



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT NORFOLK SUMMER BREEDERS 21ST – 24TH JUNE 2021

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TUESDAY 22ND JUNE - Sunny spells and cool North-easterly wind, 15C

A fabulous days birding today, following on from our recent theme of jamming in on some superb rarities on tour! A flock of nine **Bee-eaters** had been present near Great Yarmouth for the past couple of days, so we had already ear-marked East Norfolk for today in the hope they might remain another day. En route, however, news also broke of a pair of **Black-winged Stilts** at Hickling – our planned first stop of the day! We arrived at the reserve and headed straight down to the excellent Brendan’s Marsh, where the stilts had been seen. Two eclipse drake **Garganey** were seen distantly on the first pool, along with two **Green Sandpipers** (our first of autumn!) and the usual assortment of commoner ducks. Reaching the easternmost pool, we arrived just in time to see the **Black-winged Stilts** take flight and disappear back to the first pool! At least we knew they were still around though, and we were well compensated by a superb ginger male **Ruff** in full regalia, and two **Hobby** hawking insects over the reedbed. We opted to head back to Whiteslea track and try and view te stilts from there, where some raised ground by a gate affords a view of most of the area. Sure enough, we could see both **Black-winged Stilts** from this vantage point, one sleeping and the other feeding. Much better views of the two eclipse drake **Garganey** were had too – one more advanced in it’s moult, and therefore more subtle, than the other. A pair of **Little-ringed Plovers** were also seen, and the male **Ruff** count reached six! A real highlight though was a fantastic flight view of a **Bittern**, which lifted up from the reeds and flew off towards Whiteslea Lodge. Marsh Harriers of course, were constantly on show, and we saw **Norfolk Hawker** dragonfly too. An absolutely stunning **Swallowtail** on the walk back to the car park, rounded off a pretty good start to the tour!



Swallowtail at Hickling, 22nd June

Next up, the slightly less salubrious surroundings of Gapton Hall Industrial Estate in Great Yarmouth. This was where the nine **Bee-eaters** had been hanging out and they were still there. Just as we arrived however, we got news that they had moved a bit north, so we gambled that they would remain there and headed to the Rugby club. Just along the track here, among the branches of a willow tree, we were delighted by the amazing sight and sound of nine **European Bee-eaters** at close range, sallying back and forth low across the fields nabbing insects and then returning to their perches. We watched them, with an ever-increasing crowd, for about an hour – it was hard to tear ourselves away! A fantastic sight and a real flavour of The Med on tour today!



Bee-eaters near Great Yarmouth, 22nd June

To end our day, we planned to head back north to the coast around Cley, about an hour's drive away. There was a cool wind along the East Bank but there was plenty to see – namely some superb views of an adult and recently fledged juvenile **Spoonbill**. Arnold's Marsh held five dainty first-summer **Little Gulls**, two **Greenshank** and a nice group of resting Sandwich Terns. A male **Wheatear** was a very unseasonal sighting, distantly along the shingle bank beyond. The sea was quite rough in the fresh north wind, and lots of **Little Terns** were fishing close inshore giving great views. One of the **Little Gulls** flew past us too, and a couple of Ringed Plover were on the pool behind the beach.

Our final roll of the dice today was up on the heath, where we left the cool wind behind and enjoyed some warm sunshine for the final hours birding of the day. We had nice views of a perched **Woodlark**, and then heard a snatch of song from a **Dartford Warbler**. The bird perched up nicely for us on a fence post – our first of the year on tour! The bird was hanging around with a Stonechat family, but quickly vanished and we didn't see it again. Two more **Woodlark** then flew in, one landing on a gorse bush right in front of us – superb! A fourth **Woodlark** ended our day by song-fighting over the van in the car park. Not a bad first day!

WEDNESDAY 23RD JUNE – *Sunny spells and light winds, 20C*

Our day in the Brecks, like many of our birding days over the past few weeks, took an unexpected turn for the better today! We set off for Thetford Forest blissfully unaware that we would not only 'bag up' on the breeding bird targets, but also enjoy another flavour of the Med as well! Our first stops were uneventful, checking unsuccessfully for Stone Curlews at some of their favoured haunts. With fledged young now able to scurry away into the ever-lengthening grasses and nettles, it's perhaps the hardest season to find them. Our second target was much more obliging, as we enjoyed lovely views of a signing male **Tree Pipit** in a forest clearing. The heat haze hadn't quite got going, and the lack of wind meant the birds song was really resonating around on the morning air. Nearby, we heard a **Firecrest** but couldn't see it, so headed round to Lynford to try there. Success this time, with a **Firecrest** heard singing as we got out of the van and some superb low-level views of it foraging in a fir in between bursts of its staccato trilling song.

