



**TOUR REPORT**  
**NORFOLK BRECKS AND BEE-EATERS**  
**5<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

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## **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July**

With the group having all successfully checked in, Gary met them prior to dinner to run through the itinerary and plans for the trip. After an enjoyable meal we set off to visit a local area of clear fell in search of Nightjars. The walk to clearing gave us a brief male Bullfinch and both Song Thrush and Blackbird could be heard singing. With us having arrived a little bit early we took the opportunity to walk along the clearing edge to look for Woodlark. We didn't have to wait too long before two birds took off near the path, flying a short distance before returning to the ground. Initial searching proved fruitless, then Simon spotted one of the birds standing motionless on an earth ridge. The scope was quickly trained on it, fortunately staying in this position for several minutes allowing everyone to enjoy good views of it.



**Woodlark**

With the light starting to fade we didn't have to wait long before the first Nightjar started to churr. This was followed by several more across the site with a closer bird in some nearby trees located sat on a branch, allowing the scope to be trained on it and as the light dropped, more birds started to churr and call. We spent the next thirty minutes listening and watching an impressive display, as the birds flew around and near us occasionally choosing to land in the nearby trees again.



**One of the 'showy' male Nightjars we saw**

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

After last night's successful foray for Nightjars, we set off this morning hoping we'd not 'peaked too early' as they say! We needn't have worried as the day got off to a flying start with a visit to the Bee-eaters breeding site on the North-eastern side of the county. A brief stop en-route added Tree Sparrow to the list, not an overly common bird now days. We arrived at the RSPB managed Bee-eater viewing area, parked and as we were organising ourselves for the short walk to the viewing area itself the first bird was seen, perched on some distant telephone wires, success!



**A multitude of colour that's a Bee-eater!**

We walked to the viewing area and then spent an enjoyable 45 minutes watching up to three birds flying around in front of us. The birds regularly returned to land on the telegraph wires and through scopes gave us some very good views indeed with other birds seen at the site including Kestrel, Sand Martin and Common and Lesser Whitethroat.

Our next stop was a nearby Heath, our hoped-for target species here Dartford Warbler. With only a few pairs at the site it often isn't an easy task, with us initially checked a favoured area with no success. Some good fortune and the Dartford Warblers habitat of associating with Stonechats produced our first bird, brief views of seemingly a youngster which was followed more protracted and better views of an adult male. Equally nice views of Stonechats, Linnets and Yellowhammers were also had. A local steam train complete with waving passengers was a pleasant diversion as we crossed the railway line hoping to find some Silver-studded Blue Butterflies, the heath being a stronghold for the species. It was harder work than we'd hoped with combination of the gusting wind and timing of our visit making the search a tad challenging! Eventually though we met with success with a confiding individual by the path allowing the views we'd hoped for.



**Silver-studded Blue**

With lunch now a priority we headed onto the visitor's centre at Cley NWT nature reserve, taking advantage of the picnic tables and facilities at the site. Whilst eating lunch we looked out over the reedbeds noting up to six Marsh Harriers, single Spoonbill, Grey Heron, Little Egret with small numbers of Shelducks, Lapwings and Black-tailed Godwits on the pools. A nearby singing Reed Bunting was much appreciated and after finishing lunch we moved onto the eastern edge of the reserve. Here we walked out along the raised East Bank path which gives views over the reedbeds to the west but also the fields and marshes to the east. We walked along regularly scanning both areas, a good selection of wading birds were seen which included the expected Black-tailed Godwits, Curlews and Redshanks but also two

Little ringed Plovers, three Ringed Plover, two Ruffs, (both showing remnants of their summer finery) and a single Green Sandpiper. A group of terns on the marsh proved to be Sandwich, with a single Common in amongst them giving a nice comparison.

A bonus here though was a Bittern, seen in flight over the reedbed then watching flying the length of the reserve before dropping from view. A further welcome addition was two Bearded Reedlings which were seen well by John and Angela, though the best the rest of us could do was hear them, as they stayed low in the reeds to avoid the wind.

