

November 2026 – Issue 137 **The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter**

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Chair's Corner

By John Swallow

After saying in the September Chair's Corner, just a few weeks ago, "it's great to bump into birds yourself", I have already twitched a rare bird, "hoisted by my own petard" he he. A Nutcracker was found by local birder Neil Cooper on Friday 23rd Oct '26. Whatever your views on twitching (more below) this was big news for local birders and many others from the around the UK.

Yes, we all went crackers for a Nutcracker. I hasten to say not The Nutcracker, a two-act classical ballet by Pyor Ilyich Tchaikovsky (Op. 71), a perennial Christmas favourite I can thoroughly recommend which I am sure will be on the Beeb (BBC) again this Christmas.

Mark B, Roger E and I were ringing at Walsey Hills (outside Club area) a week ago. We usually kid each other about "what is going to turn up in the nets today", suggestions varied from Yellow-browed to Dusky Warbler but Roger plumped for Nutcracker! How prescient this turned out to be, maybe he had read "a major westward irruption of Northern Nutcracker is taking place in Northern Europe this autumn, with hundreds and possibly thousands of birds having already reached western Scandinavia" (Birdguides). Needless to say none of the predicted birds were ringed that morning.

I was still totally oblivious to this Nutcracker irruption when Roger, Simon and I made a long planned visit to Felbeck Trust's Spurrell's Wood nest boxes on Saturday 24th Oct '26. I'd removed all my birding kit out from the car boot and replaced it with a bucket filled with screwdrivers, a drill and drills, gloves etc so we could open and repair the nest boxes. On arriving Roger and I removed the old nests and carefully searched through the flattened nest material, a mass of poo (from ready to fledge chicks) and moss looking for the remains of any eggs and young (especially ringed ones) that were unfortunate enough to have died in the nest (this allows BTO to calculate "young fledged per nesting attempt"). I'm digressing but you get the idea.

Roger then showed me a picture forwarded by Tony on our NENBC Alerts WhatsApp group of a Nutcracker in Mundesley! But I read "currently no sign" so I made a shrug and headed for the next box.....

Once we had finished all the boxes we headed home but I remembered the bird news and decided to pull over, NENBC Alerts exclaimed "Nutcracker... NOW" along Trunch Road, Mundesley. I decided to head over to Trunch Road where I met a few NENBC members, including Andy C and Roger U but I'd just missed the bird. I mentioned I had no bins to Andy and a stranger stood next to me immediately produced a pair, Wowzer. His wife was taking a comfort break therefore he had a spare pair. This is an example of the camaraderie between birders and there were many other examples of good behaviour from the swelling crowd. Only a few birders became over excited and this was well managed by the other birders present. However, with no sign of the Nutcracker after an hour I decided to leave and hopefully try again tomorrow....

Therefore, after my usual Sunday morning routine and having checked the birding news I headed over to Mundesley, perhaps 2nd time lucky? I parked some distance from where the bird was reported then walked, passing a line of birders leaving, towards Water Lane. Once there I had great flight views and then I guided a birder stood next to me onto the bird which was now only 25m away sitting on the guttering of a garage.



Shortly after I bumped into Alan S who was yet to see the bird. Within a matter of a few minutes the bird was heading back to its favoured place, we followed and I managed to scope the bird sharing the scope with Alan, returning the favour I'd been given the day before. I suggested we go to the birds favoured garden and wait. Sure enough it returned and we both had great views. Alan took a few photos and I grabbed a digiscoped image as the Nutcracker hopped its way closer to the crowd of well behaved birders.



So what was this all about. This was Lifer for me and I couldn't remember having a chance to see a Nutcracker in the UK in the last 10 years so I checked when I got home. A sighting was indeed long overdue, the last twitchable bird occurred in Britain way back in 1991, the last record was in Caithness November 2021 but "before that, a nutcracker at Kingsdown, Kent, on 6-7 September 1998 lingered long enough for quick-moving birders to twitch successfully, but it was not enjoyed by the masses" Birdguides. But what about the name Slender-billed Nutcracker, a name I hadn't heard of. When I started birding it was just Nutcracker. I looked on eBird, Cornell's Birds of the World where it is called a Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* with four subspecies while this same species is called a Northern Nutcracker *N. caryocatactes* on Birdguides. As mentioned above Northern Nutcrackers irrupt, this is caused by cyclical food shortages when seed crops they rely on, pines and hazel, are scarce. Of the two nearby subspecies to the UK it is the Siberian-breeding *macrorhynchos* subspecies, often referred to as Slender-billed Nutcracker that irrupts. Looking at a few pictures online the Mundesley bird does have a less heavy bill than the nominate race N.c. *caryocatactes*. I'm glad that's cleared up.

Well done to John Hurst for starting a collection for Mundesley Lifeboat on Sunday and a Just Giving page has now been set up by Wayne Glossop, www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/wayne-glossop-1. The combined collection was heading towards £2000 at the time of writing www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq203424rgm8o. John H summed up his overwhelmingly positive thoughts about the Nutcracker to me in the following:-

> *"My overall perception of the event is one of optimism, generosity and the unbridled joy experienced by a very wide demographic that included many young people, and those of multicultural backgrounds, gender and ages from across the UK and beyond."*

As always when going to see a rare bird please be thoughtful and respectful to local people who may not welcome being disturbed by the arrival of hundreds of birders. Also please don't forget to be kind to your fellow birders too. A little thought goes a long way.

However you prefer your wildlife watching, enjoy your birding ☺ | John



John Hurst collecting for the Mundesley Lifeboat, photo courtesy of Trevor Williams

A Note from the Editor

By Carol Thornton

Welcome to our November newsletter!



Hopefully all those who ordered the NENBC Bird Report 2025 will now have received their copy. If you haven't and you think you should have, or if you didn't sign up for one initially but have changed your mind, then do get in touch. Unfortunately for one member, his dog got to the post before he did - I thought that was just an excuse for not doing your homework!



In other local news, there looks like there has been some progress in repairing the vandalised seawatching shelter at Cromer North Lodge Park which is good news, although there is a rumour that the contractors may have run into complications so no news yet on completion. In the meantime, seawatching is still on but from the terrace below the Red Lion nearer the pier. Still an elevated position but sadly not protected from the elements.

Now I am sure that quite a few of you are as excited as me about this month's talk as it is Members' Night – and if you aren't yet, then you should be! For those of you new to the club, this is our annual event where instead of one long evening talk, four of our members each give us a 20 minute mini talk on a bird-related topic. This time our subjects are bird art from fieldwork to finished painting, researching in the Norwegian fjords, the birdlife of the isle of Arran and a birding tour of some of the islands of Oz. Hope you can come and join us on the 26th, in person or on Zoom, for what is always an interesting night.

Other upcoming events to look out for this month are our weekend walk on 22nd to Hickling Broad and the Stubb Mill Raptor Roost with Trevor and Andy (page 17) and the 3rd Wednesday of the month Felbrigg Park Double "Walk & Amble" on 18th (page 17).

The **'Through a Lens'** topic for our front cover of birds seen last month was **'thrushes'** and we a have a Blackbird [Hale family], a Song Thrush [Mark Clements] and a Redwing [Jane Crossen]. For November our theme will be **'geese'** so get clicking!

Below is a selection of **my favourite member photos** from October and this time we have Jackdaw [Richard Farrow], Red-throated Diver [Richard Farrow], Buzzard [Jane Crossen], Starling [Mark Clements], Gannet [David Griffiths] and Rock Pipit [Richard Farrow]. Thanks all!

Welcome to our new member

* Andy Taylor *

and welcome back returner

* Stephen Buckle *

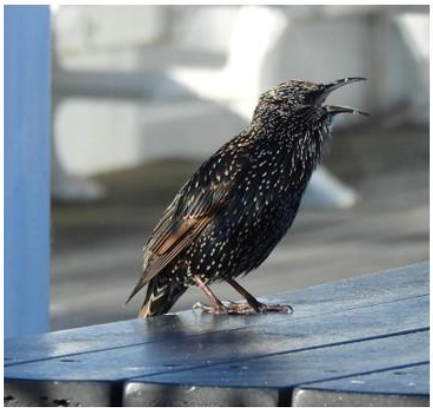
We look forward to seeing you soon!

If you have any queries, just drop us an email













NENBC Bird Highlights – October 2026

By Carol Thornton

All records are from the NENBC website and submitted by members unless otherwise stated. No use of AI to help collate the report this month!

≈ 8,376 individual records covering 183 bird species were added in October

October 2026 Highlights | Autumn birding was certainly picking up last month with the stand out bird of the year being the **Nutcracker** that hung about at Mundesley for a few days. A fantastic record that many club members were able to catch up with. At the coast, seawatchers picked up **Velvet Scoter**, **Leach's Petrel, Sooty Shearwater** and **Manx Shearwater** along with auks, skuas, divers and terns and the number of records was boosted by many non-regular seawatchers turning out for our annual Coordinated Seawatch – we hope you are now hooked! On the gull front, **Iceland Gull**, **Glaucous Gull**, **Caspian Gull**, **Yellow-legged Gull, Little Gull** and **Sabine's Gull** all put in appearances and it is always nice to see **Mandarin Duck**, **Scaup** and **Long-tailed Duck** reported. There were more **Purple Sandpiper** records from Sheringham prom than last October so fingers crossed at least one bird overwinters there. Geese were back in numbers with the usual **Pink-footed Goose** and **Brent Goose** being joined by good numbers of **White-fronted Goose** and a few **Tundra Bean Goose** too. **Woodcock** were more visible and raptors included **Osprey**, **Merlin**, **Long-eared Owl** and **Short-eared Owl**. A lovely **Rose-coloured Starling** was at Happisburgh and a **Hoopoe** put in an appearance a couple of times too. Other notable records included **Woodlark**, **Shore Lark**, **Bearded Tit**, **Yellow-browed Warbler**, **Water Pipit, Common Crossbill**, **Snow Bunting** and **Lapland Bunting**. See fuller details below.

Brent Goose | There were 125 records throughout the month along the length of our coastline with high counts of up to 1,720 birds on 17th when continuous movement of groups west was reported There were also many triple figure counts on several other days. *Photo 1 courtesy of Mark Clements*

1



Tundra Bean Goose | A single was reported in off the sea with White-fronted Geese on 20th at Weybourne, with 4 reported at Mundesley on the same day, again with White-fronts.

White-fronted Goose | The first reports of the season were on 19th of up to 144 east at Weybourne and over the next couple of days there were nearly 30 further reports at 13 coastal and inland locations in the north of our area. There were a few reports of flocks of 290-405 individuals but most were 20-60 in size. There were also a smattering of records of smaller flocks at the tail end of the month

2



Whooper Swan | Two adults initially flew east and then were reported slowly drifting west on the sea at Weybourne on 21st. One in from the east, onto the sea and off west there on 26th and one distant, also there, on 29th. *Photo 2 courtesy of David Griffiths*

Mandarin Duck | A drake was west at Weybourne on 5th plus on the 11th, a male west along the shore at Sheringham and one briefly on rocks and in sea at West Runton.

Scaup | A Third Party Report of 20 east in parties of 12 and 8, both containing adult males, at Sheringham on 7th. Also, a single drake west with Brent Geese at Weybourne on 18th.

Velvet Scoter | Eight records of 1-2 birds on 5 dates, seen from Sheringham, Walcott, Happisburgh and Weybourne.

Long-tailed Duck | Four female types east close in at Sheringham on 4th and a further report of presumably a single at Selbrigg Pond on 6th.

Goosander | A single redhead west past Sheringham on 17th and one, again west there, on 24th.

Red-breasted Merganser | Reported on 6 dates – 13th, 15th, 17th, 18th, 24th and 31st. Most reports were from 17th (max 4 Mundesley and Sheringham) and 18th (max 12 Sheringham) and sightings across the dates additionally came from Weybourne and Cromer.

Grey Partridge | At least 6 at Bodham on 3rd, 4 East Runton & Thains Lane on 15th, 6 Paston on 19th and a single at Weybourne Cliffs on 21st.

Red-necked Grebe | Seven records with singles reported from Sheringham on 7th, 8th and 19th, Cromer Pier on 14th and 29th and Weybourne on 17th.

Great Crested Grebe | Three reported from their usual stronghold at Blickling Park on 20th and records of 1-2 birds off Weybourne on 9 dates. An unusual record of a single at Felbrigg Park lake on 3rd, the first since 2021. *Photo 3 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*



Grey Plover | Reports of 1-4 birds on 9 dates between 5th and 25th from Weybourne, Sheringham and Cromer.

Bar-tailed Godwit | Reports on 9 dates of predominantly 1-4 birds with high counts of 7 at Weybourne on 2nd and 8 at Sheringham on 4th. Other reports were from Happisburgh, Cromer, Mundesley and West Runton. *Photo 4 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Knot | On the 8th, reports from Mundesley (1), Sheringham (up to 9) and Cromer Pier (2); on the 9th Weybourne Camp (5); the 10th and 21st at Weybourne (1) plus 25th (7); and on 31st, night calls recorded over Sheringham.

Purple Sandpiper | A few more records accumulated this month so maybe we will get this species overwintering again after last year's absence. Reports of 1-2 birds in the usual Sheringham spots around the Tank between 3rd and 22nd but also reported at the western end of the prom on a couple of occasions. *Photo 5 courtesy of Andy Taylor*



Little Stint | Two birds reported east along the tideline at Sheringham on 6th.

Woodcock | Twelve records of up to 4 birds. Singles reported in off the sea at Sheringham on 19th, Weybourne on 20th, 21st and 24th and Cromer on 23rd. Singles were inadvertently flushed 4 times at Felbrigg Park during a club walk on 21st and 3 at Muckleburgh Hill on 23rd.

Grey Phalarope | Two west at Sheringham on 8th, presumably the birds later reported at Cley and Blakeney. Two heading west at Weybourne on 13th with "gorgeous bouncing flight over the sea" and a single also west at Sheringham on 16th.

Kittiwake | Over 50 records throughout the month with high counts past Sheringham of 134 on 7th, up to 450 on 17th and 138 on 18th plus 200 Weybourne also 18th.

Sabine's Gull | Reported on 5 days. On 7th, a juvenile and an adult east at Sheringham; on 17th an immature west at Sheringham plus 2 juveniles west there, a juvenile surf feeding at Mundesley and a single at Weybourne; on 18th, juvenile past Walcott; on 24th a juvenile west at Sheringham and an adult west at Weybourne; on 25th a juvenile west at Weybourne.

Little Gull | Around 100 records throughout the month on nearly every day along our coastline. Several triple figure counts across 5 days with a max count of 1,101 west at Sheringham on 24th. *Photo 6 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Mediterranean Gull | Over 120 records throughout the month from 13 coastal locations with high counts on the sea off Cromer Pier on 14th (62) and feeding with Razorbills at Mundesley on 17th (35). An unusual inland record of an adult winter bird at North Walsham on 17th. *Photo 7 courtesy of David Griffiths*



Glaucous Gull | Two records of single adults reported from Sheringham on 6th and Weybourne Camp on 16th.

Iceland Gull | A probable record of a first winter bird east at Weybourne on 18th.

Caspian Gull | Five records of 1-2 birds off Cromer Pier in the first 3 days of the month with 5 there, all un-ringed first winter birds, on 12th. Also singles reported from Sheringham on 2nd,12th and 18th and Weybourne on 13th. Ringed reports listed below. *Photo 8 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Sandwich Tern | Fifty records of single figure counts between 1st and 26th from coastal locations between Weybourne and Happisburgh. The only double figure count was of 25 off Weybourne on 1st.

Arctic Tern | Singles off Sheringham on 7th, 8th, 16th, 17th, 18th,22nd and 25th; Weybourne on 16th, 17th and 29th; 2 west off Cromer Pier on 17th.

Great Skua | Reports of 'Bonxies' on 8 dates including Sheringham (max 10 on 7th and 17th), with just singles off Cromer Pier (17th), Walcott (18th), Weybourne (24th).

Pomarine Skua | Three east at Sheringham on 7th with singles there on 11th, 16th, 17th, 18th, Weybourne 11th, 16th, 25th and Cromer Pier 17th.

Arctic Skua | Nearly 50 records covering Cromer Pier, Happisburgh, Mundesley, Sheringham, Walcott and Sheringham. All single figure counts of juveniles, dark phase and pale phase birds, with all records in single figures except 26 at Sheringham on 7th and 10 there on 17th.

Long-tailed Skua | All records from Sheringham. Four west on 7th, including 3 together, a single east on 8th and a single, a pale morph juvenile also east, on 17th.

Little Auk | A single east Sheringham on 18th.

Black Guillemot | Reported on 5 dates, all singles. A distant juvenile at Weybourne on 10th, Cromer Pier on 23rd and 29th, Sheringham and Weybourne on 30th and Weybourne again on 31st. *Photo 9 courtesy of Andy Taylor*



Puffin | Singles at Sheringham on 4th, 11th and 24th, all west.

Great Northern Diver | A smattering of records over 12 days from off Sheringham, Weybourne, Walcott and Cromer Pier, with detail on just one bird which was noted as in 'near full summer plumage'. Most reports were of singles but 2 Sheringham on 17th, 24th and 29th (when adult in winter plumage and juvenile seen) plus 3 Weybourne on 18th. *Photo 10 courtesy of David Griffiths*



Storm Petrel | A single slowly moving east at Sheringham on 18th.

Leach's Petrel | A single west at Sheringham on 17th was followed on the 18th by reports of up to 4 birds there and 5, mainly west, at Weybourne.



Cory's Shearwater | A single 'sedately east' from Sheringham on 8th.

Sooty Shearwater | Twenty -six records over 7 dates from Sheringham, Weybourne, Cromer Pier and Walcott. The majority were of singles with Sheringham observations of 3 on 8th, up to 25 on 17th, up to 10 on 18th and 3 on 25th, all from seawatching sessions.

Manx Shearwater | Fifty-three records over 11 dates from Weybourne round to Walcott. Predominantly singles and up to 5 birds but with 48 over the course of a day-long seawatch at Sheringham on 7th and 20 on 17th there. *Photo 11 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Shag | A single reported at Sheringham on 8th, 9th, 19th and 27th with 32 there on 16th and 17th. Where stated in notes, reports were of a juvenile bird. *Photo 12 courtesy of David Griffiths*



Great White Egret | Coinciding with the club's annual Coordinated Seawatch on 3rd, 13 members reported the single at Cromer Pier and the 3 birds at Sheringham. There were 4 west at Weybourne Cliffs on 5th, singles over Edgefield on 13th, Aylmerton and Gresham on 19th, Weybourne on 2nd and 21st with 2 reported east there on 23rd.

Osprey | A single low and south at Gunthorpe on 3rd.

Long-eared Owl | A probable sighting of a single in off the sea at Sheringham on 17th.

