



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT NORFOLK SHOREBIRD SPECTACULAR 22ND – 24TH AUGUST 2019

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THURSDAY 22ND AUGUST – Snettisham and Frampton

Sunny spells, clouding over later, moderate SW, 23C

Day one of our Norfolk Shorebird Spectacular dawned fine and sunny, and with a high tide due at 10:45, put us in the perfect position to start with a bang by heading to Snettisham. The sight of 1000's of waders congregating at the head of the tide on the Wash is one of the UK's great birding spectacles, and while today's high tide wasn't particularly big, it didn't disappoint. Heading across county, we noted Kestrel, Red Kite and Common Buzzard on the drive, reaching Snettisham village after about 35 minutes. Soon we were out on the seawall overlooking mudflats, and already perhaps 6000 Knot and 2000 Oystercatchers were gathered on the waters edge in a tight pack. As the tide encroached, the Knot would ripple as the group jostled for position, and occasionally took flight in dramatic fashion; just superb! Also giving great views were many Bar-tailed Godwits, about 200 Golden Plovers and a scattering of Dunlin, Ringed Plovers and Turnstones. Searching through the small waders paid dividends, as an adult **Little Stint** was picked up along the edge of the main channel, and though it was mobile, allowed many to see it before it took flight. Smart Grey Plovers were scattered along the farther areas of exposed mud, while Curlew were in good number also. A couple hundred terns here included mostly Common Terns but also plenty of Sandwich Terns, some with begging fledglings. Another feature along the main trail was a couple of flighty **Yellow Wagtails** which wouldn't settle for good views, while even less obliging were 2 **Turtle Doves** which Jeremy saw as they took flight and landed in scrub across the other side of the pits, out of view. More obliging though were good numbers of Linnets along the path scrub. Into the Shore Hide to overlook the pits, we enjoyed views in good light of 6 **Spoonbills** at the far end, keeping company with 6 **Greenshank**, 13 **Spotted Redshanks** roosting in the middle, a single vocal Common Sandpiper and a cluster of perhaps 400 Black-tailed Godwits on the islands, allowing a nice discussion about the differences between these and the Bar-tailed Godwits we had seen before. From here, it was high time for a hot drink back at the van, which we had overlooking the Wash, picking up an adult **Mediterranean Gull** on the mud in the process. Finishing up, and having soaked up the atmosphere of this amazing site, we made our next move for the afternoon; heading to Frampton RSPB.



Adult Little Stint at Snettisham

Tackling the A17, and not encountering anything too strenuous in the way of traffic, we arrived at Frampton a little over an hour later. Collecting our permits and using the loos, we then headed up to the seawall carpark, where we stopped and had our lunch. Black-tailed Godwits showed at point-blank range alongside Dunlins and Ringed Plovers, while many Sand Martins and several **Yellow Wagtails** buzzed around. Good numbers of Common Snipe were also on show here, before we wrapped up our lunch and headed up onto the sea wall. A couple of particularly sort-after species have been present at Frampton for a while now; an adult **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** and a more recently arrived **BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER**, and we all agreed that we should give this bird a punt. Both were viewable from the seawall, and as folk peeled away from the direction of the Buff-breast reporting no sign for more than an hour, we decided to try for the Dowitcher. Searching the pools at the southern end of the reserve, we enjoyed nice views of Ruff, Snipe, Black-tailed Godwits, a small flock of **Spoonbills** and a single, very brief **Wood Sandpiper** which appeared in front of us before taking flight and dropping out of view. Unfortunately, despite searching thoroughly though, there was just no sign of the Dowitcher here that the moment. After 40 minutes, we started making our way north along the seawall. More Dunlin were present on the pools, as were Teal, Little Grebe, Gadwall and a single Wigeon. Meeting a couple of birders, the **BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** had come out from hiding and was showing really well, if a bit distantly, out on short vegetation amongst roosting Lapwings; great! We all got scopes on the bird and watched it feeding, noting its surprisingly small size, long striding gait when walking, plain face and bold eye-ring and very neatly scalloped plumage above; a real nice bird! A bonus here was a juvenile **Curlew Sandpiper** which was feeding in the creek closer to hand; a fine bonus! The saltmarsh behind us hosted a single **Whimbrel** which fed close to a Curlew for comparison, while **Yellow Wagtails** showed really well along the track, and a single **Wheatear** was present at the double gates. With 40 minutes to play with, we returned back to where the **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** had been hanging out, and there it was, feeding out in the open bold as brass in typical sewing machine fashion! One or the same **Wood Sandpiper** did a vocal flypast before we headed back to the visitor centre, a coffee and loo break setting us in good stead for the journey home. The final highlight was for one group participant, as I met him by the bridge in Great Ryburgh, and taking a look around the back of Bridge Farm, we enjoyed his first **Little Owls**; a family group sitting up prominent on hay bales. A great way to end, though the next task is to make sure everyone else sees these delightful owls before the end of the trip!