Our last stop of the day was a brief stop at the raptor watchpoint overlooking Swanton Novers Great Wood. Although our visit was brief with a return planned for the following morning, Common Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk were almost immediately added to the list. The best was still to come though, with two large accipiter's picked up over some distant pines and closer inspection revealed their identity, Goshawks! Two immature birds that were clearly 'stretching their wings' and we watched them flying and interacting with each other for several minutes before they disappeared back into the tree canopy.

#### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

A slightly cloudier and breezier start to the day today and with several coastal sites to visit, it was felt the plan to head there was still the favoured option. Our first stop today was a section of the forest near the town of Swafham. As we started our walk the distinct calls of Long-tailed Tits could be heard in the trees nearby. We soon found them in the canopy realising that there was other species present, mainly Blue Tits, Chiffchaff and at least one calling Nuthatch. Whitethroat and Blackcap were also heard as we walked down one of the more obvious paths. We reached a large clearing where several Yellowhammers were seen and whilst watching these a bounding woodpecker appeared over the clearing, a Green, seen well by us all before it disappeared into one of the woodland blocks. We continued down the path noting a Tree pipit flying into the top of a nearby tree. This was very much one of the species we'd hoped to see so the scopes were quickly trained on it, with the bird fortunately playing ball and staying in position.



**Tree Pipit**

We then returned to the bus to continue our journey north, our next stop a revisit to the raptor watchpoint. As we got nearer the coast and our destination, the weather had started to improve and as we arrived blue sky was appearing, and the sun was starting to come out. We arrived to find a nearly full carpark though on asking around there had been no sign of any Honey Buzzards yet. A male Marsh Harrier and several Common Buzzards started our raptor list off, and once again Yellowhammers, Linnets and Whitethroats featured nearby. Then two Honey Buzzards appeared over the tree canopy, success! We then enjoyed good, albeit a bit distant views over the next ten minutes as the two birds flew around together over the wood, joined at one stage by a Red Kite.

With time ticking by we headed off for lunch and Titchwell RSPB reserve. After lunch we set off for a walk around the reserve, visiting the large, screened pool (Patsy's), and then the Island Hide to view the fresh marsh. Birds of note or new to us during the next 90 minutes included Shoveler, Gadwall, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Spoonbill, Little Ringed Plover and Ruff. Some smart adult Mediterranean Gulls were found on one of the nearby islands and Angela picked out a much-appreciated Spotted Redshank at the rear of the marsh.

As always time was against us and we returned to the bus to head onto our next port of call, Snettisham CP. We headed off along the raised bank, with the wind fortunately having eased to degree. We didn't have to walk far before the distinct soft purring of a Turtle Dove was heard, seemingly somewhere nearby. We spent a while searching for it before deciding to walk on, shortly changing our minds as the bird was spotted on the wires near a distant telegraph pole. We had poor 'heat hazed views' but decided to walk back along the path towards it, this proved a good move with the bird staying on the wires and us able to gain some nice views.



**A confiding and co-operative Turtle Dove**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July**

A pre-breakfast walk to nearby Lynford Arboretum started our day which proved a success, giving us a different habit and a new selection of species.

A small mixed flock of mainly Chaffinches and Tits caught our attention as we arrived, with a nearby flash of brown and white proving to be a Spotted Flycatcher, it had certainly been worthwhile getting up early!



**Spotted Flycatcher, a very welcome start to the day!**

We walked through the Arboretum adding a nice selection of birds, that included several young Siskins, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Coal and Marsh Tit.

Breakfast followed, after which we headed off to a small scrubland Nature reserve near Lakenheath. We disembarked from the bus, setting up our scopes and scanning a nearby field with our hoped-for species here Stone Curlew. The search didn't take long with Kate picking up the first distant bird, with a second found nearby. We enjoyed nice, prolonged views with the increasing heat and associated haze not yet causing us any problems. The Stone Curlews were clearly not in the most relaxed state which was understandable with young possibly nearby, with the species in close proximity including at least three Kestrels, Jackdaws and Magpies!

We took a short walk along the lane that runs down to the nearby airfield being serenaded by several singing Blackcaps, Chiffchaff and Yellowhammer and very brief calling Nightingale, which unsurprisingly wasn't seen!

