



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT NORFOLK SHOREBIRDS 26TH – 29TH JULY 2021

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TUESDAY 27TH JULY - *Overcast and muggy with some light rain, 19C*

Our first day's wader-watching was a good one, with some prime habitat and loads of birds on offer – in fact the only problem we had on this tour was fitting everything in! Trying to second guess which of an impressive crop of rarities would stay 'one more day' was the first challenge though, and we opted to try first for an elusive **Pacific Golden Plover** at Burnham Norton while the overcast skies kept the heat haze off. We met a birder just returning who had not seen the 'PGP' but we were on site and seemingly had the place to ourselves, so we were going to wander out to the seawall anyway. It was almost eerily calm and muggy, and there were lots of birds about – particularly newly fledged parties of Reed and Sedge Warblers in the dead elders by the track. In one such bush, two **Cetti's Warblers** also popped up and spent a minute or two bouncing around in the open fanning their tails and picking insects off the branches just like the *acros*. A **Spoonbill** flew over and we had great views of two young **Bearded Tits** in the reeds right by the path. Up on the seawall we were greeted with a serene view with a big marsh tide covering all the saltmarsh and just the tops of the *sueada* bushes peeping out. A **Little Tern** was fishing just off the bank and it was so still we could hear it 'plop!' into the water! Walking south along the seawall to the small pool among the reeds and sedges, recently favoured by the plover, we lifted our bins and immediately could see the smart black-bellied form of the summer plumaged **Pacific Golden Plover** on the dry mud at the back! Over the next half hour, we watched the bird almost continuously. It was pretty faithful to one strip of mud but did often disappear from view behind vegetation. It was methodical in its feeding action and we could see its extensive black underparts reaching the undertail and broken white flank line. It was quite long-legged in appearance too but with a reasonably hefty bill compared to a European. Only once briefly did it take flight and show its distinctive dusky grey-brown underwings and long legs trailing beyond the tail tip. A super bird to kick off our trip! We also notched Green and **Common Sandpipers**, **Greenshank**, **Whimbrel** and two more flyover **Spoonbills** before walking back across the marsh.



Pacific Golden Plover, Burnham Norton 27th July

Next we made the long drive east across the county to the wader hotspot of Hickling, where a Pectoral Sandpiper had been seen recently. After lunch by the Visitor Centre, we walked to Brendan's Marsh though as we did so a few spots of rain began to fall and soon this turned into proper rain – coats all in the van! Never mind, it was warm at least, and there were plenty of birds. The first pool held five **Green Sandpipers**, ten **Snipe** and a **Little-ringed Plover** with two small fluffy chicks. There was no sign of the 'Pec' though, and with the rain getting heavier we retreated to the shelter of the trees along the north side of the pools, and the observation platform. Here we added a few more Green Sands, more Snipe and a smart male **Yellow Wagtail**, and with the rain now passed, we decided to walk down to the far end. Here we were greeted with 18 **Spoonbills**, including at least five juveniles and a colour-ringed adult bird which had nested at Holkham. We had great views of them squabbling on the pools and flying around – such fabulous birds to have established in the county. A **Bittern** then lumbered over the reedbed, giving us a great long flight view, and five **Golden Plover** flew over calling with another wisp of Snipe. Finally, a **Hobby** hawking by the dead trees rounded off a good session, even though we couldn't find the Pec Sand.

Cley would be our final call of the day, and a walk out along East Bank to Arnold's Marsh. There were good numbers of **Black-tailed Godwits** here, plus **Greenshank**, **Snipe** and lots of young Redshanks. At Arnold's, there were a few **Sandwich Terns** resting in lovely late afternoon light, five Dunlin and two superb red **Knots**. A very unseasonal **Brent Goose** was a bit of a surprise, on Pope's Pool! We checked the sea, but it was fairly quiet, so we wandered back and called it a day.

WEDNESDAY 28TH JULY – *Overcast with fresh westerly winds and heavy rain showers, 16C*

A true wader-fest was in store today as we took an early breakfast and headed over to Snettisham RSPB on The Wash for the high tide wader roost. There was more to our visit today though, as a **Western Sandpiper** had been found a few days prior and had been showing regularly on all the high tides of recent days – a second for Norfolk and very rare bird in Britain. We arrived at Rotary Hide to find already at least 100 birders lined up on the shingle, and they had been watching the Western Sand but sadly it flew out further onto the mud and disappeared just as we were getting out of the van. Not the best start, but the sight of tens of thousands of birds on the estuary were enough to keep our spirits up, and we set about scanning the vast numbers of Dunlin quickly being pressed closer to us by the rising water. Sanderlings and rusty-backed Turnstones were scurrying among them and a whole throng of terns were spread across the mud too. This gave a great chance to see Common, Sandwich and **Little Terns** side by side and we saw a single flock of 29 of the latter. **Mediterranean Gulls** were about too, with adults and juveniles both in evidence, and already long strings of Dunlin were threading their way over the path and onto the pits to roost.



