



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK
BUTTERFLIES & DRAGONFLIES
3RD – 6TH JULY 2025

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THURSDAY 3RD JULY

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. During dinner, we saw our only **Small Tortoiseshell** of the tour, in the skylight of the dining room.

FRIDAY 4TH JULY – *Hot and sunny all day*

With the best of the tour's weather forecast for today, this morning we made straight for Norfolk Wildlife Trust Foxley Wood in search of scarce butterflies. Conditions were so perfect that we saw almost all of our targets before so much as leaving the car park. There were **Ringlets** and **Gatekeepers** in the long grass and wildflowers around the car park. Even more interesting to us, however, were the **Purple Hairstreaks** in the tops of the young oaks above us, the **Silver-washed Fritillary** dropping down to feed on **Marsh Thistle** in the long grass, and the **Purple Emperor** we saw over the car park willows as we stood looking at all of the above. Superb!

Foxley is a simply wonderful site, which has been lovingly nurtured back to excellent condition by Norfolk Wildlife Trust over several decades. Though **Purple Hairstreaks** were fairly elusive – always skimming high above oaks – we saw numerous **Purple Emperors**, **Silver-washed Fritillaries**, **Commas**, **Large** and **Green-veined Whites** and a very obliging (if a little tattered) **White Admiral**. Among other insects, we saw **Roesel's**, **Dark** and **Speckled Bush-Crickets**, **Black-and-Yellow Longhorn Beetles**, **Brown Hawkers** and a number of hoverflies.

From here we drove north to Kelling Heath, which is well known as a site where **Silver-studded Blues** have been successfully reintroduced. As we were reaching the end of the blues' season, the butterflies we found were all quite worn, but we saw them beautifully, looking particularly fetching as they fed from the abundant **Bell Heather** in flower. We also admired **Field** and **Mottled Grasshoppers** here and saw plenty more of the common brown butterflies of summer. Close to the car park, there were clouds of **Small Skippers**, with just a few **Essex Skippers** among them.

Our next port of call was a well-known wood close to Kelling Heath. Here the **White Admirals** and **Silver-washed Fritillaries** delighted us but, the brambles having finished flowering very early in this year's hot summer, the two hairstreaks for which the site is renowned did not come down to feed.

Our final visit today was to Norfolk Wildlife Trust Cley Marshes. Here we had a specific target: a **Caspian Tern** which had been seen sporadically since first thing this morning. Happily for us, this magnificent bird was resting on Simmond's Scrape, among **Lapwings**, **Little Ringed Plovers**, **Avocets**, **Redshank**, **Greater** and **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** (with a brief drop-in by a **Yellow-legged Gull**), **Shelduck** (with adorable ducklings) and a group of post-breeding **Black-headed Gulls** holding a few handsome **Mediterranean Gulls**. All the while, there were hundreds of **Black-tailed Skimmers** skimming (appropriately enough) over the surface of the water.

SATURDAY 5TH JULY – *Warm and often sunny, with intermittent cloud and a brisk but warm breeze*

This morning we went south, to the extremely rich boundary of the Brecks and the Fens. We crossed the county border into Suffolk by a few metres to visit the RSPB's fantastic restored wetland reserve

at Lakenheath Fen. Having gone up onto the riverbank, in the hope of seeing a **Glossy Ibis** (which several of us did see later in the day), we took refuge from the breeze in the reeds and willows of the reserve, where we knew we would see most insects. This was not before seeing some **Black-tailed Skimmers** up on the bank of the river, a magnificent **Musk Beetle** and, on the Norfolk side of the river, a post-breeding flock of local **Black-tailed Godwits**.

Among the reeds and willows we saw a wonderful selection of Odonata, including lots of **Four-spotted Chasers**, one male **Scarce Chaser**, **Emperor Dragonflies**, very fresh **Willow Emerald Damselflies**, hordes of both **Common Blue** and **Azure Damselflies** and a sprinkling of **Blue-tailed Damselflies**. We also had the pleasure of watching a very newly emerged **Small Red-eyed Damselfly**, apparently still drying out before taking its first flight, while a female **Southern Hawker** flew above us. As for butterflies, we saw tons of fresh **Red Admirals**, in addition to plenty of **Gatekeepers** and **Ringlets** and the last of the **Meadow Browns**.

The one classic Lakenheath dragon we had been unable to find was **Variable Damselfly**. We had checked hundreds of the commoner blue species by this point, without luck, so we headed to my most reliable spot for the species. Here, after checking dozens more, we finally found a male **Variable** and could leave Lakenheath with our heads held high. In the same area, we saw a **Four-banded Longhorn Beetle** and could compare its attractive elytra with the related species we had seen the day before.

After lunch, we moved to NWT Thompson Common. There were lots of dragonflies and butterflies to be seen here, including **Large Skippers** and our only **Small Copper** in the long grass, but despite a long search of all the pingos and their surrounding vegetation, we could only find **Common Emerald Damselflies**.

