



TOUR REPORT

Norfolk Summer Breeders

24th - 27th June 2024

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Tuesday 25th June

Gary collected the group from their hotel on the North Norfolk coast, with a calling Mediterranean Gull being the first 'group' bird as we boarded the bus to set off. We headed inland towards Docketing, stopping after a mile or so to view the large expanse of farmland on view from the roadside. Several vocal Yellowhammers, Linnets and Common Whitethroats were quickly added to our list along with Common Buzzard, Red Kite and Red-legged Partridge. A hoped-for species here was Corn Bunting, and we didn't have to wait long for the first one to appear on the nearby telegraph wires, enabling views through the telescope.



Roadside Singing Corn Bunting, close to our North Norfolk Hotel

Our next stop was further east along the coast at Burnham Overy Saithe, where we enjoyed a nice walk out along the sea wall in the morning sun. The tide was very high, so the harbour and creek were flooded which meant shorebirds were in short supply. We managed to gain views of Oystercatcher, Redshank and Curlew though, and the vegetated water channels on the land ward side of the seawall gave some nice opportunities to compare Sedge and Reed Warbler both visually and audibly. A Common Tern showed well, with us watching it diving in for fish as it moved along the creek in front of us. The morning had already slipped by and arriving at Cley NWT visitor centre we decided to have lunch before heading out for a walk along the iconic East Bank path. Our walk proved pleasantly productive though frustrating on the Bearded Reedling front, with only brief birds heard and glimpsed. We did much better for birds out on Arnolds Marsh, and along the serpentine, a snaky shaped channel that meanders across the marsh on the eastern side of the path. Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, several Ruff, with one still sporting a largely intact ruff, and two Little Gulls,

along with ten or so Sandwich Terns, were seen. We returned along the path boarding the bus to head inland to Kelling Heath. We walked out onto the heath hoping to find one of Norfolk's scarcest breeders, Dartford Warbler. History has shown that if you can find a Stonechat there is often a Dartford Warbler nearby, which once again proved true. A singing Stonechat attracted our attention, a smart male, and as we watched it the distinct scratchy song of a Dartford Warbler was heard nearby. The Stonechat dropped down from the bush into a small birch to be joined almost immediately by the warbler. The pair sat preening and occasionally singing together for several minutes allowing us to gain some nice telescope views. Next a Woodlark appeared flying over us and landing on the path in front of us, again nice views followed with the bird being joined by a second. The birds took off but then quickly returned to land even closer!



We enjoyed nice views of two confiding Woodlarks.

A second Stonechat, a female, a distant calling cuckoo and half dozen Silver-studded blue Butterflies, concluded a very successful visit. We made one last stop as we headed back to our hotel, a flooded fen near to the village of Stiffkey. A footpath took us out to the sea wall which then gave us an elevated view of the fen. Immediately obvious was a single Spoonbill, feeding in typical bill sweeping manner and other birds present nearby included around twenty or so Black-tailed Godwits, four Green Sandpipers, Gadwall, Shoveler and Teal. Our main target species here though was a Lesser Yellowlegs, that had been discovered on the fen earlier in the day. We searched continually with no success, then just as we thought about leaving a sleeping wader on the nearer edge of the fen lifted its head. A short needle thin bill the most immediate feature and as the bird stood its long legs and size confirmed its identity as the Lesser Yellowlegs. Then frustratingly it walked down the bank and largely out of view, and the best we could manage over the next ten minutes or so were views of largely just its head and bill. Time by now was against us, so we reluctantly admitted defeated and headed back to the bus then onto our coastal hotel.

Wednesday 26th June

As previously Gary collected the group from the hotel, with the day being far cooler and misty than expected! Our destination today was to be the Breckland part of the county, though as usual, we took a somewhat convoluted route to get to our destination. Our first stop on the way was on the edge of the village of Great Bircham, to speculatively check the fields for farmland birds. A hoped-for species was Grey Partridge, and today was to be our lucky day with a pair walking out onto a ploughed section of the field near where we had parked. A bonus here as we headed back to rejoin our route was a fly over Hobby, the first of, as it transpired, several we were to see today. Two short stops just south of a much sunnier and brighter Swafham, produced several soaring Buzzards, singing Skylark and Woodlarks, and the expected birds frequenting the nearby pig field such as Shelduck, Lapwing and Oystercatcher. More of a surprise here were several Tree Sparrows, clearly breeding in the area and allowing us some nice views as they perched in the nearby bushes and telegraph wires.



