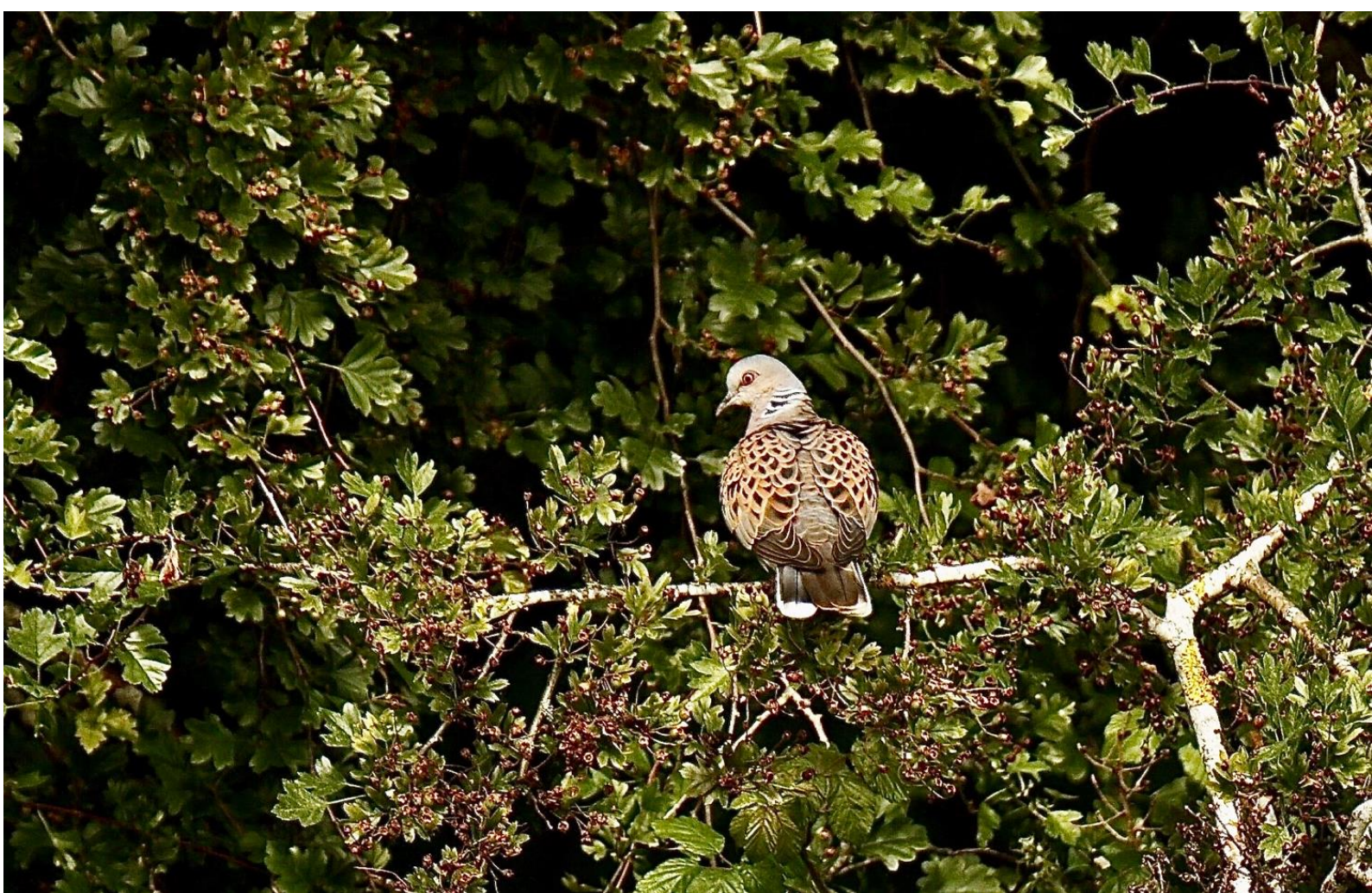




TOUR REPORT

Norfolk Summer Breeders & Late Migrants

11th – 14th June 2022

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Saturday 11th June

Gary had met the group on their arrival at the Crown and after dinner we headed out to look for Nightjars. We made several stops on the way, the first at some Pig fields where we noted (some rather smart) Stock Doves and Oystercatchers, the second a forest clearing where we saw several Yellowhammers and the first Tree Pipits of the trip. We then headed onto our main destination, noting a roadside Barn Owl along the way.



Our first evenings Barn Owl

We parked and then walked a short distance to the area we wanted to view. A singing Whitethroat and a calling Cuckoo entertained us on the way, with more Cuckoo's noted, at least three including a 'bubbling' female, whilst we stood looking over the clearing as we waited for the light to drop.

As the light started to fade a Nightjar started to churr behind us, followed by the appearance of another Barn Owl before the Nightjar flew out above us, silhouetted against the sky.

