



Norfolk, 15 - 18 May 2014

Twenty-one members enjoyed a weekend's birding in Norfolk. We stayed at The Burleigh in Hunstanton and were well looked after.

We met on Thursday morning at Paxton Pits NR in Cambridgeshire and highlights here included Nightingale, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Kingfisher and distant views of Hobby. We had our lunch there and then carried on to Hunstanton. After checking in at the hotel we had a short stop at Choseley drying barns near Titchwell where highlights included Dotterel, Turtle Dove, Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting, Yellow Wagtail and Grey Partridge. We then visited a site in North Norfolk for Montagu's Harrier. Sadly, there was no Harrier but we did see Red Kite and both species of Partridge. After eating an evening meal, we reconvened at Dersingham Bog where we had excellent views of Woodcock and Cuckoo and heard both Grasshopper Warbler and Nightjar.

A pre-breakfast walk for a few on the Friday morning to Thornham Harbour produced Spoonbill, Little Egret, Brent Goose, Little Tern and a variety of waders including summer-plumaged Grey Plover and Whimbrel. After a hearty breakfast the whole group travelled up to the Brecks and our first port of call was Lynford Arboretum where the highlights were Crossbill, Spotted Flycatcher and singing Firecrest. Lunch was taken at Weeting Heath (Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve) where they have breeding Stone Curlew and the remainder of the afternoon was spent at Lakenheath RSPB reserve. Highlights here included Cetti's Warbler, Bearded Tit, Garganey, Red Kite, a long flight view of a Bittern and numerous sightings of Cuckoo, Marsh Harrier and Hobby. We returned to Hunstanton and after an evening meal a few of us re-convened at Dersingham to have a second chance for the Nightjar. We were successful with perched and flight views of Nightjar plus Tree Pipit and brief flight views of Grasshopper Warbler.

After our success the previous morning, a few more turned up for the pre-breakfast walk when we returned to Thornham Harbour. The birds were very similar to the previous day but with the added bonus of a hunting Barn Owl and two Common Scoter. After another excellent breakfast we travelled the brief distance down the coast to Titchwell RSPB reserve. Highlights included Red-crested Pochard and again a variety of waders including Avocet, both species of Godwit, Knot, Little Ringed Plover and Turnstone and more Common Scoter, Little and Sandwich Tern together with Eider down by the beach. After lunch we visited Kelling Heath where we saw Yellowhammer, Linnet, Woodlark and Sparrowhawk plus lovely views of a steam train on the North Norfolk line much to the delight of Stephen. On the way back we called at Cley, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve, which was very quiet bird-wise but we did see Bearded Tit again and Common Sandpiper. We got back to Hunstanton a little later and by the time we'd eaten it was too late for any further birding.

There was no organised pre-breakfast walk on the Sunday and after another great breakfast we said our goodbyes to the hotel and travelled to Sculthorpe Moor (Hawk & Owl Trust reserve) where we spent the morning. Highlights here included Marsh Tit, Nuthatch, Bullfinch and a very young, newly fledged Tawny Owl chick trying to look inconspicuous alongside the woodland boardwalk. After lunch a few of us returned to Lynford Arboretum on the way home to have a second look for the Two-barred Crossbill which had been reported again over the weekend. Sadly, we were unsuccessful, but we did have views of Crossbill and Siskin in a water puddle together with Grey Wagtail, our final species for the weekend.

We ended up with 124 species over the weekend. The weather was glorious all weekend and everyone enjoyed their weekend's birding.

Ray Evans

Norfolk, 17 - 20th March 2016

Twenty members enjoyed a weekend's birding in Norfolk. We stayed at The Burleigh in Hunstanton and were well looked after.

We met on Thursday morning at the Wildfowl & Wetlands reserve at Welney. Unfortunately access to the majority of the reserve was flooded but the main observatory was open and Lady Fen's

marsh was also viewable from the visitor centre. Highlights here included Whooper Swan, Marsh Harrier, Little Egret and distant views of a Merlin. We had our lunch there and then carried on to the RSPB reserve at Snettisham on the Wash. After a long walk down to the shoreline, the tide was a long way out but we managed to see a few hundred Avocet, plus Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit. Further sightings included Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzard, Red Kite, Little Grebe while a lucky few saw a party of Sand Martins. The next port of call was Roydon Common, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve where the highlights were Kestrel, Jay, Stonechat and a single ringtail Hen Harrier which came in to roost. A lucky few of us picked up Golden Pheasant at the Wolferton Triangle on our way to the hotel in Hunstanton.

