



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK SPRING MIGRATION
25TH-28TH APRIL 2022

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MONDAY 25TH APRIL

Gary collected Paul and Christine from Kings Lynn station then onto our base for the next few days, Briarfields Hotel, Titchwell. Paul and Christine checked in and headed to their room to freshen up before dinner, with Gary taking the opportunity to meet the rest of the group and outline the plan for the next few days.

TUESDAY 26TH APRIL

Gary met the group as arranged this morning and we headed off towards Thornham, taking a somewhat convoluted route with the hope of picking birds up along the way. This proved a good strategy with the first surprise, a male Ring Ouzel that flew from a field edge to a small pile of hay in the centre of a nearby field. We pulled over and parked as soon as we could, realising there was at least one more bird present, the birds seemed settled and some nice views were achieved. Several Yellowhammers were also noted, as were Shelduck, Oystercatcher, Skylark and Red-legged Partridge and a scan through the gulls present revealed a pair of Mediterranean Gulls in among their commoner cousins. Back in the bus we continued on along the lanes though it wasn't long before we getting out again, a Corn Bunting our next find, well two to be precise, which again afforded us some nice views.



Singing Corn Bunting

Our next stop was a long shot, but felt worth a go, some Dotterel had taken up temporary residence in a field a short walk from the road but no positive news had been received this morning. We walked out to find unfortunately that the Dotterel had departed, possibly added by the farmer working in the field. We walked back to the bus gaining nice views of a vocal Whitethroat, a smart

male Grey Partridge and starting our trip butterfly list, with Small Tortoiseshell and Green-veined White.

Our next port of call was Thornham Harbour, where we walked up to the path that runs along the sea wall to view the nearby fields, harbour creek and distant shoreline. A small flock of White Wagtails, at least five in total, were almost the first birds seen with several Pied nearby a good comparison; these were closely followed by two Wheatears. The corner of the field was flooded and scanning across the area revealed several Avocets, Redshank, Lapwing and Little Egret along with two Ruff, with our hoped for target specie Wood Sandpiper, eventually discovered along the back edge of the flood.



'Golden slippers' Little Egret

We returned back to the bus enjoying nice views of some Whimbrel feeding in an adjacent field and headed west along the coast to our next destination North Point pools on the outskirts of Wells-next-the-sea.

A brief stop en-route to view the fresh marsh at Holkham from the confines of the bus resulted in our first Spoonbill and a Great White Egret that lazily flew over the marsh disappearing down into a ditch. Lunch followed at North Point with us scanning the pools and general area whilst we ate. Birds seen included another Spoonbill, Black-tailed Godwits, at least eight Snipe, six Wigeon, plus the commoner wildfowl such as Teal, Shoveler and Gadwall. A showy singing Sedge warbler gave some nice views too, as did a further pair of Grey partridges on the nearby field edge. Our next stop was Blakeney Harbour, where we parked in the main car park and climbed onto the raised bank to view the marsh. Our hoped for species here was Red-breasted Goose, with the bird that had been accompanying the Brent Geese during the winter still present in the area. Our luck was in as they say, with the bird quickly found with a small group of ten Brent Geese in the centre of the marsh. Although a bit distant, the light was good and we gained a variety of nice views. A short drive further along the coast took us to Cley and the NWT reserve, where we parked at the end of the East Bank and walked out along the path to view the reed bed to the west, and fields and marshes to the east. Another Spoonbill flew onto the marsh as we walked along, with the area home to the

expected wildfowl and wading species, which we appreciated too. A calling Little Grebe showed itself, as did a singing Reed Warbler, though the next bird a male Bearded Tit was a surprise especially given the wind strength. The bird had flown over the channel the Grebe was in, landing in the base of some closer reeds, where several of us managed good views. Several others were heard as we walked along, though we managed no more than a brief glimpse of one in flight. Four Pintail and two Turnstone were on the furthest pool of water to the west and the marsh there to the east, revealed Ringed Plover and Dunlin, plus six Bar-tailed Godwit and a single Knot. A quick look at the sea was a tad disappointing, with two flyby Common Gulls the best it had to offer, though a smart male Wheatear on the nearby shingle was a bonus.



Male Northern Wheatear

We returned back to the bus enjoying two rather smart, and very yellow, Yellow Wagtails, that were chasing each other noisily over the marsh.

A short stop at the visitors centre was followed by our last destination of the day, Stiffkey Fen. We walked out along the path that runs alongside the River Stiffkey to join the seawall, which gives an elevated view of the Fen and nearby Blakeney Point and harbour mouth. A Dusky warbler has been in residence for the last few weeks, though as expected with this species a tricky one to see, with Gary hearing it call several times the best we could manage today as we walked along the heavily vegetated path. From the seawall the expected species were seen such as Teal, Gadwall, Avocet and Black-tailed Godwits. New additions for us for the day though were Greenshank and Tufted Duck plus sandwich Tern, with the large colony viewable distantly on the shore of Blakeney Point. We returned the bus, pausing to watch some Swallows flying noisily above us, a good move it transpired with a Sand martin picked out amongst them.