Our next stop and destination for the rest of the day was Lakenheath RSPB reserve. Gary had rung them the previous day to say we were planning to visit and they had offered to delay the opening of the moth trap until we arrived. This gave a slightly different start to the day and an insight into the popular world of moths! They had had a good catch, and we were shown species such as Poplar Hawkmoth, Garden Tiger, Spectacled Moth, Scarce Footman and Canary-shouldered Thorn, which was particularly impressive!



**Canary-shouldered Thorn**

We set off around the reserve making stops at the two covered watchpoints and reedbed hide. As always, we had a very pleasant and productive walk, though by the end of it we were grateful of lunch and a chance to sit in the shade! Birds seen included several Kingfishers and Bearded Reedlings with nice views of the latter from the hide.



**Young Bearded Reedling**

We spent some time looking out over the extensive reedbed from the furthest watchpoint noting two distant Great White Egrets. With things seemingly on the quiet site we decided to walk on and join the riverside path. Half the group followed Gary with the other half lagging behind slightly, which was to their benefit and enabled them to see a Crane as it took off and flew a short distance over the reeds. We were now hearing Cranes and joining the footpath gave us views out over the fields where they appeared to be calling from. The vegetation was high though unfortunately and even a large bird like a Crane can be hard to find! Gary walked ahead to see if he could gain a better view of the area, leaving the group to look out over the reedbed. Gary should have stayed with the group as they had been rewarded with views of Bittern, Great White Egrets and Cranes by the time he returned! We walked back to the centre along the river noting two high flying Hobbies at times in the company of a Kestrels which was a nice comparison.

After lunch we walked to the nearby viewpoint that looks over the washland area of the reserve. Good numbers of Lapwings, Avocets, Black-tailed Godwits lined the muddy margins, with a single moulting Ruff found amongst them. Ducks on the water included Mallard, Gadwall and Teal and several Common Terns were noted in among the Black-headed Gulls.

Time had now got the better of us and we returned to the bus and then onto the hotel, where we said our goodbyes before heading our separate ways and starting our homeward journeys.

### Trip Species List

|    |                      |                               |  |  |   |   |   |
|----|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| 1  | Canada Goose         | <i>Branta canadensis</i>      |  |  | X | X | X |
| 2  | Greylag Goose        | <i>Anser anser</i>            |  |  | X | X | X |
| 3  | Mute Swan            | <i>Cygnus olor</i>            |  |  | X | X | X |
| 4  | Shelduck             | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>        |  |  | X | X | X |
| 5  | Shoveler             | <i>Spatula clypeata</i>       |  |  |   | X |   |
| 6  | Gadwall              | <i>Mareca strepera</i>        |  |  |   | X | X |
| 7  | Mallard              | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>     |  |  | X | X | X |
| 8  | Teal                 | <i>Anas crecca</i>            |  |  |   | X | X |
| 9  | Pochard              | <i>Aythya ferina</i>          |  |  |   | X |   |
| 10 | Tufted Duck          | <i>Aythya fuligula</i>        |  |  |   | X |   |
| 11 | Red-legged Partridge | <i>Alectoris rufa</i>         |  |  | X |   |   |
| 12 | Grey Partridge       | <i>Perdix perdix</i>          |  |  |   | X |   |
| 13 | Pheasant             | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>    |  |  | X | X | X |
| 14 | Little Grebe         | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> |  |  |   | X | X |
| 15 | Great Crested Grebe  | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>     |  |  |   |   | X |
| 16 | Spoonbill            | <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>    |  |  | X | X |   |
| 17 | Bittern              | <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>     |  |  | X |   | X |
| 18 | Grey Heron           | <i>Ardea cinerea</i>          |  |  | X |   | X |
| 19 | Great White Egret    | <i>Ardea alba</i>             |  |  |   |   | X |
| 20 | Little Egret         | <i>Egretta garzetta</i>       |  |  |   | X | X |
| 21 | Cormorant            | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>    |  |  | X | X | X |
| 22 | Sparrowhawk          | <i>Accipiter nisus</i>        |  |  | X | X |   |
| 23 | Goshawk              | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>     |  |  | X |   |   |
| 24 | Marsh Harrier        | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>     |  |  | X | X | X |
| 25 | Red Kite             | <i>Milvus milvus</i>          |  |  |   | X | X |
| 26 | Honey Buzzard        | <i>Pernisapivorus</i>         |  |  |   | X |   |
| 27 | Buzzard              | <i>Buteo buteo</i>            |  |  | X | X | X |
| 28 | Moorhen              | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>    |  |  | X | X | X |
| 29 | Coot                 | <i>Fulica atra</i>            |  |  | X | X | X |
| 30 | Crane                | <i>Grus grus</i>              |  |  |   |   | X |
| 31 | Stone-curlew         | <i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>   |  |  |   |   | X |
| 32 | Oystercatcher        | <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>  |  |  | X | X | X |
| 33 | Avocet               | <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> |  |  | X | X | X |

