



TOUR REPORT
NORFOLK SUMMER BREEDERS
9TH – 12TH JUNE 2025

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10TH JUNE – *Cloudy becoming sunny, strong westerly wind slackening after lunch 18c*

For our first day BBC Weather forecast sunny intervals and a fresh westerly breeze. Well, so far as the wind was concerned, we would have to disagree it was blowing an absolute hoolie! We travelled to Cley Marshes in the hope of seeing a **Marsh Warbler** present for a couple of days. As we left the van it was clear that seeing any birds in the reedbed was going to be a challenge given the strength of the wind. Nil desperandum. As we walked the “Skirts” we soon heard the **Marsh Warbler** singing. It was low in the vegetation and singing sporadically. This species is a master of mimicry and although it was not in full voice we heard snatches of Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Blackbird, Swallow, Woodlark, Crossbill and even Moustached Warbler!

Whilst listening to the Marsh Warbler we enjoyed flight views of **Cattle, Great** and **Little Egrets**. **Spoonbills** were flying backwards and forwards to North Foreland wood. We even heard a distant booming **Bittern**, no mean achievement in the conditions. On the Marsh Warbler front it was clear that the bird was bedded in and was not going to show so we drew stumps and decided to take a walk along the famous East Bank.

It was positively bracing but the light was good, and we added a decent hand of birds to our total. On the wader front there were breeding **Avocets**, a lone non-breeding plumaged **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Little Ringed Plover**. Best of all was a *tundrae* **Ringed Plover**. A darker mantled bird with bright orange legs and bill. Not a local breeder but a Fenno-Scandinavian bird bound for the High Arctic to breed. Arnold’s Marsh held all three summer breeding Terns. **Sandwich, Common** and the diminutive **Little**. We gained good views and were able to compare plumage and structural differences.

Next up was a walk on a coastal heath. Dartford Warbler was our target here. We tried very hard, but it was not to be. The wind was keeping everything low. There were lots of broods of **Stonechats** and **Linnets** about but the only warblers we saw were **Willow Warblers** and **Common Whitethroat**. Our best sightings were not birds but instead an adult **Slow Worm** and a box-fresh **Silver-studded Blue** butterfly.



Little Owl (Marilyn Peterkin)

Lunch beckoned and we took it in a different part of the heath. Whilst eating our sandwiches a **Woodlark** popped up onto a gorse bush and sat there for a few minutes. There were in fact a pair of birds and over the next twenty minutes gave lovely scope views revealing their strong supercilia pattern and the pale-dark-pale covert patches. Good stuff.



Kingfisher (Marilyn Peterkin)

Over lunch the wind had dropped substantially, and we decided to give the Marsh Warbler another go. Sadly, the bird was silent, but we did add a **Bearded Tit** to our tally. We decided to spend the rest of the afternoon working farmland areas in NW Norfolk. Our first stop looking over pig fields was interrupted by farm operations before we had really started. However, we did hear a rattling Lesser Whitethroat and had brief views of a pair of **Mediterranean Gulls**.

Our next stop was much more profitable with extended views of a pair of **Little Owls** and one of their young. They were sitting low in a time-weathered oak and with the afternoon sun behind us we could see them very well. A bonus was a male **Kingfisher** sitting on a post above a farm pond. Finally, a female **Marsh Harrier** flew in and sat preening not a hundred yards away. Marsh Harrier is a common enough bird in Norfolk but views like these are not an everyday occurrence.

The afternoon was ebbing away quickly and reluctantly we had to tear ourselves away. We drove back to base under blue skies and a bright sun. It had been a game of two halves in terms of the weather, but a thoroughly enjoyable day of birding in North Norfolk.

11TH JUNE - *Sunny and warm in a moderate SE breeze. 23c*

Terrific birding in excellent weather today. We headed south towards the Brecks. On the way we stopped at a spot to look for **Turtle Doves**. It was a bit of old Norfolk, tall hedges and a glorious tangle of scrub, just what this species needs. Sadly, too much of our countryside has been tidied up

and rendered sterile for this species. We parked and walked a lane. At first all was quiet but just then we heard the gentle “purr” of our target. It was calling sporadically, but eventually we managed to spot it on a bare branch just as it dropped into a bush. After a wait it took flight, and we glimpsed the distinctive white outer tail pattern as it disappeared into the wide blue yonder. As we returned to the van a few of us were lucky enough to see another bird fly through. Tantalising views of a bird still scandalously in decline in the UK.