Long-billed Dowitcher and Black-tailed Godwit at Frampton

FRIDAY 23RD AUGUST – Titchwell, Burnham Norton and Wells

Sunny all day, light SW turning E later, 26C

A scorcher of a day started well with a pause overlooking where we had seen the **Little Owls** the previous day. Using the van as a screen we had nice views of 2 **Little Owls** showing well by Bridge Farm, while Common Whitethroat also showed well. From here we then headed out to Titchwell, where we spent the morning. Parking up, and after a quick cuppa, we took a wander around the carpark in search of Sylvia warblers, noting a single **Lesser Whitethroat** in the paddocks and a few calling Blackcaps, before heading round towards the visitor centre. Around towards the reedbeds a Cetti's Warbler was giving some late sub-song but failed to show itself, while a single **Bearded Tit** sat up in some isolated reeds. From here we walked on to overlook the freshmarsh. A good number of

Black-tailed Godwits were present along with smaller numbers of Ruff and Dunlin, and a single **Spoonbill** stood alone on one of the back islands. Four juvenile **Little Ringed Plovers** were keeping company with 2 adult Ringed Plovers close to the track, while many Avocets and Lapwings also littered the marsh. Walking out to the beach, **Whimbrel** was noted along with a roost of Oystercatchers and a single Turnstone. The sea was quiet but offered a number of passing Common Terns. As the tide was coming in, we returned to the Freshmarsh (enjoying further good views of Whimbrel on the way) to sit in the Parrinder Hide to see if any further waders would make an appearance. Just as we entered the hide, a commotion from the flocks of gulls and waders alerted us to a **Hobby** which cruised in, circled, and then headed off again. Back in the hide, good views of Common Sandpiper were had along with the other assorted species, which now included some Knot which had come off the high tide. From the island hide, a look across the marsh offered better lighting conditions for checking through the roosting gulls here. A single adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was reward for the change of position, as was another brief **Bearded Tit** beside the hide. It was now getting on for lunchtime, so we made our way back to the carpark to have our sarnies before moving to our next destination.

From Titchwell we headed along the coast to Burnham Norton, where we took a walk out to the seawall. Large numbers of hirundines were feeding over the houses, while 2 **Yellow Wagtails** flew over a little way along the track. One landed in a Hawthorne and put on an outrageous show, feeding on aphids here while we watched it down to 3 meters away! Obviously a juvenile, it clearly knew no reason to fear our presence, and we enjoyed watching it for 5 minutes before leaving it behind. Further interest here came in the form of egrets. A small flock of **Cattle Egrets** have been present on Norton Marsh for most of the summer, but they are extremely difficult to see in the areas they favour. However, we managed to get lucky. Watching over a flock of cows in a near field, a flock of egrets took flight beyond and flew around a few times; several Little Egrets and with them, at least 4 **CATTLE EGRETS**. On our way back along the track the birds were giving the same fly-arounds; it appeared as if something was disturbing them in their favoured field, much to our benefit. Several flight views showed their distinctly heavy structure, short legs and tan wash to the back, along with the yellow bill; enough to please everyone despite only flight views being had! Avocets and Black-tailed Godwits were present on the pools here, while back at the van we were treated to a fantastic display from 2 **Hobbys** hunting hirundines above our heads whilst we had a cuppa! Wrapping up here, we had one last stop at Wells North Point before making our way homeward. With the day being rather hot and sultry, the temperature had started to drop now, and it was very pleasant here overlooking pools. New for the trip were 5 **Green Sandpipers** feeding, some at close range, while **Greenshank**, 2 Little-ringed Plovers and a Common Sandpiper were also seen, along with a single **Yellow Wagtail** and several very fine juvenile Ruff. Wrapping up, we headed homewards after another superb day.



Green Sandpiper showing well at Wells

SATURDAY 24TH AUGUST – Salthouse and Cley

Sunny all day, light SE winds, 28C

Our last day of the trip, and another scorcher forecast! We headed out to the coast again to spend the day, and with a light easterly breeze, we fancied a look in at Salthouse and Gramborough Hill to see if any migrants might have drifted in. This proved a good choice, as a **Whinchat** was enjoyed along the fence lines close to the cattle, along with several Pied Wagtails and Meadow Pipits, and the patch of cover on the back of Gramborough Hill hosted our first **Pied Flycatcher** of the autumn. An elusive bird, it was difficult to see perched for very long; certainly not as obliging as the Whinchat! The sea was quiet from here, hosting only a few passing Common and Sandwich Terns, so we strolled back to the van.