A pre-breakfast trip to Wolferton on the Friday morning failed to find the Golden Pheasant from the night before but a short journey to Flitcham Abbey Farm reserve gave us Barn and Little Owl, both Grey and Red-legged Partridge, Egyptian Goose, Stock Dove, Brambling and Tree Sparrow. After a hearty breakfast the whole group travelled up to the Brecks and our first port of call was Lynford Arboretum where the highlights were Marsh Tit, Raven, Hawfinch, Treecreeper, Nuthatch and Firecrest. We then moved to Grime's Graves where we had excellent views of the wintering Great Grey Shrike. Lunch was taken at Santon Downham where we were unsuccessful in our search for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker but found a number of Redwing in a horse paddock plus Grey Wagtail and Mandarin on the river. The remainder of the day was spent at Lakenheath RSPB reserve. Highlights here included Lesser Redpoll, Bearded Tit, Marsh Harrier, Great White Egret and Common Crane. We then returned to Hunstanton for our evening meal.

After our success the previous morning, our pre-breakfast walk took us to Choseley Drying Barns where the highlights were Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting and then on to Thornham Harbour where highlights included Barn Owl, Brent Goose, Sanderling, Grey Plover and Red-breasted Merganser. After another excellent breakfast we travelled along the coast to Blakeney Harbour where a group of Lapland Bunting have spent the winter. We then moved on to Kelling Heath where we had excellent views of Dartford warbler plus lovely views of the 'The Hook Continental' steam loco on the North Norfolk line much to the delight of Stephen. On our return down the coast we called at Holkham where the highlights included Peregrine, Pink-footed and White-fronted Goose plus Lapwing and Golden Plover. We then had a brief stop at Titchwell RSPB reserve where we saw Water Rail, Water Pipit, Rock Pipit, Red-crested Pochard, Avocet and Grey Plover.

There was no organised pre-breakfast walk on the Sunday but one carload ventured back to Wolferton and was rewarded with a sighting of Golden Pheasant. After our final breakfast, we said our goodbyes to the hotel and travelled the short distance back to Titchwell and spent the morning there. We walked down to the beach and highlights included Bearded Tit, Cetti's Warbler, Common Scoter, Slavonian Grebe, Red Kite, Hen Harrier plus further views of Water Rail, Water Pipit and Red Crested Pochard. After lunch we made the short trip to Choseley again and had further views of Yellowhammer, Grey and Red-legged Partridge. Our final stop of the weekend was the harbour at Brancaster Staithe where the only new bird was a Common Gull.

We ended up with 125 species over the weekend. The weather was cold but mostly dry with a few drizzly showers on the Saturday and everyone enjoyed their weekend's birding.

Ray Evans

Norfolk, 16-19 May 2019

Sixteen members enjoyed a weekend's birding in Norfolk. We stayed at The Russet House in King's Lynn (a new venue for our accommodation) and were well looked after.

We met on Thursday morning at RSPB Frampton on the Lincolnshire coast, a new reserve for most of the group. This is a fairly new reserve and the birding is excellent. Highlights here included Cuckoo, Yellow Wagtail, Avocet, Cetti's Warbler, drake Garganey, Red-necked Phalarope, Greenshank, Brent Goose and a couple of lekking Ruff. We had our lunch there and then carried on to King's Lynn. After checking in at the hotel we travelled to RSPB Titchwell and a short walk around the back of the carpark gave us Stock Dove and 3 Turtle Doves plus Red-crested Pochard on Patsy's Pool. We drove a short distance to Chalkpit Lane southeast of Choseley drying barns where highlights included Dotterel, Corn Bunting, Marsh Harrier and Red-legged Partridge. After eating an evening meal, we visited Flitcham Abbey Farm where we saw Yellowhammer, Egyptian Goose, Grey Partridge and a Muntjac Deer. The group (or most of us) reconvened at Dersingham Bog where we had excellent flyover views of Woodcock and Nightjar.

On Friday after a hearty breakfast, the whole group travelled up to the Brecks and our first port of call was Lynford Arboretum where the highlights were Crossbill, Siskin, Treecreeper, Nuthatch and a fleeting Firecrest for a lucky few. Lunch was taken at Weeting Heath (Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve) where they have breeding Stone Curlew and other sightings included Whimbrel and Marsh Tit. We then moved on to RSPB Lakenheath where we saw Garganey, a long flight view of a Bittern and sightings of Cuckoo, Marsh Harrier and Hobby. Our final destination for the afternoon was Santon Warren just north of Santon Downham village where we had excellent views of Woodlark plus Tree Pipit, Yellowhammer and Stonechat. After an evening meal a few of us re-convened at Dersingham where we had further views of Woodcock but we didn't stay late enough to see the Nightjar.