A stop at a forest clearing followed next, with a pair of Stonechat with at least one young, several Linnets and singing Whitethroat the most obvious birds present. A more challenging species was Tree Pipit, something we'd hoped to see, and after some searching a distant singing bird was finally heard. This resulted in a short walk along the clearing, where we found two birds perched on some telegraph wires, resulting in us gaining some nice and much appreciated views. Weeting Heath NWT reserve was our next stop, and a short walk to the closest hide revealed at least eight Stone Curlews spread across the grassland area on view. A flock of thirty or so Stock Doves and a singing Goldcrest concluded our visit, after which we headed off to the main destination of the day, Lakenheath Fen RSPB reserve. We made our way to the reception area, noting a calling Coal Tit just outside it and after a brief chat to the staff we made our way to the first watchpoint which overlooks an extensive wet reedbed. With the opportunity to sit in the shade and look out over the reedbed and pools we decided to have to our lunch, with watching and eating producing our first Bittern and Kingfisher, along with the expected Marsh Harriers and calling Cuckoo. After lunch we made our way out along the main path to the furthest part of the reserve and the next watch point, pausing for a while at a small hide enroute. Another Bittern, a family party of Great crested Grebe and a fly over Cuckoo and

Hobby were the bird highlights. Dragonflies featured too, largely on the water in front of the hide, with us noting species such as Scarce and Four-spot Chaser, Emperor and Red-eyed Damselfly.



Two Ovipositing Emperor dragonflies at Lakenheath.

With the early afternoon heat clearly effecting both us and bird activity, we sat for a while at the last watchpoint with six Hobbies hawking and flying distantly over the reed bed making the long walk worthwhile. Returning to the visitor centre, an ice cream was just what we all needed, and after saying our goodbyes to the staff we made our way back to our North Norfolk Hotel. We had one more excursion planned for this evening, a visit to an area or heath near Dersingham for Nightjars. On talking to several wardens present on site, they said returning numbers had been low this year but with the weather looking promising this eve they'd chosen tonight to try and calculate how many birds were now present. As the light started to fade the first Nightjar was heard, distant but a promising start. When the bird started churring again one of the wardens walked towards the woodland area it was clearly calling from. He returned to say the bird was on its favoured perch, then giving us directions which enabled us to view it through the telescope. The bird then took off giving us flight views as well, briefly returning to its perch before taking off again. Several Woodcock were also seen during the evening as well, flying over calling as they transversed their breeding territories and a glow worm on the side of the path was of added interest on the walk back to the bus.

Thursday 27th June

Our last morning and we set off west along the coast with our destination for the morning Snettisham Country Park and Ken Hill marshes. A roadside stop enroute at the Fulmar colony at Hunstanton ensured the species made it onto the list, after which we headed straight onto Snettisham.



One of several Fulmars we saw over the cliffs at Hunstanton.

We parked and then set off along central footpath between the country park and nearby Ken Hill marshes. It was a much breezy day than we'd expected, which was clearly going to make looking for the smaller birds a bit more challenging. We did manage to hear or see a selection of the commoner birds as we walked along, with the bonus of a reeling Grasshopper warbler, though on stopping to try and locate it, it unfortunately stopped and didn't start again. Birds of note on the adjacent marshes included Avocets and Black-tailed Godwits at the southern end and as we approached the larger pools at the north end a Glossy Ibis was discovered feeding near the path.



Feeding Glossy Ibis at Ken Hill Marshes.

We then took the opportunity to look over the extensive marsh noting twenty Spoonbills, several Mediterranean Gulls in amongst their commoner cousins, five Wigeon, a large flock of close to a thousand Knot, and both Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, often in mixed groups offering nice comparison.

