



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK BUTTERFLIES & DRAGONFLIES
4TH – 7TH JULY 2023

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WEDNESDAY 5TH JULY – *Overcast and windy with sunny spells later, 17C*

It was a cold and windy morning with little prospect of butterflies and dragonflies being on the wing, so we swung our birding plans into action and headed towards North-east Norfolk, where our ultimate goal would be to see the breeding **Bee-eaters**, back in Trimingham quarry for their second year in a row. En route we had to make a diversion for an accident and this took us close to Swanton Novers raptor watchpoint, and so we called in for a 90 minute watch over the woodland in the hope we might connect with a Honey Buzzard. The car park field was alive with small birds, and a real treat to see – **Linnets, Yellowhammers, Common Whitethroat** and **Skylarks** abounded, and we saw **Reed Bunting** and **Chiffchaff** too. Raptors were very slow to get going in the cool weather, but we eventually saw several Common Buzzards and a couple of Sparrowhawks, though nothing rarer. Continuing on to Trimingham we arrived at the site to find it surprisingly quiet for people with only a handful of cars. The birds had become a little more sporadic of late, after the first clutch had failed, though it was looking likely that the birds were starting a replacement clutch as they continued to visit the nest hole regularly. We had to wait about half an hour until the three **Bee-eaters** (two males) flew in and landed on the wires. They then entertained us for some while, catching bees and even an Emperor Dragonfly! We also saw some pair bonding behaviour between the main pair, with the male coming in and landing next to her with wings raised. After lunch here, we moved west along the coast to Cley



Bee-eater at Trimingham, 5th July

It was still cool and breezy on the East Bank, but with blue breaks now appearing in the cloud it felt like the day was finally warming up enough for some insect life to appear. Subsequently, we saw first an **Emperor** and then a **Norfolk Hawker** dragonfly, patrolling the path beside us. **Large White, Small Tortoiseshell, Meadow Brown** and **Gatekeeper** were also seen – things were looking up! The birding was great here too, with three juvenile **Bearded Tits** perching in the open for us and out on The Serpentine, a first-summer **Little Gull** dropped in. Pope's Pool hosted lots of **Black-tailed Godwits**, two fine male **Ruff**, and singles of **Greenshank** and **Green Sandpiper**. Two **Little-ringed Plovers** were also seen, pottering along the muddy fringes. At Arnold's Marsh, we saw a flock of about 80

Sandwich Terns and 20 **Mediterranean Gulls**, many sporting summer adult plumage. More were seen offshore, with a feeding frenzy going on and lots of big gulls attracted in too. Also of note was a steady westerly passage of **Curlew**, mainly moving low over the sea, with a few **Whimbrel** admixed. With the sun now edging out, we walked east along the shingle bank to look for one of Britain's most fabulous butterflies, the **Grayling**. We found two, typically well camouflaged against the pebbles and with their body pressed to the ground for warmth. After super views of this 'master of disguise', we retraced our route to the car park.



Grayling on the shingle ridge at Cley

Kelling next, and now we had the sunshine we had been craving, we wanted to look for some woodland butterflies. An absolute bonanza awaited, as we spent time watching a large buddleia and adjacent bramble blossom in a woodland glade. **Silver-washed Fritillaries** were abundant in greater numbers than we had ever seen – we must have easily seen 30 – 50 individuals. A single **White Admiral** appeared and we also added **Comma**, **Green-veined White**, **Ringlet**, **Speckled Wood**, **Red Admiral** and a stunning **Painted Lady**. A single *valezina* form of the female **Silver-washed Fritillary** flew in and we watched her egg-laying in the grooves of the bark of a silver birch tree. We marvelled at the fact the larvae would eventually have to make their way down to the woodland floor and go in search of violets, its food plant, all by itself! We couldn't find any hairstreaks today, but a great butterfly showing nonetheless.

The day had raced on to 5pm but we still just about had time to squeeze a quick visit in to the heath, in order to look for the **Silver-studded Blue**. We easily found two specimens and had some good views, among the heather and gorse. **Small Skipper** and **Essex Skipper** could be compared side by side on the Viper's Bugloss, and we also added singles of **Small Heath** and **Small Copper**, and heard the purring song of a **Turtle Dove**. A superb day of wildlife watching!



