



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT NORFOLK MIGRATION MAGIC WEEKEND 16th-19th September 2021

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Thursday 16th Sept

Gary collected Barbara and Kay from Kings Lynn train station and headed onto the RSPB reserve at Titchwell, where the remainder of the group was to meet.

With the others having already arrived the group quickly assembled and we started the trip with a walk along the west bank footpath. We stopped to view the large pool to the East noting Pochard, Tufted and Little Grebe.

Pausing again just prior to Island hide, we could hear 'pinging' Bearded Tits, with a male subsequently giving us a variety of views both in flight and perched, but a calling Water Rail and Cetti's Warbler weren't unsurprisingly as co-operative.

A scan of the nearby fresh marsh produced several Avocet, Ruff, Shelduck, good numbers of Teal and a solitary Pintail. A second calendar Great Black-backed Gull could be seen feeding on a carcass and closer inspection revealed it to be a Teal.

A stop to chat with the site's warden revealed she'd seen a wader close to the reed edge, which was currently hidden from view. The bird at that point took off calling, a Wood Sandpiper, a hoped for species here, though unfortunately choosing to fly out across over the marsh to land out of view.

We moved along the path meeting a group of birders who were watching the Pectoral Sandpiper, which had been at the site for a few days. We momentarily latched onto the bird before it flew into the nearby corner and frustratingly out of view. We walked round to the path leading to the Parinder Hide and found we could view the bird by looking over the bank. We then walked onto hide and looked back into the corner again, able to see the bird when it walked out of the corner into view.

Birds on the marsh here included several Yellow Wagtails, Meadow Pipits, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Teal plus a selection of Gulls, which included an adult Mediterranean Gull.

We then scanned from the eastern end of the hide picking out several Dunlin and a Little Stint though both couldn't have been any further away!

We then returned back to the path and walked out towards the sea, where a roosting flock of several hundred Knot and few Turnstone were noted on the Saltmarsh Pool. A large flock of Golden Plovers were also seen soaring over nearby Thornham Harbour, resettling distantly on the saltmarsh.

Walking back we then enjoyed point blank views of Pectoral Sandpiper, this time right by the path. A surprise addition here though was two unseasonal Redhead Goosander noted flying in and then landing on the fresh marsh.

Friday 17th September 21

Gary picked up the group from the Blue boar shortly after breakfast, a calling Nuthatch starting our day list as it flitted around the trees in the car park. With little sign of anything changing weather wise at the coast it was decided that a brief mornings sortie to the Brecks was in order. Our drive south saw us arriving on the edge of some pig fields, a flyover Sparrowhawk noted as we pulled into park. The area is a traditional pre migration gathering spot for Stone Curlews and it wasn't long before we were enjoying our first views of the birds. A vocal Grey Wagtail flying over calling was noted too.



Stone Curlews – Tour Participant Robert Todd

We continued our journey south to our next destination, Lynford Arboretum. The expected Woodland species were noted around the car park, which included Coal Tit, Goldcrest and a calling Treecreeper, which unfortunately wouldn't show. A walk out into suitable habitat in search for our hoped for species proved harder than we'd hoped, with distractions along the way that included a family of Stonechat and a small flock of siskin, plus hundreds of Bees, a solitary sand dwelling 'colletes' species, which were plentiful on the exposed sandy areas. A small flock of five Woodlarks were eventually found which gave us nice views in flight, calling and a brief snatch of song, but unfortunately couldn't be viewed on the ground. A roadside stop on the way back to the coast produced at least six Buzzards, a Great Spotted Woodpecker and three Mistle Thrushes.

Our destination on the coast was Cley where we park at Walsey Hills and walked out along the east bank. The walk proved productive with the several close Common snipe adjacent to the path on the eastern side and calling Bearded Tit in the reeds to the west of us. Scanning the marsh we noted many of the previous days encountered species notably Wigeon, Teal, Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit plus a Yellow Wagtail, Greenshank and a small group of Sandwich Terns. A Wheatear was seen distantly on a fence post bordering the marsh, with presumably the same bird seen better and closer as we approached the beach.

Looking out to sea Gannets were immediately obvious, and as we spent time looking we noted at least three Guillemots sat on the sea. Three Red-throated Divers, sporting various stages of summer plumage were seen and a juvenile Arctic Skua flew past close in shore. We returned back to the bus and finished the day at nearby Salhouse and a walk out to Cramborough Hill, which is a small hillock with an equally small collection of scrub on it. Two Wheatears, a flock of around sixty Linnet and 15 Pied wagtails were encountered on the walk out but the hill itself proved disappointing with three Stonechat perched along the nearby fence line the best we could manage.

Saturday 18th Sept

Our destination this morning was Burnham Overy Dunes, where we parked on the main road then walked down alongside the grazing marsh towards the dunes. A small flock of Egyptian Geese were noted, the first for the trip, and insects were a short diversion on the hedgerows with several Butterfly species seen including a Painted Lady, an impressive Hornet Hoverfly plus an opportunity to compare the differences between Common and Ruddy Darter Dragonflies.



Hornet Hoverfly-Tour Participant Marilyn Peterkin

A typically vocal but elusive Cetti's warbler teased us in the nearby bushes and Whitethroat and Blackcap were both seen, giving some hope there maybe some migrants around. A small flock of Geese were noted flying over the marsh, at a reasonable height and distance and though silhouetted they were fortunately calling, which confirmed their identity as Pink-footed Geese.