The bird, a male with white patches in the wing and tail, flew around landing on occasions in the trees behind us.



Male Nightjar

The thoughts were the bird appeared to want to come down to the area in front of us so we moved back a little, at which point the bird flew in to be quickly joined in flight by a female. We watched the birds as the light faded with several Woodcocks also seen flying over calling.

Sunday 12th June

Gary collected the group after breakfast and we headed off towards the North coast. A speculative stop enroute to look for Stone Curlew met with limited success, with a bird seen but very distantly and with a heat haze already forming views were far from ideal! A distant singing Woodlark was equally frustrating, so we had to settle for several Eurasian Curlews, Skylarks and Mistle Thrushes on the nearby fields as consolation. We arrived at the coast and headed to our first port of call Snettisham Coastal Park and Ken Hill Marshes. A raised bund separates the two sites and we walked along the top of this gaining views of both. Whitethroats, Reed Buntings, Sedge and Reed Warblers sang from both sides, with Whitethroats especially easily seen. We paused by a couple of other birders who told us they had been watching a Turtle dove that was seemingly nest building. Sure enough after a minute or two's wait the bird appeared carrying a stick and flying into a nearby bush. It then transpired the bird had a predictable pattern, emerging from the bush and settling on a nearby perch before repeating the process again! We stood and watched the bird as it came and went, enjoying some excellent views. We eventually dragged ourselves away and continued along the path scanning the area as we walked.



Nest building Turtle Dove

The marsh pools held small numbers of Avocets and Lapwings plus Tufted Duck, Gadwall and Shelduck. A small flock of six Spoonbills were noted too (their numbers boosted to eight by the time we walked back) which included several young birds which we watched head bopping and bill waving in front of the adult birds to encourage their parents to feed them. Our main target species here though was a long staying Great Reed Warbler and as we approached the area the bird was in the gravelly almost guttural far carrying song of the bird could be heard. The area the bird was in though was hidden so we walked past and joined several people further along the bank who were peering back down the reed sided channel hoping to see it. We searched initially with no success then suddenly the bird appeared, sitting in full view singing its heart out! We enjoyed great scope views, though unfortunately the wind and the distance restricted photography to a large degree.



The at times showy and very vocal Great Reed Warbler

Pleased with our success we returned back to the van to head onto our next site, Titchwell RSPB reserve, with a short detour to add an Hunstanton Fulmar to the trip list! Lunch here was followed by a walk around the reserve. We started off walking along the boardwalk to the screened pool (Patsy's) on the east of the site, where a drake Red-crested Pochard was bonus find with round 80 Gadwall and a Little Grebe also present. We then headed to the first hide along the main path overlooking the fresh marsh, pausing to look at some dragonflies which included a smart male Banded Demoiselle and several Four Spotted Chasers. Scanning the fresh marsh initially from the hide and then the main path revealed several new additions for the trip, Ringed and Little Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Turnstone, Sandwich Terns and Mediterranean Gull to name a few. We continued onto view the sea, which was very quiet with distant mobile Sandwich Terns the best it had to offer. A feeding Spoonbill was on the nearby tidal pool as was a solitary Little Tern. With the day slipping by and a reasonable journey ahead for us to the Crown, we returned to the bus and started our journey back. Another detour took us in search of Corn Bunting which initially drew a blank, but fortunately 'Lady Luck' was smiling on us, with a bird found further along the route back on some roadside wires and a 'return drive past' ensured we all got to see it. Our next stop was the area we'd visited earlier in the day to see if the Stone Curlew had moved to a more favourable position. Unfortunately, it hadn't, in fact it had disappeared completely with the field now full of Rooks and Jackdaws. With time still allowing one more throw of the dice, we tried one more area nearby which proved a good move with a hoped for Stone Curlew found and with the sun now in a favourable position we enjoyed some good views. We continued our journey back checking the wires and hedgerows as we drove. A rattling Lesser Whitethroat was heard singing deep in the roadside bushes and birds on the telegraph wires, which were more cooperative, transpired to be Greenfinch, Linnet and Goldfinch plus a bonus in the form of a Tree Sparrow.

Monday 13th June

We started today locally, heading to a forestry clearing a short drive from the hotel. As we walked along the tree lined track to the clearing we saw Goldcrest, Siskin and Coal Tit, and heard both Willow and Garden Warbler though neither was viewable. Arriving at the clearing a singing Tree Pipit was audible which we quickly located and lined up in the scope. At least one other was present and several Yellowhammers and Linnets were noted too. A Woodlark flew over the clearing towards us carrying food which quickly disappeared behind a line of raised earth. We stood searching for it but we couldn't relocate it, but whilst doing so a soft anxiety call good be heard nearby. Searching the nearby area almost immediately revealed another Woodlark, which stood stock still whilst we enjoyed good looks at it.