WEDNESDAY 27TH APRIL

Gary collected the group as the previous morning with our destination today to the south and the Breckland part of the county. We made good time and we were soon stood at a field edge scanning for birds. Two Eurasian Curlews were picked out immediately, along with a few Red-legged Partridges which were followed by our hoped for specie, Stone Curlew. Initial views were distant but then a close pair was found, and we enjoyed some really nice views. An accipiter came out of the nearby pines with closer inspection revealing its identity as a Sparrowhawk. A short drive took us to our second stop in search of Tree Sparrows, with the birds breeding along the road edge in some of the large dead trees. Several false alarms of distant birds perched along the telegraph wires turned out to be Yellowhammer and Goldfinch, but were followed by our first Tree Sparrow which in time was joined by four more.



Tree Sparrow

We headed on deeper into the forest stopping and parking at the edge of a large clearing. A Blackcap was singing in a nearby tree and we thought it was good opportunity to try and actually see one. The bird had other ideas though, with several of us gaining brief glimpses but no more than that, so we gave it up as a bad job and headed off along the obvious track in front of us.

We didn't go very far before our first Tree Pipit was heard and the bird was soon located at the top of a large pine tree. The bird showed well for us both perched but also parachuting down several times in its display flight with several others seen and heard during our time in the area.



Tree Pipit

As we walked along birds seen by the group included a male Stonechat and a Treecreeper, and Mistle Thrush and Nuthatch were both heard. We stopped at the edge of the clearing adjacent to an area of dense conifer woodland, which revealed the expected Goldcrests and Coal Tits singing and calling in the canopy above us.

We retraced our steps back to the bus pausing to watch a singing Marsh Tit that was surprisingly active and co-operative. We deposited our telescopes in the bus and took a short walk along the road to explore another nearby area. Again we did well, with a pair Nuthatch and a pair of Blackcaps showing well for us, though the icing on the cake was two Firecrests, deservedly a real 'WOW' moment for the group!



One of the Firecrests

Lunch was our next priority and a combination of the facilities there and some potential new birds saw us heading to nearby Lakenheath RSPB reserve.

After lunch we checked in at the visitor centre and then headed up onto the raised bank to view the large expanse of water called Hockwold Washes. A nice selection of birds was on show for us, including three Ruff, in a variety of colours! Two Greenshank, six Black-tailed Godwits, Avocets and Redshanks plus a selection of ducks that included a rather smart drake Garganey.

Our attention drifted to a distant large bird high up above the nearby tree line, that on closer inspection transpired to be a Common Crane. The bird lazily circled as it moved away from us, enabling a scope to be trained on it and us all to get nice views.

We returned back to the bus and headed onto our next stop, an area of scrub backing onto a large military airport. A walk round the area soon produced our first hoped for Nightingale, with the bird's distinct song clearly audible even with all the aircraft noise! At least three Nightingales were heard with a brief view had by several of us of one bird, and other birds seen and heard included Lesser Whitethroat, Willow and Garden warbler. With time ticking by we headed off to our last destination of the day, the NWT reserve at East Wretham. A short walk from the car park took us to a large hide that overlooks a mere and we sat and spent a relaxing twenty minutes looking out over the area. Birds noted included several pairs of Little Grebe, at least one pair of Little Ringed Plovers, a rather smart male Yellow wagtail and several House Martins feeding over the water alongside the Swallows.

THURSDAY 28th APRIL

Our last day already, with the plan to stay local and visit several sites along the coast, our first stop, a brief one, at Burnham Norton a relatively under watched site and part of Holkham Estate. We walked out along the start of the track and scanned the grazing marsh and pools that were viewable,

noting the regular species such as Avocet, Redshank, Teal and Brent Geese with the hedgerow and reeds alongside us hosting several vocal Sedge Warblers plus a Cetti's Warbler, which actually showed itself, albeit briefly, on several occasions.

Returning to the bus we headed onto our next stop, Burnham Overy, parking at the roadside to walk down to view the grazing marshes. This proved a productive stop and an enjoyable couple of hours followed, with a Grey Partridge starting us off, seen before we had even crossed the road! The walk itself proved equally successful with a male Ring Ouzel and two male Wheatears plus several Whimbrel and Great White Egrets seen in the first few hundred yards.



Male Ring Ouzel

A pale-bellied Brent Goose was the next find, picked out in amongst a small flock of dark bellied birds, which was a useful comparison.

Our next sighting of note wasn't a bird, though it was in a bush and seemingly somewhat out of context, a Water Vole feeding on Hawthorn buds, which was later seen swimming off in more typical manner along a small stream running adjacent to the path.



Water Vole

We reached the harbour wall that gave us an elevated view of the marsh and a nearby large reed fringed pool plus the harbour channel itself. The tide was out and scanning the mud we could see Black-tailed Godwits, Avocets, Redshanks and two Grey Plovers, the latter already close to achieving their summer finery. Two Great White Egrets were perched on bushes in the centre of the reed bed and on the pond there were Tufted Duck, Pochard and our first Great Crested Grebe.