When we reached the Brecks, we stopped at an area of recently cleared forestry. As we parked, we could hear the descending cadence of a singing **Tree Pipit**. It did not take long to spot it on the snag of a dead pine. It soon began song flighting, shooting high into the air and parachuting down back to its original perch. As we listened, we heard three or four other birds. All were perched on similar dead trees, and one had a **Woodlark** for company too. It was a good opportunity to study this often-overlooked bird. Onwards!

Our next stop was at Weeting Heath to look for **Stone Curlews**. By now the sun was high in the sky and we knew heat haze would be an issue. Nonetheless, we soon picked out a **Stone Curlew**. It was distant but its hunched posture was distinctive. Arguably even better was a pair of displaying **Curlews**. Sadly, another species on the Red List. These birds are much rarer breeders in Norfolk than Stone Curlews which are doing very well. It was now lunchtime, and we ate our sandwiches at some picnic tables. A definite bonus here was a **Spotted Flycatcher** flitting in the trees above our heads. Good stuff.

Our afternoon destination was RSPB Lakenheath Fen. It was hot now and there was a somnolent feel to things. As we walked out from the centre we heard plenty of warblers but otherwise it was quiet. However, upon reaching Joist Fen things sparked up and a **Bittern** gave a flight view as it skimmed the tops of the reeds. We enjoyed views of three **Hobbies** as they chased Dragonflies. Best of all was a pair of calling **Common Cranes** that flew past us and gave prolonged views as they circled above us. A few of the group hung back to enjoy the view from New Fen Viewpoint and they were rewarded with very close views of a flyby **Bittern**.

Time was now passing so we returned to the centre via the flood bank along the Little Ouse. A pair of **Cuckoos** flew ahead of us calling and our last good bird was an eclipse drake **Garganey**. He was a dowdy looking thing and hard to pick out, but eventually everybody enjoyed views. We drove back to base for an early dinner as we had important business this evening.

After dinner we drove to look for **Nightjars**. We arrived on site just before dusk. A Tree Pipit was the first bird we saw, and it proved to be very confiding as it perched in a stunted pine. As the light began to go, we saw the first **Woodcock** of the night it flew low over the woods in front of us. As dusk gathered, we heard the first unmistakable “churr” of the evening. There were probably four singing birds. Our first view proved to be a good one as a male took off from the heath and flew to a large pine. Fortunately for us he landed in clear view on a branch and began to churr, so we gained some fabulous views. Another bird flew low in front of us. The white patches on his wings and tail identifying him as a male. As the night darkened, we heard lots of calling from birds plus a few wing claps too. It really was a magical experience standing there and we found it hard to leave. We drove home as the Strawberry full moon rose. It had been a long day but a good one seeing many of Norfolk’s most sought-after summer breeders.

12TH JUNE – *Sunny and hot in a moderate SE breeze. 24c*

For our final day we took the short drive to Titchwell. As we loaded up to leave, we heard **Cuckoo** and **Mediterranean Gull** close by. Arriving at Titchwell we walked through the woods hoping to connect with the two pair of **Spotted Flycatchers** reported to be breeding there. Unfortunately, we learned that both nests had been predated, and we had sketchy views of just a single bird.

As usual the Freshmarsh was full of birds, principally the breeding colony of Black-headed Gulls and **Avocets**. There were a few **Common Terns** about and a smattering of **Little Ringed Plovers**, both of which breed on site. We saw about ten loafing **Mediterranean Gulls**, surprisingly the first we had seen on the ground this trip. However, the undoubted highlight was a young **Spoonbill**. These “teaspoons” differ from the adults in having shorter, flesh-coloured bills and black in the wing tips. High tide was not long past, so we went to the beach to see what was about. There were plenty of Sandwich and **Little Terns** passing by, but otherwise it was quiet save for a few **Gannets** and **Sanderlings**.

Returning to the reserve we took a walk through the woods to Patsy’s Pool in the hope of seeing the drake Red-crested Pochard that had been in residence for a few days. We were out of luck as it had not been seen since early morning. By now it was very hot, and we returned to the van for a refreshing drink.

We then drove some of the back roads inland looking for farmland birds. We saw a couple of **Yellowhammers**, but the highlight was a singing **Corn Bunting** now a very scarce resident in this corner of the county.

Conscious that we had not yet had good views of **Turtle Doves** we drove to Snettisham Country Park to look for them. Whilst eating lunch we heard purring from two birds, and it was not long before we found one sitting in a pine tree. With a careful approach we obtained good views. By now time had beaten us and we drove to Kings Lynn station to drop people off. It had been a busy three days packed with excellent birding in the height of the breeding season.

