



TOUR REPORT

New Forest and nearby...

15th – 18th July 2026



www.oriolobirding.com

info@oriolobirding.com

15th July

With the weather forecast for the **New Forest** looking very warm for the week we opted to start our first day at **Acres Down** as it looked the coolest of starts and it would keep the haze down. The walk down to the viewpoint gave us incredible views of two families of **Firecrest** in the Hollies and Birches. The juveniles are always very educational, looking as they do, like odd Yellow-browed Warblers. **Spotted Flycatchers** flicked around and we could hear **Bullfinches**, **Siskins** and **Treecreepers** along with sneezing **Marsh Tits**. As usual for the time of year actually seeing the birds in the wood was more tricky.

The view was magnificent and we had not been there very long when three **Ravens** slowly drifted over us and these were shortly followed by a large raptor. '**Honey Buzzard!**' I called and everyone got quickly onto this well marked female as she lazily headed off to look for breakfast. We were even able to get it in the scope. What a great start. Not long after, we added a male **Goshawk** too and although further away it was still perfectly enjoyable.

Meadow Pipits and **Stonechats** were seen but other than **Stock Doves** there was little else over the trees and with our main targets somehow quickly achieved we began to amble back.

This time we spent more time looking at the ground and found **Woodland**, **Field** and **Meadow Grasshoppers**, **Wood Crickets** and a flying **Dor Beetle**. **Keeled Skimmer** and **Southern Hawker** zipped around and a male Blue Emperor patrolled the path where **Gatekeepers** and **Speckled Woods** flickered.

Eleven o'clock was taken at the tea room where a few Butterflies were added as we sat and supped and the **Ravens** returned and kronked and popped above us.

Onwards and down to **Crockford Bridge** where the ridiculous parking situation is still in place, requiring the walk back up along the road from the next car park down. Not that it was without wildlife and we found families of **Siskins** and **Treecreepers** and a good selection of **Dragons** before we even got near the Bridge with **Golden-ringed**,



Silver-studded Blue

Emperor, Keeled Skimmer and **Common Darters**. **Silver-studded** and **Common Blue** were seen and took great joy in showing off some common **leafmines**. **Labyrinth Spiders** had their large hammocks strung through the brambles but a single ***Opilio canestrinii*** was the only other spider.

The session down at the stream was, as hoped, superb with all the targets quickly found, allowing more time to relax and actually enjoy them. **Beautiful Demoiselles** flounced up and



Southern Damselfly

down; shimmering in the sunshine and we quickly worked our way through the Damselflies with **Small Red, Blue-tailed, Southern, Azure** and even **Small Red-eyed** that I had not seen here before.



Small Red Damselfly

Keeled Skimmers were numerous and two pairs of **Golden-ringed Dragonflies** patrolled not stop and never gave us the chance to get a shot! While watching them the Gorse was full of **Linnets**, **Stonechats** and **Meadow Pipits** and a **Brown Hare** lolloped through.

We walked back, spending time with the **Dragons** again and the zipping little **Minnows** in the stream where **Whirligigs** did what they do best. **Brown Heath Robberflies** patrolled and as we stopped to watch the **Demoiselles** back near the road, the female **Golden-ringed** appeared and began egg laying at our feet with powerful dips into the water all the way up to the wings. There were big smiles all round.

It was late afternoon but simply too hot to be walking out onto another area of exposed heath so we returned to the hotel.



Golden - ringed Dragonfly



Dinner in town in the pub was followed by a visit to the closest area of heath where at just after 10pm the first **Nightjars** started churring and kewicking although the dip in the view prevented us actually seeing one.

A **Tawny Owl** called through the very warm still night while large **Noctule Bats** hunted around us.

16th July

Breakfast and then out and north out of the New Forest to **Bentley Woods** with some interesting lane driving and vehicle squeezing on the way. Two buck **Roe Deer** were seen in a stubble field just before we got there. Our walk along the main rides was quieter than hoped and it would seem that the extreme and prolonged heat had speeded things up meaning that Purple Emperors and White Admirals were already over and given the state of most of the **Silver-washed Fritillaries** they did not have too long left either!

I think I have only seen one **Purple Hairstreak** there before but this time we had quite a few and several were at ground level where the famous blackcurrent purple could be seen as they flicked by. We added **Small** and **Large Skippers** and **Ringlet** and a big patch of **Betony** hosted eight freshly emerged **Brimstones** which was to become one of the trip highlights.