Whinchat at Salthouse

We drove round to the beach car park for a quick look at the sea, as a **BLACK GUILLEMOT** had been present off here the previous day. There was no sign now though, and but for a couple of Gannets and Fulmars distantly offshore, there wasn't much going on to keep us here for long. So with that we headed around to park up at the visitor centre, and took a walk down to the hides overlooking Pat's, Simmond's and Whitwell Scrapes. Sitting down, we enjoyed good views of a wide variety of common waders, taking in the beautiful juvenile plumages of Black-tailed Godwits and Ruff, and also watching several Green Sandpipers and Common Sandpiper at close range. Several Marsh Harriers were noted over the reedbeds, while Shoveler and Wigeon were dabbling close by. With a couple of hours left to play with, we headed now round to the East Bank, taking a walk out to Arnold's Marsh where we noted a small number of Knot, Dunlin, Redshank and Curlew, as well as a few roosting Sandwich and Common Terns. As we wandered back, a message came through saying that the **BLACK GUILLEMOT** was present off the coastguards. With a group decision approving the foregoing of a cuppa before finishing up for the day, we instead headed for the beach, where we enjoyed nice views of the juvenile Tystie close offshore, in the company of an adult summer plumaged Red-throated Diver and a single female Eider; a nice couple of bonus birds; the **Black Guillemot** being a particularly difficult bird to connect with in Norfolk. After enjoying these for a short while, we had to hit the road, dropping Ken and Jeremy off at the visitor centre (where they had dropped their cars off in the morning), John, Susan and Brian at the Blue Boar and Jill, Sue and Megan at King's Lynn, where we wrapped up a really enjoyable trip.



Juvenile Yellow Wagtail showing well at Burnham Norton

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NORFOLK SHOREBIRD SPECTACULAR

22ND - 24TH AUGUST 2019

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	22	23	24	COMMENTS
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	x	x	x	
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	x	x	x	
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	x			
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	x	x	x	
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	x	x	x	
6	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			x	
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	x			
8	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	x		x	
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	x	x	x	
10	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	x	x	x	
11	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		x		
12	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			H	
13	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	H	x		
14	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>			1	
15	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>			x	
16	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	x	x	x	
17	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		1		
18	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	x	1		
19	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	x	x	x	
20	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	x	x	x	
21	Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		1	x	
22	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	x	x	x	
23	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>			x	
24	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		x	x	
25	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	x			
26	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	x	x	x	
27	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		H		
28	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	x	x	x	
29	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	x	x	x	
30	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	x	x		
31	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	x	x	x	
32	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	x	x	x	
33	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	x	x		
34	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	x			
35	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	x	x	x	
36	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		6		
37	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	x	x		
38	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	x	x	x	
39	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	x	x		
40	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	x	x	x	
41	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	x	x		
42	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	x	x	x	
43	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	x	x	x	
44	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1			
45	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	x			
46	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	x	x	x	

#	Common Name	Scientific name	22	23	24	COMMENTS
47	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	1			
48	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	x	x	x	
49	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	x	x		
50	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		5	x	
51	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	x	x	x	
52	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	1			
53	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	13			
54	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	x	1	x	
55	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	x	x	x	
56	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	1	1	3	
57	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	x	x	x	
58	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	x	x	x	
59	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	x	x	x	
60	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>		1		
61	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	x	x	x	
62	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	x	x	x	
63	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	x	x	x	
64	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>	x	x	x	
65	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	x	x	x	
66	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	x	x	x	
67	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	2			
68	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	x	x	x	
69	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	3	2		
70	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	x	x		
71	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			x	
72	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	x	x	x	
73	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		3		
74	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		x		
75	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	x	x	x	
76	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	x	x	x	
77	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	x	x	x	
78	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	x	x	x	
79	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	x	x	x	
80	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	x	x	x	
81	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>		x		
82	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	x			
83	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	x	x	x	
84	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	x	x	x	
85	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	x	x	x	
86	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H		
87	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		x		
88	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		1		
89	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		x		
90	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	x	x	x	
91	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		H		
92	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		1		
93	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		1		
94	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	x	x	x	
95	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	x	x	x	
96	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	x	x	x	
97	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	x	x	x	
98	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			1	

#	Common Name	Scientific name	22	23	24	COMMENTS
99	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	1			
100	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	x	x	x	
101	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	x	x	x	
102	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	x	x		
103	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	x	x	x	
104	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	x	x	x	
105	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		x		
106	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		x		
107	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	x	x	x	
108	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	x	x	x	
109	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		x	x	
#	Additional species	Scientific name	22	23	24	COMMENTS
110	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		4		
111	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Lymnodromus scolopaceus</i>	x			
112	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>	x			
113	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>			x	
114	Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>			x	
115	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>			x	
#	Other Wildlife	Scientific name	22	23	24	COMMENTS
1	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>				
2	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>				
3	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>				
4	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				
5	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>				
6	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>				
7	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>				
8	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>				
9	Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>				
10	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>				
11	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>				
12	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>				
13	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>				