



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK MIGRATION SHORT BREAK
17TH – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

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SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER – *Overcast with a fresh Easterly breeze*

The group arrive to a day full of promise, as an easterly airflow had been blowing across the North Sea since yesterday, with a nice high pressure built to the east of us over Scandinavia. So far, the day hadn't lived up to expectations with relatively few migrants around, though Ashley had found a Red-breasted Flycatcher earlier in the day and so after our 2pm rendezvous, we headed to Wells Woods to spend the afternoon birding there in the hope we might relocate it. In truth it was very quiet, with the large tit flock being highly mobile and difficult to check properly. We found a smaller flock feeding by the main path further west which produced views of **Chiffchaff**, **Goldcrest**, **Treecreeper** and **Blackcap**, while a furtive **Redstart** showed briefly at the edge of The Dell. Dusk was upon us all too early though and we had to call time on a relatively slow afternoon.

MONDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER – *Fresh SW winds and heavy rain showers, 20C*

After yesterdays promising weather, we opted for Holkham Meals this morning as this is a site where birds can collect over the days following an arrival. It was relatively sheltered and actually we enjoyed some beautiful warm sunshine throughout our entire walk. Heading up past Meals House, we saw several **Red Kites**, **Common Buzzard**, **Marsh Harrier**, **Kestrel** and **Sparrowhawk**, while the grazing marshes resounded to the burbling of **Pink-footed Geese**, freshly arrived from Iceland and snoozing among the freshly mown fields. Passerines were few but at the far west end, we heard the unmistakable 'tsoo-eet!' call of a **Yellow-browed Warbler**. The bird popped up high in a pine, then flew down into the sycamores under the pines. We managed some half decent views here, with the bird calling loudly really close to us, before it shot off to the bushes in the dunes. Walking on, we picked up a lovely **Whinchat** along the fence line with two **Stonechats** for company, and then had the **Yellow-browed Warbler** briefly again with a small tit flock in the bushes. The sunshine meant our whole walk was buzzing with insects – we saw seven species of butterfly and lots of odonata too, the best of which was a brief **Willow Emerald Damselfly**. More good views of the **Pink-footed Geese** on the way back were had from the Washington Hide, where we also saw a **Great White Egret** standing sentinel among the cattle.



Yellow-browed Warbler at Holkham Meals

We had lunch in the sunshine at The Lookout, where a pair of **Raven** passed by cronking and giving superb views. It was then back west along the coast to Titchwell, as heavy rain was forecast for the latter part of the afternoon and we wanted to be near some cover. The reserve was full of water and rather poor for birds as a result, but at least in Island Hide we stayed dry while thunder clapped overhead and the rain lashed down. Lots of **Teal**, **Shoveler** and **Wigeon** were supplemented by the odd **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Ruff**, **Spoonbill** plus **Avocets** of course. A break in the rain allowed us to dash to Parrinder Hide, from where we saw a distant **Water Rail** and more of the same waterbirds. We had to call at Island Hide again on the return to shelter, adding two **Common Sandpipers**. To wrap up the day, we popped into Thornham enjoying close views of two juvenile **Bar-tailed Godwits**, **Spoonbill** and a lovely male **Marsh Harrier**.



Shoveler in the rain at Titchwell

TUESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER – *Overcast with strong SW winds and showers, 17C*

A tough day of weather was forecast, but we actually had an excellent days birdwatching and notched up a couple of nice rarities plus a good selection of regular passage birds. We headed east along the North Norfolk Coast to Wells and called first at North Point Pools, where there was plenty to see – particularly large numbers of **Ruffs**, mainly juveniles, and a lovely **Snipe** were showing well. A **Spoonbill** flew in and there were lots of **Teal**, **Shoveler**, **Wigeon** and the odd **Pintail**. Turning our attention to the west flood, we noticed a smaller wader feeding furtively on a grassy island – it was a juvenile **Pectoral Sandpiper**, which had been around on and off for a while. We had great views as it fed in the open, often dwarfed by the juvenile **Ruffs**, and frequently facing us to show its distinctive pectoral band demarcated against a clean white belly. As we were watching the ‘Pec’, a cracking juvenile **Grey Plover** dropped in and landed close to the path – quite an unusual bird to see at this location.