We popped into Shore Hide, where we could work one of the main roosting islands to check the Dunlin there. We had **Spotted Redshank** as well from this vantage point, but couldn't relocate a superb adult **Curlew Sandpiper** which we had scoped up briefly by the main channel just beforehand. The hide was full to bursting with people queueing outside, so we bailed out and continued round to Sanctuary Hide which was pleasantly quiet. The views from here were superb, with fabulous light for viewing hordes of Dunlin jostling with Knot and Black-tailed Godwits on the small islands right in front of us. We didn't manage to pick anything rare out, but eleven more Spotted Redshanks were seen.



As soon as the first birds started to show signs of departing to The Wash, we headed back north as we wanted to be in position when the Western Sand hopefully returned to its favoured shingle beach. We had to take shelter in Rotary Hide though as a torrential downpour came in – we were grateful of the hide that's for sure! As soon as it cleared though, the first muddy edges were beginning to appear by the shingle and there among the roosting Dunlin was the **Western Sandpiper**! Thankfully it was sitting at the front of the flock and we had some decent scope views showing its rusty scapulars and dark anchor-streaked breast. It woke up briefly showing a distinct chestnut cap to the head and a slightly odd front-heavy jizz with long bill and truncated rear. While smaller than the Dunlin, it certainly wasn't dwarfed by them – but still a distinctive bird all round and a great bird to watch with thousands of Knot making shapes over the estuary beyond at the same time. Our views didn't last long, before a sudden flush spooked the whole lot and they flew out onto the mud several hundred metres away. We did see the **Western Sand** again roosting but it was very distant, and in the background beyond, we could see purplish-black clouds racing towards us. Realising what was coming, we left the crowd of birders and pegged it back along the shingle, but not quite in time as an absolute deluge descended! Thankfully we had the van close by and could dive quickly in!



Dunlin at Snettisham – a bright, rufous tinged *alpina* in the midst of the *shinzii*

Lunch was taken up at Choseley, as we couldn't immediately get into the full car park at Titchwell. This was quite pleasant though, as another series of black clouds edging south of us had driven a huge flock of Swifts low over the rape fields. There must have been 1000+, wheeling and swooping into the fresh wind over the fields. A **Hobby** appeared briefly too, and then a **Raven** was picked up flying our way. Still a scarce bird in Norfolk, we had very good views as it powered west past us. A male Yellowhammer rounded off a pretty productive lunch.



Raven at Choseley – phonescoped as it flew west past us!

Titchwell next, and a parking space was now available. The reserve was fairly quiet – loads of birds but not much new for us. Both of the recent juvenile **limosa Black-tailed Godwits** were present, ‘headstarted’ birds from the Ouse Washes project. 90 Dunlin, 22 Golden Plover, a showy **Water Rail**, some really close Ruff and **Little-ringed Plover** and a fine adult **Spoonbill** were the best of the rest on freshmarsh. At the shore, we added Bar-tailed Godwit (bizarrely we hadn’t logged one in the morning) and enjoyed a fantastic party of 11 **Whimbrel**, all fresh juveniles, which flew in off the sea and landed on the beach.

Our day ended at Wells North Point, where we had some good views of at least five **Green Sandpipers** on the pools but the best was two superb **Hobby** hunting over the barley fields. They were gaining height and then plummeting down with closed wings and breakneck speed, and we could see their red trousers against yet another black sky in the distance. We’d been lucky to (mostly!) avoid the rain today!

THURSDAY 29TH JULY – *Strong SW winds and sunshine, 18C*

We headed into neighbouring Lincolnshire today to pay a visit to Frampton marsh, always a site brimming with birds at this time of year. As we arrived, we could see that reedbed scrape had plenty of roosting waders on so a quick check of this spot was our first port of call. There were over one thousand Dunlin here but no sooner did we start checking through them than they all flew off back to The Wash – it wasn’t even high tide yet! Moving down to the seawall, we were greeted by a small crowd watching the adult summer **Pacific Golden Plover** – our second of the tour! We had some really good views of the bird scuttling about on the short grass, a real beauty and we would return for some more views later.