A female Silver-washed Fritillary of form *valezina*

THURSDAY 6TH JULY – *Sunny day in light winds, 20C*

A superb day with great weather both for bugging and birding! We kicked off with a visit to Snettisham RSPB, as big tides are on at the moment and although we weren't in the market for getting there very early for the rising tide, we knew a high water visit would still allow us to see large numbers of roosting birds in a quick 'smash and grab' type visit. The Wash was entirely covered with water when we arrived, and so we made our way down to South Screen to see what was roosting on the pits. On the way, a white bird flying low over the saltmarsh was not the expected Little Egret, but a very pale **Barn Owl** – a species we see increasingly less of these days, so always nice to pick one up. The light from South Screen was just fantastic, and a superb spread of around 1000 **Dunlin** and similar numbers of **Black-tailed Godwits** were there right in front of us. We spent time scanning the flocks, picking out a couple of **Knot** and a single **Sanderling**, but generally just enjoying the brilliant views and listening to all the adult Dunlin trilling away! Twelve **Spotted Redshanks** were seen, all in their black summer finery, and seven **Spoonbills** included two begging juveniles. Other species noted included lots of **Common Terns**, **Med Gulls**, and a **Peregrine** which came over the pits and send everything scattering. By the time we walked back out to The Wash, the tide had dropped revealing lots of mud. The **Peregrine** had put a load of **Bar-tailed Godwits** into the air distantly, and we also saw an out of place lone **Brent Goose**! Driving back out to the beach road, we stopped for a bird on a wire and as suspected, it was a **Turtle Dove**. The bird sat there purring and allowed us to get some superb scope views!

A long drive south now then as we headed down to Lakenheath. Our route took us across the Feltwell fens, where we saw three singing **Corn Buntings** along the roadside wires. Lunching in the car park at Lakenheath, we then went for a walk to New Fen.. A Kingfisher showed well by the Visitor Centre, but along the first section of our walk, which was quite exposed to the wind, odonata were noticeable by their absence. Eventually we found a sheltered corner and promptly uncovered a male

Variable Damselfly, one of our target species here. Further on, we commented on just how few dragonflies there were – we didn't see a single Four-spotted Chaser or Black-tailed Skimmer which are normally abundant here! We did, however, manage to find a single specimen of our second target – the **Scarce Chaser**. As always by early July, it was an over-mature male looking pretty dog-eared, but still we had good views and could see the salient ID points. Back by New Fen viewpoint, we had the rare chance to watch **Red-eyed Damselfly** and **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** flying together, and the route back produced **Banded Demoiselle** and **Brown Hawker** too.



Variable Damselfly at Lakenheath, 6th July

We had time to squeeze another site in and this would be the excellent pingo trail at Thompson Common. Another target species awaited us here, in the form of the **Scarce Emerald Damselfly**. Its commoner relative the **Emerald Damselfly** occurs too though and so great care is needed to separate them. As usual we saw both species flying together and so were able to compare and contrast – the thicker set appearance of the scarce being quite obvious once you 'got your eye in'. Lots of emerging Common and **Ruddy Darters** were also seen here, with a **Norfolk Hawker** patrolling the main pool – a regular feature at the site in recent years.

FRIDAY 7TH JULY – *Hot and sunny in light winds, 25C*

It was a scorcher today, though thankfully for our first site at least there was enough breeze to keep things manageable. We headed out onto the west Norfolk heaths in search of some dragons and damsels typical of acidic boggy habitat. We weren't disappointed, with a plethora of species on show and a couple of real goodies too. The first of these was the **Black Darter**, present in excellent numbers and with several mature males seen defending their territories around the small pools. A single immature male was also seen, a more tricky ID and so quite useful for everyone to see. **Emperor**, **Four-spotted Chaser** and **Keeled Skimmer** were all numerous, and we also found our second target – the **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly**. This recent colonist is very restricted in range and only found at a few sites in Britain, so it was great to get superb views of a number of males here.

Further up the boggy flush we found a superb male Broad-bodied Chaser patrolling an open pool, and a single **Banded Demoiselle** flew by too. Butterflies were well represented with **Small Heath**, **Small Copper**, **Brimstone** and a lovely **Brown Argus** noted.



Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly

Heading east across the county we rounded off our tour with a visit to Foxley Wood. This site has emerged over the past few years as a good site to see the **Purple Emperor**, and this would be our main quarry here. It was baking hot though, and we weren't sure how much activity there was likely to be. The **Silver-washed Fritillaries** and Large Whites weren't put off, with both flying in good numbers. Around the crowns of the oaks, the fluttering silvery flashes of **Purple Hairstreaks** could be seen but we saw one extremely well at low elevation through the telescope too. On our walk back, a **White Admiral** glided past us and a **Southern Hawker** was typically inquisitive as it patrolled the path ahead. A large and dark butterfly then appeared briefly ahead of us – thankfully after a short wait it reappeared over the track and even offered to land on the ground. It was a female **Purple Emperor**, and she was obviously looking for places to lay eggs, weaving in and out of the sallows at low level. This meant we could get our binoculars on her and see her pretty well. The large size compared to the similar White Admiral was particularly apparent in overhead views. A great result given the heat!

ORIOLE BIRDING NORFOLK BUTTERFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES JULY 2023

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		5	6	7	
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>			▪		
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		▪	▪		
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			▪		
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>			▪		
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		▪	▪		
6	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		▪			
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			▪		
8	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>					
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		▪	▪		
10	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>					
11	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		▪			
12	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>					
13	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>					
14	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			▪		
15	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>				▪	
16	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>				▪	
17	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
18	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		▪	H		
19	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			▪		
20	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>			▪		
21	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		▪	▪		
22	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>			▪		
23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		▪	▪		
24	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		▪	▪		
25	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		▪			
26	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
27	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
28	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		▪	▪	▪	
29	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			▪		
30	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			▪		
31	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		▪	▪		
32	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		▪	▪		
33	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		▪			
34	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>					
35	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>					
36	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					
37	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		▪			
38	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		▪			

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	5	6	7
39	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	▪		
40	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		▪	
41	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	▪	▪	
42	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			
43	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		▪	
44	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	▪		
45	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		▪	
46	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		▪	
47	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			
48	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			
49	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	▪		
50	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	▪	▪	
51	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>		▪	
52	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	▪		
53	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	▪	▪	▪
54	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	▪	▪	
55	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	▪	▪	
56	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	▪		
57	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	▪		
58	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	▪	▪	
59	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	▪	▪	
60	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	▪		
61	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>			
62	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		▪	
63	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>			
64	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			
65	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	▪	▪	▪
66	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	H	▪	
67	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	▪	▪	▪
68	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			
69	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>		▪	
70	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>			
71	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>			
72	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	▪	▪	▪
73	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		▪	
74	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		▪	
75	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>			
76	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	▪	▪	▪
77	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			
78	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			
79	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	▪	▪	▪
80	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	▪	▪	▪
81	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	▪	▪	▪

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	5	6	7	
82	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	▪	▪	▪	
83	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				
84	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>			▪	
85	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
86	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		▪	▪	
87	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	▪			
88	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>				
89	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	▪	▪	▪	
90	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▪	▪	▪	
91	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	▪			
92	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	▪	▪	▪	
93	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>				
94	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			▪	
95	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				
96	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	▪	H	▪	
97	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			H	
98	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		H		
99	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			H	
100	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>				
101	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>				
102	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	▪	▪		
103	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>				
104	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>				
105	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				
106	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H	▪	▪	
107	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				
108	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		▪		
109	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	▪	▪	▪	
110	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	▪	▪	▪	
111	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>				
112	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				
113	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				
114	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		▪		
115	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			▪	
116	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
117	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>				
118	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				
119	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	▪			
120	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	▪			
121	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				
122	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	▪			
123	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	H			
124	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	▪			