After yet another excellent breakfast on the Saturday, we travelled down the coast to RSPB Titchwell. Highlights included Bearded Tit, Spoonbill and again a variety of waders including Avocet, both species of Godwit, Common Sandpiper, Grey Plover, Sanderling and Turnstone plus Common, Little and Sandwich Tern down by the beach. A single Little Gull and a few Mediterranean Gulls were also present on the reserve. We then decided to move to Kelling Heath and en-route we saw a Red Kite. After taking lunch we saw Garden Warbler, Linnets, Whitethroat and again a lucky few had Dartford Warbler. Stephen had his fix of steam trains for the trip with lovely views of a steam loco on the North Norfolk line. On the way back we called at Cley, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve, where highlights included Greenshank, Water Rail, Little Ringed Plover and Little Stint. After our evening meal a few of us called at North Point pools, just east of Wells where we saw a hunting Barn Owl and 7 Wood Sandpipers.

On our last day after another great breakfast and settling our bills, we said our goodbyes to Roger at the hotel and travelled to Thornham Harbour where we took a walk on the sea wall towards Holme. Highlights here included summer plumaged Grey Plover, further Little Terns fishing in the mouth of the harbour, Marsh Harrier and Paul B picked up a hunting Short-eared Owl. A few of us returned to Dersingham Bog where we saw Linnets, Stock Dove and Stonechat. Our final port of call was back where we started the trip at RSPB Frampton Pools where the highlights were a Broad-billed Sandpiper (undoubtedly the bird of the trip) and 2 Temminck's Stint.

We ended up with 138 species over the weekend, a record for one of our spring trips. The hotel was excellent and I'm sure we will use it again. The weather stayed fairly fine all weekend and everyone thoroughly enjoyed their weekend's birding.

Ray Evans

Norfolk, 17-20 March 2022

Over the weekend of 17th- 20th March, 15 members enjoyed a weekend's birding in Norfolk. We stayed at The Russet House Hotel in King's Lynn and were well entertained and looked after.

We met on the Thursday morning at the Wildfowl & Wetlands reserve at Welney. Highlights here included Whooper Swan, Marsh Harrier, Red Kite, Little, Great White and Cattle Egret, Avocet and a variety of wildfowl and waders together with Tree Sparrow at the feeders. We had a late lunch there and then carried on to our accommodation for an early check-in. and then travelled along the coast to RSPB Titchwell where we took a short walk around the east trail where highlights included Chiffchaff, Cetti's Warbler building a nest to the side of the Reedbed Hide, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier and Brent Goose. Our final destination for the afternoon was Choseley Drying Barns where we saw Red-legged Partridge, Linnets and a lucky few had Corn Bunting.

After a hearty breakfast the group travelled up to the Brecks for the day and our first port of call was Lynford Arboretum where the highlights were Yellowhammer, Brambling, Firecrest, Goldcrest, Common Buzzard, Marsh Tit and a roosting Tawny Owl which Paul managed to find in his telescope although it was only its tail. Lunch was taken near Santon Downham where we took a walk on one of the rides to look for Woodlark, but we were unsuccessful. We then moved on to Weeting Heath (Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve). It was their first day opening for the season and James the warden walked with us to show us where the newly arrived Stone Curlew were. This time we could only see the head of the bird as it was sitting down and never moved while we were watching it. The remainder of the day was spent at RSPB Lakenheath reserve. Highlights here included Garganey, Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit, Marsh Harrier and Kingfisher at the Washland viewpoint while a few who ventured to the far end of the reserve saw Common Crane. We then returned to

King's Lynn for our evening meal.

On the Saturday, after another excellent breakfast, we travelled along the coast to RSPB Titchwell again to explore the rest of the reserve. There were many highlights here including Redwing, Little Egret, Golden and Grey Plover, Sparrowhawk, Mediterranean Gull, Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit. We had our lunch on site and then moved to Holkham where a walk in to Holkham Gap gave us good views of the wintering Shorelark and a few of the group managed to see a Spoonbill. Our last destination for the day was North Point Pools near Wells where the highlights were a number of Common Gull, Mediterranean Gull (2) and many Avocets.

After yet another hearty breakfast, paying our bills and saying goodbyes we set off for RSPB Frampton Marsh which was on our way home. We were unable to locate the White-tailed Lapwing that had been in residence for a while and frustratingly it was reported in the afternoon at 4.00 pm just after we'd left. We did however see a good mixture of wildfowl and waders including Goldeneye, Little Stint, Ruff, Bar-tailed Godwit and Little Ringed Plover.

Unfortunately, on the Saturday night, one of the group tested positive for Covid and five more succumbed to the virus before the end of the week but thankfully nobody was really bad with it.

We ended up with 105 species over the weekend. The weather was cold and dry with a biting east wind most of the time but everyone thoroughly enjoyed their weekend's birding.

Ray Evans