicks managed to see it.

Our enthusiasm undimmed, we headed back through the dunes, greeting the Holkham NNR konik ponies and stopping to admire the dune nano-flora including **Heath Dog-Violet**, **Early Forget-Me-Not**, **Sand Sedge** and **Spring Vetch**.

We walked gently back through the dunes and past the saltmarsh, admiring a **Spoonbill** flying over Burnham Overy Staithe, a **Stoat** bothering the nesting **Lapwings** and **Skylarks** in the grazing marsh, and a very handsome **Grey Plover** in the channel. Shortly before reaching the vehicle, as we crouched to see a tiny, very scarce plant called **Mousetail**, we saw a pair of **Long-tailed Tits** in a **Blackthorn** bush. To our amazement a **Bank Vole** was high up the bush with them, apparently feeding on freshly set sloes.

We called briefly at your hotel for you to have lunch before heading to RSPB Titchwell for the afternoon. Having crouched and bobbed and craned, we did manage to see the reserve's celebrated roosting **Tawny Owl** and some of us even managed a view of its face.

The marsh was heaving with courting and nesting **Black-headed Gulls** and there were dozens of pairs of **Mediterranean Gulls** here too. Among them was a recently arrived contingent of **Sandwich Terns**, plus a few pairs of **Common Terns**. We also picked up some distant **Turnstones** in breeding plumage and a **Common Snipe**. Along a fence were no fewer than five sunbathing **Viviparous Lizards** which were apparently fazed neither by phone-photographers nor by a **Bloody-nosed Beetle** blundering past and over them.

From the main hide we saw **Little Ringed Plovers**, **Teal**, **Shoveler**, **Linnets** and a sleeping godwit which, when it woke for a split second, revealed itself to be a **Black-tailed Godwit**. We had left two members of the group on a bench, where they hoped to see **Bearded Tits**. They had indeed seen them, plus a **Water Vole**, and some of us managed to see a female **Bearded Tit** here too, while the group gathered before heading on to our last spot.

Continuing our quest for a **Little Owl**, we made a detour to a lane near Ringstead, where they are sometimes seen. As yesterday, we had no luck with owls, but we did see singing **Yellowhammers** and a pair of **Grey Partridges**. Most amazingly of all, having heard a singing **Corn Bunting**, and

tracked it to its perch on top of an **English Oak**, we saw it join a couple more buntings in a hedge. Here we counted four, then five buntings. Eventually, when the flock flew off to the northwest, we were astonished to count no fewer than 14 **Corn Buntings**.

SUNDAY 27th April – Clear and sunny

Having seen virtually everything on offer on the coast, and with several group members very keen to see **Stone Curlews**, this morning we made our way to the Brecks. At our first port of call, in a village south of Swaffham, the heat haze was too severe for us to find the local **Stone Curlews** so we continued to NWT Weeting Heath, where the birds were far more obliging.

Also here, we heard a singing **Mistle Thrush** and saw a **Common Curlew**, **Oystercatchers**, **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and plenty of nesting **Lapwings**. In the car park we admired the very rare **Breckland Wormwood**.

At Lynford Arboretum, we heard a ton of **Siskins** and saw **Treecreeper** and – to our delight – a pair of **Firecrests**, which were apparently riled by another male singing nearby.

From here we headed north again, to a forest ride where a **Garden Warbler** was singing from a **Bird Cherry** right by our parking spot. Plenty of **Blackcaps** were singing here too but our target was a male **Tree Pipit** which gave us a splendid display, both singing and performing his parachuting display. The insects gave us plenty to look at here too: there were **Green Tiger Beetles** all along the track and plenty of **Brimstone**, **Orange-tip** and **Holly Blue** butterflies.

Our last port of call was a wonderful patch of fen nearby. Even as I reversed the van into the parking spot, you picked up the **Hobbies** which had been reported. They were active overhead for the entire time we spent here and we counted at least five birds. A **Cuckoo** sang almost constantly and we were very pleased to see him perching to sing a couple of times. There were plenty of singing **Reed Warblers** plus a singing **Cetti's Warbler** and a **Bittern** boomed just a couple of times in the distance.

We almost witnessed a food pass between a pair of **Marsh Harriers** here. Nick spotted the male with prey some distance away and warned you to look for the female. She appeared from the reed bed, giving her characteristic call. They flew together for some time, almost jostling for the prey. Then, just at the moment the male chose to surrender it to her, they disappeared behind a line of trees, robbing us of the sight of this most dramatic moment of **Marsh Harrier** private life!

Nonetheless, we headed back to your hotel thrilled with all that we had seen over three full days of birding. Thank you very much for joining us and sharing your enthusiasm for wildlife. We look forward to welcoming you to another Oriole Birding tour very soon, in Norfolk or further afield.