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		5	6	7	
125	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		▪			
126	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
127	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>					
128	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		▪		▪	
129	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
ADDITIONAL SPECIES							
	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		▪			
	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			▪		
	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicula</i>			▪		
	Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>				H	
BUTTERFLIES							
<i>The species list below follows the taxonomy of the checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles; Agassiz (2013)</i>							
#	Common Name	Scientific Name		5	6	7	
1	Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>		▪	▪		
2	Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>		▪	▪		
3	Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>			▪	▪	
4	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		▪	▪	▪	
5	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			▪		
6	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>		▪	▪	▪	
7	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			▪	▪	
8	Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>					
9	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		▪	▪	▪	
10	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>		▪		▪	
11	Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
12	Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>		▪	▪	▪	
13	Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
14	Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>		▪			
15	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>		▪		▪	
16	Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>					
17	White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>		▪		▪	
18	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		▪	▪	▪	
19	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		▪			
20	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>					
21	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>		▪			
22	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>		▪		▪	
23	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		▪		▪	
24	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>				▪	
25	White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Satyrrium w-album</i>					
26	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>			▪		
27	Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>		▪			
28	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>				▪	

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	5	6	7
29	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>			
30	Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura iris</i>			▪

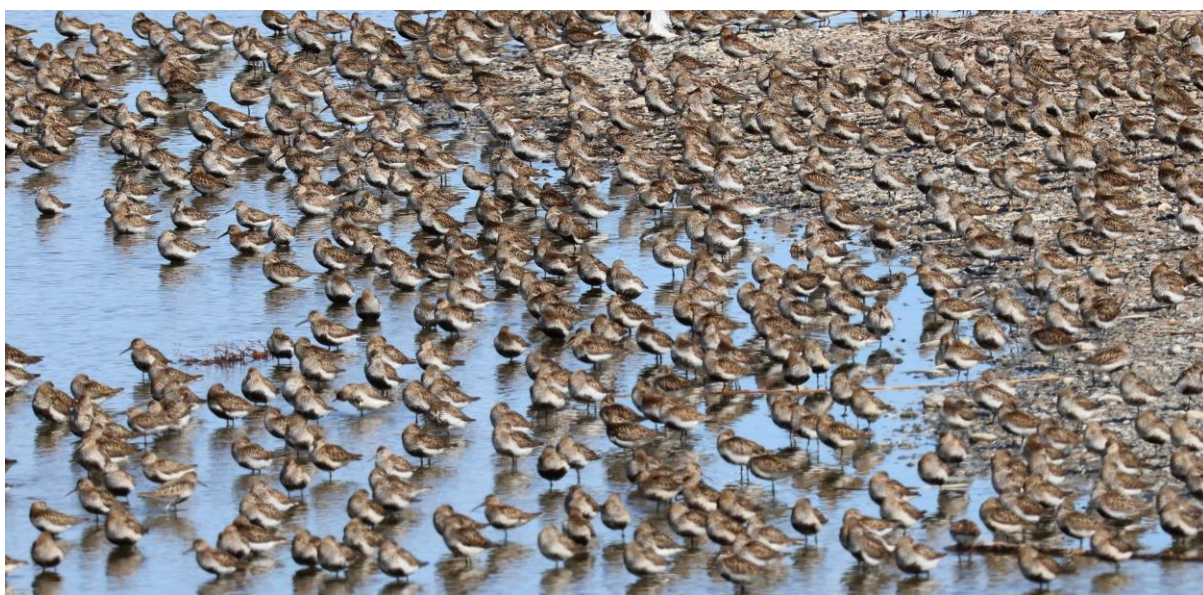
DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

The dragonfly lists presented below follow the taxonomy of Schorr and Paulson (2013).

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	5	6	7
1	Scarce Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes dryas</i>		▪	
2	Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>		▪	
3	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>		▪	▪
4	Small Red Damselfly	<i>Ceragrion tenellum</i>			
5	Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	▪	▪	
6	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>		▪	▪
7	Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>		▪	
8	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>		▪	
9	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>		▪	▪
10	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>			
11	Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>			▪
12	Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>		▪	▪
13	Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	▪	▪	▪
14	Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>			▪
15	Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>		▪	▪
16	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>		▪	
17	Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>			▪
18	Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>			▪
19	Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>		▪	▪
20	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		▪	
21	Norfolk Hawker	<i>Aeshna isoceles</i>	▪	▪	
22	Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>			▪



Silver-washed Fritillary, Kelling 5th July



Waders roosting at Snettisham pits



Bee-eater and bee!



Kingfisher at Lakenheath



Scarse Chaser, Lakenheath 6th July



Male Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly



Broad-bodied Chaser



Young Marsh Harrier recently fledged at Lakenheath