Returning to the bus we then made our way back east along the coast and our last destination of the day and trip, Titchwell RSPB reserve. On arrival lunch was our priority, after which we headed to the reception area to 'check in'. As luck had it, a pair of Spotted Flycatchers were nesting in the area, and it didn't take long to locate one of the birds, enjoying nice views of it sat nearby. We took the path leading round to the area called Patsy's Pool, taking the path out to join the main footpath, noting a calling female Bullfinch on the way. We then spent the next thirty or so minutes of our time left looking out at the birds on the freshmarsh. Large numbers of Avocet and Black-tailed Godwits were noted, along with equally large numbers of nesting Black-headed Gulls on the islands. A few Mediterranean Gulls were present too, along with several 2CY Common Gulls. We'd now unfortunately run out of time, so we returned to the bus and made the short journey back to the hotel, where we said our goodbyes and started our journeys back home.

Norfolk Summer Breeders & Late Migrants

24th - 27th June 2024

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	25	26	27
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)					
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>			x
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	x	x	x
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	x		x
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	x		x
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	x	x	x
6	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	x		x
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	x		x
8	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			x
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	x	x	x
10	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	x		x
11	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	x		x
12	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	x	x	x
13	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>		x	
14	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	x	x	x
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>	x	x	
18	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	x		x
19	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		x	
20	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	x	x	x
21	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	x		
22	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	x		x
23	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	x	x	x
24	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	x	x	x
25	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	x	x	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
29	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	x	x	x
30	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>		x	
31	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	x	x	x
32	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	x		x
33	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	x	x	x
34	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	x		
35	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	x		
36	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	x		
37	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>			x

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	25	26	27
38	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	x		x
39	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>			x
40	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	x		
41	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	LO		
42	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>		x	
43	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	x	x	
44	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	x		x
45	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			x
46	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	x	x	x
47	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	x		x
48	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>			x
49	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	x		
50	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	x		x
51	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	x	x	x
52	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	x		x
53	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	x		
54	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	x		x
55	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>	x	x	x
56	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	x	x	x
57	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	x	x	x
58	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	x	x	x
59	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	H	x	
60	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		x	
61	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	x	x	x
62	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		x	
63	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		x	x
64	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		x	
65	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		x	
66	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	x	x	x
67	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	x	x	x
68	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		x	
69	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	x	x	x
70	Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	H	x	
71	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		x	x
72	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	x	x	x
73	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	x		
74	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	x	H	
75	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	x	x	x
76	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	x	x	x
77	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	x		
78	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	x	x	x
79	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	H	x	H
80	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	x		x
81	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	H	H	H

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	25	26	27
82	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	x		H
83	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	x	x	x
84	Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>			H
85	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	H	H	H
86	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	x		
87	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	H		
88	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	x	x	x
89	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	x		
90	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		H	
91	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	x	x	x
92	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	x	x	x
93	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	x	x	x
94	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			x
95	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	H	H	x
96	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	x	x	x
97	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	x	x	x
98	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		x	
99	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	x	x	x
100	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	x	x	x
101	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	x		x
102	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		x	
103	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	H	x	H
104	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>			x
105	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	x	H	x
106	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	x	x	x
107	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	x	x	x
108	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	x	x	
109	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	x	x	
110	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	x	x	x
111	Lesser Yellowlegs		x		
112	Glossy ibis				x
154	Barnacle Goose				x
155					
#	Other Wildlife		25	26	27
1	Chinese Water Deer				
2	Reeves Muntjac				
3	Brown Hare				
4	Rabbit				
5	Grey Squirrel				
6	Brown Rat				
1	Comma				
2	Ringlet				

#	Common Name	Scientific Name		25	26	27	
3	Red Admiral						
4	Meadow Brown						
5	Large White						
6	Small White						
7	Sivler-studded Bue						
8	Large Skipper						
1	Emporer Dragonfly						
2	Hairy Dragonfly						
3	Scarce Chaser						
4	Four-spot Chaser						
5	Black-tailed Skimmer						
6	Ruddy Darter						
7	Bluetail Damselfly						
8	Azure Damselfly						
9	Red-eyed Damselfly						
	Glow Worm						