Cicadella viridis – a funky leafhopper

Singles of three big Dragons patrolled and a good selection of Orthoptera but there were very few flies at all.

Lunch in the shade and then onwards and



Silver-washed Fritillary



Brimstone on Betony

west to **Martin Down**. It was hot but we had a very productive walk out to the raised works. Florally it was still good with plenty of **Knapweed**, **Small Scabious**, **Parsnip** and **Carrot** but there were no moths other than **Grass moths** this time. Butterflies were better with almost all the hoped for species with **Chalk-hill Blue**, **Marbled White**, **Small Heath**, **Essex Skipper**, **Painted Lady** and **Green-veined White** but the hyper **Dark Green Fritillaries** were looking very tatty as they zoomed around. **Red-tailed Bumblebees** were once again the commonest bee on site and by patiently checking the **Red Bartsia** I eventually found several highly active *Melitta tricincta* that specialise in this semi-parasitic flower. As usual there were Grasshopper headaches but at least **Roesel's Bush-Crickets** and **Long-winged Coneheads** are straightforward enough. There were **Labyrinth Spiders** here too and I was particularly pleased to find a *Neoscona adianta* on a Wild Carrot bloom.



Chalkhill Blue



Bartsia Bee

Yellowhammers called and the bushes held a few Chiffchaffs, Whitethroats and Blackcaps while Skylarks were still collecting food.

Everyone was happy to back in the air conditioned van as we cut back across country and through Fordingbridge before diverting to **Eyeworth Pond** which was the perfect way to end the day.



**Eyeworth
Pond**

It was warm and still and the lake was teeming with hundreds of **Damselflies**. Most were **Common Blue** and **Small Red-eyed** but we found **Azure**, **Blue-tailed** and **Large Red-eyed** too with excellent close views on the lilies. **Black-tailed Skimmers** were zipping between us and there were many **Blue Emperors** on patrol and females were seen ovipositing. A **Brown Hawker**

was one of our missing species and then a male **Red-veined Darter** unexpectedly came to visit. They seem to be having a good year.

A shoal of **Rudd** were in the shallows and two each of **Kingfishers** and **Grey Wagtails** were seen as we moved out of the way to let some **New Forest Ponies** come down to drink.

Curry night at the Ormonde beckoned!

17th July

We may have slightly left the New Forest once again and went west to the magical **Silverlake** not far from Dorchester. It was once again hot and sunny and the lake was on very fine form. The crew did not know where to look first. Once again the water was covered in **Common Blue** and **Small Red-eyed Damselflies** but of course there were many other wonders to see here with our first **Broad-bodied** and **Four Spotted Chasers**, at least four **Lesser Emperors** and I reckoned at least eight or so **Broad Scarlets**.

There were many **Blue Emperors** too and they kept the **Lessers** on their wings and we also found **Common** and four or so **Red-veined Darters** amongst the **Black-tailed** and **Keeled Skimmers**. A female **Banded Demoiselle** was new one too.



Small Red-eyed Damselfly



Silverlake

I opted for a pre-lunch walk towards the pits where **Dartford Warblers** were quickly found but remained deep in the Gorse while we counted at least 20 **Clouded Yellows** (including one '*helice*' female) generally heading east across the site but at least one or two had the decency to pause on the Fleabane. There were some immaculate **Painted Ladies** too and on the Ragwort we found **Cinnabar** cats, two **Six Spot Burnets** and a magnificent ***Ectophasia crassipennis*** – a species of **Tachinid** that only made it to mainland Britain from the Channel Islands in 2019. There were plenty of common **Grasshoppers** to cause a headache but the **Mottled** was a stunner and looked like a piece of lichen.



Mottled Grasshopper

We took out packed lunches back to the pool and sat there while the dragons flew around us. The **Lesser Emperors** showed exceptionally well at this point and the **Blue Emperors** were obviously off on a siesta somewhere.



Ectophasia crassipennis



Broad Scarlet

Some local gleaned information had us heading ten minutes back east to the almost hidden **Higher Hyde Heath NR** where we hoped to find **Ruddy Darter** – a surprisingly scarce species down here. The site was made up of mixed damp woodland with pool along with open heath and bog. The latter was completely dry and a couple of the ponds still had a little water in.

Ruddy Darters were indeed in attendance and we did not see another red species here.

A glowing male **Broad-bodied Chaser** was hunting from a favoured perch and there were **Keeled Skimmers** and **Common Blue Damsels**.