An unobtrusive Woodlark standing motionless by the path

We walked away from the bird and headed back to the bus noting a flyover Green Woodpecker along the way.

With news of a viewable flock of Bee-eaters on the coast we decided to 'bite the bullet' and drive over to hopefully see them. Arriving at the site they were at we quickly located one of the birds, perched on a bush, with a second on a sandy bank. The birds were quite showy with three appearing and flying over and around us calling at one stage and giving some nice views as they perched on some nearby telegraph wires.



A rather poor record shot of the Bee-eaters in the hazy North Norfolk Sunshine

With lunch time approaching we headed off along the coast deciding Cley for the early part of the afternoon was the most favourable option. Disembarking from the bus at the NWT visitor centre we were met by the sound of a calling Quail, seemingly the bird that had been reported from Barley field several hundred yards to the west, it never ceases to amaze me how much bird song can carry in the right conditions! Lunch was followed by a walk along the iconic East Bank. Distant birds were noted on the pools at the back of the marsh and closer inspection revealed three Black-tailed Godwits amongst the expected Avocets, Lapwings and Redshanks. Turning our attentions to the extensive reedbed to the west, Reed and Sedge Warbler were noted along with several Reed Buntings. The hoped for Bearded Reedlings seemingly weren't playing ball, the strong breeze not helping our quest. Then the characteristic pinging call was heard and two birds flew low across the reeds. This was to be the pattern for the next few minutes as several birds appeared briefly in flight before disappearing back into the reeds. We accepted this was as good as things were like to get, so we returned to the bus and headed onto to the nearby Heath our main target species there, Dartford Warbler. We walked up from the carpark noting a family group of Stonechats flitting around in a nearby clearing. Knowing the association between Stonechats and Dartfords we decided it would be prudent to spend some time watching them. John then noted the top of a grey head just visible behind some heather, a Wheatear maybe? something didn't look right, the bill looked too heavy! the bird then flew landing in full view, it was a stonking male Red-backed Shrike!



Male Red-backed Shrike

What a day today was turning into! We enjoyed good views of the bird before leaving it and heading onto another part of the heath, flushing up two Woodlarks by the path, that flew over us giving a short burst of song. More Stonechats were visible nearby so again we spent some time watching them hoping a Dartford would appear, this proved a good strategy with a male appearing nearby. The bird showed intermittently on several occasions for us and in

between views we enjoyed equally good views of several freshly emerged Silver-studded blue Butterflies.



Silver-studded Blue Butterfly

A second Nightjar trip was the plan tonight, though the proposed site was a potential one as opposed to a dead cert! We arrived and walked down the entrance track noting a hunting Barn Owl and then entered a large clearing, which on the face of it looked promising. We didn't have to worry or wait long before the first Nightjar started calling, and then in the half-light it flew right past us! The bird landed in some nearby pines and started to churr, a second bird started up, then a third and by the end of the evening we'd estimated 5-6 males in the area. We enjoyed flight views, including disputing males, plus several churring perched birds in the telescope, it couldn't have been any better! Roding Woodcocks also joined the show with up to two flying over and around us on several occasions.

Tuesday 14th June

A prompt departure the following morning as our hoped-for species to start the day was Nightingale and the time of year left some question marks as to how active they would be. We needn't have worried as arriving the site one at least was immediately audible. A cursory scan of the field near the site carpark produced a pair of Grey Partridge before we set off in search of our quarry. A singing bird ahead of us continued singing as we moved closer, and a quick search revealed it sat in full view on the edge of a small clump of Hawthorn. The bird was in view long enough for us to see it, before moving off further back along the path. With the bird still singing we followed the sound to find the bird sat right out in the open on a bare branch again at the top of a bush. This time the bird stayed in position allowing nice scope views and photo opportunities.



Nightingale in the Brecks – what a view!

Pleased with our success we set off in search of Garden Warbler, several of which could be heard singing nearby. These were considerably harder than the Nightingale to see and although we managed views not all the group was successful. We returned to the carpark adding Lesser Whitethroat on the way to the days tally, we then reboarded the bus and headed onto our next destination Lakenheath RSPB reserve.

We 'checked in' at the visitor's centre before heading off around the reserve taking the main central path out to the watchpoints and then returning along the river. Insects also featured heavily during our walk here and we spent a while as we walked along separating out the various Damselfly species which included Azure, Common Blue, Blue-tailed and Large Red-eyed and the occasional Banded Demoiselle again. Dragonflies included Scarce Chaser, Black-tailed Skimmer, Emperor and Four-spot Chaser, the latter being the most numerous. Butterflies featured too, with a Painted Lady and Comma amongst new ones for the trip.