We reached the seawall climbing up and pausing briefly to view the creek in front of us. Redshanks were immediately obvious, as were several Curlews and Black-tailed Godwit and a scan round with the telescopes soon revealed Grey and Ringed Plover too. We continued our walk noting three Spoonbills on the saltmarsh, several red Kites overhead and a Chinese Water deer.

By this time we had arrived at the dunes with our walk through these proving somewhat disappointing producing just a single Hobby and a male Blackcap.

We arrived at the pines at the eastern end of the dunes with the plan being Gary would return back along the route we had taken to collect the bus, the group continuing through the Pines

to meet Gary at car park at Lady Anne's Drive. Before we separated a toad was spotted on the path, and closer inspection revealed it was Natterjack that proved a bit of a bonus.



Natterjack Toad Tour-Participant Marilyn Peterkin

The groups walk back produced four Great White Egrets and better views of the previously seen Pink-footed geese, and we rendezvoused as planned, then headed off for lunch. Our lunch spot was a wetland site just outside Wells, giving us plenty to look at whilst we ate, and we managed to clock up another four Spoonbills and several Pintail amongst the numerous ducks, geese and commoner waders at the site. A Wheatear was also an addition for the day, unsurprisingly choosing to perch on a nearby fence line. We continued east along the coast after lunch to our next destination, a somewhat overlooked water body near Stiffkey, called Stiffkey Fen. As always the site held plenty of birds largely wildfowl such as Greylag Geese, Wigeon, Shoveler and Teal, though searching through the latter revealed several Pintail as well. An impressive flock of largely roosting Spoonbills numbered twenty-five birds in total. Black-tailed Godwit and Redshank were also easily seen and again a closer look revealed seven Greenshank and a Green Sandpiper. The seawall also gives views out over Blakeney Harbour and a scan with scopes revealed large numbers of Oystercatchers, plus Grey Plover and Bar-tailed Godwits, Mute Swans, gulls and eight Brent Geese. A Grey Wagtail also flew in and landed on the sluice in front of us. Our last stop of the day was a short drive away, a small strip of coastal woodland on the edge of Stiffkey village. A nice pleasant walk through the wood and back along the edge of the saltmarsh was unfortunately largely birdless, from a migrant perspective at least, so we decided to call it a day and head back to the accommodation.

Sunday 19th Sept

We started our last morning by heading to the coast to explore a stretch of coastal scrub just east of wells-next-the-sea. As the previous few days passerines were challenging to find and the best we could achieve as we walked along the tree edged path was a couple Chaffinches and a surprise Nuthatch that called vigorously but stayed out of sight. We initially went west when we reached the end of the path stopping to explore the bushes around a small pit. As we stood watching, species such as Linnets and Reed Buntings were immediately obvious, the latter surprisingly numerous with at least ten present. Other birds started appearing a couple of Chiffchaffs, a Blackcap and then a Lesser Whitethroat, the first of the trip. We then walked east to view a larger pit which was quiet and the only birds of note were a Marsh Harrier and Red Kite over the neighbouring fresh marsh.

We returned back to the bus and made a short return drive to Wells, our destination Wells Woods. A scan of the boating lake as we disembarked and walked towards the woods revealed a count of seven Little Grebes and several Coot. Our route took us around the more open area to the southwest of the large depression they call the Dell, a Sparrowhawk flew over us and a calling Buzzard drew our attention skyward revealing a circling kettle of at least thirteen birds.

A stop by a small seemingly largely dry woodland pool, was followed by a walk back through the more wooded northern side of the Dell. This proved a good move with two Treecreepers seen well, plus Coal Tis, Goldcrests and at least five Chiffchaffs. A flock of at least four Jays noisily followed our route, giving typical coarse Jay calls but at least one repeatedly mimicking a Green Woodpecker with a second watched doing an uncannily accurate Common Buzzard call from a nearby perch.

With lunchtime approaching we headed west along the coast to our last planned stop of the day the NWT reserve at Holme. After negotiating the bumpy pot holed track we parked and had lunch before walking a stretch of the coastal path.

Whitethroat, Stonechat, Linnets and Meadow Pipits were seen on the dune side of the path with several Marsh harriers seen out over the grazing marsh.

Scanning the shoreline a selection of waders could be seen including Bar and Black-tailed Godwit, Turnstone and Oystercatcher. Small flocks of wildfowl were noted flying west, largely just off shore, mainly Wigeon with a few Teal but also Pintail with twenty-two counted. Brent Geese were also seen, a sign of the changing season with forty-four counted and two Red-throated Divers flew east and a Great crested Grebe was noted on the sea.

Time was now running out and we returned to the bus to make the journey to Kings Lynn to drop off Barbara and Kay at the Train Station. After saying our goodbyes we headed back towards Great Ryburgh making one more quick stop at a private reserve enroute. The surrounding fields revealing a small covey of Red-legged partridge and an impressively large mixed pigeon, Corvid and gull flock that revealed the hoped for Stock Doves.

Arriving back at Great Ryburgh we said our goodbyes and then commenced our journeys home.

Species List

Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>

Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>
Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>
Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedichnemus</i>
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>

Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>

Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>

Other Wildlife

Red Admiral
Painted Lady
Speckled Wood
Large White
Small White

Common Darter
Ruddy Darter
Migrant Hawker
Willow Emerald

Hornet Hoverfly
Natterjack Toad

Chinese Water Deer
Brown hare
Rabbit
Grey Squirrel