Short-eared Owl | Singles in off the sea at Sheringham on 10th and 16th with 1-2 birds west there during seawatches on 17th. *Photo 13 courtesy of Andy Taylor*

Hoopoe | One at Happisburgh on 21st and a Third Party Report, with photo, from a local resident at Southrepps on 25th.

Merlin | Singles reported from Weybourne on 8th, 15th and 20th plus Sheringham on 18th and 22nd. Where stated in note, a 'female type'.

Ring-necked Parakeet | A single flew over the east end of Sheringham Golf Course 3 times calling on 23rd.

Nutcracker | Thirty-seven club members were able to get a look at this fantastic addition to our club species list. This well-twitched bird was at Mundesley between 24th and 27th and you can read much more about its stay in John's Chair's Corner and elsewhere in this newsletter. *Photos 14 and 15 courtesy of Stu Buck and Trevor Williams*

14



15



Hooded Crow | A single reported from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 2nd, 14th, 15th, 20th and 22nd, Weybourne on 9th, Mundesley on 17th and West Runton on 21st. *Photo 16 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Raven | Two reported around Weybourne on 2nd and 14th and a single calling over a member's house at Thornage on 15th. *Photo 17 courtesy of David Griffiths*

Marsh Tit | A pleasant uptick in records this month of this species. In addition to Gresham and Beeston Common garden feeders, birds were reported at Corpusty & Saxthorpe, Mossymere Wood, Selbrigg Pond (2), Holt Country Park & Lowes (2), Ridlington and Southrepps Common.

Bearded Tit | A Third Party Report of 6 in Weynor Gardens, Weybourne on 1st.

Woodlark | Up to 2 birds reported at Kelling Heath during the month and also heard singing at Weybourne on 2nd and 3rd.

Shore Lark | Two reported on stubble west of Spalla Gap at Weybourne on 2nd.

Yellow-browed Warbler | Singles at Weybourne Camp and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 1st and Weybourne on 28th and 30th.

Willow Warbler | A single at Sheringham on 15th.

Lesser Whitethroat | Singles at Incleborough Hill on 22nd and Beeston Bump on 26th.

Firecrest | A handful of records of mostly singles at Sheringham Park, High Kelling (2 on 12th), Old Briton's Quarry, Trimingham, Sheringham, Beeston Common (2 on 31st) and Pretty Corner Woods.

Rose-coloured Starling | An obliging but mobile single, widely reported as juvenile, was present at Happisburgh on most days from 19th to the month end. *Photo 18 courtesy of Stu Buck*

Ring Ouzel | A single Third Party Report of a single fly-over at Mundesley during the Nutcracker twitch on 28th.

16



17



18



Redstart | A single at Happisburgh on 2nd and 3rd. *Photo 19 courtesy of Steven Lines*

Wheatear | Reported around Weybourne on 1st and 2nd (2), Sheringham Cemetery also on 2nd and flycatching at Sheringham on 6th. *Photo 20 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Yellow Wagtail | A single west at Weybourne on 8th calling.

Grey Wagtail | Forty records throughout the month of mostly singles at coastal and inland locations. Two birds reported from Weybourne on 5th, Mundesley on 24th and Sheringham on 15th, 19th and 30th.

Water Pipit | A single in off the sea at Weybourne on 28th was the only record.

Rock Pipit | Nearly 70 records throughout the month predominantly of 1-7 birds from Paston, Weybourne, Beeston Bump, Mundesley, Happisburgh and Cromer Pier. At Sheringham, high counts 25 west on 8th (dropping to feed on shoreline wrack) and in small groups west on 9th plus 10 on 11th.

Brambling | Most of the 22 records were of singles or low single figure counts with 15 on 19th at Aylmerton the highest count of the autumn thus far.

Hawfinch | A single west with Chaffinch at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 1st and a subsequent flight call recorded at Beeston Bump a little later. Another sound recording was made of a bird flying through there on 30th.

Redpoll | Following a single on 1st at Cromer, Lesser Redpoll numbers were on the up with flocks of 20-100 reported from 19th through to 30th before tailing off. Sheringham had a fly-by of these larger numbers on 28th but birds stopped off to feed, drink and rest at Beeston Common and Kelling Heath on that date.

Common Crossbill | A single east, calling, at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 15th.

Lapland Bunting | A single east, calling, at Weybourne on 28th and one on the coastal path there on 31st. *Photo 21 courtesy of Ollie Allison*

Snow Bunting | A single at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 14th and also on the clifftop and east at Weybourne on 23rd. *Photo 22 courtesy of Vinnie Purdy*

19



20



21



22



November: What to look forward to .....

Last month in this section we were hoping for an irrupting Nutcracker and we weren't disappointed! We can't promise such delights this month but looking back at previous Novembers / Decembers, there have been quite a few unusual birds. We can always expect a range of geese so continue to scan those **Pink-footed**

Goose flocks for **White-fronted Goose**, **Tundra Bean Goose** and **Barnacle Goose** or something rarer – we had **Red-breasted Goose** and **Taiga Bean Goose** at the end of 2023! **Whooper Swan** are not unusual passing by in small numbers but in 2022 we had some hang about in fields outside Aylmerton for a few weeks and we also had some **Bewick's Swan** reports in 2023. The sea often becomes the focal point at this time of year for **divers**, **skuas**, **petrels**, **shearwaters** and **sea-ducks**. Look out for **Red-necked and Slavonian Grebe** but also **Black-necked Grebe** which we had in 2023. Whilst looking at our more regular auks, scan for **Black Guillemot**, already reported this season and also in 2022 and 2023, and the occasional **Puffin** or **Little Auk**. It is always good to look at gulls so check the beaches for **Caspian Gull** and **Yellow-legged Gull** which are often ringed. You might be lucky enough to have a **Short-eared Owl** come in off the sea, a passing **Bittern** or a **Glossy Ibis** flock, all previous November records. The 'good birds' aren't just at the coast. Farmland walks are worth the effort with the possibility of a **"white-winged" gull** in with the pigs (**Iceland Gull** and **Glaucous Gull**) or a **scarce bunting** among the feeding finches. **Winter thrushes** are expected in greater numbers so look out for **Mistle Thrush** and **Song Thrush** along with **Redwing and Fieldfare**. A mild spell of weather may encourage another **Hoopoe** or **Pallid Swift** to visit, and November is a good month for **Red-rumped Swallow** and **Richard's Pipit** records and we have previously had **Pallas's Warbler** and **Hume's Leaf Warbler** passing through too. If it is to be a '**Waxwing** winter' then they will begin to arrive in numbers during November. Whatever you are watching, enjoy the experience and please upload your records to the website. Want to make sure you don't miss out? Sign up to our WhatsApp Alerts Group for timely posting of interesting species – drop Carol your mobile number on nenbc@aol.co.uk.

Observations from last month .....

Member Extra!

Member Highs, Lows and Ponderings

All member comments are taken from the notes section of the website. We are getting a lot more detail on The birds and their activities these days which makes these summaries longer, but much richer, so please keep it up everyone!

Greylag Goose | x 2 Adult and juvenile with the grey geese flock, perhaps European birds? | Ian Prentice | Mundesley | 20th

Pink-footed Goose | Heading east (I think), couldn't see them through the mist, but a small flock of perhaps about 30 | Stephanie Witham | Happisburgh | 29th

Pink-footed Goose | x400 Very large and vocal flock flew over in a long strung out formation, was quite amazing, heading north-west presumably on their way to the coast for roosting | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 29th

White-fronted Goose | x1 Juvenile nearly became a road casualty as it tried to alight on the coast road just west of the village | Ian Prentice | Bacton | 20th

Mute Swan | x6 two adult, four juv, castle moat, agitated and corralled into one corner by the radio controlled boat. | Phil Borley | Baconsthorpe | 10th

Mute Swan | x10 distant flock on the sea - considered to be the same birds reported flying east past Cley, Weybourne and Sheringham. Now considered to be Mute - not Whooper | Trevor Williams | Cromer Pier | 30th

Egyptian Goose | x2 Being given a hard time by a Mute Swan! | Alan Stevens | Burgh-next Aylsham | 4th

Turtle Dove | x1 here was some discussion about if this was the Oriental sub-species, the bird was seen in dull light and at distance. It was a smaller bird than the nearby Collared Dove and having looked at photos (not great pics) and compared to field guides, it appears it was the European race and possibly a 1st winter bird (best guess!) | Stella Baylis | Undisclosed Location | 28th

Water Rail | x1 Standing at edge of hope reed bed. Thermal imager. | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 7th

Little Gull | x4 At least 4 feeding offshore, delightful dancing flight with dip-feeding, slowly moving west, all imm or sub-adult; seawatch 1645-1730 | Andy Clarke | Sheringham | 11th

Herring Gull | x2 In the paddock with Highland cattle. 'Paddling' to bring worms to the surface very successfully. | Stephanie Witham | Happisburgh | 29th

Arctic Skua | x1 chasing a blackbird coming in off, several attempts to catch blackbird resulted in its loss of tail before being knocked into the sea, only for a herring gull to grab and consume it. | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 18th

Guillemot | x8 east - a few identifiable amongst the many auks passing - mostly east - during 2 hour sea-watch from Red Lion terrace | Trevor Williams | Cromer Pier | 2nd

Red-throated Diver | x3 Very close in, lovely views of them feeding. One had quite a bit of red on it still! | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 12th

Sparrowhawk | x2 male and female hunting in tandem, attracting the attention of crows who eventually spilt them and saw off the female | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common 21st

Great Spotted Woodpecker | x1 I really couldn't believe it. I thought I bet I can't get that Gt Spotted on the bird bath again. I sat down and less than 30 seconds later it appeared! In the tree and then onto the birdbath!! Just call me the Woodpecker Whisperer!! | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 5th

Peregrine | x2 Both adults showing well around the church. They have been re-bonding with a food pass witnessed over the weekend and they sit closer together outside the breeding seasons than they do in it! | Jane Crossen | Cromer | 28th

Magpie | x5 A couple of times I've been at the cemetery and a Muntjac and Magpie seem to be best buddies! The Magpie follows the deer and attempts to jump on its back every now and again. Hilarious! It's not nailed the landing yet though! | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 2nd

Rook | Including a bird with a broad well defined white wing bar - only visible in flight. | Tony Pope | Weybourne Cliffs | 3rd

Swallow | x3 Nice surprise to see them feeding over the field west of cemetery. Record shots only it was a bit of a feeding frenzy! | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 11th

Cetti's Warbler | x1 hope reed bed. showing well for a change | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 29th

Wren | x1 In Hazels, giving me a good ticking off and bobbing up and down | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 31st

Starling | x200 That's a guesstimate - they just kept coming in! I seem to usually time it right at this time of the year. Started with about 30 dropping in and then they just kept coming! Feeding in the farm area and then the field west of cemetery. It's an annual stopping off place for them (and me!). | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 19th

Blackbird | x8 our rowan berries have been ripe for over a month but the continental blackbirds have arrived and are having a feast. | Chris Mason | Beeston Regis | 13th

Blackbird | x18 Possibly a small fall as that's much larger number than usual and they were very vocal. | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 23rd

Blackbird | x15 Garden & surroundings suddenly full of blackbirds in the afternoon, at least 15 counted. | Sue Parsons | Southrepps Common | 31st

Song Thrush | x10 Flock of 100s of unidentified thrushes flew over but only a few Song Thrushes seen in trees | Peter & Sue Morrison | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 7th

House Sparrow | x12 Local colony foraging at our feet in the hope of crumbs from Julian's splendid muffins! | John Hurst | Mundesley | 3rd

Meadow Pipit | x60 Steady passage west from dawn, increasing through the morning | Andy Clarke | Happisburgh | 3rd

Yellowhammer | x5 Two pairs and a single (poss juv) - calling and definitely re-bonding. Lot of it about in the bird world atm! | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 31st

Highlights | 'NocMig' Sound Recordings



Calling all those members out there who dabble in nocturnal recordings of over-flying birds ... Please do pop your confirmed records on the website. They don't count towards your Star or Green badges but they are an interesting addition to our data. Supporting sonogram images welcome. But what about those off-the-wall identifications the analysis software comes up with? The advancements in technology are great but they are a guide rather than a definitive ID so you do need to check your recordings yourself using website databases like Xeno-Canto or BirdNet for example. Please don't log these 'dodgy' records on the website, but do drop us an email to let us know your best 'if only' records of the month!

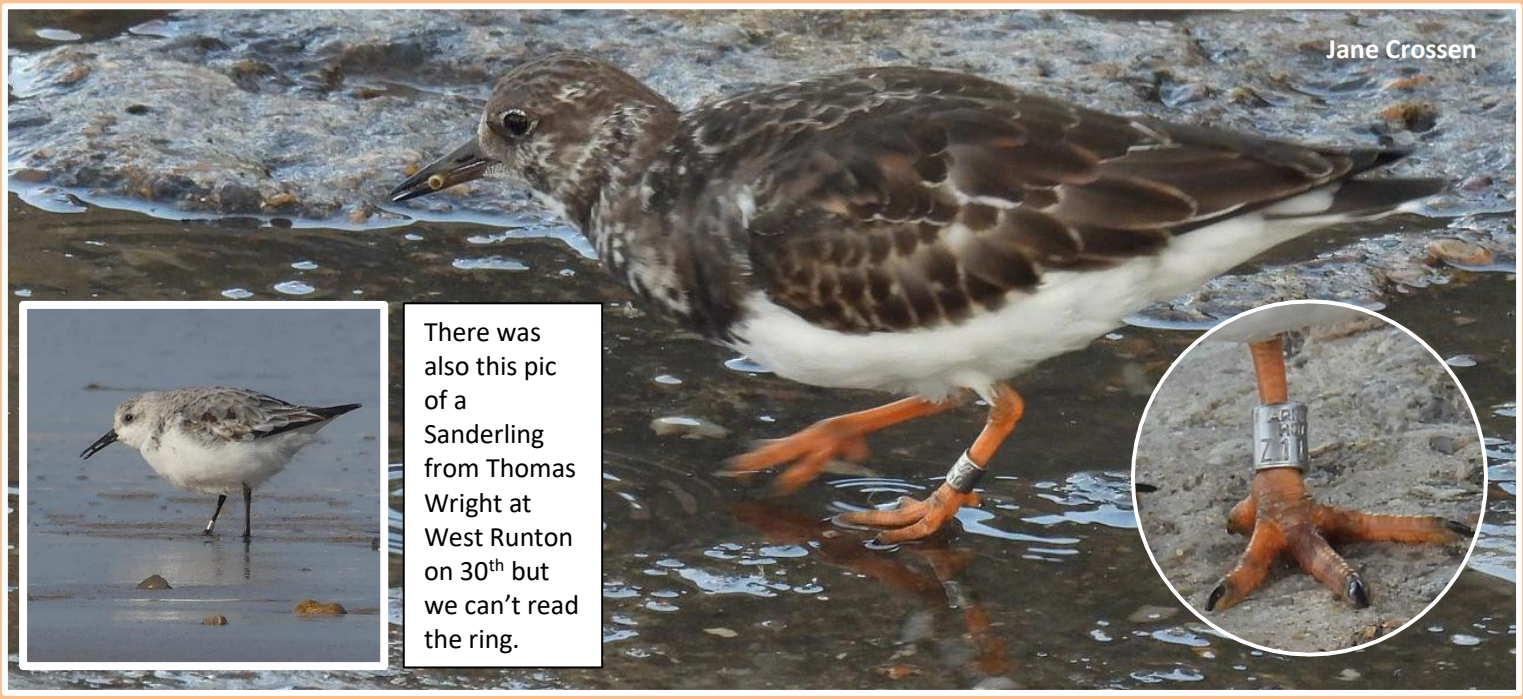
31/10/2026	White-fronted Goose	1	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight call over garden, single call 2000 (so 30 October)
31/10/2026	Moorhen	1	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight call over garden
31/10/2026	Coot	1	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight call over garden
31/10/2026	Knot	1	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight calls over garden, 4 calls 2320 (so 30 Oct)
31/10/2026	Blackbird	3	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight calls over garden
31/10/2026	Fieldfare	3	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight calls over garden
31/10/2026	Redwing	90	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight calls over garden, cotinuous passage overnight 30/31 Oct
31/10/2026	Song Thrush	4	Sheringham	Andrew Clarke	Nocturnal flight calls over garden

Highlights | Rings, Tags & Flags



Just a reminder to folk logging ringed birds on our website. Although we send our data off en masse to the county recorder through BirdTrack uploads, we don't directly contact ringing coordinators of individual projects – that needs to be down to you if you have a sighting and the ringing coordinators love to get updates on 'their' birds. | **EU Colour Ring website** | **Iceni Bird Monitoring Group** [locally ringed Turnstones (red flag three letters starting JAA), Black-headed Gulls (red rings starting 2C00) and Marsh Tit (white rings 00-99)] | **BTO** [metal-only rings]

08/10/2026	Turnstone	18	Sheringham	Jane Crossen	Including the bird Z117940 ringed in Holland this year. Much better views of the whole ring than previously seen.
22/10/2026	Turnstone	12	Sheringham	Jane Crossen	including the bird ringed this autumn in Holland. Close up photo I used the B&W filter to highlight the ring,
30/10/2026	Turnstone	28	Sheringham	Jane Crossen	Bird ringed in Holland Z117940 was present. Record shot only - it wouldn't keep still!
15/10/2026	Herring Gull		Walcott	Bob Farndon	quite a few hanging around and loafing on the beach, one with a red ring on left leg but too distant to read.
03/10/2026	Caspian Gull	1	Cromer Pier	Trevor Williams	colour-ringed bird on the beach - during 3 hour coordinated sea-watch



Now this one was just outside our area but worth keeping an eye out for ....



"We were at Cley for our regular Monday 'duty day'. Before the morning briefing we'd already seen Great Egret and Whooper Swan from the Visitors Centre. Afterwards I headed down to the beach car park in the hope of catching up with the Desert Wheatear (see what I did there!) which has been around for the past week. It didn't take much finding – and typical of this species it was very confiding. At one point it was swooped on by a Kestrel, which later perched on the fence-line between pillbox and the 'beach hotel'. As I approached I noticed it was ringed and managed a couple of shots before it took off again. Back home I processed the photos and realised it wasn't a BTO ring. During the course of the evening, with the help of John and Mark, we established it was a Dutch bird but unfortunately not enough of the code was visible to pin it down to a particular ringer. Interesting none-the-less." *Trevor Williams*

Turtle Dove Records

Due to the drastically declining UK population of Turtle Doves, and in order to help their conservation, earlier this year we asked you not to publish your club area sightings of this species on our website during the breeding season (April to August). For any that did get through, we auto-flagged the species so that the location was publicly shown as 'undisclosed'. If you haven't already, please could any members that kept manual records now send them directly to the Club Recorder Andy Clarke on ac1967@cantab.net who will ensure they are passed to RSPB and BTO. If you also chose to keep other vulnerable species offline such as Dartford Warbler or Woodlark, then we would welcome these records too. Thank you!