SUNDAY 6TH JULY – *Cloudy with heavy rain at times*

We had known since the start of the tour that today's weather would likely not be favourable for watching insects. Nonetheless, in true British style, we headed out in our Gore-Tex into the rain.

We first called at Snettisham Coastal Park where we immediately heard a **Turtle Dove** singing. We were delighted, as this had been our most wanted species here. After a little work to find him, we were able to watch this tragically scarce bird at length through my telescope. Another male sang a little further along the track.

Later in the morning, walking around the boardwalk at Dersingham Bog NNR, in quite heavy rain, we realised that the morning would likely be even worse than expected for insects. Even though the rain kept the dragonflies at bay, we saw some of the classic plants of peat bogs here, including **Round-leaved Sundew**, **Bog Asphodel** and **Cranberry**.

Having chosen, given the conditions, not to take a longer heathland walk in search of dragonflies, we seized a break in the clouds to visit the wonderful chalk grassland of Warham Camp in the hope of seeing the **Chalkhill Blues** whose emergence had been reported just a couple of days earlier. We saw lots of grassland butterflies here and some dazzling and very freshly emerged **Six-spot Burnets**, and we enjoyed **Pyramidal Orchids**, **Squinancywort**, **Small Scabious**, **Greater Knapweed**, **Rough Hawkbit** and plenty of other classic chalk grassland flowers, but we were unable to find the blues.

Well, not the exact blues we were after... As we walked back to the vehicle for the drive back to your hotel, we added not one but two new butterfly species to our list. A **Holly Blue** was in the ivy right by the gate to the fort, while in the flinty path a few metres ahead of us we saw a lovely, fresh **Painted Lady**.

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

ORIOLE BIRDING NORFOLK BUTTERFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES JULY 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	4	5	6	
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		s		
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	s	s		
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	s	s		
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	s			
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	s	s		
6	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>				
8	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	s			
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	s	s		
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>		s		
16	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>				
17	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	s	s		
18	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		s		
19	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				
20	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	s			
21	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	s	s	s	
22	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				
23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	s	s	s	
24	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	s			
25	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>			s	
26	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	s	s		
27	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		s	s	
28	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	s		s	
29	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	s	s		

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6
30	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		s	
31	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	s	s	h
32	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	s		
33	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	s		
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>	s		
38	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>			
39	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	s		
40	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>			
41	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		s	
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>	s		
51	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			
52	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			
53	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	s	s	
54	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	s		
55	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>			
56	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>			
57	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	s		
58	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	s		
59	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	s	s	s
60	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		s	
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>	s	s	
65	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	s	s	s
66	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>			s
67	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	s	s	
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>	s	s	s

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6
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>	s	s	s
77	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			
78	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			
79	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	s	s	s
80	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	s	s	s
81	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	s	s	
82	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	s	s	
83	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>			
84	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	h		
85	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	h	s	
86	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		s	
87	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>		s	
88	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>			
89	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	h		h
90	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	s	s	s
91	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	s		
92	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	s	s	
93	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			
94	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	h	s	
95	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			
96	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	h	h	h
97	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			
98	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		s	
99	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	h	s	
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>	h	h	
106	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	h	h	
107	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			
108	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>			
109	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	s	s	
110	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	s	s	
111	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		h	h
112	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			
113	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			
114	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		s	
115	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			s

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6
116	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		s	
117	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		h	
118	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			
119	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	s	s	
120	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			
121	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			
122	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		s	
123	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		h	
124	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		s	
125	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	s	s	s
126	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	s	s	s
127	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>			
128	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	h	h	
129	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		s	
130	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		s	

BUTTERFLIES

The species list below follows the taxonomy of the checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles; Agassiz (2013)

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6
1	Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	s		
2	Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	s	s	s
3	Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	s	s	s
4	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	s		
5	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	s	s	
6	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	s	s	
7	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>		s	
8	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		s	
9	Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	s	s	s
10	Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	s	s	s
11	Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	s	s	s
12	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	s		
13	White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>	s		
14	Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura iris</i>	s		
15	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	s	s	s
16	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>			s
17	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>	s	s	
18	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	s	s	
19	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		s	
20	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>	s		
21	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>			s
22	Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>	s		

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

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

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6	
1	Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>		s		
2	Willow Emerald Damselfly	<i>Chalcolestes viridis</i>		s		
3	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>		s		
4	Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>		s		
5	Variable Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>		s		
6	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>		s		
7	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>		s		
8	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>		s		
9	Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	s	s		
10	Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	s	s		
11	Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	s	s		
12	Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>		s		
13	Scarce Chaser	<i>Libellula fulva</i>		s		
14	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	s	s		
15	Ruddy Darer	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>		s		
16	Common Darer	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		s		