Scarce Chaser

Four Bittern sightings and up to five Hobbies made for a successful birding trip too, though a flyby Kingfisher in front of one of the hides was disappointingly quick, as was the appearance of a Crane which flew across the reedbed a short distance before dropping back down and out of view. A pair of Great crested Grebes plus and a youngster were on one of the path side pools and Cuckoos put in an appearance, seemingly constantly calling and seen on at least four occasions. We scanned the washland area at the end of the walk, with a flock of Lapwing on the furthest bank and several Avocets feeding in the shallows on the closure edge. Large numbers of Mallard and Gadwall were also present and a single male Teal was found amongst them.



Bittern in flight at Lakenheath

We dropped down the bank to return to the centre, hearing a Cetti's Warbler calling nearby. We stopped to look and realised it was a young bird, with a second nearby, which gave us brief views as moved around the base of the nearby willow scrub. Lunch followed and with the day having slipped away we headed back to the hotel where we said our goodbyes and went our separate ways.

Special thanks to John Fuller for supplying some of his photos for the report.

Oriole Birding

Norfolk Summer Breeders & Late Migrants

11th - 14th June 2022

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		11	12	13	14		Comments
	Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)								
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		x	x	x	x		
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>			x	x	x		
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			x	x	x		
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>			x				
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>			x	x	x		
6	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			x	x	x		
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			x	x	x		
8	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>							
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			x	x	x		
10	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>					x		
11	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>			x				
12	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			x				
13	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			x	x	x		
14	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			x				
15	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>					x		

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		11	12	13	14		Comments
16	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>				H			
17	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		x	x	x	x		
18	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>			x				
19	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			x	x			
20	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>					x		
21	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>			x				
22	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>					x		
23	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			x	x	x		
24	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			x	x	x		
25	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			x	x	x		
26	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			x	x	x		
27	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>			x		x		
28	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		x	x	x	x		
29	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			x	x	x		
30	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			x	x	x		
31	Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>					x		
32	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>			x				
33	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		x	x	x	x		
34	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>			x	x	x		
35	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			x	x	x		
36	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			x				
37	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>			x				
38	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			x				
39	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>				x			
40	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			x				

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		11	12	13	14		Comments
41	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			x				
42	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>		x					
43	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			x	x			
44	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>			x	x	x		
45	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			x				
46	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>				x			
47	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>			x	x			
48	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			x	x			
49	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>			x				
50	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>			x				
51	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>			x	x			
52	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		x	x	x	x		
53	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>			x	x	x		
54	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>			x				
55	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			x	x	x		
56	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		x		H	x		
57	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>		x		x			
58	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		x		x			
59	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		x	x	x	x		
60	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					x		
61	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>				x			
62	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		x	H	H	x		
63	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>			H	x			
64	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			x	x	x		
65	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>					x		

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		11	12	13	14		Comments
66	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		x	x	x			
67	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>			x	x	x		
68	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>			x	x	x		
69	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			x	x	x		
70	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>			x	x	x		
71	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>			H	x			
72	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>			x	x	x		
73	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>				x	x		
74	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>				x			
75	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>			H	x			
76	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			x	x	x		
77	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		x	x	x	x		
78	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>				x			
79	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>			x	x	x		
80	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			H		x		
81	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			x	x	H		
82	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				x	H		
83	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		H	x	x	x		
84	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			x	x	x		
85	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>			x	x	x		
86	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		H	x				
87	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>				H	x		
88	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>			H		x		
89	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		x	x	x	x		
90	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>				x			

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		11	12	13	14		Comments
91	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				x			
92	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H	x	x	x		
93	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>				x			
94	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>			x	x	x		
95	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		x	x	x	x		
96	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		H	H	H	H		
97	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			x	H			
98	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			x	x	x		
99	Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>					x		
100	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			x	x			
101	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			x	x	x		
102	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>			x				
103	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			x	x	x		
104	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>			x	x	x		
105	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			x	x			
106	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		x		x			
107	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			x	x	x		
108	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			x	x	x		
109	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>			x	x	x		
110	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>			x	x	x		
111	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				x			
112	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>			x				
113	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		x	x	x	x		
114	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>			x	x	x		

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		11	12	13	14		Comments
1	Muntjac								
2	Roe Deer								
3	Chinese Water Deer								
4	Rabbit								
5	Brown Hare								
6	Grey Squirrel								
1	Banded Demioselle								
2	Blue-tailed Damselfly								
3	Azure Damselfly								
4	Common Blue Damselfly								
5	Large Red-eyed Damselfly								
6	Four-spotted Chaser								
7	Scarce Chaser								
8	Brown Hawker								
9	Black-tailed Skimmer								
10	Emperor								
11	Hairy Dragonfly								
1	Red Admiral								
2	Painted lady								
3	Comma								
4	Small Tortoiseshell								
5	Meadow Brown								
6	Speckled Wood								

7	Large White								
8	Small white								
9	Brimstone								
10	Small Copper								
11	Small/Essex Skipper								