Pop-ups are coming your way – with your help!

By Stella Baylis

What are 'pop-ups'?! They are walks or static events arranged at short notice, designed to take advantage of favourable weather conditions for all types of birdwatching

and encourage less visited sites to be explored. Generally, no prior booking is required. The club has successfully been using pop-ups for seawatching this year, along with a summer evening Nightjar walk. Future possibilities include looking through geese for scarcer species, twitching a rarity (if one stays around for a few days!), gull watching, skywatching for raptors and a dawn chorus next spring. Pop-ups can also be a great way to visit a new site with some buddies or share your own local patch with others and boost your site list.

We are on the lookout for a leader or two. Don't be put off by the admin, we can help with that using our WhatsApp communications chat. 'Leaders' of pop-ups do not have to be experienced at leading or expert birdwatchers, so why not give it a go? If you are going for a birdy walk anyway and fancy some company, you can easily turn it in to a pop-up or if you are thinking of going out looking for migrating raptors and would like to benefit from more than one set of eyes, please get in touch at nenbc@aol.co.uk.

Anyone got a spare scope ?



Many members who attended our talk last year about Aride in the Seychelles will remember what an interesting evening Rob Lucking gave us talking about his conservation work there. Rob explained that the project treads a fine wire financially and has contacted us with both a plea and some good news of the Sooty Tern population on the island.

> "I'm on the lookout for a telescope and tripod for Aride. The team currently doesn't have one and a scope would be really useful in a number of areas - e.g. identifying boats illegally fishing within the protected area limits and monitoring species such as Roseate Terns that are susceptible to disturbance. I was wondering whether it would be possible to put out a request in the next NENBC newsletter just in case a member has an old scope and/or tripod knocking around needing a new home? It would be hugely appreciated. It's been a good season on Aride. We had over 70,000 pairs of sooty terns this year which is the highest number since 2011 and around 10x the number we had last year. Not sure why the population has spiked but one theory is that in 2022 there were huge numbers of sardines around and this could have boosted productivity in that year. As sooty terns only start breeding when they're at least 4 years old, this year is the first year that the 2022 cohort could have nested"
>
> | *Rob Lucking | Chair, Island Conservation Society UK* |

So, if anyone has an old scope/tripod in a cupboard and not seeing the light of day perhaps you could give Rob and his team a thought please? Contact Carol on nenbc@aol.co.uk and we'll put you in touch. Cheers.

Bird Ventures of Holt

Our club sponsors offer a 5% discount on own-branded wild bird food to NENBC members all year. They also stock feeders and so much more and are always happy to offer advice. Have a look at their website https://birdventures.co.uk or pop by their shop. Free local delivery available.

Bird Ventures | The Wildlife Shop
9B Chapel Yard, Albert Street
Holt NR25 6HG
Telephone 01263 710203
salesbirdventures@aol.com
Monday 10:15am-5:00pm
Tuesday to Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm

NENBC WhatsApp groups

We have 3! We need your mobile number to sign you up for any of them and you will need to activate WhatsApp on your phone if you are not already using it. There are a few rules on the 1st two groups which you will need to agree to on sign up that ensures they run as smoothly as possible for our volunteer administrators and the instant info you get is of use. Please be aware that like all WhatsApp groups, your number will be visible to all those on the group There isn't a way to hide them.

NE Norfolk Sea-watching is administered by Trevor Williams and is for any active and participating seawatchers along the north east Norfolk coast whether they are club members or not.

NENBC Alerts is administered by Tony Forster and is solely for club members to share news on the location of interesting birds within the club area.

NENBC Communications has been set up so we have a means of contacting members quickly and easily without going through the email / website route. We plan to use it for things like ….

- sending out reminders a day or two before scheduled club events
- letting folk know where we are running a short-notice 'Pop-Up' event outside of our published schedule
- advising to any last-minute changes to scheduled events

Unlike the other WhatsApp groups only the Admins can send messages out; **members won't be able to respond** via it so there shouldn't be a lot of traffic on it. It **won't be used as a bird alert** so won't duplicate the purposes of our other two.

Newsletter Contributions

The more folk who contribute articles for this monthly newsletter, the richer the read! You don't have to be a birding expert to write something with a birding link – long or short, with or without photos, trips, anecdotes, questions you want answered, surveys you have been doing, equipment or books you like – you would be surprised the number of members who would be interested in reading what you have to say. Please get in touch on nenbc@aol.co.uk if you can help. We would love to hear from you.

2nd Hand Book Stock

We could do with some new book donations for our birds and other nature book stall at our indoor events. We have rather a lot of Field Guides for most of the world it would seem so we don't necessarily need more of those, but we could do with a wider range of reading material from home and away. We will be getting rid of some of the old stock at year end. If you have any books languishing on your shelves, please bring them along to one of our events or drop us an email on nenbc@aol.co.uk

A change to our subscription rate for next year ….

Just a quick reminder about the changes we announced back at the AGM in December. From January 2027 we will be increasing the annual membership rate to £17.50 for those wanting a printed Annual Report from the previous year. The rate without a report remains at £12.00. **Those of you with a standing order, we would be much obliged if you could change the amount to be deducted prior to the renewal date in January**. Thank you!

Speaker Suggestions

We are always on the lookout for recommendations for speakers for our indoor programme, or ideas you may have of subjects we could cover. If you have any thoughts, please drop Alan and email on ahstevens52@gmail.com

What's On?

General Event Information – please see our **website** for **full details**



Overview

- Talks on the last Thursday evening of the month at Gresham Village Hall from Sep-Nov and Jan-Apr, also available live via Zoom
- Walks around Felbrigg Park on the 3rd Wednesday morning of the month Sep-Jul
- Varied monthly weekend walks and the odd evening one from Sep-Jul
- Special events including:
  - Coordinated Seawatch
  - Walks Weeks
  - Christmas Social & AGM
  - New Year's Day Birding Challenge
  - NENBC Big Sit
  - Global Big Bird Day activities
  - Birding for Beginners Course
  - Short-notice themed 'pop-up' sessions

Car-sharing is always encouraged, or even better, walking or cycling.

General Walks Information

Please wear clothing suitable to conditions - footpaths can be muddy at any time of the year.

YOUNG PEOPLE: Children are always welcome if accompanied by well-behaved adults and we would be happy to see young members aged 16 and 17 attend unaccompanied with prior written consent from a parent or guardian who has also supplied a phone number where they can be contacted in an emergency.

DOGS: We regret no dogs except assistance dogs.

EQUIPMENT: Binoculars are always recommended to gain full enjoyment from your birding and for some of our walks, a scope is definitely useful but don't forget you'll have to carry it!

ACCESSIBILITY: Unfortunately most of our walks aren't suitable for wheelchair users but please do contact us on **nenbc@aol.co.uk** to see which of our events are or could be adapted to be so.

BADGES: Birds seen on club-area walks count towards individual Star badges & if you walk or cycle from home, they also count towards your Eco-Badges.

BOOKING: You generally won't need to book for any of our walks so just turn up on the day if you fancy it. We advise joining the WhatsApp Comms group which we will always use if we have to make any last minute changes. There may be the occasional time we do need advance numbers and bookings and if this is the case it will say so on our publicity.

General Talks Info

LOCATION: Our indoor events are benerally held at Gresham Village Hall and unless otherwise stated they start at 7:30pm. Most are also available live via Zoom. The postal address is East Beckham Road, Gresham, Norfolk, NR11 8RT but note the published postcode might not take you to exactly the right spot! If you are coming through Aylmerton and Lower Gresham, turn right by the church (just after the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are coming through Gresham, turn left at the church (just before the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are dropping down from East Beckham, the hall is on your right opposite the church.

AT THE HALL: Those of you attending in-person at the hall for our regular evening talks can expect a selection of home-made cakes plus tea, coffee, hot chocolate, wine and cold drinks during the interval and of course the chance to socialise with other members. We can cater for gluten-free or other requirements if you let us know in advance. We have a 2nd hand 'natural world' book stall for you to purchase from / contribute your no-longer-required stock to, supplies of our club publications to buy (including our annual bird reports), a display of member photos and details on our upcoming events. We are happy to offer members' old birding equipment for sale at our events (or in our newsletter) with a contribution going to club funds.

NO BOOKING REQUIRED BUT…: It is always nice to know if you are coming to an evening talk but by no means essential so if it takes your fancy on the evening, please just turn up as we would love to see you! If you want the Zoom link though, you will need to let us know in advance!

ACCESSIBILITY: The hall is wheelchair accessible. The level car park at the hall is shingle but we can reserve a space next to the entrance if you need it.

PARKING: Access to the hall car park is off East Beckham Road, opposite the church. There is additional parking on the road along the side of the church itself and an overflow car park has kindly been offered to us by Gresham Village School. The school car park is located on Cromer Road to the left of the school as you face it and at the left-hand end of the row of houses – about a 300m walk from the hall. Please park considerately to allow maximum number of cars in the car parks and on the road but with enough space for passing traffic to be able to get through, including agricultural vehicles. We can send you a map of the locality on request.

Upcoming Events

In the coming weeks we have another **Felbrigg Park Double** offering a walk or a shorter and slower amble depending on your preference, a **Raptor Roost at Stubb Mill** and look out for any **Pop-Up Events**. Our **November Evening Talk** is our annual **Members' Night** of mini talks and save the date for the **Christmas Social & AGM**.

Felbrigg Park Monthly Walks

18th November
16th December
20th January

Come and join us on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and take your pick of a walk or an amble ....

Felbrigg Park Walk
9:00am to 11:00am | ≈ 2+ miles
A bit of a romp
with Trevor Williams

Felbrigg Park Amble
9:30am to 11:00am | ≈ 1 mile
Slow and steady
with Nick Kimber

A staggered start with us all meeting up in the café afterwards at 11am.

These events are sociable and cater for all levels of birding ability so come and give us a try. Our route is dependent on the local bird and other wildlife recently reported or likely to be present on the day. We normally see around 40 bird species on an average walk and even on the 'worst' of days more than 30.

NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET: Main Felbrigg Hall car park – free for National Trust members | **ACCESSIBILITY:** footbaths, grassland, a bit of mud usually and can be uneven in places | **FACILITIES:** Café and loos at the Hall | **CLUB BADGES:** In area so all appropriate individual records count.

Thursday 26th November | Members' Night

7.30pm to 9.30pm | GVH and via Zoom

4 club member speakers with 4 mini talks of about 20 mins each. Always a highlight of the talks season!

"Fieldwork to finished painting" *with Mark Boyd*
Mark will run through some of the thinking that accompanies his pencil and show how it relates to some of his finished work.

"A few Islands off Australia" *with David Harper*
Australia's mainland is surrounded by hundreds of smaller islands and David's talk hops between them, showing their unique wildlife

"Researching in the fjords - what could possibly go wrong?" *with Tim Turner*
Tim's summary of his 18 day research trip to Porsanger fjord, Northern Norway, during May this year

"An introduction to birding on Arran" *with Trevor Williams*
Trevor will share his recent discovery of the wonderful and varied birdlife of this beautiful yet accessible Scottish island.

NENBC Talk zoom

Hickling Broad and Stubb Mill Raptor Roost

Sunday 22nd November | (noon) 1.00 pm - 5.00 pm
Walk Leader: Andy Clarke and Trevor Williams

NWT's Hickling Broad and Marshes is one of Norfolk's most iconic birdwatching sites and part of the wider Broadland landscape. Late November is an exciting time here with abundant wildfowl to be enjoyed in their winter finery and an orchestra of geese and cranes overhead. The main event will be a walk to Stubb Mill where we will scan for harriers, owls, maybe merlin and cranes coming into the roost site. For anyone interested, Andy will be at the car park from noon, for a walk to the viewing mound, from where it is possible to scan the reedbeds and marsh, before returning to the car park for the start of the walk to Stubb Mill.

PARK & MEET: *NWT Hickling Broad car park, Stubb Road, Hickling. Free car park and entry for NWT members, others £5.* **NR12 0BW (village & follow signs) | TG 427221 | X642769, Y322114 | diverged.oldest.pounds**

DISTANCE: approx 4 miles

ACCESSIBILITY: The walk is on grassy or hard tracks which may be wet, muddy and slippery. Standing at the raptor roost site can be very cold, so wear appropriate warm and waterproof clothing, and walking boots or wellington boots. We will be walking back to the car park in the dark, so please bring a torch.

FACILITIES: The visitor centre, shop, café/refreshments and toilets are open between 10am-4pm. Please note they will be closed by the time we return to the car park.

Christmas Social and AGM





Come and join us for a lovely sociable evening in the lead up to Christmas!

Thursday 10th December
7:30pm to 10:00pm
Gresham Village Hall

If you haven't already, get the date in your diaries!

The Annual General Meeting element will additionally be available online via Zoom but the rest of the evening will be hall-based.

We'll get the business side of things sorted first as we start the evening off with our AGM, a chance to vote on various aspects of the club and to listen to a Review of 2026 with Chair John Swallow.

THOSE WHO ATTEND AT THE HALL IN PERSON can later enjoy the fun of our CHRISTAMS SOCIAL EVENT which will consist of a light-hearted QUIZ from last year's winning team Mark, Chris T, Seán and Chris M along with a HOT AND COLD BUFFET AND DRINKS. We will have team tables spread out in the large hall, there will be prizes available and party hats and attire are very much encouraged throughout.

We will need ADVANCE BOOKING for both the hall and the Zoom bit nearer the time.

Last Month's Evening Talk
"Wildlife of the Danube Delta" *with Val & Mick Walker*

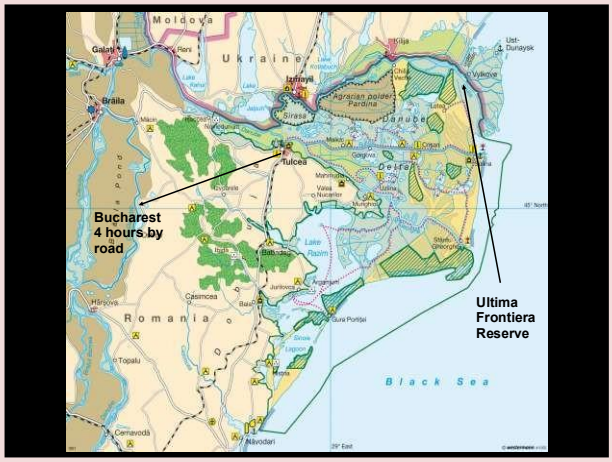
zoom

NENBC Talk

By Alan Stevens

Those at the club's October indoor meeting were delivered a treat. Members Val and Mick stepped up to give a presentation around their visit to the Danube Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Europe's largest remaining natural delta. They based their visit around their fantastic photography, which proved to be a visual extravaganza. With the proximity to the current war in Ukraine, access since their trip has sadly but understandably been curtailed.

Val got things underway by giving some detail about the delta and its location before turning to the area they visited, the Ultima Frontiera Reserve extending to around 750 hectares and part of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. Travelling mainly for birds their interest in nature generally also drew them towards the other wildlife found there.



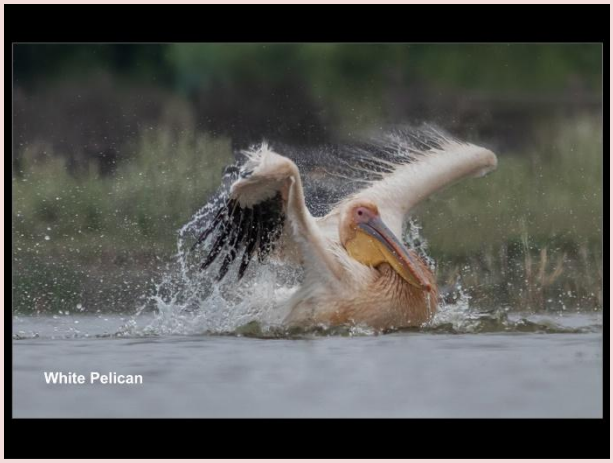
Getting there from the UK involved first the flight (you could drive if you have the time), then a 4-hour road trip and finally a 2- hour boat journey along the Danube to the reserve which was operated with an emphasis on photographers and wildlife enthusiasts.



The reserve was a labyrinth of waterways and off the Danube Channel lie a myriad of shallow channels and lakes. It was very well prepared for visitors with electric buggies available to visit differing locations and habitats and many areas were specifically prepared for target species with photographic opportunities enhanced from thoughtfully adapted hides. Some, for example were floating and facilitated getting closer to birds while others had low level openings allowing photographers to get right down to water level.



The scene was set and so to the birds! Many of the clear water lakes enjoy an abundance of floating vegetation and the first image was of a pair of Common Tern chicks on their floating nest, a charming start. Aside from their photography, Val and Mick take a keen interest in observing birds and their behaviour and here they noted that some chicks were well developed while others were still being incubated. Fledged juveniles, we learnt, are fed at the nest for around 5 days and then join adults fishing. Some of the best shots of birds can be taken when they are hovering or coming into land, and this was well illustrated by further images of the birds and others of Whiskered Terns. There followed great low-level shots of other birds inhabiting these areas, Squacco Heron, Great-crested and Black-necked Grebes and Black-crowned Night Heron (including a juvenile). Then Purple Herons, which out-number Grey Herons in the region, and Little and Great Egrets before looking at White Pelicans. Common to the area, they can be found over a wide area and differing bodies of water, usually in small flocks of up to around 20 or larger when fishing in groups. While running through a list



of birds like this it is important to keep in mind that what made this talk far more than just a list was the speaker's photography. One of those talks where you really had to be there.

The flow of images continued with a mix of birds familiar to us in the UK and some less so, Pygmy Cormorants, Little Crakes, White Stork, Glossy Ibis and Spoonbill which are admittedly becoming more regularly featured in our own birding. A series of images focused on Black-tailed Godwit courtship. Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover and Wood Sandpiper, wader species more familiar to us, and these were interspersed with passerines including Nightingale, White Wagtail and Lesser Whitethroat all capped off with classic Kingfisher shots.

Before the break for refreshments and time to peruse the bookshop (*for those reading here the last chance to stock up on Christmas books will be at the November meeting!)* a short segue into insects revealed Scarce and Blue-tailed Damselfly, and Common and Short-tailed Butterflies in amazing detail

Back in our seats Mick took over the commentary with a photograph of a steppe landscape and shifted the emphasis away from water to a different habitat kicking off with Red-Footed Falcon showing clearly the difference between the sexes and revealing shots of breeding with images of fledglings both in and away from the nest. Amongst these pictures were several of the great 'in-flight' shots which popped up throughout the talk and were a stand-out feature. As we all know, birds on the wing present very different challenges, and opportunities compared with them perching motionless on a branch!