Bog Bush-cricket

The open heath held many **Bog Bush Crickets** in areas that should have been damp and with patience we were able to get some great views of this localised species.

Red & White-tailed Bumblebees were on the Heather and a tiny **Bee-fly** got us quite excited as it turned out to be a **Heath Bee-fly - *Bombylius minor*** – a species only found a few Purbeck heaths!

We said hello to the grazing horses and ponies who were spooking up Silver Y and Common Heath moths and then re-entered the woods where our final pond gave us two Common Emerald Damselflies in the gloom although it took a little while to get everyone on to them.

From here we wended our way back (via an icecream) to be in time for our final La Pergola dinner.

Heath Bee-fly



18th July

The final day of this trip is always about trying to squeeze something worthwhile in before we all head for home. This time I decided to try **Pig Bush** and it proved to be the perfect finale. The shady trees were alive with invisible **Wood Crickets** and families of **Spotted Flycatchers** and out on the edge these were joined by broods of **Redstarts**, **Stonechats** and **Robins**. Two chats were on the path and I stepped back to let the others see the **Redstart** and therefore did not see the **Adder** that was escorted across the path by them

A **Tree Pipit** perched up alongside us and **Meadow Pipits** and **Reed Buntings**

were further out on the heath where **Grayling** danced. I scanned for raptors but only found two **Buzzards** but **Dartford Warblers** were occasionally vocal and we got several views as they zipped to and fro over the Heather.

Down at the still damp bog there was just a little water left in the valley bottom and I was very surprised to find a 'Green Frog'. I had no idea of which species it was although I wrongly suspected Pool Frog or that there are four potential species within this bit of Hampshire! We found six more, mostly dark frogs on other pools and it would appear that they are actually **Marsh Frog**.



Redstart & Adder – Julie Rogers



Marsh Frog

We searched for **Raft Spiders** but I only found a small one on the surface but one is better than none and our scans also gave us a couple of **Reed Beetles**, **Keeled Skimmers**, a male **Broad-bodied Chaser** and a very large, funky black and white **Icunumen Wasp** which looks like it may just about be field identifiable.

A **Water Rail** flushed from our feet and headed for the willows and male **Oak Eggar moths** hurtled across the landscape. I saw an incoming insect which crash landed onto Chris's head. 'Big Beetle!' I thought and immediately removed it without

really looking. Tim offered me a pot and I enjoyed saying 'You're going to need a bigger pot...'

What had come to see us was a large **Musk Beetle** decked out in glorious shining iridescent green with long legs and typical Longhorn antennae. It came with us back to the wood where it headed straight for the oak canopy.

The walk back on the same path had given the **Bee-wolves** the chance to warm up and go hunting and we saw two bringing back Honey Bees slung beneath them.

Time was marching on so we called it a day, dropped Gill off in Brockenhurst and then fought our way through the first day of school holidays traffic back up to Lyndhurst to eject the rest of crew and say our farewells after a thoroughly enjoyable few days in an area that I think, for this trip, should be called the Greater New Forest... cough cough.

Musk Beetle



Bird List	
Mute Swan	Barn Swallow
Canada Goose	Common House Martin
Greylag Goose	Coal Tit
Mallard	Marsh Tit
Pheasant	Eurasian Blue Tit
Great Crested Grebe	Great Tit
Little Grebe	Long-tailed Tit
Rock Dove	Eurasian Nuthatch
Common Woodpigeon	Eurasian Treecreeper
Stock Dove	Eurasian Wren
Collared Dove	Reed Warbler
Tawny Owl	Eurasian Blackcap
Common Swift	Common Whitethroat
Eurasian Nightjar	Dartford Warbler
Coot	Firecrest
Moorhen	Goldcrest
Water Rail	Spotted Flycatcher
Black-headed Gull	European Robin
Herring Gull	Common Redstart
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Whinchat
Great Cormorant	European Stonechat
Grey Heron	Mistle Thrush
Little Egret	Eurasian Blackbird
European Honey-buzzard	Song Thrush
Goshawk	Common Starling
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Dunnock
Red Kite	Grey Wagtail
Common Buzzard	Pied Wagtail
Green Woodpecker	Meadow Pipit
Great-spotted Woodpecker	Tree Pipit
Common Kestrel	Common Chaffinch
Hobby	European Greenfinch
Eurasian Jay	Common Linnet
Magpie	European Goldfinch
Eurasian Jackdaw	Bullfinch
Carrion Crow	European Siskin
Western Rook	Yellowhammer
Common Raven	House Sparrow
Eurasian Skylark	
	Total: 77