Oriole Birding Tour - Norfolk Spring Migration - 24th - 27th April 2025									
Species order, names and taxonomy follows - Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2018. IOC World Bird List (v 8.1). http://www.worldbirdnames.org/									
#	Common Name	Scientific Name		24	25	26	27		
1	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>			s	s			
2	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>			s	s			
3	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>			s	s	s		
4	Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>							
5	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			s	s			
6	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>			s	s			

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	24	25	26	27
7	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		s	s	s
8	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>				
9	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		s	s	
10	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		s	s	
11	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		s	s	
12	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		s	s	
13	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>				
14	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		s	s	
15	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>				
16	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			s	
17	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			s	
18	Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>				
19	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>				
20	Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>				
21	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>				
22	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			s	s
23	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>			s	
24	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		s	s	s
25	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>				
26	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>				
27	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		s		
28	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				
29	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		s	s	
30	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>				h
31	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		s		
32	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		s		
33	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		s	s	
34	Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>				
35	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			s	
36	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>				
37	Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		s		
38	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		s	s	s
39	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>				
40	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>				
41	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		s	s	s
42	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		s	s	s
43	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			h	
44	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			s	
45	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			s	
46	Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>				
47	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>				s
48	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		s	s	s
49	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		s	s	
50	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		s	s	s
51	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>				
52	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			s	
53	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>				
54	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		s	s	
55	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		s	s	

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	24	25	26	27
56	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			s	s
57	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>				
58	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		s	s	
59	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			s	
60	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>				
61	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>		s	s	
62	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>				
63	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>				
64	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>				
65	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				
66	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>				
67	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			s	
68	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		s		
69	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>				
70	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		s	s	
71	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				
72	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>				
73	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>				
74	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		s	s	
75	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>		s	s	
76	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		s	s	
77	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>				
78	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>			s	
79	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		s	s	
80	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>				s
81	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			s	
82	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>				
83	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>			s	
84	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>				
85	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>				
86	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>		s		s
87	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		s		s
88	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		s	s	s
89	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>		s		
90	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		h	s	s
91	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		h	h	s
92	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>				
93	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>			s	
94	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>				
95	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>				
96	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>			s	
97	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				
98	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				
99	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		h		h
100	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		s	s	s
101	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>				s
102	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				
103	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		s	s	s
104	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>				s

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	24	25	26	27
105	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		s	s	s
106	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		s		s
107	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		s	s	s
108	Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>		s		
109	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>				
110	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		s	s	s
111	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		s		h
112	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>			s	
113	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		s		
114	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		s	s	s
115	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		s	s	s
116	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		s	s	
117	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		s		
118	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		h	s	h
119	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		h	s	s
120	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		s	h	h
121	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		s	s	s
122	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		s	s	
123	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		h	h	h
124	Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>				
125	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		h	s	h
126	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>				s
127	Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>				
128	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		h	h	
129	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		s	s	s
130	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>		s		
131	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>				s
132	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				s
133	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		h	s	s
134	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				h
135	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>				s
136	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		s	s	s
137	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>				
138	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		s	s	s
139	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>				
140	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			s	
141	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				h
142	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		s	s	s
143	Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>				
144	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>				
145	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		s	s	
146	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			s	
147	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		s	s	s
148	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>				
149	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			s	
150	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>				
151	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				
152	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		s	s	s

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	24	25	26	27
153	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		s	s	
154	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				s
155	Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>				
156	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		s	h	s
157	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>				
158	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				
159	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			s	
160	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		s	s	s
161	Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>				
162	Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				
163	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		s	s	s
164	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				h
165	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		s	s	
166	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		s	s	
167	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		s	s	s
#	ADDITIONAL SPECIES					
168	American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>		s		
169	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		s		
170						
171						
172						
#	OTHER WILDLIFE					
1	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		s	s	
2	Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>			s	
3	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>				s
5	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>				s
6	Orange-tip	<i>Anthocaris cardamines</i>				s
7	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>				s
8	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>			s	s
9	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>		s		s
10	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			s	
11	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Phyrosoma nymphula</i>			s	s
12	Green tiger beetle	<i>Cicindela campestris</i>				s
13	Bloody-nosed Beetle	<i>Timarcha tenebriosa</i>			s	
14	Reeves's Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>			s	s
15	Chinese Water Deer	<i>Hydropotes inermis</i>		s	s	
16	Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>			s	
17	Bank Vole	<i>Clethrionomys glareolus</i>			s	
18	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>		s	s	s
19	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>				s
20	Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea</i>			s	
21	Viviparous Lizard	<i>Lacerta vivipara</i>				