An interesting look at the Collared Pratincole came next. This attractive species, a classic bird of the steppes nesting in low growing grasses such as salicornia or samphire. Low down shots (achieved by laying down!) gave an interesting perspective and permitted a close approach without disturbing the birds. Interestingly this species hunts insects in the air to supplement their ground feeding.

Val and Mick had little opportunity to photograph mammals on their trip but did manage to 'bag' a Wild Boar family and some beautiful shots of Golden Jackal, larger than our Red Fox, smaller than a Jackal, which it is understood are spreading their range across Europe having reached Austria, Hungary and Germany aided by climate change and their omnivorous and opportunistic feeding habits.

Back to the birds again we were treated to some fantastic images of European Rollers, one of the continent's most colourful birds. Pictured perching and in flight their plumage was shown to best advantage while we were told something of their diet with a picture of one with a frog it had caught which was quickly followed by a Smooth Newt, and their breeding behaviour.

The flow of species carried on with, among others, Turtle Dove, Grey-headed Woodpecker, a bird with a huge European range from Norway to Turkey, a Little Owl family, Tree Sparrows, hard to get a shot of at home these days, and then attention turned to the European Bee-eater.











The Bee-eaters proved to be among Val and Micks top birds during this visit, representing excellent photographic opportunities both for their plumage and acrobatic behaviour with stunning images of them with insect prey and one of a bird on the point of catching a dragonfly.

Hoopoe were shown with crest up, and crest down, and at a nest site, followed by birds of prey featuring Marsh Harrier and White-tailed Eagle. A Hooded Crow preceded gulls, both Caspian and Pallas's, with indemnification hints explained.

This roller-coaster evening drew to a close with a reprise of White Pelicans in feeding frenzy and then relaxed into a concluding sunset panorama over a lagoon.

Val and Mick gave us all a very enjoyable evening. At the outset they told us they are 'not birders in to graphs' but rather their behaviour and images and their talk was testament to the perseverance needed to get 'that shot' and all described with a quiet modesty.





In other news from the evening, **CONGRATULATIONS** to those presented with certificates and badges on the night - **Andrew Gorton** with his BRONZE Star Badge and both **Roger Unite** and **Thomas Wright** with their BLUE Badge for Seawatching. Well done all!









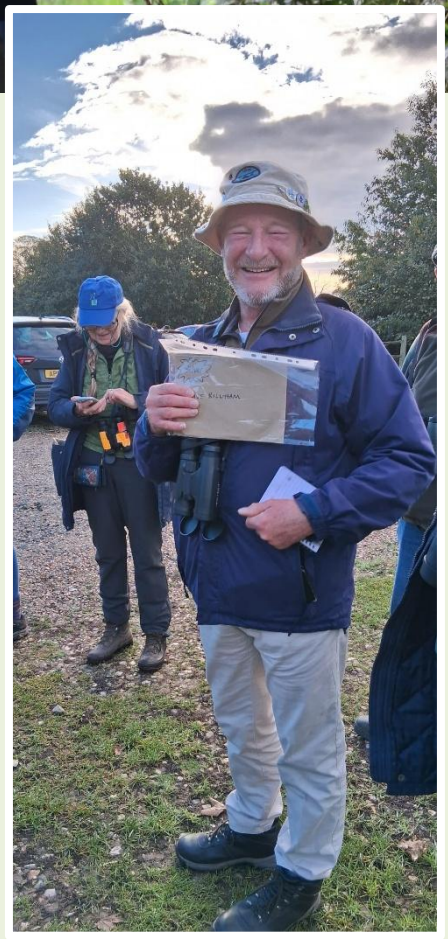




Last Month's Double Mid-Week Walk

Felbrigg Park | Wednesday 21st October





White, Silver and a Ten! | By Dave Billham

With Trevor still away in Arran, I had been asked if I could lead this walk. No problem there, but it did raise one issue; which way to go? The days before the walk had been wet and windy, but the morning of the walk was dry and calm; ideal conditions, I thought, to be 'out in the open'. Therefore, the route would be out to the eastern edge of the park, followed by a circuit round to the lake. Hopefully we would catch some woodland and farmland species, and there would be plenty of 'big sky' opportunities for raptor-spotting. That, anyway, was the plan.

Starting the list in the car park, we collected the usual corvids; **Rook**, **Jackdaw**, **Carrion Crow** and **Magpie**, and of course **Woodpigeon**. Three singing **Robin** were serenading us from the nearby trees, and a lone **Common Buzzard** was taking it easy in a nearby field. A rising volume of calls alerted us to a flock of 200-plus **Pink-footed Goose** approaching overhead in a series of v-shaped formations, soon followed by a further 80 or so. A smaller flock of 40-plus flew over us a little later, then we noticed an incoming flock of another 30 - but this time they were much lower down, and, apart from a couple of 'honks', silent. As they got nearer the sun was lighting up the white fronts to their faces – wow, **White-fronted Goose**!

(Checking on the club website, the only previous records of this species at Felbrigg were reports of a single bird on two consecutive days in March 2021 in with a small flock of Greylag, and a flock noted overhead on the day before this walk, so a really good sighting)!

With fourteen members ready to start, Carol surprised me by presenting me with my silver badge, awarded for 200 species noted in the club area. (Having got to 199 quite some time ago, I then had a very long spell of no additions to my list, before gaining two species in as many weeks, so it was gratefully received)!

With the formalities over we set off towards the far end of the car park to begin the walk, where a single **Collared Dove**, sat on a fence, was added to the list. Reaching the small copse of trees halfway to the park's eastern boundary, we saw a **Herring Gull** overhead, and heard the 'ticking' of a **Wren**. Much to our surprise, we disturbed two **Woodcock**, which had been hidden adjacent to the path. It was also pleasing to see large numbers of **Blackbird**, a complete contrast to the previous month's total of just one for the whole two hours.

Skirting the edge of the park, we had mature trees on one side of us and farmland on the other, topped off with sunshine and practically no wind at all. Numerous **Skylark** obviously found these conditions to their liking, and the still air was full of their song – it was as if we had re-wound six months back to spring once again – glorious. We took the opportunity to stand awhile and just soak it all in. **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit** and **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were all heard and seen, and we put up a third Woodcock from the hedgeline. As a **Black-headed Gull** drifted past in the distance, the calls of several **Pied Wagtail** got us looking around; they were initially spied on top of the hedge next to us, before they dropped into the adjacent field. Here there were also **Starling**, along with **Meadow Pipit**, their calls drawing our attention just as did the wagtails.

I realised at this point that those at the rear of our group, along with Carol, had gone through an entrance in the hedge to observe the field on the other side. As we waited for them to reappear we were entertained by a flock of **Goldfinch**. When Carol et al came back out onto the track, she told me that they had seen **Pheasant**, a **Mistle Thrush** and a **Sparrowhawk** – we should all have gone in there! As soon as we started walking again we put up a fourth Woodcock; perhaps there had been an 'arrival' the night before? One of the group came up to tell me that there had been **Long-tailed Tit** in the woods earlier; a good spot. Turning from the track onto the Weavers Way, we did not pick up any new species, but we did enjoy the sunshine! Eventually we came upon two male **Chaffinch**, calling constantly whilst sharing a tree with a large flock of tits. This was followed by a flock of **Greenfinch**, a smashing sight.

Up until this point the group had been hanging together well, and become fairly fluid as we walked and talked. Perhaps too fluid, or maybe I was just being derelict in my duty as leader, because I became aware that Carol was now well out in front, and I was right at the back! Never mind, the lake was now in sight - as was the group on the later, slower walk. We stopped on the dam wall to chat with them, and exchange sightings. They told us that there was a large flock of **Siskin** in the Alders at the end of the dam wall, which indeed there was; our first recording of this species on a walk this year. Just as we were getting ready to go our separate ways, Carol thrust an envelope into my hands and told me to present it to Nick as she took a photo. It was his ten year certificate, awarded for a decade of club membership – well done Nick!



On the lake we found **Mallard**, **Gadwall**, **Mute Swan**, **Moorhen** and a lone female **Tufted Duck**. In the usual trees were six **Cormorant**, with a further one on the water. From the reeds could be heard a squealing noise; **Water Rail**. We completed a slow circuit of the lake, collecting **Jay** on the way. Leaving the lake to head back to the house, we thought that we were probably not going to see much more; however, in the space of a couple of minutes we saw **Treecreeper** and heard **Nuthatch**, followed by a burst of loud, unmistakable song; a **Cetti's Warbler** – quite the trio! **Feral Pigeon** was the last addition to the notebook, whilst a final, mysteriously silent, goose flock turned out to be 'just' pink-feet.

All in all it was a cracking walk, with perfect, 'mummy bear' weather (not too hot, not too cold, not too windy, not too wet; just right!). Unfortunately I missed Nick at the café (I was too busy chatting and drinking coffee) so I cannot say if he was able to improve on the **42 species** we found in the two hours. Going back to the original plan for this walk, we did find woodland and farmland species, but despite many, many 'big sky' views, the hoped-for raptors had decided to stay at home – not even the usual kestrel. Ah well, that's birding! With two more walks left before the end of the year, why not come along and give it a go – you never can tell what will turn up.

Dry and Fresh and a Café result! | by Nick Kimber



An impromptu presentation on the dam wall saw Nick receive his 10 Year Anniversary Badge. Thanks Nick for all your support!

Considering the forecasts, the weather was thankfully dry but fresh as our small group of 6 met at 9:30 in the Felbrigg Park car park for our slower and shorter monthly walk. The usual **Jackdaws** and **Rooks** were abundant across the park and several **Robins** could be heard competing with their song. As we set off along the drive in front of the house a few **Black-headed Gulls** headed down towards the lake and a **Chaffinch** was picked up calling. **Carrion Crow** were also seen across the park as well as **Woodpigeon** and some mobile **Starlings**. Taking the short path down to the bench above the lake, a single **Redwing** was spotted, followed by some small groups heading over the shelter belt. Three **Mute Swans** remain on the lake, along with a growing number of **Gadwall** and **Mallard**. Eight **Cormorant** were seen the the usual roost across the lake and behind us two **Skylark** could be seen and heard on the warren. As we headed to the bridge across the end of the water meadow a single **Teal** flew across to the lake, which we saw again later on our return, and a solitary **Pheasant** was walking down the bank.
Little else was observed as we made our way around the lake other than a few **Blue Tit**, until we reached the dam, where fortunately looking directly up, a number of **Siskin** were found feeding on the small cones of the Alder. We counted around 18, but later when disturbed we could see it was a much larger flock of around 50 flying. Walking across the dam, a single female **Tufted Duck** was on the lake and Julia spotted a **Jay** and a **Blackbird** below the dam. Just as the other NENBC group arrived from the opposite direction, a **Water Rail** was heard calling from the lake reed bed. Making our way back along the top of the lake, a **Cettis Warbler** obliged with its song, and three **Mistle Thrush** flew across the park. We made our way back up to the house, beating the other group to the coffee shop by a good margin this month. No queue! In all **27 sightings**, a definite improvement on last month's poor result.

Last Month's Weekend Walk *with Janice Darch*

Winterton Dunes and Somerton Estate | Saturday 17th October



By Stella Baylis

With a brisk northerly air flow forecast, the weather was always likely to be discussed, and we decided 'some of everything' was the order of the day before setting off. Pausing to admire the 132*ft* high church tower at the Holy Trinity and All Saints church in Winterton (surely tall enough for Peregrine Falcons!) we soon came across a small mixed flock of passerines keeping low in tree and scrub cover on the allotments. **Goldfinches**, **Chaffinches**, **Blue, Great and Coal Tits** were ticked along with a smart male **Great Spotted Woodpecker** giving some dead wood a thorough inspection and a **Song Thrush** feasting on hawthorn berries. One tired looking **Redwing** also seen here.

The sky now looking ominous we quickly headed for a small area of woodland, grassland and scrub, partially surrounded by a moat (currently dried up). Used by the local community for quiet recreation and most importantly for us, providing a wooden open fronted shelter which proved timely as the heavens opened. Scanning the trees from the shelter a **Chiffchaff** called, and a possible but unconfirmed ***Pied Flycatcher*** was suggested.

Walking through the Somerton Estate, **Pheasants**, **Red-legged Partridges** and **Rooks** were unsurprisingly widespread on the arable farmland with one field attracting a single **Stock Dove** and a dozen **Pied Wagtails** which we checked through. A **Grey Heron** and a mixed gull flock stood disconsolately in the rain and as the sun emerged a few **Greylag Geese** passed by distantly.

As we dried out and warmed up, the birds did likewise. Soon our first **Buzzard** was seen and a **Red Kite** passed low overhead, the rich colours standing out against the now blue sky, closely followed by a male **Kestrel**, similarly resplendent in the sun.



A check of the woodland surrounding the fenced off evocative ruins of St Mary's Church (a local

‘Instagram-able’ attraction) produced **Jay** and calling **Goldcrest**. The landscape opened up as we left the shelter of the wooded areas and walked by grazing marsh intersected with drainage ditches. A **Marsh Harrier** flew by high, and a further one was seen lower down quartering the fields.

We soon came across a sizeable flock of **Pink-footed Geese**, Norfolk’s most iconic winter visitor. The first few small groups took off from a grassy field, giving their signature ‘wink wink’ call making our initial estimate of around 500 birds. Scanning the remaining birds in the tall grass and watching subsequent groups take off we upgraded the count to around 1,500-2,000 birds, with one group passing directly over our heads, against what was still a blue sky.

A little further on, after adding **Meadow Pipit**, **Mute Swan**, **Moorhen** and **Egyptian Goose** to our day list, a single **Golden Plover** flew over calling, picked up by a keen-eared club member. Testing our listening skills further in hope of a Yellow-browed Warbler in a likely looking damper patch of sycamore, willow and birch scrub, we ‘only’ added **Long-tailed Tits**.





Entering the northern area of Winterton Dunes, we headed through the north gap to the beach, where there was a bedraggled **Rock Pipit** finding some shelter against the sea wall and Grey Seals relishing the angry, churning grey North Sea. **Gannets** passed distantly offshore, with a few **Kittiwakes**, a single **Turnstone** hurrying by and several small flocks of **Common Scoter**. Most managed to see **Brent Geese** and **Red-throated Diver** and one of our group called **Arctic Skua**, **Short-eared Owl** and a single Bonxie (**Great Skua**). Alas, a squally sharp shower arrived, and visibility quickly vanished before more of us could see the owl or skuas.

That set the pattern for the rest of the morning, with short spells of intense rain against our backs for most of the walk south through the dunes. We added **Stonechat** in between showers, paused to look through a further tit flock and saw a stunning Fly Agaric *Amanita muscaria* (aka Fairy Toadstool).

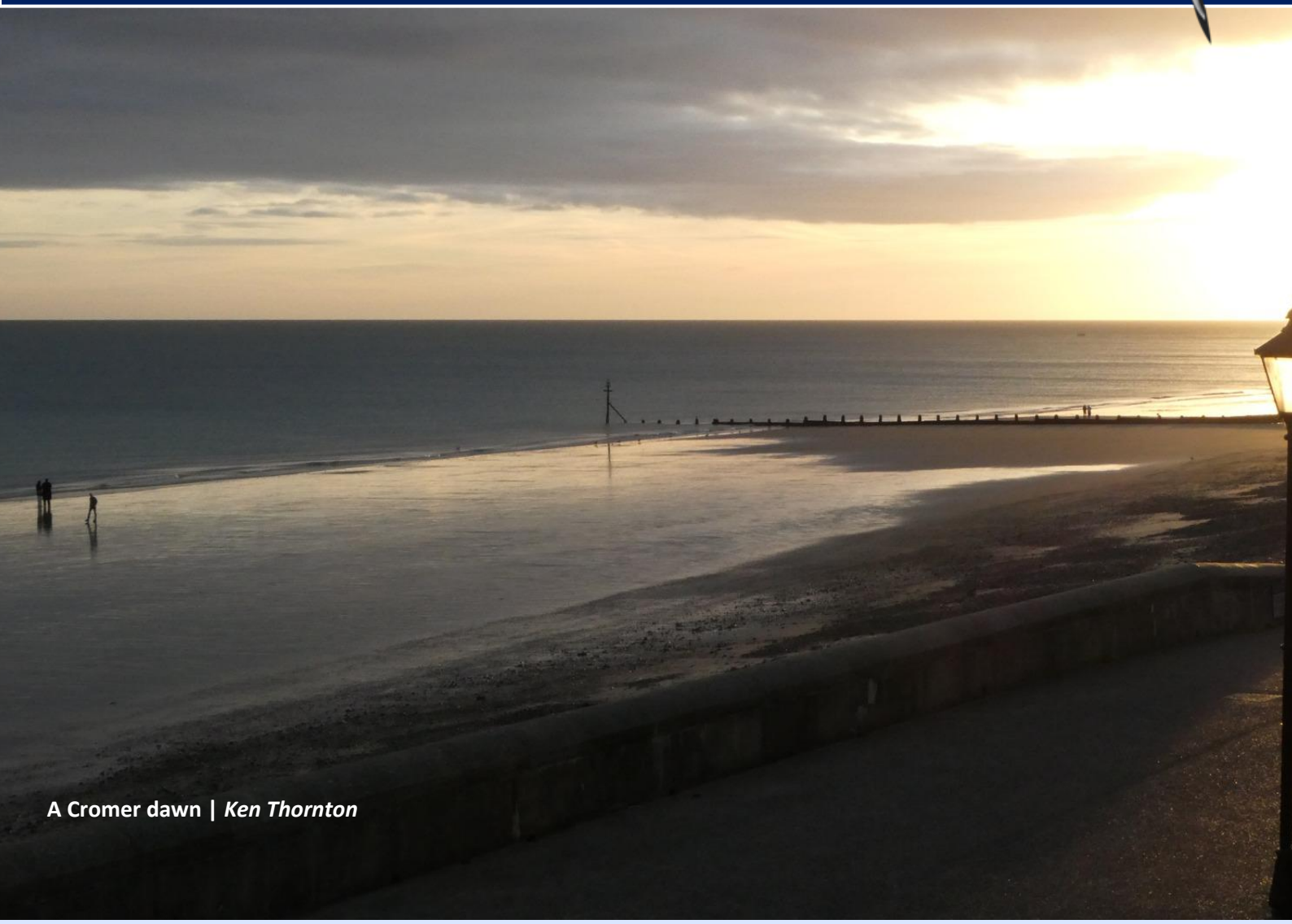
Predictably, back at the car park, the sun came out once again. We were right, it had proved to be a morning with ‘some of everything’: weather, variety of habitats and a good range of birds. With thanks to Janice Darch for leading and keeping us on the right path back through the rain-lashed dunes, the group list at the end totalled **60 species**.