Lakenheath always has plenty to offer at this time of year, but we particularly wanted to try and see the Cranes today and so headed straight up to Joist Fen. Along the way, we admired several perched dragonflies – including a spectacular male Emperor. **Cuckoo** was also seen, and a frequent sound along the whole walk, while we were greeted with six **Hobbies** hawking over the reedbed from Joist Fen viewpoint. We scanned hard for the Cranes, but the grass was now very tall and there was no sign. A **Bittern** flew straight down the dyke towards us though, before passing close on our left in perfect light and at close range. We followed it all the way back to New Fen – even better views than yesterday. Just then, the **Cranes** started bugling and this gave us a steer on their position – sure enough, three heads could be seen! Two adult **Cranes** with a half-grown ginger chick were watched walking around in the grass meadow towards the railway line – mission accomplished. We then headed back to New Fen, but our time here was cut short as we overheard a conversation about a Roller (??!) somewhere not that far away. We'd been out of signal, and not checked the rare bird news – sure enough, a **ROLLER** had indeed been found less than 20 minutes away. We were off!



Roller at Icklingham, 23rd June

The village of Icklingham in Suffolk was our destination, and we knew it wouldn't be hard to find the right spot. Cars were parked all along the roadside at the **ROLLER'S** chosen spot but thankfully we managed to get a good slot in a lay-by. Within moments, we were scoping that most unpredictable summer vagrant, it's orange-and-turquoise colour scheme visible despite the long distance through the heat haze as it perched on a fence at the far side of a sheep field. After everyone had seen it, we opted to walk up a track which got us much closer to the bird. Now we had it in profile and got superb views, just before it was flushed by photographers and flew back into the sheep field and perched on the wires. It was now against the light, but we watched it fly down into the field several times to pick up prey before returning to the wires to feed. An astonishing bird to follow up yesterday's Bee-eaters and June is the month that just keeps on giving!

Our route home took us back past a couple of our **Stone Curlew** spots, and thankfully now with the heat of the day waning, one pair had shuffled out into view in a maize strip and we had some nice views of them by using the van as a hide. Even there, the day was not quite done as we had our evening excursion after dinner to look for **Nightjars**. On our way out, we called at the Oriole office to admire our breeding pair of **Spotted Flycatchers**, which showed brilliantly in the late evening sunshine. Nick had then lined up another treat for us, having located one of the fledged **Tawny Owlets** perched in the pear tree – brilliant! Our **Nightjar** excursion was a great success, with some fabulous views of at least four birds, with three chasing each other right in front of us at one point. We also had prolonged perched views in the scope of a churring male on two occasions, and at least eight roding **Woodcock**. What a day – again!



Spotted Flycatcher at Great Ryburgh

THURSDAY 24TH JUNE – *Sunny spells giving way to light rain later, 20C*

A decent final day after the excitement of the previous two! It was always going to have a lot to live up to, but we managed to see a couple of key targets and enjoy some more general birding to wrap up the tour. Snettisham Coastal Park and Ken Hill Marsh was our first port of call, and in the light winds there was plenty of small bird action to be had here. The reeds and scrub were alive with warbler song – Sedge Warbler, Common Whitethroat and Reed Warbler being most common, but we also had a pair of **Lesser Whitethroats** and heard **Grasshopper Warbler** reeling in two different

spots. One of these was quite close but the bird remained hidden and a 'heard only' for the list today. Two fine adult **Mediterranean Gulls** flew south, and on the marsh we could see six first-summer **Little Gulls** dancing over one of the distant pools. Four **Spoonbills** resting included a fledged juvenile, and a large flock of **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen heading out to The Wash. Our main target bird here though was **Turtle Dove**, so we were pleased to see one fly north over the scrub in typical twisting, fast flight. We saw it pitch into some elders in the dunes and so headed that way. The bird could soon be heard purring, and then we spotted it perched in the open on a dead branch. It was later joined on the same branch by a second bird and we had some good scope views. At the north end of the marsh, we found a gorgeous summer plumaged **Spotted Redshank** feeding, and an assortment of ducks that included about twenty Teal. On our walk back, we saw three more **Turtle Doves**, including one perched at close range on a wire, and a pair of Bullfinch.

Titchwell would be our final stop of the tour, and just a quick check of the freshmarsh today as time was ticking away. We had lunch, then headed out along the west bank path – five summer **Spotted Redshanks** was the highlight, feeding alongside two gaudy male **Ruffs**. June is definitely the month for seeing these two Norfolk passage specials, as both begin to return from mid-month still in full breeding dress. Other highlights were few and far between, though a **Hobby** hawked briefly over the reedbed, two fledged juvenile Marsh Harriers were seen and there were a couple of **Little-ringed Plovers** about. A **Spoonbill** also flew over as we headed back to the car park. Onwards then to King's Lynn station, and then back to Great Ryburgh to conclude the tour.