A scan of the marsh from here revealed a distant grazing Pink-footed Goose, another addition to our list. At this point Gary retraced his steps to collect the bus, with the group taking the path back to Burnham Overy Staithe, where Gary would meet them. The group gained some news views of singing Sedge Warblers as they walked along, though a real bonus was a male Bearded Tit which flew along the reed fringed channel by the path calling and then perched out in full view.

The morning had flown past already so we headed back along the coast towards our afternoon destination, Titchwell RSPB reserve. Just before reaching the reserve a Cuckoo flew over the road in front of us with most of the group managing a view, the first sighting of the trip.

Lunch was next, followed by a walk out onto the reserve with us heading first to Patsy's Pool, a large reed fringed pool complete with viewing screen, then out onto footpath that leads out onto the main part of the reserve. A welcome addition here by the path was a Grasshopper Warbler, which in typical fashion clearly kept moving its head as it reeled meaning locating it was tricky, and when it was eventually found it immediately frustratingly dropped down out of view!

We spent time in the hides overlooking the fresh-marsh though water levels were seemingly on the high side, meaning the breeding Avocets were the most numerous wading species, scattered around on the newly created Islands. Three Ruff, three Little Ringed, two Ringed Plovers and a Common Snipe were other wading birds seen with two Pintail, two Pink-footed Geese and at least six Mediterranean Gulls also noteworthy.



Little Ringed Plover

We walked onto to view the sea noting a small group of Oystercatchers, two Turnstone and a Golden Plover on an island on the salt-water lagoon just before the beach.

The sea itself was quiet with a few Cormorants the best we could find, though several Sanderlings were noted busily chasing the waves in and out along the shoreline as they do.

Time had now well and truly ticked by, so we returned to the bus and made the short journey back to the hotel to conclude our trip, saying our goodbyes and then parting company to start our respective journey's home.

SPECIES LIST

Common Name	Scientific Name	25	26	27	28	COMMENTS
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>		X		X	
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		X	X	X	
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		X	X	X	
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>				X	
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		X	X	X	
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		X	X	X	
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		X	X	X	
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>			X		
Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		X	X	X	
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		X	X	X	
Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		X			
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		X	X	X	
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		X		X	
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		X	X	X	
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				X	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		X	X	X	
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		X	X	X	
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>		X		X	
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		X	X	X	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		X	X	X	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				X	
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		X			
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		X		X	
Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		X		X	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		X		X	
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		X	X	X	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>			X		
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		X		X	
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		X	X	X	
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		X	X	X	
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		X	X	X	
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		X	X	X	
Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>			X		
Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedichnemus</i>			X		
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		X	X	X	
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		X	X	X	
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		X	X	X	
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>				X	
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>				X	
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		X		X	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>			X	X	
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		X		X	
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		X	X	X	
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		X			
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		X	X	X	
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		X		X	
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		X			

Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>			X		X	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>					X	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			X	X	X	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>						
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			X		X	
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			X	X	X	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			X			
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			X	X		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>			X	X	X	
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			X		X	
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>			X		X	
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>			X		X	
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>			X	X	X	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			X	X	X	
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			X			
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>			X	X	X	
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			X		X	
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>			X	X	X	
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			X	X	X	
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			H		X	
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>				H		
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			X	X	X	
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>			X	X	X	
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>			X	X	X	
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			X	X	X	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>			X	X	X	
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				H		
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>				X		
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>			X	X	X	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>				X	X	
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>			X		X	
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			X	X	X	
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>			X	X	X	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			X			
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>				X	X	
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			H	H	X	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			H	X	X	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				X		
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			X	H	X	
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			X	H	X	
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>			X	H	H	
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>					X	
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			H	X	X	
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>				H		
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>			H	H		
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>			X	H	X	
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>				X		
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				H		
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			X	X	X	

Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				X		
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>				X		
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>			X	X	X	
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>			X		X	
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>			X	X	X	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>				H	X	
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				X	X	
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			H	X	X	
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>				X		
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			X		X	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			X	X	X	
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>				X		
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			X	X	X	
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>			X	X		
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>			X	X	X	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			X		X	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				X		
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			H	X	X	
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			H	X	X	
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>			X	X	X	
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>			X	X	X	
Common Name	Scientific Name	25	26	27	28		COMMENTS
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				X		
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>			X			
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>			X	X	X	
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>			X	H	X	
Red-breasted Goose	<i>Branta ruficollis</i>			X			
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>					X	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>			X		X	
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>			X			
Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>			H			leader only
OTHER WILDLIFE		25	26	27	28		Comments
Roe Deer					X		
Chinese Water Deer				X			
Muntjac Deer						X	
Brown Hare				X	X	X	
Rabbit					X		
Water Vole						X	
BUTTERFLIES							
Peacock				X			
Small Tortoiseshell				X			
Green-veined White				X			
Orange Tip				X			