Photos courtesy of Susan King (1, 3, 4, 6) and Stella Baylis (2, 5)

NENBC Coordinated Seawatch 2026

Saturday 3rd October



A Cromer dawn | *Ken Thornton*

For this annual event we had teams at 4 sites with good sea views, each led by an experienced seawatcher, to record the number and species of all the birds seen flying along the coast throughout a 3-hour time frame. As well as passing on our love of seawatching, by sharing our sightings across locations and noting timings, we can also calculate flight speed data. This event attracts beginners and experts alike so is always popular. Don't worry if you missed it this year and next autumn seems a long way off as we are now running **pop-up events** at short notice throughout the year where you can learn about the joys of seawatching and seabird ID from one of our able volunteers. We advertise these on the website when conditions are promising with about 48hrs notice or you can contact Carol on nenbc@aol.co.uk with your mobile number and we'll get you added to the NENBC Comms WhatsApp Group for event notifications.

So, here we are again! Autumn has rushed around once more and we were all very excited that perhaps this year our advance-booked date with suitable tides would bring the hoped for onshore winds. The day dawned and yet again we were foiled as we were greeted by light winds, a flat calm sea and even a bit of sunshine!

As usual, Sheringham drew the largest number of participants followed by Mundesley. A low count at Cromer was possibly due to the vandalism of the seawatching shelter putting folk off as we relocated to a lower view point. Really pleased to see that one club member joined Andy at the rather exposed site at Happisburgh this time – would be great to get him a crowd next year!

It was a productive morning overall, and the light passage meant that we could savour the passing birds rather than panicking to make sure they were all recorded and none were missed! But maybe we will have better luck with the weather next year…..!

Highlights were a **Great White Egret** seen by the excitable bunch at Cromer but outdone by the three seen by Team Sheringham. **Manx Shearwater** were reported at the outlying sites of Sheringham and Happisburgh but dipped by the middle 2 sites. Every site had good views of **Arctic Skua**, **Brent Geese**, **Wigeon**, **Teal**, **Common Scoter**, multi-aged **Gannets** and **Red-throated Divers**. Sheringham had the only **Egyptian and Pink-footed Geese**, Cromer had a **Caspian Gull**, Happisburgh a **Bar-tailed Godwit** with **Pintail** reported both there and at Mundesley.



Photos: Great White Egret (David Griffiths) and Red-throated Diver (Doug Cullern)

The NENBC coordinated seawatch often provides timed observations that we can use to estimate flight speeds. Our WhatsApp Seawatching Group allows folk to log a distinctive group or individual bird flying past them in real time and then others along the coast can subsequently keep an eye out and record them passing in real time too. This year there were six birds that allowed this, though none of them were recorded at more than two locations.



Species	Locations	Speed (km/h)
Brent Goose	Cromer/Sheringham	46
Brent Goose	Cromer/Sheringham	52
Brent Goose	Cromer/Sheringham	52
Manx Shearwater	Sheringham/Happisburgh	40
Arctic Skua	Sheringham/Cromer	52
Arctic Skua	Happisburgh/Mundesley	31

These are all typical speeds for the particular species. The two Arctic Skuas were travelling at very different speeds, and this is also quite usual; some skuas are on the move and fly powerfully through, others are more leisurely, often stopping to harass terns on the way.

The NENBC flight-speed database now has 804 observations from 90 species. Most of these are for seabirds or waterfowl, and we currently have two species with 100 or more observations (Brent Goose and Common Scoter).

All in all we had 38 species reported by observers across the 4 sites, not all passing seabirds, but all of interest on the day. Thanks everyone for coming - the brave newbies who came along to learn what it is all about for the first time (and who will hopefully come again!), the folk who enjoy coming every year but maybe don't out get much in between, those learning and improving with every outing and those who supported others with scope set ups, discussing seawatching techniques, pointing out birds (whether they knew what they were or not) or identifying what the tricky species were and why. A team effort!

Species	Sheringham	Cromer	Mundesley	Happisburgh
Brent Goose	*	*	*	*
Pink-footed Goose	*			
Egyptian Goose	*			
Wigeon	*	*	*	*
Pintail			*	*
Teal	*	*	*	*
Common Scoter	*	*	*	*
Rock Dove	*			
Oystercatcher	*	*		
Curlew	*		*	
Bar-tailed Godwit				*
Turnstone	*		*	
Black-headed Gull	*	*	*	*
Mediterranean Gull		*	*	*
Common Gull	*	*	*	
Great Black-backed Gull	*	*	*	*
Herring Gull	*	*	*	*
Caspian Gull		*		
Sandwich Tern	*	*	*	*

Species	Sheringham	Cromer	Mundesley	Happisburgh
Arctic Skua	*	*	*	*
Guillemot	*	*		
Razorbill	*		*	*
Red-throated Diver	*	*	*	*
Manx Shearwater	*			*
Gannet	*	*	*	*
Cormorant	*	*	*	*
Great White Egret	*	*		
Sparrowhawk				*
Carrion Crow	*			
Chiffchaff				*
Starling	*			
Robin	*			
Redstart				*
House Sparrow	*		*	
Grey Wagtail	*			*
Pied Wagtail	*			*
Meadow Pipit				*
Rock Pipit	*		*	*

Sheringham | *Andrew K, Ann G, Brian W, Dave B, David G, Delia C, Doug C, Jane H, Francis F, Kala N, Kevin H, Mike Mc Phil B, Sam G, Steve B, Thomas W, Val S* **|** The weather for the day was not entirely favourable for sea watching, I was not anticipating many sea birds to be seen, however nothing can be ruled out, and so it proved to be, although not great numbers, several species were seen on the day. A few species of ducks, gulls and waders did put in an appearance. Highlights were, Arctic Skua, Great White Egret (3) and a close in Manx Shearwater, this being a first in the club area for some of those watching. Thanks go to Jane, who upon arrival, promptly offered to keep the records for the day**. | Phil Borley |***Photos thanks to David Griffiths* **|**



For more on the Sheringham Coordinated Seawatch, see Val Stubbs' piece "My Blue Badge Challenge" on page 39.





Cromer | *Alan S, Carol T, Ken T, Trevor W* **|** Weather and location are vital factors when it comes to sea-watching - so it proved today. The Cromer contingent of the club's Coordinated sea-watch were treated to some late summer sunshine whilst we watched from our temporary viewing platform below the Red Lion Hotel - a necessary change of venue due to our regular shelter having been vandalised a few weeks ago and not yet repaired. The birding was steady at best with a few periods of little or no activity. Red-throated Diver and Gannet were evident most of the time - the majority heading east. Far out ribbons of auk moved close to the horizon with only a small percentage identifiable as Guillemot. Mixed groups of duck included Teal, Wigeon and Common Scoter were punctuated by the odd family party of Brent Geese heading west - a couple of groups being speed-checked further along the coast. Interest peaked with Sandwich Tern, Arctic Skua and a close-in Great Egret being harassed by a Herring Gull before negotiating the pier and continuing west. A colour-ringed Caspian Gull on the beach in front of us was a welcome bonus. The four of us enjoyed a pleasant three hours in the sun, watching the to-ing and fro-ing of locals and visitors along the busy esplanade, chatting to inquisitive passers-by and exchanging the odd birding anecdote. We certainly weren't rushed off our feet bird-wise but we did enjoy the stuff we saw and the birding banter. Can't think of a better way to spend an October Saturday morning. | **Trevor Williams |** *Photos thanks to Trevor |*







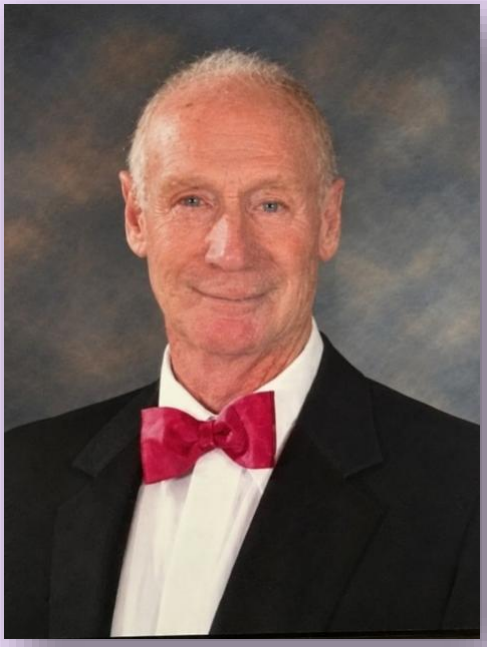
Mundesely | *Bob C, John H, Julian T, Stella B, Stephanie W, Toby B* **|** For any but the hardened sea-watcher the dawn would have heralded a perfect autumn day, with clear blue skies and a light southerly breeze. It was, perhaps, with an air of pessimism that we assembled at the shelter on Mundesley sea front but a few birds flying past in the minutes before the official start time of 07:30 raised hopes that there might at least be some passage of common species, and so it proved with a steady trickle of birds in both directions keeping our scribe Stephanie quite busy. As expected at this time of year wildfowl passage of birds returning to winter in Britain is almost all westerly and flocks of Wigeon, Teal, Common Scoter, Pintail and Brent Geese tracked past with distant mixed flocks always presenting a challenge to count the different species. Waders can be a feature of autumn sea-watches but a single Curlew was the sole representative of the group. Gannets and Red-throated Divers passed in good numbers, together with a scatter of Sandwich Terns, with most of these birds flying east and we all enjoyed watching the leisurely westerly passage of an Arctic Skua. Trains of distant auks were difficult to identify beyond 'Auk sp.', but there were several small parties of Razorbills close in on the sea, all of which had gangs of Mediterranean Gulls hovering over them – we couldn't decide if the gulls were trying to steal fish caught by the Razorbills, or just taking advantage of fish shoals located by the Razorbills. A 1st winter gull with a very clear black tail band and white tail, but lacking the white head of Caspian was recorded as a Yellow-legged Gull, hopefully correctly. All in all an enjoyable session, with the chance to chat and exchange news, and feast on the cake provided. **| Julian Thomas |** *Photo thanks to Julian* **|**

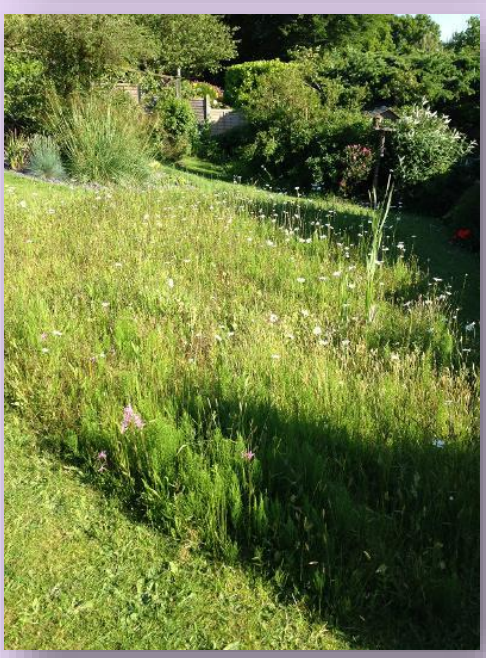


Happisburgh | *Andy C, Helen B* **|** I arrived at Happisburgh at 07:05 to find the community car-park still locked, but there was ample room in the parking area just outside the official car-park (which now has a new sign to say that you still need to pay!). The traditional sea-watching location at Happisburgh has now disappeared into the sea, so this year the watch-point was a grassy area above the ramp down to the beach and by the start of the cliff-top path to Cart Gap. As with last year, conditions were not auspicious, with a light southerly wind and a flat sea, but this did mean it was easy to pick out the auks and divers on the sea. For the early part of the sea-watch I was joined by club member Helen and we were able to ease ourselves into the rhythm of sea-watching with a light passage of Gannets and Red-throated Divers. Waterfowl were few and far between, with small numbers of Wigeon and Teal, and the occasional Brent Goose. The highlights were a single Manx Shearwater, which Helen was delighted to pick up, and (sadly after Helen had left) a fine Arctic Skua which came in from the north and then turned west, presumably being the bird seen shortly afterwards by Julian at Mundesley. By 10:00 passage had all but ceased, so I packed up and went to look for passerine migrants. These were also thin on the ground, but I did manage to find a Redstart in a coastal hedge. **| Andy Clarke |** *Photo thanks to Andy |*



Remembering Malcolm

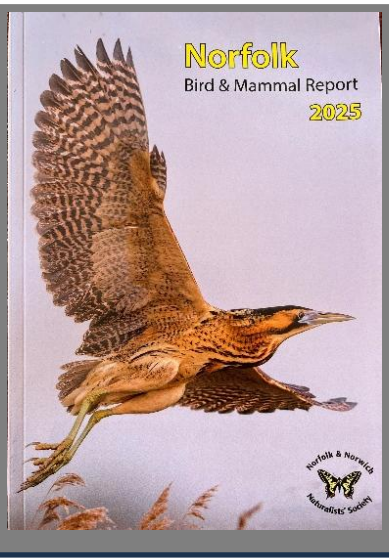




We have recently learnt of the untimely passing of one of our long term members, Malcolm Crane. Malcolm, along with his wife Liz, joined NENBC way back in 2016 and always enjoyed coming to our walks, talks and other events over the years and will be fondly missed. Back when we were in the claws of lockdowns, Malcolm and Liz wrote us a lovely positive piece for our 2020 Bird Report on their enjoyment of their Cromer garden in those restricted times...

"Garden meadow | The year 2020 was a good year to enjoy the garden. Being unable to get out and about as usual visiting NENBC sites with our fellow members on the lovely organised walks, we spent our days working in and enjoying our garden. The garden is a mixture of hedges, shrubs, trees, lawns, flower borders, vegetable plots and a pond. It might sound organised but it's not, we have wildlife areas a plenty, log piles, blackberry brambles stinging nettles and lots of weeds. A highlight in our gardening year is our "meadow". We like to say meadow as it sounds grand but in fact it's a piece of uncut lawn oval in shape measuring about 8m by 5m. We stopped cutting it about 15 years ago. In the first few years it was a beautiful grass meadow. Slowly over the years it has changed into a flower meadow. We have done nothing to it except plant daffodils bulbs which did not survive and get a scabious plant to grow from seed. The other flowering plants have arrived from somewhere by themselves. The first to appear was yellow rattle which soon restricted the grass growth and allowed dock, white clover, yarrow, ragged robin (self-seeded from the pond, does not do well as too dry) creeping buttercup, plantains, sheep's sorrel and many more. The first meadow highlight in April are the cowslips with the complete meadow covered with them in various densities. There is also one false oxlip courtesy of the occasional primrose. The second highlight comes in the form of marguerites which follow the fading cowslips. Now looking forward to this year's displays. Did not mention the birds! The garden is full of them well fed on sunflower seeds and homemade fall balls and all very clean as they love a bathe. We missed going out last year but had the garden to enjoy as we hope you did also."

Norfolk Bird Report 2025

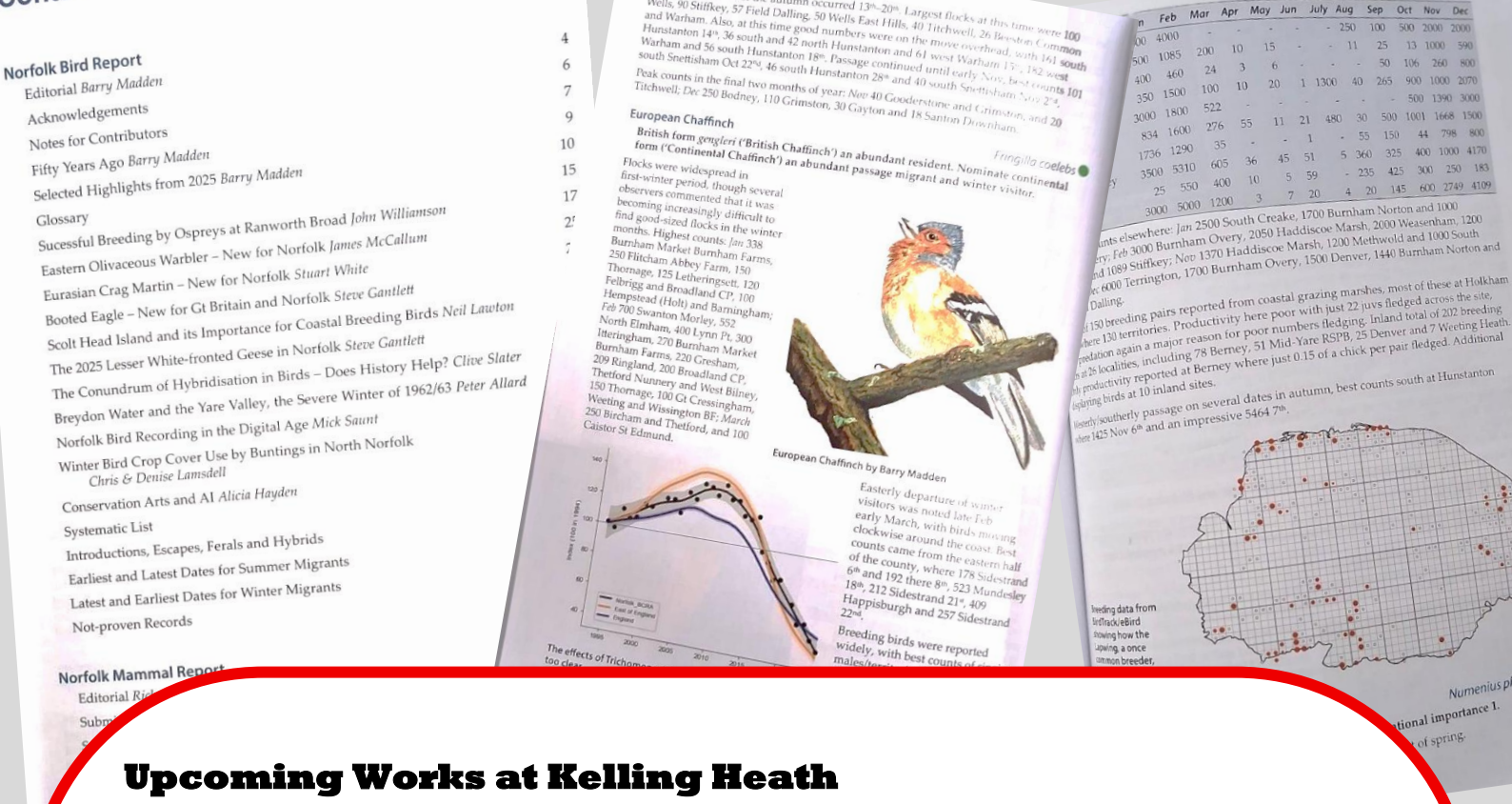


It's Out! The 2025 Norfolk Bird and Mammal Report is available now!

If this is not something you usually treat yourself to, then please do consider giving it a go this year. All our NENBC records which we submit to BirdTrack feed into this county report.

It has some very interesting articles in it, as per the Contents page shown overleaf and lots of records, photos, tables and breeding maps.