Pectoral Sandpiper, North Point Wells

Cley next and we braved the beach car park for a quick seawatch. It was really windy here and tricky to stand up never mind use a scope. But there were some superb juv **Gannets** loafing around just off the beach, several **Razorbills** close in on the water and our first **Sandwich Terns**. Heading around to the Visitor Centre, we heard that the semi-resident **Long-billed Dowitcher** was roosting on Pat's Pool, so opted to head directly to the Bishop's Hide to look for it. There were loads of birds sheltering on the pool, mainly gulls, ducks and **Black-tailed Godwits**. There was no sign of the dowitcher among them but we could see four beautiful juvenile **Bar-tailed Godwits**. Experienced told us though that the dowitcher was very good at hiding among the godwits out of sight, so it could easily be there! We got on with scanning the rest of the scrape, noting three juvenile **Little Stints** and a **Curlew Sandpiper** which dropped in briefly before flying off to Simmond's. A **Marsh Harrier** then appeared, flushing birds as it went across the pool before dropping onto an Avocet, killing it and proceeding to feed on it on one of the islands! This drama sent a wave of commotion round the scrape, flushing the godwits and shuffling the **Long-billed Dowitcher** into full view – it had been there all the time! We had great views of Cley's long staying American visitor, before it eventually scuttled back into long grass out of view.



Long-billed Dowitcher, Cley

Next we headed along to Salthouse, to look for four **Cattle Egrets** which had been seen near Beach Road. Taking a footpath north behind the duckpond, we managed to spot three of them among the long grass, no doubt sheltering from the strong winds and seemingly reluctant to move into the open. An adult **Mediterranean Gull** was also seen among the roosting gulls – it was shaping up to be a productive day! Back at Snipe's Marsh, we watched two **Green Sandpipers** feeding and then the squeal of a **Water Rail** revealed not one but two feeding in the open along the reed edge. East Bank was predictably rather windy, but we picked up a **Greenshank** and Ringed Plover, saw more **Sandwich Terns**, a **Spoonbill** and lots of Wigeon. Finally from the central hides, we had superb views of the three **Little Stints** again with a mixed flock of Dunlin and two juvenile **Curlew Sandpipers**. The **Long-billed Dowitcher** was feeding in the open (albeit more distantly) and a surprise **Common Swift** swept through on the wind. There was even another productive stop on our way back to base, with a field full of **Golden Plovers** and a covey of **Grey Partridge** at Burnham Overy by the coast road.

WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER – *Strong Southerly winds, 16C*

A very windy final morning of the trip with Southerly gales raking across the country and bringing in rain from the west. We had few options on with little bird news and little prospect of any migrants being found, so headed for Snettisham over the end of the tide to see if we could add anything among the masses of waders there. It was almost impossible to stand up on the crossbank but we struggled down to the hides, noting a couple of **Sanderling**, **Turnstone** and of course thousands of **Oystercatchers** and hundreds of **Shelducks**. From Shore Hide, a decent roost was gathered on the island north of the hide, comprising mainly **Redshank** and **Black-tailed Godwit**. Careful scanning revealed a lovely peachy juv **Curlew Sandpiper**, and a handful of **Knot**. Three **Spotted Redshanks** were roosting in their usual favoured spot out in the middle of the pit (though it was so windy, it

looked as if they were going to be either blown away or drowned by the waves on the water!). 17 **Spoonbills** completed the blustery picture, and with rain forecast to arrive we headed back with the wind behind us, beating the weather to stay dry. We called it a day here, with drop offs back at King's Lynn and Titchwell.



Curlew Sandpiper at Cley



Grey Plover – a lovely juvenile seen at Wells

Thanks to Peter Barrett for use of his excellent photos in the report

#	Common Name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)						
1	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>				
2	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		■	■	
3	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>			■	
4	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		■	■	■
5	Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	■	■	■	■
6	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		■	■	■
7	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>			■	■
8	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		■	■	■
9	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>				
10	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		■	■	
11	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		■	■	
12	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		■	■	
13	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	■	■	■	■
14	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			■	
15	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		■	■	■
16	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		■		
17	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	■			
18	Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>				
19	Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>				
20	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>				
21	Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>				
22	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>				
Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)						
23	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		■	■	
24	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>			■	
25	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				
Gaviidae and Procellariidae (Divers and Shearwaters)						
26	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>				
27	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>				
28	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna griseus</i>				
29	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>				
Podicipedidae (Grebes)						
30	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	■	■		■
31	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				
Ardeidae and Threskiornithidae (Hérons, Egrets, Bitterns and Spoonbills)						
32	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		■	■	■
33	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>				
34	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		■	■	
35	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		■		
36	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		■	■	■
Sulidae and Phalacrocoracidae (Gannets, Cormorants and Shags)						