Butterflies	
Essex Skipper	Marbled White
Small Skipper	Grayling
Large Skipper	Silver-washed Fritillary
Small White	Dark Green Fritillary
Green-veined White	Red Admiral
Large White	Peacock
Clouded Yellow	Small Copper
Brimstone	Purple Hairstreak
Speckled Wood	Holly Blue
Small Heath	Silver-studded Blue
Ringlet	Chalkhill Blue
Meadow Brown	Common Blue
Gatekeeper	Total: 26
Odonata	
Common Emerald Damselfly	Blue Emperor
Banded Demoiselle	Lesser Emperor
Beautiful Demoiselle	Golden Ringed Dragonfly
Small Red Damselfly	Broad-bodied Chaser
Southern Damselfly	Four-spotted Chaser
Azure Damselfly	Black-tailed Skimmer
Common Blue Damselfly	Keeled Skimmer
Red-eyed Damselfly	Ruddy Darter
Small Red-eyed Damselfly	Common Darter
Blue-tailed Damselfly	Red-veined Darter
Southern Hawker	Broad Scarlet
Brown Hawker	Total: 23

Selected botany	
Bog Asphodel	Tutsan
three Heathers	Betony
Round-leaved Sundew	Yarrow
Oblong-leaved Sundew	Yellow Rattle
Bog Myrtle	Wild Carrot
Harebells	Wild Parsnip
Small Sacbious	Wild Basil
Red Bartsia	Wild Thyme
Lesser Skullcap	Black Knapweed
Bog Pimpernel	Wayfaring Tree
Black Bryony	Alder Buckthorn
Dwarf Thistle	Purging Buckthorn
Imperforate St John's Wort	Squinancywort
Slender St John's Wort	Vervain
Square-stemmed St John's Wort	Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil
Marsh St John's Wort	

Other wildlife	
<i>Mammals</i>	<i>Orthoptera</i>
European Mole (hills)	Lesser Marsh Grasshopper
Brown Hare	Field Grasshopper
Rabbit	Meadow Grasshopper
Muntjac Deer	Woodland Grasshopper
Nocule Bat	Mottled Grasshopper
Pipistrelle Bat	Bog Bush Cricket
New Forest Pony	Speckled Bush Cricket
<i>Herps</i>	Wood Cricket
Marsh Frog	Long-winged Conehead
Adder	<i>Flies</i>
Sand Lizard	<i>Ectophasia crassipennis</i>
<i>Fish</i>	<i>Tachina fera</i>
Rudd	<i>Eriothrrix rufomaculata</i>
Minnow	<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>
<i>Hymenoptera</i>	<i>Eupeodes corollae</i>
Red-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Syrphus ribesii</i>
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Eristalis tenax</i>
White-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombylius minor</i>
Common Carder Bee	<i>Dexisoma caninum</i>
<i>Andrea flavipes</i>	<i>Tolmerus cingulatus</i>
<i>Mellita tricinctus</i>	<i>Phytomyza ilicis (mine Holly)</i>
<i>Amblyjoppa porteus</i>	<i>Sicus ferrugineus</i>
<i>Common Wasp</i>	<i>Liriomyza eupatorii (mine Hemp)</i>
<i>Bee-wolf</i>	<i>Moths</i>
Wood Ant	Oak Eggar Moth
<i>True Bugs</i>	Common Heath
Dock Bug	Silver Y
<i>Cicadella viridis</i>	<i>Pyrausta aurata</i>
<i>Beetles</i>	<i>Coptotriche marginea (mine Bramble)</i>
7-Spot Ladybird	<i>Ectoedemia heringella (mine Holm Oak)</i>
14-Spot Ladybird	<i>Stigmella aurella (mine Bramble)</i>
Woodland Dor Beetle	<i>Phyllonorycter messaniella (mine Beech)</i>
Musk Beetle	<i>Tischeria ekebladella (mine Oak)</i>
Red Soldier Beetle	<i>Agriphila inquinatella</i>
<i>Donacia versicolore</i>	<i>Agriphila straminella</i>
<i>Spiders</i>	Six Spot Burnet Moth
Labyrinth Spider	Grass Emerald
<i>Neoscona adianta</i>	Rush Veneer
<i>Opilio canestrinii</i>	<i>Synaphe punctalis</i>