Copies available for purchase at NWT Cley, Wildsounds (01263 741100 – website currently misbehaving), other bookshops and direct from Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society



Upcoming Works at Kelling Heath

The Kelling Heath Trustees have been in touch to advise us of some works at the heath this winter:

"Kelling Heath is jointly managed by two bodies: Kelling Heath Trustees, which is a registered charity, and Salthouse Heath Management Group. Most of the area between the railway line and Kelling Heath Holiday Park is maintained by the Kelling Heath Trustees. In this part of the heath, we are privileged to have some rare breeding birds.

To avoid having any detrimental effect on these rare birds, we have been very careful with the management of this area. If we are to continue to preserve and improve this very rare lowland heath, and keep it suitable for breeding birds, we do need to remove areas of out-of-control gorse and scrub. This will create bare patches of ground and allow heather regeneration. Without this work, the area will revert to trees and scrub and will no longer be lowland heath.

We have had advice from a local conservationist and have identified three areas that require attention. In order to keep disturbance to a minimum, we will be working on one section per year. This winter, we will be removing a smallish area of gorse and young silver birch and will create a scrape. This will hopefully allow heather regeneration." *Philip Randell |Chairman, Kelling Heath Trustees*



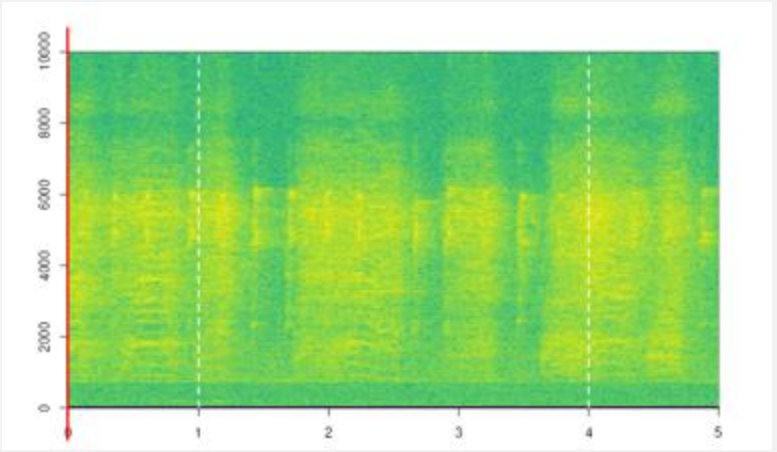
The proposed work area showing the 50m long area of European Gorse and trees to be removed. On the very edge of the photo is an area of Western Gorse which will remain, and is the limit of the planned work.

Help improve AI Bird Identification!

By Andy Clarke

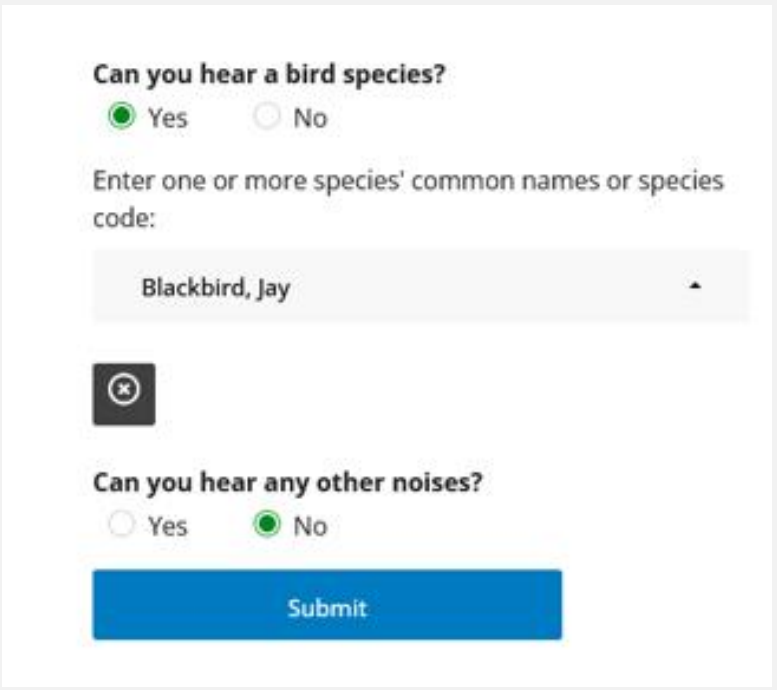
AI has transformed the face of birding. Resources such as BirdNET (Cornell University) and Chirpity have greatly speeded up the identification of bird vocalisations, and the popular 'Merlin' smartphone App has brought the joys of birding to many new people. However all of these AI systems have their weaknesses, being unable to correctly identify some calls. 'Merlin', for example, has a real problem distinguishing the contact calls of Chiffchaff, Redstart and Chaffinch, and often identifies Pied Flycatcher when none are present.

The key to improving these AI tools is to increase the library of correctly identified calls on which they are trained. To help with this, a PhD project at UEA is looking at how to improve the ability of AI to identify calls or songs when there is background noise from humans or weather. The student, **William Gough, is looking for volunteers** to help with this by listening to short clips and reporting whether they can hear any bird calls or songs.

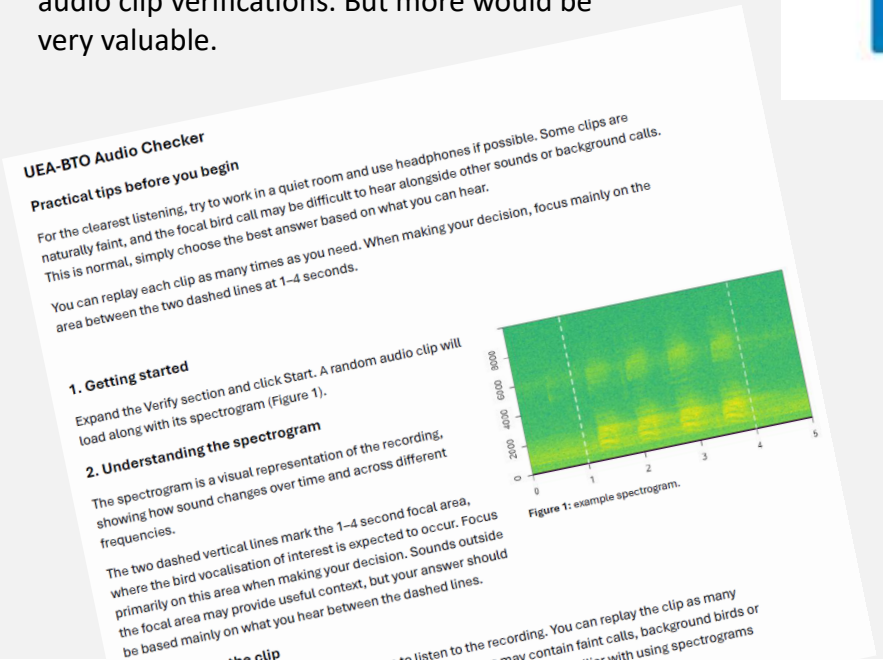


The procedure is very simple. After registering with the project (all you need is your email as user name, and a password), you listen to a short (5 seconds) clip of sound, concentrating on the middle three seconds. You are presented with a spectrogram of the clip, which is helpful, but it is the sound that is important.

There are then two simple questions to answer: **can you hear a bird, and can you hear any background noise?** If the answer is yes to either of these, you are then asked to say what the bird is, and also what the background noise is (and 'unknown' is allowed as the answer to both!). It is important to emphasise that the birds in the clips are all common UK species with familiar calls and songs, so you don't need to be an expert birder to make a genuine contribution. The project is a test of the AI, not a test of the volunteer!



Each sound clip takes about 1 minute, and William is hoping that each volunteer will do about 100 clips. So far at least three club members have become involved. Since the project launched in late September, 215 volunteers have signed up and completed over 11,000 audio clip verifications. But more would be very valuable.


UEA-BTO Audio Checker

Practical tips before you begin

For the clearest listening, try to work in a quiet room and use headphones if possible. Some clips are naturally faint, and the focal bird call may be difficult to hear alongside other sounds or background calls. This is normal, simply choose the best answer based on what you can hear.

You can replay each clip as many times as you need. When making your decision, focus mainly on the area between the two dashed lines at 1–4 seconds.

1. Getting started

Expand the Verify section and click Start. A random audio clip will load along with its spectrogram (Figure 1).

2. Understanding the spectrogram

The spectrogram is a visual representation of the recording, showing how sound changes over time and across different frequencies.

The two dashed vertical lines mark the 1–4 second focal area, where the bird vocalisation of interest is expected to occur. Focus primarily on this area when making your decision. Sounds outside the focal area may provide useful context, but your answer should be based mainly on what you hear between the dashed lines.

Figure 1: example spectrogram.

to listen to the recording. You can replay the clip as many may contain faint calls, background birds or with using spectrograms

If you would like to help out, then simply go to:

https://audiochecker.uea.ac.uk/

From here you can register and immediately start.

The web-site has clear, simple instructions and there are also more detailed (but equally clear and simple) instructions that can be downloaded as a PDF (as left). Have fun!

A Cracker of a Nutcracker














Photos: Derek & Dianne Hazell, Ollie Allison, Mick Rebane, Andy Clarke, Alan Stevens, John Hayward, Stu Buck, David Griffiths, Steven Lines, Francis Farrow, David Barrass, Trevor Williams

Fundraising



"As an avid twitcher, I am all for supporting local communities and after arriving on site, I spoke to John Hurst a local resident who was keen to help the local community raise money. John also does his fair share of fundraising as an ecology committee member of Mun Beck residents group who own and manage the meadows by the river Mun where the bird was frequenting today. John was out collecting donations for the **Mundesley Inshore Lifeboat** charity which is solely independent run and not part of any other charity like RNLI. It is fully funded by donations and runs with volunteers based in the village, so I thought it would be great to set-up this just giving page to help the local community raise money for this cause. After this beautiful village has rewarded us with the amazing Nutcracker, I felt it was necessary to help give something back to them. Thanks." | Wayne Glossop

Glad to be able to support such a good cause after seeing the Nutcracker yesterday.

Splendid Nutcracker views - thank you for welcoming us to your lovely village 😊

Great cause for a cracking bird

Thank you for being so understanding !

Thanks to you and the patience of the local people

Thank you to the people of Mundesley for putting up with us "Nutters".

Great for birdwatching to support the local community

Twitched Nutcracker from S Wales with Rob Jones & Lukas Le Grice. Met loads of locals that happy to hear about the bird & pleased to see birders enjoying village. Stunning bird - Thank you Mundesley!

We were very happy to see the Nutcracker with no local animosity

Great cause (and a great bird).

Absolutely cracking bird that I was privileged enough to see twice. Thank you to the community of Mundesley for putting up with us imposing on your small town! This literally was a dream come true

Nice to give something back for such a great experience.

Thanks to the people of Mundesley for putting up with our invasion with good grace, and thanks for this chance to give something back. Wonderful to see local children enjoying the bird as much as us!

Thanks to everyone in the village for putting up with us all!

Good to get these collections going for twitches - well done.

Thanks for sorting the donations & an excellent idea to pass the money to the local RNLI 👏

Huge thanks to the birding folk who helped us to see this gorgeous bird and huge thanks to the patient residents of Mundesley. All power to the wonderful RNLI!

Great bird, and thanks to the people of Mundesley for putting up with the disruption.

Thank you to the village of Mundesley for sharing their beautiful Nutcracker, what a bird! Wonderful to take my kids there and enjoy great views alongside lots of friendly and excited birders!!

Thank You to the residents for their understanding. What a bird.

Thanks to the local residents

Thanks to the finder for getting news out and to the local residents for putting up with us.

A big thank you to the residents who have put up with all the birders who came to see this wonderful bird. I hope the birders will donate to this very worthwhile cause.



1 x Nutcracker
Slender-billed Nutcracker seen in trees along Trunch Road. Amazing sight and hopefully will be around and enjoyed by many?

1 x Nutcracker
As with many, cracking views of this 'cracker.

1 x Nutcracker
Still showing very well by the bridge on our conservation meadows by Water Lane. Fifty visiting birders including one from Unst and four from Sweden (who don't regularly get slender billed nutcracker!)

1 x Nutcracker
Return visit for this superb bird. Faint pale streaking on crown and white tips to greater coverts suggest a first-winter bird. Mobile around gardens and paddocks off Water Lane.



1 x Nutcracker
Seen on and off between 1545 and 1615 foraging in paddocks by Water Lane and in trees. Last seen flying towards trees near summerhouse. This was a species that in the 1968 invasion numbered 104 individual sightings between August and October and occurred in 58 Norfolk localities and as a teenager I missed seeing any!

1 x Nutcracker
Nutcracker present for second day about half a mile from where it was being observed yesterday. Was feeding at western end of open area north of water lane. Very good views on ground at first and then mainly in pine, ash and beech trees and also on garden fence and roof of house. Encroaching watchers meant the ground it was feeding on became unavailable to it which may have contributed to it flying to eastern end of the open area.



1 x Nutcracker
Water Lane by Mundesley Beck Conservation Area. Very mobile. First seen feeding in Ash before flying into neghbouring garden where it foraged on the ground for a few minutes. It then flew into a Pine to feed and then flew onot a roof to have a drink from a gutter and show off a bit before flying off.

1 x Nutcracker
Missed it yesterday so happy to get some good views and photos

1 x Nutcracker
No words!

1 x Nutcracker
On my garage roof and now back by the river mun off water Lane . Donations for the Mundesley inshore lifeboat station being collected. A humbling and wonderful response.The 'Just Giving ' page set up for the designated charity met it's target this evening . Brilliant, thanks to everyone.

We managed to catch the only ferry to leave Arran in the weather window between Storm Austen and Storm Boelo – the long journey home being punctuated with increasingly frantic reports of a Nutcracker in Mundesley. The only one I'd seen previously in the UK was in Staffordshire, back in October 1991. However, the welcome news this morning was that the bird was still present, though not in its original location, and showing well – in a small park off Water Lane. On arrival we headed for the crowd and there it was, giving close views as it fed in a pine tree, drank from a nearby garage gutter and dropping to the ground occasionally. A real crowd pleaser – a Norfolk 'tick' for me and a UK lifer for Jane. A real 'welcome home' present.



Artwork by club member Mark Boyd (main image) and local birder Gary Wright from his BlueSky account @garywright62.bsky.social

Here are some Nutcracker links for you to check out ....

- From the RSPB, Influx of Nutcrackers a sweet treat for birdwatchers!, including some top ID tips
- The BTO Bird Facts pages for Nutcracker facts and figures
- The Xeno-Canto site to hear the Nutcracker call
- The @RareBirdAlertUK birding round-up 23 - 29 Oct for a bit of background on Nutcrackers and some further info on the Mundesley bird.

The Upcoming BTO Bird Atlas 2027 to 2031

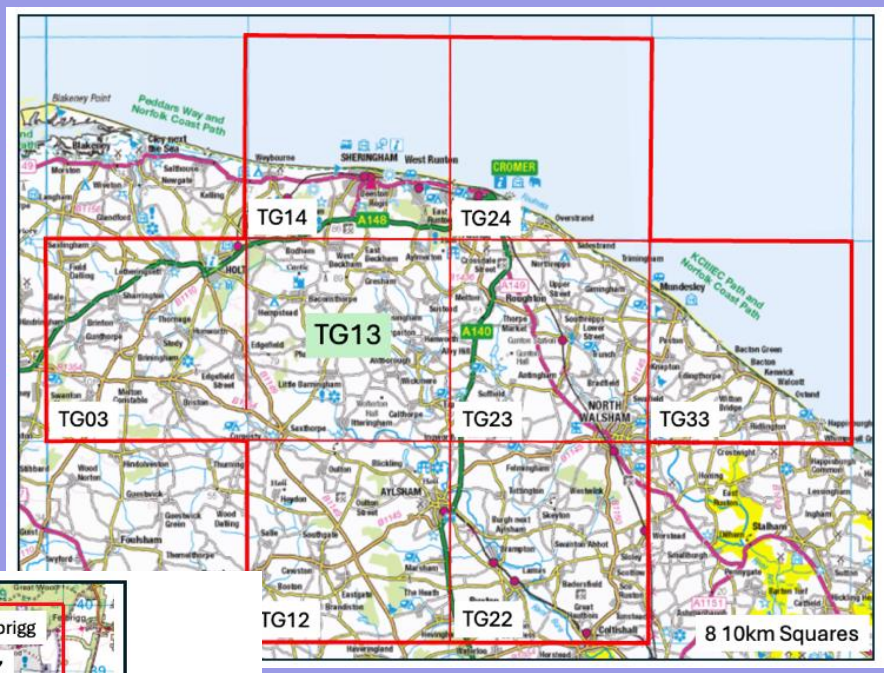
Bird Atlas

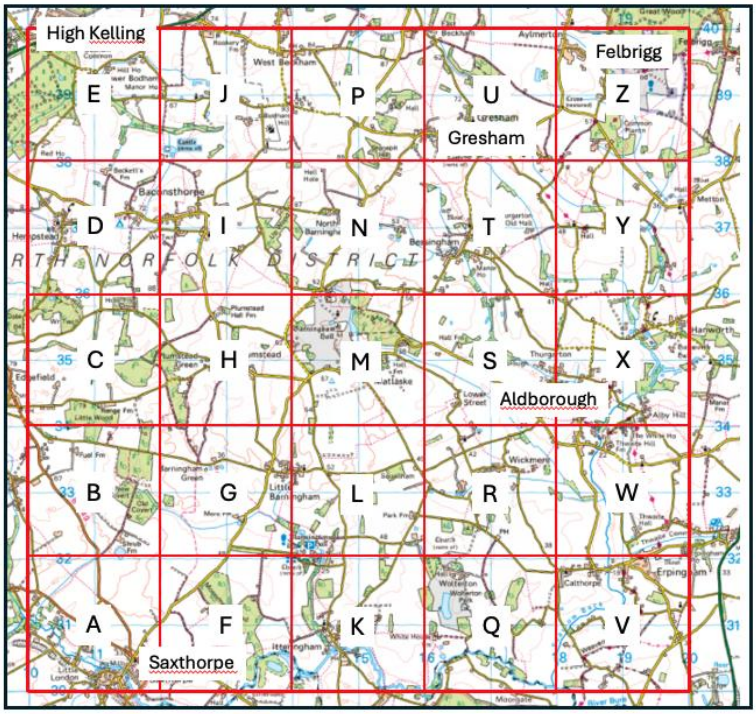
By John Swallow

This is a short note to explain the way that BTO will collect information for next Bird Atlas which commences November 2027.

We are familiar with the NENBC recording area (right) which is based on the Ordnance Survey map grid, specifically eight 10km squares. They are named based on the OS grid, each 100km grid has a couple of letters, in our area it is TG. The **10km grid** is then defined by these letters and the easting and northing 10km interval.

I have highlighted **TG13**.