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		22	23	24		Comments
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)								
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	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>						
14	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			▪	▪		
15	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			▪	▪		
16	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>						
Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)								
17	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			▪	▪		
18	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>			▪			
19	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		▪	▪	▪		
Procelariidae (Petrels)								
20	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>						

	Podicipedidae (Grebes)						
21	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		■	■	■	
22	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			■	■	
	Threskiornithidae and Ardeidae (Spoonbills, Herons, Egrets and Bitterns)						
23	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		■		■	
24	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		■	■	■	
25	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		■	■	■	
26	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>					
27	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		■		■	
	Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)						
28	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		■	■	■	
	Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)						
29	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		■		■	
30	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		■	■	■	
31	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>					
#	Common Name	Scientific Name		22	23	24	Comments
32	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		■		■	
33	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		■	■	■	
	Rallidae and Gruidae (Rails, Coots and Cranes)						
34	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					
35	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		■	■	■	
36	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		■	■	■	
37	Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>			■		
	Burhinidae, Recurvirostridae and Charadriidae (Thick-knees, Avocets, Plovers and Allies)						
38	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>			■		
39	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		■	■	■	
40	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		■		■	
41	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		■	■	■	
42	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>					
43	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>					
44	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		■			
45	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		■		■	
	Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)						
46	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>					
47	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		■	■	■	
48	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>					
49	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>				■	
50	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>					
51	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>					
52	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>		■		■	
53	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>					
54	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>					
55	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>					
56	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>					

57	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					
58	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</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>		▪			
Laridae (Gulls and Terns)							
66	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
67	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>				▪	
68	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		▪		▪	
69	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>		▪		▪	
70	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>		▪		▪	
71	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		▪		▪	
72	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>					
73	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
74	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>		▪			
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	22	23	24		Comments
75	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>		▪			
76	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		▪	▪	▪	
77	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>					
Columbidae and Cuculidae (Pigeons, Doves and Cuckoos)							
78	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>					
79	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		▪	▪	▪	
80	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
81	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>				▪	
82	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		▪	▪	▪	
83	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			▪		
Tytonidae and Strigidae (Owls)							
84	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>		▪	▪		
85	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>			▪		
86	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>		▪	▪		
Caprimulgidae and Apodidae (Nightjars and Swifts)							
87	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>			▪		
88	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
Alcedinidae and Picidae (Kingfishers and Woodpeckers)							
89	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					
90	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			▪		
91	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>					
Falconidae (Falcons)							
92	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
93	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		▪	▪	▪	

94	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					
Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)							
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>		▪	▪	▪	
Paridae and Panuridae (Tits and Reedlings)							
100	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>					
101	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>			▪		
102	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
103	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		▪			
104	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>					
Alaudidae (Larks)							
105	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		▪			
106	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
Hirundinidae (Swallows)							
107	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		▪	▪	▪	
108	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		▪			
109	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		▪	▪	▪	
Scotocercidae, Aegithalidae and Phylloscopidae (Bush Warblers, Bushtits and Leaf Warblers)							
110	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			H	H	
111	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		▪			
#	Common Name	Scientific Name	22	23	24		Comments
112	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		▪	▪		
113	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		▪	▪	▪	
Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)							
114	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
115	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		▪	▪	▪	
116	Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>				H	
117	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		▪	▪	H	
118	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>					
119	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>				▪	
120	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		▪	▪	▪	
121	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>		▪			
Regulidae (Kinglets)							
122	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>			▪		
123	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>			▪		
Troglodytidae Sittidae and Certhiidae (Wrens, Nuthatches and Treecreepers)							
124	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		▪	▪	▪	
125	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			H		
126	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>				▪	
Turdidae and Sturnidae (Thrushes and Starlings)							
127	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		▪	▪	▪	

128	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		■	■	■		
129	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			■			
130	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		■	■			
Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)								
131	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			■			
132	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		■	■	■		
133	Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>						
134	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		■	■			
Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)								
135	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		■	■	■		
136	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>						
Prunellidae (Accentors)								
137	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		■	■	■		
Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)								
138	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>						
139	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>						
140	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		■	■	■		
141	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		■	■	■		
142	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			■			
Fringillidae (Finches)								
143	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		■	■	■		
144	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				■		
145	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				■		
146	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		■	■	■		
147	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		■	■	■		
148	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				■		
#	Common Name	Scientific Name		22	23	24		Comments
Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)								
149	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>						
150	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		■				
151	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		■	■	■		
ADDITIONAL SPECIES								
152	European Bee-eater			■				
153	Black-winged Stilt				■			
154	European Roller				■			
155	Black-necked Grebe				■			



Nightjar, Dersingham 23rd June



Tawny Owlet, Great Ryburgh