|    |                          |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | Lapwing                  | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 35 | Golden Plover            | <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>        |  |   | X |   |   |
| 36 | Ringed Plover            | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>       |  |   | X | X |   |
| 37 | Little Ringed Plover     | <i>Charadrius dubius</i>          |  |   | X | X |   |
| 38 | Curlew                   | <i>Numenius arquata</i>           |  |   | X | X |   |
| 39 | Black-tailed Godwit      | <i>Limosa limosa</i>              |  |   | X | X | X |
| 40 | Ruff                     | <i>Calidris pugnax</i>            |  |   | X | X | X |
| 41 | Green Sandpiper          | <i>Tringa ochropus</i>            |  |   | X |   |   |
| 42 | Redshank                 | <i>Tringa totanus</i>             |  |   | X | X |   |
| 43 | Spotted Redshank         | <i>Tringa erythropus</i>          |  |   |   | X |   |
| 44 | Black-headed Gull        | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> |  |   | X | X | X |
| 45 | Mediterranean Gull       | <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>       |  |   |   | X |   |
| 46 | Great Black-backed Gull  | <i>Larus marinus</i>              |  |   | X | X |   |
| 47 | Herring Gull             | <i>Larus argentatus</i>           |  |   | X | X |   |
| 48 | Lesser Black-backed Gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i>               |  |   | X | X | X |
| 49 | Sandwich Tern            | <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>    |  |   | X | X |   |
| 50 | Common Tern              | <i>Sterna hirundo</i>             |  |   | X | X | X |
| 51 | Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) | <i>Columba livia</i>              |  |   | X | X |   |
| 52 | Stock Dove               | <i>Columba oenas</i>              |  |   | X | X | X |
| 53 | Woodpigeon               | <i>Columba palumbus</i>           |  |   | X | X | X |
| 54 | Turtle Dove              | <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>        |  |   |   | X |   |
| 55 | Collared Dove            | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>      |  |   | X | X | X |
| 56 | Nightjar                 | <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>      |  | X |   |   |   |
| 57 | Swift                    | <i>Apus apus</i>                  |  | X | X | X | X |
| 58 | Kingfisher               | <i>Alcedo atthis</i>              |  |   |   |   | X |
| 59 | Great Spotted Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopos major</i>          |  |   |   |   | X |
| 60 | Green Woodpecker         | <i>Picus viridis</i>              |  |   |   | X | H |
| 61 | Kestrel                  | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 62 | Hobby                    | <i>Falco subbuteo</i>             |  |   |   |   | X |
| 63 | Jay                      | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>        |  |   | X | X | X |
| 64 | Magpie                   | <i>Pica pica</i>                  |  |   | X | X | X |
| 65 | Jackdaw                  | <i>Coloeus monedula</i>           |  |   | X | X | X |
| 66 | Rook                     | <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 67 | Carrion Crow             | <i>Corvus corone</i>              |  |   | X | X | X |
| 68 | Coal Tit                 | <i>Periparus ater</i>             |  |   |   |   | X |
| 69 | Marsh Tit                | <i>Poecile palustris</i>          |  |   |   |   | X |
| 70 | Blue Tit                 | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>        |  |   |   |   | X |
| 71 | Great Tit                | <i>Parus major</i>                |  |   |   |   | X |
| 72 | Bearded Tit              | <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 73 | Woodlark                 | <i>Lullula arborea</i>            |  | X |   |   |   |
| 74 | Skylark                  | <i>Alauda arvensis</i>            |  |   | X | X | X |
| 75 | Swallow                  | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>            |  |   | X | X | X |
| 76 | Sand Martin              | <i>Riparia riparia</i>            |  |   | X |   |   |
| 77 | House Martin             | <i>Delichon urbicum</i>           |  |   | X | X | X |