25 Tetrads Per 10k square

TG13

Rather like a picture has pixels, a bird atlas is based on data points at regular intervals so for the National Atlas has chosen to display information for each 10km square. However, to ensure that each square has representative data we "drill down" into a finer grid of 2 x 2km squares called **Tetrads**.

Left is a plot of TG13 again this time zoomed in to show the 25 Tetrads. As you can see they are labelled A to Z (no O).

BTO require that 8 Tetrads are surveyed in each 10km square to consider the survey as completed.

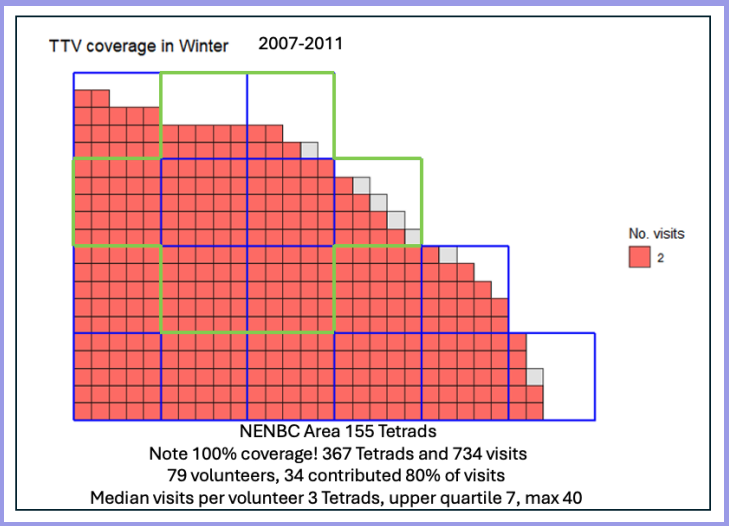
The Atlas will survey both winter and summer (breeding) distribution and to allow species density to be estimated Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs) are made. The Atlas period is 2027 to 2031.

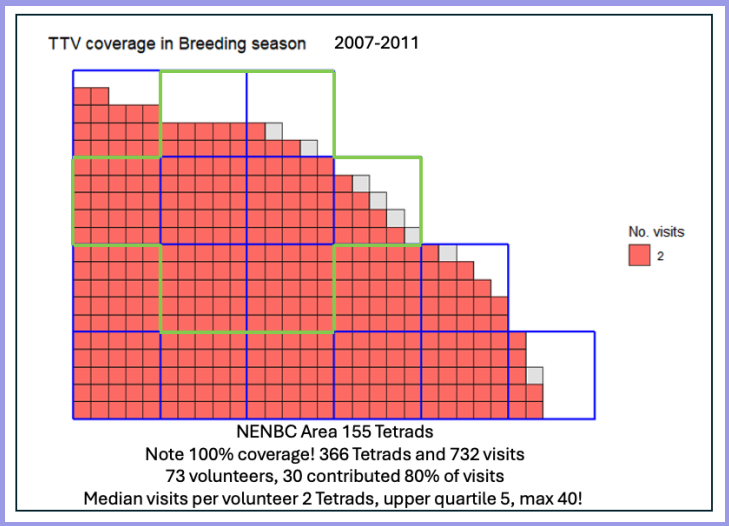
Winter Tetrad visits: two visits Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb of 1 or 2 hours noting all birds present.

Summer Tetrad visits: two visits April/May and Jun/July of 1 to 2 hours noting all adults present and three categories of breeding evidence (Possible Probable Proven, more later on this).

Observations are "topped up" by Roving Records, BirdTrack, Rare Breeding Birds Panel, Rare Bird Services, RSPB etc. These extra records are especially important to confirm the highest level of breeding evidence, which naturally often takes more time than a 1 or 2 hour visit to obtain, for as many species as possible in each Tetrad.

This all sounds rather daunting, however, if we look at the coverage obtained during the last Atlas the minimum of 8 Tetrads was easily exceeded, indeed all Tetrads were surveyed! This is sufficient to provide data for a Local Atlas and BTO will support Clubs attempting a Local Atlas for 2 to 3 years after 2031.





More information will be provided on survey techniques and the definition of breeding evidence in future notes in our Monthly Newsletter.

The Blue Badge Challenge | Episode 7

Strength in Numbers!

By Val Stubbs

On **Saturday October 3rd** it was time for the Club's annual coordinated sea-watch, and I opted to go to my nearest location: Sheringham. As instructed, most people arrived promptly for a 7.15 am briefing, during which our leader Phil Borley introduced newcomers to some of the terminology used in sea-watching, and pointed out markers that help to describe where the birds are, including the Sheringham Shoal windfarm and its two 'pineapples', as well as the line of marker buoys. By 7.30 the prom in front of the Tank was bristling with telescopes and we were ready for the off - nothing would escape us. Fortuitously, I had positioned myself towards the right-hand end, and many of the more interesting birds were flying east.

The morning was started off by a very obliging **Red-throated Diver** that was swimming about on the sea right below the Tank, so that we were able to see its webbed feet and watch it under the water as it looked for food. Others were seen flying out at sea, mostly heading east. Many juvenile **Gannet** were also going east, and a few adults too. A number of groups of **Common Scoter** were flying west in flocks ranging from 3-20, with a single group of five heading east. A single **Oystercatcher** flew east along the shoreline. Then there was a shout of "**Manx**, east", and much leaning over the parapet. With the aid of all the onlookers to the left of me I was

My Species List	Points	Number of Sessions Seen	My Sightings					
			Session 5	Session 6	Session 7	Session 8	Session 9	Session 10
Arctic Skua	15	2		3				1
Bar-tailed Godwit	15	1			1			
Black-headed Gull	10	6	1		7		20	*
Brent Goose	10	2						13
Common Gull	15	1						
Common Scoter	10	9	7	50	37	5	4	38
Cormorant	10	9	3	4	4	2	3	6
Curlew	15	3			2		1	1
Dunlin	15	1		5				
Egyptian Goose	15	1						2
Eider	15	1						
Fulmar	15	7	1	1	3			
Gadwall	15	1						
Gannet	10	9	1	31	26	31	22	27
Great Black-backed Gull	10	7			2	1	60	*
Great Crested Grebe	15	1						
Great Egret	15	1						3
Grey Heron	15	1			1			
Greylag	15	2	5					
Guillemot	15	2						
Herring Gull	10	10	15	2	20	11	100	*
Kittiwake	15	3				1		
Knot	15	1		4				
Lesser Black-backed Gull	15	1		2				
Little Egret	15	1	1					
Little Tern	15	1	9					
Manx Shearwater	15	1						1
Mediterranean Gull	15	3		1				
Oystercatcher	10	5	1	5	2			1
Razorbill	15	1						1
Red-throated Diver	15	6					5	10
Redshank	15	1			6			
Sandwich Tern	10	7	18	8	21	8		2
Shelduck	15	2						
Spoonbill	15	1	1					
Teal	10	5		8	16	11	5	26
Tufted Duck	15	1	1					
Turnstone	10	1						40
Whimbrel	15	2			3		2	
Wigeon	15	1						31

Note: * not counted

finally able to pick up on the bird, true to form shearing above the sea, quite close in – an NENBC first for me. A **Cormorant** flew west, and later four more glided high in the sky, and another going in the opposite direction. A lone **Wigeon** flew west, and later another 10 hove into view, followed by a group of 20 that ditched onto the sea. Looking out to sea, we almost missed a pair of **Egyptian Geese** flying high to the east. A number of small groups of **Brent Geese** were all going west. To add to all the activity out in the distance, closer to there was an immature **Razorbill** fishing at the end of the rock groyne. Someone spotted three large white birds, way out but flying in towards us. It soon became obvious that they were egrets and as we watched them approach it became evident that they were **Great White Egrets**. Before they reached land, they turned west and headed off into the distance. 40 mobile **Turnstones** were darting about on the beach, rocks and prom, driven in by the rising tide. Two **Sandwich Terns** powered through with their distinctive flight. An **Arctic Skua** flew eastwards close in, and once again the watchers on my right were able to give instructions to enable me to get onto it with my telescope – a beautiful dark morph bird. Six **Teal** flew west followed by another 20 very distant ducks which I am assured were also Teal. Final bird of the morning was a **Curlew** making its way westward.

I wasn't able to stay for the full three hours, but thoroughly enjoyed my two-hour session, and added **Egyptian Goose**, **Great White Egret**, **Manx Shearwater**, **Razorbill**, **Turnstone** and **Wigeon** to my species list, though in all the excitement I forgot to keep a record of gull numbers.

I am now within touching distance of my Blue Badge.

My Current Points Tally .....

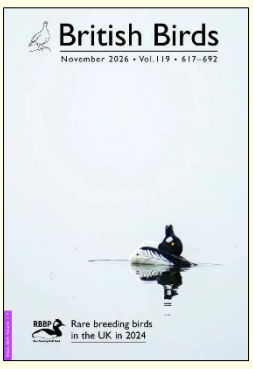
Duration Points	340
Event Bonus Points	100
First Time Species Points	545
TOTAL	985



Great White Egret | Mark Clements | Library photo

Contemplating Conservation

2024 Report of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



"The 2024 report of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) was published in British Birds in November 2026 (Eaton et al. 2026; British Birds 119: 621–687) and can be obtained by subscription at www.britishbirds.co.uk; a pdf of the report will be available at www.rbbp.org.uk in due course.

This is the 51st report published by the RBBP – we have now reported on 52 breeding seasons (with one report covering two years, 2003 and 2004).

The 2024 report documents the status of the 103 species and subspecies of rare and scarce native birds that were recorded breeding, or showing signs of breeding, in the UK, although for three of these the accounts are simply reports of continued presence. In addition, records were compiled for 13 rare non-native breeding species. Population totals are given for each species in the report, alongside a breakdown of records by country and recording area, and where possible updated trends are given. A table summarising species' numbers and trends is available here.

For the first time, our report features a table summarising UK population trends for those species for which annual coverage is robust enough to do so. When possible, trends are presented for the most recent 10 years, 25 years, and the longest available trend period, along with the between-year change since 2023. The UK table, along with separate online-only tables with English, Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh trends can be found here.

The report was enabled by the collation of over 11,400 individual records, which, once duplicates were identified, provided nearly 8,600 unique records. The most important sources of data are the detailed submissions compiled by the UK's county and regional bird recorders, who in turn depend on observers submitting their records in the first place. Other important sources include returns from Schedule 1 licence holders, the BTO/JNCC Nest Record Scheme, raptor study groups, annual species' monitoring, periodic national surveys, and counts from RSPB reserves."

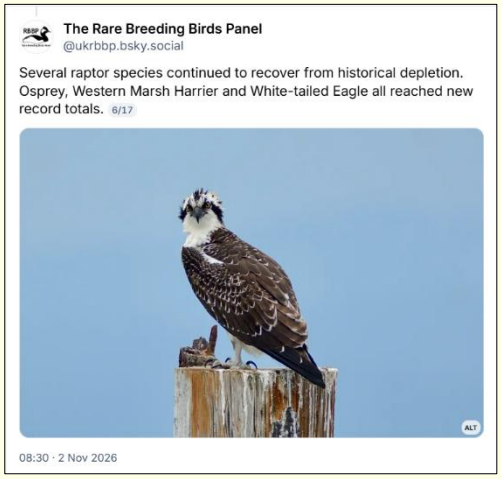
Dr Mark Eaton | Secretary, Rare Breeding Birds Panel, November 2026 | 2024 report overview – UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel | Nov-26

As well as the very useful links above to data tables and context, Dr Eaton has also released a YouTube clip outlining the key findings (available **here**) and below is the summary as presented in a series of posts on the RBBP BlueSky account **@ukrbbp.bsky.social**. For those of you who 'don't do social media', it isn't all toxic and there is a wealth of information regularly posted on there from conservation and wildlife organisations as well as local naturalists, club members included.

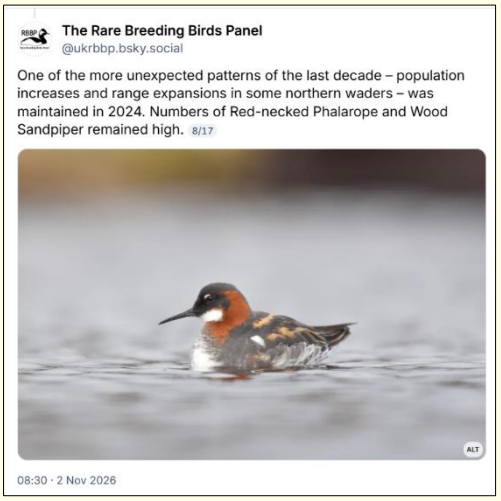










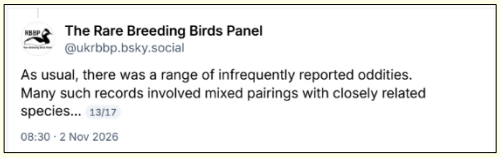


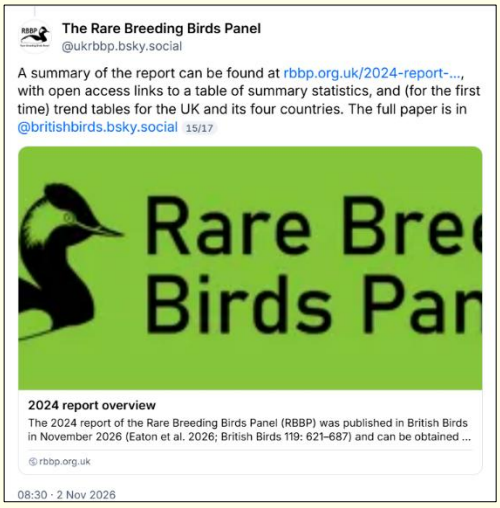














Check This Out!

A few bits and bobs in the news recently …

Note: You may now need to sign up on the BirdGuides website to read their articles – it is free but you need to put in your email address to sign up to their newsletter. Alternatively, going back and in again on the link may work.

- **Rising seas threaten the world's migratory shorebirds - The Conversation** [07-Oct]
- **Using Drones for Finding and Monitoring Nests – UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel** [27-Oct]
- **Jet lag shifts Manx Shearwaters off course - @RareBirdAlertUK** [03-Nov]
- **AviList updated for 2026 - @RareBirdAlertUK** [29-Oct]
- **Coastal waterbird count returns across Britain and Ireland - @RareBirdAlertUK** [28-Oct]
- **Redwings carry more infected ticks during mild late autumns - @RareBirdAlertUK** [27-Oct]
- **Mute Swans hide nests when breeding near Whooper Swans - @RareBirdAlertUK** [20-Oct]
- **Thousands of people take part in EuroBirdwatch 2026 - @RareBirdAlertUK** [12-Oct]
- **Public's help needed to solve mystery of starling murmurations - BBC News** [02-Nov]



- **I'm one of a growing number of Gen Z birdwatchers - it helps my mental health - BBC News** [27-Oct]
- **The surprising benefits of birdwatching - BBC** [20-Oct]
- **'Scarecrow' helps tackle accidental seabird deaths in Cornwall - BBC News** [04-Oct]
- **For centuries, bird migration was a mystery but a tech revolution is changing that, and could help save these amazing creatures - The Conversation** [16-Oct]
- **Birding for every body - British Ornithologists' Union** [15-Oct]
- **The BirdGuides Podcast - YouTube** "The BirdGuides Podcast is the ultimate audio hub for birdwatching – wherever you are and whatever your experience. We discuss the latest sightings and stories, speak to the biggest birding names, delve into the best hot-spots and birding countries, remember famous moments, talk all things ID and so much more. The BirdGuides Podcast helps connects you to the birds, the places and the people that make the hobby so special." BirdGuides

What's That Song?

Many of us find it difficult learning or remembering bird song whilst others seem to have a natural knack for it, a bit like a foreign language or music skill. The Merlin App has been a great help in recent years but can you recognise a bird from the description of its voice? The words below come from three different books, but they all refer to the same bird – no wonder it is so confusing! As you can see, some texts go into more detail than others. Answers are at the back of this newsletter, along with a link through to a website where you can listen to an audio excerpt and decide which description resonates best with you!

"Corus of guttural croaks, laughing notes and deep cooing calls at colony at night."
from WILDGuides BRITAIN'S BIRDS 2nd Edition - An identification guide to the birds of Britain and Ireland 2nd Edition by Hume, Still, Swash, Harrop and Tipling

"At colonies on dark nights, raucous, coughing calls, four-syllable 'ak-ka chich' and the like, the latter notes hoarser, more drawn-out and deeper."
from Collins BIRD GUIDE 3rd Edition by Mullarney, Svensson, Zetterström

"At sea it is generally silent. At the nest it has a variety of weird calls, including crowing, cooing, howls and screams."
from RSPB Handbook of British Birds 4th Edition by Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves

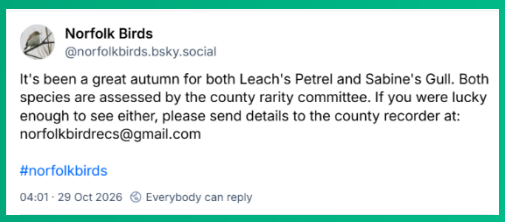
Wordsearch

This month, we have 28 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in November 2025 for which we have just 1 or 2 records – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled as there were certainly quite a few exciting birds this time last year! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. Solution is at the end of this newsletter.

Bar-tailed Godwit
Black Guillemot
Black-throated Diver
Caspian Gull
Common Tern
Hooded Crow
House Martin
Jack Snipe
Leach's Petrel
Long-tailed Skua
Mandarin Duck
Purple Sandpiper
Red-necked Grebe
Swallow
Swift
Water Pipit
Yellow Wagtail
Bittern
Crane
Grey Phalarope
Grey Plover
Little Owl
Ring Ouzel
Sabine's Gull
Sandwich Tern
Short-eared Owl
Tundra Bean Goose
Yellow-legged Gull

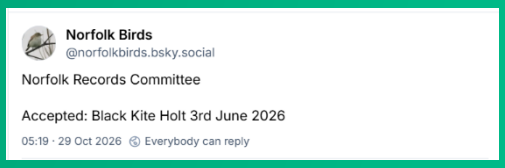
W B G H S O O X Z B B A X Z K L S J O H U S D B D T N Y J I
O K G E U P B U M M M U C S A B I N E S G U L L L W B T Q E
L C S P R O V A P R B R C P H H P F A Q N C I H S E S F Q I
L Y H I T C C U J Y I F E N U Y A Z F E C N L I K W V O E G
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I M E K E G B L A C K T H R O A T E D D I V E R U F O T T K
J A D H U V D R R E V C T M G R E Y P L O V E R R Z Y N I E
O G O Y U B C M Y R E P I P D N A S E L P R U P E E E C L L
K B W M L S Z C V C V Z K Y E B T G K O G X J V L F O L E M
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G W R O M W F Z B N Q O T Y E I G H M H K C O N V L B O T N
C T W J H O U S E M A R T I N G P T P E S W Q X R W M C E D
G F A S I T H Y X X X J A M W W T S J L L Y T M D O G Q P A
O L F W H B U E P W O R C D E D O O H E N L P Z E N B N S R
G D U Z Y Y U L G O T S F S G S O U G H F X I D F L J F H I
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A U U R E D N E C K E D G R E B E E D E M K B E G J M E A D
C W W K J Q C N A T J E E C X D J R X E N J M I B K C C E U
G R E Y P H A L A R O P E T G B Z L C V L T X R T Y C H L C
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M U I N V W M Z R C Y L B N G J S V L A P H L T I Z X R I B
C N Y L E X V U P F I I K G C H N Z V A L Y X X R V C J N Z
E N D B D J W F L O N G T A I L E D S K U A M U L A F L N D
W Q W K B E U C Z V T X R R I L L U G N A I P S A C B U J D

Three new 'Accepted' records from the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter and their current '**NRC work in progress**' file was last updated 24-Feb-26. They have also flagged a need for Leach's Petrel and Sabine's Gull descriptions (see right). The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [Dec-24].