Pacific Golden Plover, Frampton Marsh 29th July

Up on the seawall, the wind was really strong and it was difficult to stand up and use a telescope. By getting tucked down we managed to pick out the roosting flock of about 30 **Greenshanks**, with one or two **Spotted Redshanks** mixed in. There were also a few Common Ringed and **Little-ringed Plovers** and plenty of Common Terns from this spot, but the wind was so strong we decided to retreat back down to the road and head to the 360. It was surprisingly quiet there, but we did manage to dig out a beautiful fresh juvenile **Wood Sandpiper** which was our first one seen. From reedbed hide, a juv **Yellow Wagtail**, two Common Sandpipers and a **Green Sandpiper** were seen, plus a couple of moulting drake Wigeon. Back at the van, we spent some time admiring the **Pacific Golden Plover** again as it was now closer and showing even better – a stunning bird to round off our trip! Back to King's Lynn then for drop off, and then on to Great Ryburgh where we concluded about 3pm.

#	Common Name	Scientific name	27	28	29	
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	▪	▪	▪	
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	▪	▪	▪	
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	▪	▪	▪	
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>				
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	▪	▪	▪	
6	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>				
7	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	▪	▪	▪	
8	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	▪	▪	▪	
9	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			▪	
10	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	▪	▪	▪	
11	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>				
12	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	▪	▪		
13	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			▪	
14	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		▪	▪	
15	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>				
16	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>				
17	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>				
18	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
19	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>				
20	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>				
21	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna griseus</i>				
22	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>				
23	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			▪	
24	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			▪	
25	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	▪	▪	▪	
26	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	▪			
27	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	▪	▪		
28	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▪			
29	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	▪	▪	▪	
30	Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		▪		
31	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	▪	▪	▪	
32	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>			▪	
33	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	▪	▪		
34	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
35	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	▪	▪	▪	
36	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		▪		

37	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	■	■	■
38	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	■	■	■
39	Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>			
40	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>			
41	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	■	■	
42	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	■	■	■
43	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	■	■	■
44	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	■	■	
45	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			
46	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		■	■
47	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	■	■	■
#	Common Name	Scientific name	27	28	29
48	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	■	■	
49	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	■	■	
50	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		■	
51	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	■	■	■
52	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		■	
53	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		■	■
54	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	■	■	■
55	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		■	
56	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		■	
57	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		■	■
58	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>			
59	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	■		■
60	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	■	■	■
61	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	■	■	■
62	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	■	■	■
63	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			■
64	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>		■	■
65	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	■	■	■
66	Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>			
67	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	■	■	■
68	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	■	■	
69	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		■	
70	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>			
71	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	■	■	
72	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	■	■	
73	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>			
74	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	■	■	
75	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	■	■	
76	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	■	■	
77	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	■	■	■
78	Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>			
79	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>			
80	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>			
81	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	■	■	■
82	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	■	■	■
83	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>			
84	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	■	■	■
85	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	■	■	

86	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>				
87	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>				
88	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
89	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	H			
90	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				
91	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	▪			
92	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
93	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	▪	▪		
94	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				
95	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>				
96	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	▪	▪	▪	
97	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	▪	▪	▪	
98	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
99	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	▪	▪	▪	
100	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>				
101	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>				
102	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		▪		
103	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		▪		
#	Common Name	Scientific name	27	28	29	
104	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	▪			
105	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	▪	▪		
106	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▪	▪	▪	
107	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	▪		▪	
108	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	▪			
109	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	▪			
110	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>				
111	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	H			
112	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		H		
113	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
114	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	▪	▪	▪	
115	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				
116	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>				
117	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>				
118	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		▪		
119	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				
120	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	▪	▪		
121	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				
122	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>				
123	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	▪	▪	▪	
124	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	▪	▪	▪	
125	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	▪			
126	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				
127	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				
128	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	▪			
129	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>				
130	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>				
131	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>				
132	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	▪	▪	▪	

133	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>					
134	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		▪	▪		
135	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		▪		▪	
136	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>					
137	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		▪	▪	▪	
138	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
139	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		▪			
140	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>					
141	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>					
142	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>			▪		
143	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		▪	▪		
144	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>					
145	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>					
146	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>			▪		
147	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		▪			
	ADDITIONAL SPECIES						
148	Pacific Golden Plover			▪		▪	
149	Raven				▪		
150	Western Sandpiper				▪		