|     |                     |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 78  | Cetti's Warbler     | <i>Cettia cetti</i>               |  |   |   | H |   |
| 79  | Long-tailed Tit     | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>        |  |   |   | X | X |
| 80  | Chiffchaff          | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>     |  |   | H | X | H |
| 81  | Sedge Warbler       | <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i> |  |   | X | H | X |
| 82  | Reed Warbler        | <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>    |  |   | H | X | X |
| 83  | Blackcap            | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>         |  |   | H | X | X |
| 84  | Lesser Whitethroat  | <i>Sylvia curruca</i>             |  |   | X |   |   |
| 85  | Whitethroat         | <i>Sylvia communis</i>            |  |   | X | X | X |
| 86  | Dartford Warbler    | <i>Sylvia undata</i>              |  |   | X |   |   |
| 87  | Goldcrest           | <i>Regulus regulus</i>            |  |   |   | H | X |
| 88  | Wren                | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>    |  |   | H | X | X |
| 89  | Nuthatch            | <i>Sitta europaea</i>             |  |   |   | H | X |
| 90  | Treecreeper         | <i>Certhia familiaris</i>         |  |   |   |   | X |
| 91  | Starling            | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>           |  |   | X | X | X |
| 92  | Blackbird           | <i>Turdus merula</i>              |  |   | X | X | X |
| 93  | Song Thrush         | <i>Turdus philomelos</i>          |  |   | H | H | X |
| 94  | Mistle Thrush       | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>          |  |   |   |   | X |
| 95  | Spotted Flycatcher  | <i>Muscicapa striata</i>          |  |   |   |   | X |
| 96  | Robin               | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>         |  |   | X | X | X |
| 97  | Nightingale         | <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>      |  |   |   |   | H |
| 98  | Stonechat           | <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>          |  |   | X |   |   |
| 99  | House Sparrow       | <i>Passer domesticus</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 100 | Tree Sparrow        | <i>Passer montanus</i>            |  |   | X |   |   |
| 101 | Dunnock             | <i>Prunella modularis</i>         |  |   | H | X | X |
| 102 | Pied Wagtail        | <i>Motacilla alba</i>             |  |   | X | X | X |
| 103 | Meadow Pipit        | <i>Anthus pratensis</i>           |  |   | X | X |   |
| 104 | Tree Pipit          | <i>Anthus trivialis</i>           |  |   |   | X |   |
| 105 | Chaffinch           | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 106 | Bullfinch           | <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>          |  | X |   |   |   |
| 107 | Greenfinch          | <i>Chloris chloris</i>            |  |   | X | X | X |
| 108 | Linnet              | <i>Linaria cannabina</i>          |  |   | X | X | X |
| 109 | Goldfinch           | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>        |  |   | X | X | X |
| 110 | Siskin              | <i>Spinus spinus</i>              |  |   | X |   | X |
| 111 | Yellowhammer        | <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>        |  |   | X | X | X |
| 112 | Reed Bunting        | <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>       |  |   | X | X | X |
|     |                     |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
|     | <b>Butterflies</b>  |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 1   | Small Tortoiseshell |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 2   | Peacock             |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 3   | Red Admiral         |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 4   | Small/Essex Skipper |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 5   | Large White         |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 6   | Small White         |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 7   | Ringlet             |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
| 8   | Meadow Brown        |                                   |  |   |   |   |   |

|    |                              |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 9  | Gatekeeper                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Silver-studded Blue          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Comma                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Speckled Wood                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Brimstone                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 |                              |  |  |  |  |  |
|    | <b>Damselfly and Dragons</b> |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1  | Four-Spotted Chaser          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2  | Emporer                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3  | Azure Damselfly              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4  | Common Blue                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5  | Blue-tailed Damselfly        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6  | Red-eyed Damselfly           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7  | Banded Demoiselle            |  |  |  |  |  |
|    |                              |  |  |  |  |  |
|    | <b>Mammals</b>               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1  | Reeve's Muntjac              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2  | Roe deer                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3  | Brown Hare                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4  | Rabbit                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5  | Grey Squirrel                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6  | Weasel                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7  | Pipistrelle Bat              |  |  |  |  |  |