NENBC Website

Many thanks to everyone who has uploaded records to our website this year to date. For the newbies reading this, we would love to see your records too! It is easy to do and we can guide you through if you are unsure. Please don't think that your records aren't of interest – they are. We submit all our data on to the BTO's BirdTrack for inclusion in the county reports, which appear in published format annually. How common species are faring is just as important to keep track of as sightings of the less common species. If you need any assistance, or have forgotten your password and need it resetting, just drop Carol a line on **nenbc@aol.co.uk** or through the messaging element of the website. You can access our website at **www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club** (or typing 'NENBC' into your search engine will get you there) and you will need your member password to get in. Not sure on your bird ID? Just ask – drop us an email, message or a WhatsApp or ask another birder when you are actually viewing the bird.

POINTS: This version of the prolific posters table is based purely on birds recorded. Points are allocated according to the likelihood of seeing a species. So the **common** birds, such as Wood Pigeon, Blue Tit and even Goldcrest and Curlew, will earn you 10 points. **'Mildly' interesting** birds, like Marsh Tit, Cuckoo and Grey Wagtail gain 20 points. **Interesting species** – the likes of Firecrest and Ring Ouzel – will garner you 30 points, while **very interesting** birds such as Glossy Ibis, Lapland Bunting or Richard's Pipit add 40 points to your score. And if you are lucky or persistent enough to spot a real **rarity** such as Lesser White-fronted Goose, Dusky Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler or Brünnich's Guillemot you are awarded 50 points.

Prolific Posters October 2026 | By Val Stubbs

Phil Borley's score has now passed 200,000 points. Tony Pope remains in second position with more than 86,000 points, with Mark Clements holding on to third place, with a score exceeding 75,000 points. Two prolific At Home birders are fourth and fifth: Philip Cartlidge now has nearly 63,000 points, followed by Val Stubbs on just over 60,000 points. The rest of the top ten remains unchanged in terms of ranking.

Of the 128 members who have recorded birds on the Club website this year, 18 have already scored over 10,000 points, with another 20 exceeding 5,000 points, and 22 more on over 1,000 points.

!1	Phil Borley	201,390
2	Tony Pope	86,470
3	Mark Clements	75,500
4	Philip Cartlidge	69,970
5	Valerie Stubbs	60,660
6	DAVID Griffiths	52,990
7	Doug & Jenny Cullern	34,930
8	Stuart Jones	17,760
9	Trevor Williams	15,490
10	Ken Thornton	15,040
11	Andrew Clarke	14,980
12	Stephanie Witham	14,610
13	Ann Gladwin	13,320
14	Carol Thornton	12,560
15	Russell Page	10,940

16	John Swallow	10,840
17	Thomas Wright	10,660
18	David Barrass	10,660
18	Stella Baylis	9,940
20	Steven & Barbara Lines	9,680
21	Julia & David Ivison	9,650
22	Colin Blaxill	8,430
23	Alan Stevens	7,510
24	Ollie Allison	7,370
25	Francis Farrow	6,930
26	Paul Laurie	6,820
27	Peter & Sue Morrison	6,740
28	Andrew Kershaw	6,550
29	Gary Bunting	6,050
30	Stuart Buck	6,000

2026 Club Stats

448 individual members across 303 households

84,904 bird records logged

241 bird species reported

Social Media & WhatsApp – a few bits from social media and WhatsApp in the last few weeks.

This is something we really haven't got to grips with of late so if you can tag us in any of your BlueSky posts or indeed have an interest in social media and can help us out, please do get in touch!

Stella Baylis
@silyab22.bsky.social

Delighted to see and hear Marsh Tit in our small fen valley in NE Norfolk today, my first record here since 2021. Possibly 2 birds. Also Redwings and reasonable numbers of Fieldfare now passing through, a few Golden Plover over and a Brambling in a rowan tree #norfolkbirding @nenbc.bsky.social



17:17 · 31 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

bridgetjanejones.bsky.social
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

Yay! My first decent view of a Fieldfare this autumn. Five dropped in this afternoon with some incoming Blackbirds and Robins and one Redwing! @nenbc.bsky.social



20:10 · 1 Nov 2026 · Everybody can reply

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Fog was really patchy this morning. One minute there was good visibility the next it had closed in. In a moment of good visibility, this Red Kite came out of the gloom moments later it had disappeared again. Spotted this Grey Heron standing on a fence post but only briefly.



20:56 · 29 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

A pair of Gadwall in bright sunshine on the lake at Felbrigg NT yesterday during a period when the fog had lifted. It did not last long and it began to drift back over the meadow, and can just be seen in the next picture looking back over the reedbed.



20:34 · 30 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

bridgetjanejones.bsky.social
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

Don't think I'll ever have better views of my local Buzzard - so distinctive and the activity between the love birds (pun intended!) Kestrels and the Rooks was hilarious. This Rook seems to identify as a Kestrel, either that or a voyeur! He just wouldn't go away! @nenbc.bsky.social



08:01 · 1 Nov 2026 · Everybody can reply

Andy Taylor
@tankertonbirder.bsky.social

Sheringham East Beach this a.m.Black Guillemot A good way to round off my 1st Month on new patch finding this bird on the sea my a decent 125 sp. Since moving on 30/9. Memories of the Kent Longrock bird as it hung around the Buoy #patchbirding @nenbc.bsky.social



16:54 · 30 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Great Spotted Woodpecker visiting a peanut feeder earlier today but it spent some time checking that there were no predators about by peering out from the branches of a Rowan tree.



20:05 · 7 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

The White Falcon
@markgolley.bsky.social

We decided to pop along to Happisburgh to have a look at the showy moulting juvenile Rose-coloured Starling that's been around a few days. This is a species I have a real soft-spot for: the 1st rarity I ever found, at Portland Bill, in late October 1982 😊
@linnetincley.bsky.social
#norfolkbirding



20:06 · 28 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

Andy Taylor
@tankertonbirder.bsky.social

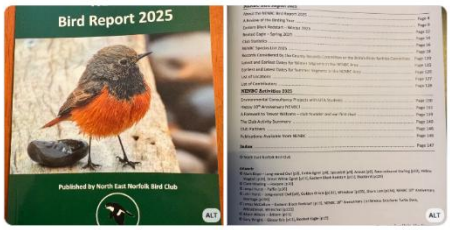
My east Sheringham garden provided 2 new patch birds a pair of Black Redstart and a Woodcock a couple of groups of Whitefront flew over and another Short-eared Owl circled high overhead. @nenbc.bsky.social



15:37 · 23 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply

James Emerson
@norwichbirder.bsky.social

A bit of free time this morning allowed me to have a first look through the excellent annual bird report of @nenbc.bsky.social . A great effort as always, with useful explanations of how the data is presented and analysed along with lots of photos and artwork.
www.bird.club/clubs/north-...



08:54 · 18 Oct 2026 · Everybody can reply



Club Badges

Member Awards

Star Badges

CONGRATULATIONS to Dave Bilham on achieving his SILVER and Alan Shearing on his BRONZE.

Currently, **6** members have achieved GOLD STAR status, **28** members have been awarded SILVER STAR status and a fabulous **91** members now hold the BRONZE STAR status.

For any of the club events that take place in the club area you can include all of the species you see or hear so join us for a walk.

Keep up the good work everyone – star badges are within everyone's reach!

Number of bird species recorded in the NENBC area since joining the club:

BRONZE [100] self-certified
SILVER [200] peer reviewed
GOLD [250] peer reviewed
PLATINUM [300] peer reviewed

We will notify members when they achieve the Bronze badge but for the higher-level badges, members should notify us on **nenbc@aol.co.uk** when they are ready for their website records to be peer reviewed by the Peer Review Group.

NOTE: The Norfolk Birds Rarities Committee (NBRC) can sometime get a little behind in assessing submitted 'description' species (rarities) for acceptance. This has an impact on our ability to peer review and award badges as we only confirm a rarity for badges once accepted by NBRC so apologies if you are waiting and thank you for your patience.

Eco-Badges

No new eco-achievers this month.

We currently have **27** members who have achieved their GREEN ECO-BADGES [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 11] and **11** who have achieved SUPER-GREEN [Coastal: 8 | Inland: 3].

Those of you wanting to submit, please let us have a list of species, dates seen and locations that is derived from your website records (we can help you download your data) as we can't yet tell on our website if you are driving or not! If you need help getting your list of species downloaded, please ask!

NOTE: For these badges, electric bikes are considered motorised transport!

Number of bird species recorded in the NENBC area at or from home without the use of motorised transport since 1st January 2020 (or date of joining if later):

GREEN ECO-BADGE: 75 species required for lists with only inland sites / 100 for lists with any coastal locations

SUPER-GREEN ECO-BADGE: 125 species required for lists with only inland sites / 175 for lists with any coastal locations

Lists to be submitted by members from **their club website records** to **nenbc@aol.co.uk** along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.

Sea-watching Badge

Congratulations to Roger Unite on achieving his Blue Badge this month!

We currently have **11** members who have achieved their BLUE BADGE.

Those of you wanting to submit, please let us have a list of the dates and locations of your qualifying seawatching sessions and the species generating points on those occasions that reflect your website entries. Note that you will need to ensure that you have **added to the comments on the website duration of any of your qualifying seawatches and it might help to add 'BLUE BADGE'** against any qualifying species too. Shout if not clear!

You must earn a total of one thousand points through a combination of time spent sea-watching and species recorded.

Species list available on request

Getting Points: You get a once-only bonus of 100 points for attending a club seawatch, for all other watches 10 for every ½ hour spent watching, plus variable points for the first sighting of each of the species on our published list (also on website 'News') - 10 for the easy species, 15 for the more difficult or scarce and 20 for the rare ones.

Lists to be submitted by members from **their club website records** to **nenbc@aol.co.uk** along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.

Why not get going on your own badge journey today!?

Cultural Birds – Birds and Halloween

The Spooky Connection: Birds and Halloween Throughout History by Roberta Winchester of The Fat Finch, 2024

"The association between birds and Halloween has deep roots, intertwined with folklore, superstition, and cultural symbolism. Here's an overview of how these two elements became linked through history:

1. Birds in Ancient and Medieval Superstitions



Crows and Ravens: In many ancient cultures, crows and ravens were considered harbingers of doom or death. In Celtic mythology, these birds were often associated with battlefields and the war goddess Morrigan, who could transform into a raven. In medieval Europe, they were linked to witches and the underworld, feeding the belief that they could communicate with the dead or serve as omens of misfortune.

Owls: Owls have long been seen as mysterious creatures of the night. In ancient Rome, the call of an owl was considered a bad omen, often predicting death. During the Middle Ages, this view continued, as owls became symbols of witches or evil spirits. The fact that they are nocturnal hunters added to their mystique and association with darkness and the supernatural.

2. Halloween Origins



Samhain: The origin of Halloween traces back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, celebrated at the end of the harvest season on October 31. The Celts believed that during this time, the boundary between the world of the living and the dead was blurred, and spirits could return to the earth. Birds, especially those associated with death or the night, like ravens and owls, became symbolic of this transition between life and death.

Christian Influence: As Christianity spread through Europe, many pagan traditions, including Samhain, were merged into what became known as All Hallows' Eve, eventually evolving into Halloween. The bird symbolism persisted, especially as superstitions around crows, ravens, and owls continued to be connected to witches, death, and the supernatural.

3. Birds in Halloween Iconography



Crows and Ravens: By the 19th and 20th centuries, these birds solidified their role in Halloween imagery. Gothic literature, such as Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem *The Raven* (1845), helped shape the public's perception of ravens as eerie, deathly figures. Their black feathers and haunting caws made them perfect symbols of Halloween, emphasizing its themes of death, mystery, and the supernatural.

Owls: Owls, with their glowing eyes and silent flight, became part of Halloween iconography due to their nocturnal habits. Their mysterious appearance in the night sky and traditional associations with witchcraft made them common in Halloween decor and storytelling.

Bats: While not birds, bats also became closely associated with Halloween due to their nocturnal habits and connections with vampires and the supernatural, especially in 20th-century pop culture.

4. Birds in Modern Halloween Culture

In modern times, birds such as crows, ravens, and owls are often used as decorations during Halloween, reinforcing the holiday's spooky, eerie atmosphere. They are also featured in horror films, haunted houses, and Halloween parties as part of the overall theme of darkness and fear.

In summary, birds became linked to Halloween through centuries of superstition, mythology, and cultural associations with death, mystery, and the supernatural. The symbolism of nocturnal or dark-feathered birds like crows, ravens, and owls played a key role in shaping the Halloween imagery we recognize today."

Photos: Andrew Crossley (Carrion Crow), David Griffiths (Raven), John Taylor (Barn Owl)

Ficedula Fun Solutions ???

The bird voice variously described was that of a **Manx Shearwater**. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! website for this species. Here's a link to the **BTO Bird Facts Manx Shearwater** page. The bar chart shows the Seasonal Activity from the NENBC.

Photos: David Griffiths, Mark Clements (2), Moss Taylor



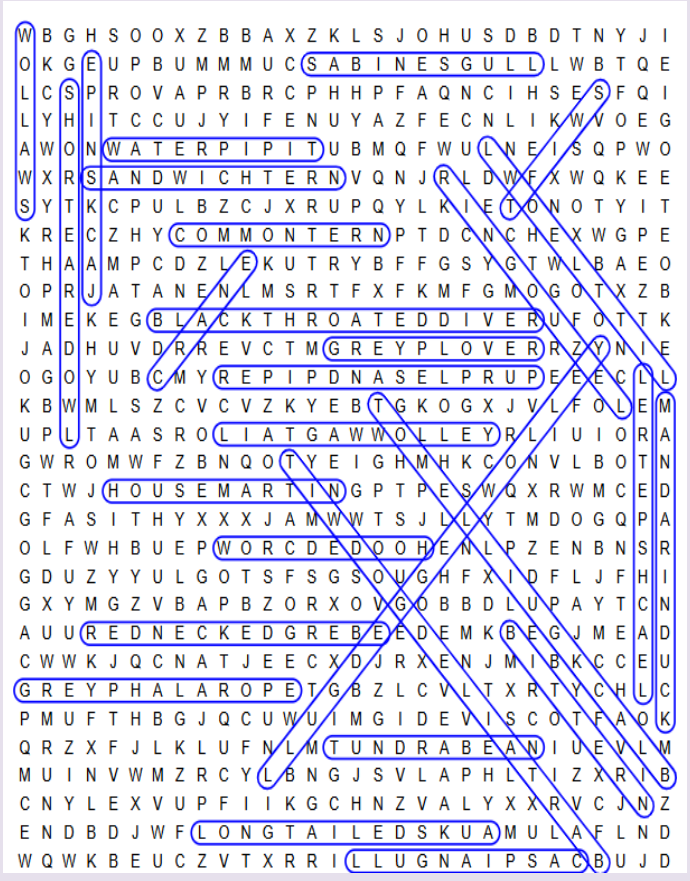








This month's **Wordsearch Solution**:
BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN NOVEMBER 2025



Back Page Club Info .....



NENBC Bird Reports are compiled annually from the records and photographs added to the club website by members, supplemented by other local records, and complemented by articles on club activities. The reports are £2 for back-copies, £5 for current one. Our **10th Anniversary Commemorative Book** celebrating the first decade of the club is also available (low stock) for £5. **The Birds of Felbrigg Park** is a systematic review of the records of all 220 species seen in and around the park over the past 50 years, indicating their current status and highlighting, for the rarer species, every recorded sighting. The publication includes photographs and artwork from local artists. The book is now reduced to £2 (postage extra) and all profits from the sale of this book go to Felbeck Trust, our local wildlife conservation charity: **www.felbecktrust.org.uk**

For Annual Reports or The Birds of Felbrigg Park, contact Carol on **nenbc@aol.co.uk**.

Club Sponsor: A 5% discount on Bird Ventures branded wild bird food is available to NENBC members at their shop in Holt all year on production of a current (or 2025) NENBC Membership Card. Have a look at the **Bird Ventures website** as they also supply feeders and much more with good advice and help for garden bird enthusiasts. **Bird Ventures, The Wildlife Shop, 9B Chapel Yard, Albert Street, Holt, Norfolk NR25 6HG, Telephone 01263 710203, Email salesbirdventures@aol.com**

The NENBC objectives:

- **Encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching in North East Norfolk with people of all abilities and experience.**
- **Promote diversity and inclusion in all its activities.**
- **Gather and collate data on birds in the recording area.**
- **Share information between members.**
- **Participate in regional and national surveys incorporating the recording area.**
- **Administer the Club in an environmentally sensitive manner.**
- **Promote the conservation of birds and wildlife within Norfolk.**
- **Liaise with other conservation groups within the local area and more widely.**
- **Hold regular indoor and field meetings and social events throughout the year.**
- **Put the interests of birds first and respect other people, whether or not they are interested in birds, in line with the birdwatchers' code.**

Monthly mid-week bird walks around Felbrigg Park on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from September to July | Varied **monthly weekend bird walks** to a range of local birding hotspots from September to July | **Occasional evening walks** in the spring and summer | **Monthly evening talks** on the last Thursday of the month from September to November and January to April - refreshments provided | An annual **Big Sit** birding event at a number of locations across the club area in May, recording the total number of species seen from one spot between dawn and dusk | Autumn **Global Big Day** birding challenge | Annual **Coordinated Seawatch** event along the coast in the autumn recording visible migration | Short-notice **Pop-Up Birding events** | A **Birding for Beginners** workshop series combining practical and theoretical elements of birdwatching | **New Year's Day Birding Challenge** | **Occasional master-classes, lectures, workshops and conferences** to develop better skills and understanding of the birding world | A combined **Christmas Social and AGM Evening** in December