



**TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK BUTTERFLIES AND
DRAGONFLIES
13TH – 16TH JULY 2026**

www.oriolobirding.com

info@oriolobirding.com

MONDAY 13TH 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 (though payment system errors meant a very lengthy delay before some of your courses arrived).

TUESDAY 14TH JULY – *Cloudy with a strong breeze all day, with warmer, brighter periods*

We spent the whole of today in West Norfolk, visiting only two sites, both in their different ways highly productive for dragonflies and butterflies. Our first port of call was Dersingham Bog National Nature Reserve. Despite the country being in its third heatwave of the year, Norfolk was under a sea fret, with a chill wind, and there was nothing to see of the **Black Darters** which are found here. We did, however, admire the Round-leaved Sundew, Common Cranberry, Cross-leaved Heath and Bog Asphodel along the boardwalk.

From here we headed a couple of miles inland, to another excellent wet heath. In spite of the strong breeze, we soon began to see **Common Blue-tailed Damselflies**, **Azure Damselflies** and **Common Emerald Damselflies** and as the day became warmer and the cloud broke occasionally the **Keeled Skimmers** became more active, as did a single, very tired **Four-spotted Chaser**. There were plenty of **Gatekeepers** to be seen here, in addition to a few very worn **Small Skippers**. Among the many plants here, we enjoyed Purple Loosestrife, Square-stalked St-John's-Wort, Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil, Marsh Lousewort and Common Centaury. Walking back from this excellent site, we saw many **Gatekeepers** and several **Ringlets**, **Speckled Woods**, **Green-veined Whites** and **Large Skippers**. Also here were a few **Common** and **Ruddy Darters**, a **Common Blue Damselfly** and a splendid *Volucella bombylans* hoverfly, which is a bumblebee mimic.

We stopped for lunch before taking advantage of the slightly higher temperature to revisit Dersingham Bog. Again, no **Black Darters** could be found from the boardwalk. However we walked further, to what was historically a flight pond for shooting ducks. Here we found several very fresh **Black Darters**. Two male **Emperor Dragonflies** were patrolling the peaty water of the pond and both **Azure** and **Common Emerald Damselflies** were in the surrounding vegetation, while a male **Black-tailed Skimmer** briefly appeared at the water's edge.

WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY – *Warm and often sunny, with a brisk but warm breeze*

This morning we went south, to the extremely rich boundary of the Brecks and the Fens. Our first visit was to NWT's wonderful Thompson Common reserve. Before we even made it through the woods at the entrance to the reserve we had stopped multiple times, to look at **Speckled Wood**, **Brown Hawker**, **Ruddy** and **Common Darters** and a host of **Purple Hairstreaks**, among other species. We also briefly saw a **Silver-washed Fritillary** here and the first of today's two hornet-imitating hoverflies *Volucella zonaria*.

The grass, rushes and reedbed around the sunny pingos were superb. After searching through multiple **Common Emerald Damselflies**, we found two male **Scarce Emerald Damselflies**. There were **Small Coppers** here too, lots of **Small Skippers**, **Common Blues**, a **Holly Blue** that landed on a group member's hand, and the three common brown butterflies of open grassland. Over the largest

pingo an **Emperor Dragonfly** was patrolling and there were plenty of **Ruddy Darters** around the edge. As we walked back through the woods we saw a splendid female **Southern Hawker**.

We also had a short lesson in Orthoptera here, hearing and seeing **Field** and **Meadow Grasshoppers**, plus a **Roesel's Bush-Cricket** and a gorgeous female **Long-winged Conehead**.

We next visited NWT Wayland Wood, where there were **Emperor Dragonflies** and plenty of **Brown Hawkers** but none of the specialist butterflies of ancient woodland. So we drove on to the RSPB's fantastic Lakenheath Fen. As soon as we arrived there was insect action, though sadly only I saw the **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** feeding in Viper's Bugloss beside the visitor centre. We all had superb views of **Small Red-eyed Damselflies** (and **Smooth Newts**) around the pond-dipping pond.

We took the trail through the middle of the reed beneath the riverbank, which was simply superb. There were lots of **Common Blue Damselflies** and **Ruddy Darters** here and **Brown Hawkers** were amazingly numerous over the reed. We had great views of a female **Southern Hawker** too. The highlights were an **Emperor Dragonfly** eating a water beetle while perched on a reed, a **Black-tailed Skimmer** also perched in reed (which we initially hoped would be a **Scarce Chaser**), a **Clouded Yellow** which flew past us and a male **Blue-eyed (Southern Migrant) Hawker** which repeatedly buzzed us, giving outrageously good views of this gorgeous recent colonist.

On Gary's Fen there were numerous **Mute Swans**, plus a few **Coots** and a **Great Crested Grebe**. Along the trail back to the first shelter we saw numerous **Azure Damselflies** and enjoyed a flyover **Bittern**. From the shelter we could see **Little Grebes** and several distant **Black-tailed Skimmers** over the water.

As we walked back, the Hemp Agrimony at the edge of the poplar wood was heaving with freshly emerged **Painted Ladies**, accompanied by several **Red Admirals** and **Peacocks** and a **Silver-washed Fritillary**. We made the long journey back to your hotel positively beaming with all that we had seen.

THURSDAY 16TH JULY – *Sunny and warm with a strong breeze*

We had a lot we wanted to see today, so we decided we would focus our attention in a hugely diverse area of North Norfolk, where potentially all of our targets could be found. We started at our easternmost point, at Beeston Common, just east of Sheringham. Here, as everywhere today, our success was limited by a cool breeze and by high cloud, though we still saw plenty of interesting things.