#	Common Name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20
37	Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			■	
38	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		■	■	■
Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)						
39	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		■		
40	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		■	■	
41	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>				
42	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	■	■	■	
43	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	■	■	■	
Rallidae and Gruidae (Rails, Coots and Cranes)						
44	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		■	■	
45	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		■	■	■
46	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	■	■	■	
47	Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>				
Burhinidae, Recurvirostridae and Charadriidae (Stone Curlew, Avocets, Plovers and allies)						
48	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>				
49	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		■		■
50	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		■	■	
51	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		■	■	
52	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	■		■	
53	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			■	■
54	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			■	
55	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>				
Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)						
56	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>				
57	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		■	■	■
58	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		■	■	
59	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		■	■	■
60	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			■	■
61	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>			■	■
62	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>		■	■	
63	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>			■	■
64	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>				■
65	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		■	■	■
66	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>			■	
67	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		■	■	
68	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		■		
69	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			■	
70	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		■	■	■
71	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				
72	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>				■
73	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			■	
Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skuas)						
74	Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>				

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75	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	■	■	■	■
76	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			■	
77	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>			■	
78	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>				
79	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>		■	■	■
80	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		■	■	
81	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>				
82	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			■	
83	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			■	
84	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		■	■	■
85	Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>				
86	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>				
Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skuas)						
87	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>				
88	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>			■	
Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)						
89	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>				
90	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>				
91	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	■	■	■	■
92	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	■	■	■	■
Tytonidae and Strigidae (Owls)						
93	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>				
94	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>				
95	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>				
Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)						
96	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				
Picidae (Woodpeckers)						
97	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				
98	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>				
Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)						
99	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	■	■	■	
100	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>				
101	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>				
102	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				
Corvidae (Crows, Jays and Magpies)						
103	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	■	■		
104	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	■	■	■	
105	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	■	■	■	■
106	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		■	■	■
107	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		■	■	
Paridae (Tits)						
108	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	■	■		
109	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>				

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110	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	▪	▪		
111	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	▪	▪		
Panuridae and Alaudidae (Reedling and Larks)						
112	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>				
113	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>				
Hirundinidae (Swallows)						
114	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		▪	▪	
115	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			▪	
116	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		▪	▪	
Scotocercidae and Phylloscopidae (Bush and Leaf Warblers)						
117	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>				
118	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
119	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				
120	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	▪	▪		
121	Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>		▪		
Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)						
122	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>				
123	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				
124	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	▪			
125	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>				
126	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>				
127	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>				
Regulidae (Kinglets)						
128	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>				
129	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	▪	▪		
Troglodytidae (Wrens)						
130	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	▪	▪		
Sittidae and Certhiidae (Nuthatches and Treecreepers)						
131	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				
132	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	▪			
Turdidae and Sturnidae (Thrushes and Starlings)						
133	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	▪	▪	▪	
134	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		▪		
135	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>				
136	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>				
137	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>				
138	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				
Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)						
139	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				
140	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	▪	▪		
141	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>				
142	Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	▪			

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143	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		▪		
144	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		▪		
145	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>				
<i>Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)</i>						
146	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		▪	▪	
147	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>				
<i>Prunellidae (Accentors)</i>						
148	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		▪	▪	
<i>Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)</i>						
149	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>				
150	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				
151	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		▪	▪	
152	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		▪		
153	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				
154	Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>				
<i>Fringillidae (Finches)</i>						
155	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		▪		
156	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>				
157	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				
158	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				
159	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		▪		
160	Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>				
161	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>			▪	
162	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				
<i>Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)</i>						
163	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>				
164	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>				
165	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		▪		
166	Snow bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>				
167	Lapland Bunting	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>				
168						
169						
170	Swift				▪	
171	Cattle Egret				▪	
172	Pectoral Sandpiper				▪	
173	Long-billed Dowitcher				▪	
174	Raven			▪		