Oriole Birding

Norfolk Summer Breeders & Late Migrants

9th - 12th June 2025

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		10	11	12	
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)							
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>				x	
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		x	x		
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		x	x	x	
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		x		x	
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		x	x	x	
6	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>			x		
7	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				x	
8	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		x	x	x	
9	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		x			
10	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		x	x	x	
11	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>					
12	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				x	
13	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>					

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		10	11	12	
14	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				x	
15	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		x		x	
16	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>					
Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)							
17	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		x	x		
18	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>					
19	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		x	x	x	
Procelariidae (Petrels)							
20	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>					
21	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		x		x	
22	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			x		
Threskiornithidae and Ardeidae (Spoonbills, Herons, Egrets and Bitterns)							
23	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		x		x	
24	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		h	x		
25	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		x	x	x	
26	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		x	x	x	
27	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		x	x	x	
Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)							
28	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		x	x	x	
Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)							
29	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		x	x		
30	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		x	x	x	
31	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>					
32	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		x	x	x	
33	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		x	x	x	
Rallidae and Gruidae (Rails, Coots and Cranes)							
34	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		h			
35	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		x	x	x	
36	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		x	x	x	
37	Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>			x		
Burhinidae, Recurvirostridae and Charadriidae (Thick-knees, Avocets, Plovers and Allies)							
38	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>			x		
39	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		x	x	x	
40	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		x	x	x	
41	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		x	x	x	
42	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>					
43	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>					
44	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		x			
45	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		x		x	
Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)							
46	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>					
47	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			x		
48	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>					

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	10	11	12	
49	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	x			
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>			x	
56	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				
57	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>				
58	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>		x		
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>	x	x	x	
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>	x	x	x	
67	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	x		x	
68	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>				
69	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>				
70	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	x	x	x	
71	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	x	x	x	
72	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>				
73	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	x	x	x	
74	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	x		x	
75	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	x		x	
76	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	x		x	
77	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>				
Columbidae and Cuculidae (Pigeons, Doves and Cuckoos)						
78	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>	x	x	x	
79	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	x	x	x	
80	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	x	x	x	
81	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>		x	x	
82	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	x	x	x	
83	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		x	h	
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>	x			
Caprimulgidae and Apodidae (Nightjars and Swifts)						
87	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		x		
88	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	x	x	x	

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	10	11	12	
Alcedinidae and Picidae (Kingfishers and Woodpeckers)						
89	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	x			
90	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				
91	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>				
Falconidae (Falcons)						
92	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	x	x	x	
93	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		x		
94	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				
Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)						
95	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	x	x		
96	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	x	x	x	
97	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	x	x	x	
98	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	x	x	x	
99	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	x	x	x	
Paridae and Panuridae (Tits and Reedlings)						
100	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	h		x	
101	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>				
102	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	x	x		
103	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	x	x	x	
104	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	x		h	
Alaudidae (Larks)						
105	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	x	x		
106	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	x	x	x	
Hirundinidae (Swallows)						
107	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	x	x	x	
108	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	x			
109	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	x	x	x	
Scotocercidae, Aegithalidae and Phylloscopidae (Bush Warblers, Bushtits and Leaf Warblers)						
110	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	h	x	h	
111	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	x	x	x	
112	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	x	h	h	
113	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	x	x	x	
Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)						
114	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	x	x	x	
115	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	h	x	x	
116	Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>				
117	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	h	x	h	
118	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	h	h		
119	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	h			
120	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	x	x	x	
121	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>				
Regulidae (Kinglets)						
122	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>				

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		10	11	12	
123	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		h	x		
	Troglodytidae Sittidae and Certhiidae (Wrens, Nuthatches and Treecreepers)						
124	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		h	x	x	
125	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>					
126	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>					
	Turdidae and Sturnidae (Thrushes and Starlings)						
127	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		x	x	x	
128	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		x	x	x	
129	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		x	h		
130	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			x		
	Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)						
131	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			x	x	
132	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		x	x		
133	Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>					
134	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		x	x	x	
	Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)						
135	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		x	x	x	
136	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>					
	Prunellidae (Accentors)						
137	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		x		x	
	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>		x	x	x	
141	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		x	x	x	
142	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			x		
	Fringillidae (Finches)						
143	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		x	x	x	
144	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>					
145	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		h		x	
146	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		x	x	x	
147	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		x	x	x	
148	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>			h		
	Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)						
149	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>				x	
150	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		x		x	
151	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		x	x	x	
	ADDITIONAL SPECIES						
152	Cattle Egret			x			
153	Marsh Warbler			h			
154	Gannet					x	
#	Other Wildlife						
1	Brown Hare			x			

2	Slow Worm			x			
3	Silver-studded Blue Butterfly			x			
4	Muntjac			x			
5	Roe Deer			x			
6	Muntjac				x	x	
7	Chinese Water Deer					x	
8	Rabbit				x	x	
9	Red Admiral				x		