I had promised you carnivorous plants, so we entered the site via the fen where we saw Round-leaved and Great Sundews and Common Butterwort. Also here were some Southern Marsh Orchids (already over), a Common Spotted Orchid (very close to being over) and both Marsh Helleborines and a Marsh Fragrant Orchid still in glorious bloom. Following a question from a group member, we also had a short workshop in grass, rush and sedge-identification, using the time-honoured rhyme:

*Sedges have edges,
Rushes are round,
And grasses have nodes that go down to the ground.*

At the south end of Beeston Common, a sap run on an old oak has recently been a big draw for butterflies and has been very reliable for **Purple Emperor**. When we first arrived the sap run was empty, except for a wasp, which was soon joined by a hornet. On nearby bramble flowers, however,

there were plenty of **Gatekeepers**. As soon as the sun broke through the cloud, **Red Admirals** began to visit the sap, with three or four individuals present at any one time. Also here, we were buzzed by a **Southern Hawker**.

We gave the sap run our very best shot, but eventually decided that the weather was too cool to coax a **Purple Emperor** out of the canopy. Walking back across the common we saw plenty of **Gatekeepers**, plus the remarkable sight of a wasp killing a **Peppered Moth**.

We next drove a short distance west, to Kelling Heath. Here we stopped for lunch, which I disrupted when I found a small cloud of **Essex Skippers** feeding from Viper's Bugloss (very sun-scorched Viper's Bugloss) at the edge of the car park. An extensive search among the best patches of flowering Bell Heather and almost-flowering Common Heather failed to reveal any **Silver-studded Blues** and we concluded that their season had come to an end altogether, which was unsurprising, given the date and the relentlessly hot, dry summer it has been.

We next moved a very short distance southwest, to an area which is excellent for woodland butterflies. We soon found our first **White Admiral** (later followed by a second) and we saw plenty of **Silver-washed Fritillaries** here, in addition to abundant **Gatekeepers** and a **Comma**. Overhead there was a single **Migrant Hawker**, hunting the crowns of the trees, as the species commonly does.

Agonisingly, we had glimpses of what I suspect were both **Purple** and **White-letter Hairstreaks** (around Pedunculate Oaks and Wych Elms, respectively) but in today's cool breeze we simply never saw them land to give us a proper view. **Holly Blues** were greatly more obliging. Even more agonisingly, I briefly left you to check some Wych Elms for hairstreaks, leaving you looking at the flowering brambles where most of the butterflies were concentrated. I was initially delighted when a **Purple Emperor** landed above me in the top of a Hawthorn, only to be disappointed when it flew off as you walked towards me.

Having given the woodland butterflies our very best shot, we headed still further west to Warham Camp. Here we easily saw **Chalkhill Blues**, in addition to **Six-spot Burnets** and our only **Wall Brown**. Having seen so much, both today and across the tour, in the late afternoon we returned to Briarfields in Titchwell, where your tour came to an end.

Thank you very much for sharing your love and enthusiasm for dragonflies and butterflies with us. We hope to see you again on another Oriole Birding tour.

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	Comments
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>				
	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		s		
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>		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>		♦		
16	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>				
17	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				
18	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		s		
19	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		♦		
20	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>				
21	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		s		
22	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		s		

23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		s			
24	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>					
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	s		
28	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	s	s	s		
29	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		s			
30	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		s			
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>					
39	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					
40	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>					
41	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>					
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6	Comments	
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>		s			
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>			h		
65	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	s	s	s		
66	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>					
67	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		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		
73	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					
74	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			s		
75	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	h		h		
76	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	s	s	s		
77	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>					
78	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	s	s	s		

79	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	s	s	s		
80	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>					
81	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>					
82	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		s	s		
83	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		h			
84	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>					
85	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		s			
86	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		s			
87	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>					
88	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>					
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	4	5	6	Comments	
89	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			h		
90	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	s	s	s		
91	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>					
92	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		s			
93	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>					
94	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		s	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			
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>		s	s		
107	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	h	h			
108	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>					
109	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>					
110	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		s			
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>	s				
116	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		h	s		
117	Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>					
118	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>					
119	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		s			
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>		s			
125	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	s	s			
126	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	s	s			
127	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		h			
128	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>					
129	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					

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	Comments	
1	Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>			s		
2	Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	s	s			
3	Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	s				
4	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		s			
5	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		s			
6	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	s	s	s		
7	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>		s			
8	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>		s			
9	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	s	s	s		
10	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>					
11	Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	s	s	s		
12	Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	s	s	s		
13	Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	s	s	s		
14	Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>			s		
15	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>		s	s		
16	Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>					
17	White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>			s		
18	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	s	s	s		
19	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	s	s			
20	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>		s			
21	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>					
22	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>		s	s		
23	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	s	s	s		
24	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>		s			
25	White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium w-album</i>					
26	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>		s	s		
27	Chalkhill Blue	<i>Lysandra coridon</i>			s		

28	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>					
29	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		s			
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	4	5	6	Comments	
1	Scarce Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes dryas</i>		s			
2	Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	s	s			
3	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>		s			
4	Small Red Damselfly	<i>Ceragrion tenellum</i>					
5	Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	s	s	s		
6	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	s	s			
7	Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>					
8	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>		s			
9	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	s	s			
10	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>					
11	Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>		s	s		
12	Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>		s			
13	Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	s	s	s		
14	Blue-eyed Hawker	<i>Aeshna affinis</i>		s			
15	Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	s	s			
16	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	s	s			
17	Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	s				
18	Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	s				
19	Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	s	s	s		
20	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	s	s			

21	Norfolk Hawker	<i>Aeshna isoteles</i>					
22	Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>					