



July 2025 – Issue 121

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

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Through a Lens



By Trevor Williams

The stand-out event of the summer for me was undoubtedly the Club's 10th Anniversary Anglo-African Bird Migration conference, held in early June. Our A list line-up of speakers and mixed audience of club members and invited guests from other county bird groups and wildlife conservation organisations spent an enjoyable day together learning about the plight of our summer visitors and passage migrants, which spend time here in Norfolk but winter in the Sahel. For a fuller account of the occasion and members reflections [see page 10](#). With the main causes of well-documented declines in the majority of our migrants being climate change, habitat destruction, reduced food supply due to changes in agricultural methods and hunting, more of which we will have in the next newsletter, it can seem a bit overwhelming but there are things we can do - as a Club and as individuals. Apart from the obvious financial support we can give to international initiatives run by our national and regional organisations like RSPB, BTO, Birdlife and

NWT we can help in other ways. One of our speakers pointed to the pressing need for more qualified African ecologists who can work most effectively with the people of the Sahel - who understand their needs and can communicate the simple changes which can be made locally to help protect their bird life and environment. Club support for one such person from the Kartong Bird Observatory in Gambia is a small example ([see page 12](#)). But there is practical conservation work we can all do to ensure that conditions for those migrants that do survive the many challenges are as good as they can be here in Norfolk. We can manage our gardens and local green spaces better for the benefit of wildlife. If every club member spent an equivalent amount of time doing something for conservation as they spend birdwatching we could make a significant difference - for the birds we love and the enjoyment and understanding of generations to come.

A Note from the Editor



By Carol Thornton

Welcome to our July newsletter as this rather hot summer continues. It is a time of year when I always see far fewer birds like most but I am pleased that it seems to be a much better year for butterflies and certainly our meadow patch in the garden has been great this year attracting them in. This year's [Big Butterfly Count](#) starts on 18th July so do have a look at their website for details on how to submit your sightings.

After the excitement of the 10th Anniversary Conference, we have just one event left this season – our July 16th monthly Felbrigg Park walk so why don't you come along and join us? We will have our full 2025/26 schedule of events out to you in the September newsletter with a flavour of what is to come in next month's.



'Through a Lens' for the front cover last month was 'African Migrants' and we have a Sand Martin and Swift from Richard Farrow, a Whitethroat from Francis Farrow and amazingly a 'garden tick' Turtle Dove from Nick Stubbs. For July, our theme will be 'Raptors' so get clicking!

Here are my favourite member photos from June – Chiffchaff from Francis Farrow, Stonechat and Meadow Pipit from Jane Crossen and Peregrine from Steven & Barbara Lines.



By Paul Laurie

All records are from the NENBC website and submitted by members unless otherwise stated.

≈ 5,000 individual records covering 138 bird species were added in June

June 2025: The **Night Heron** at Mundesley early in the month was the clear highlight and was seen by thirteen club members. Cromer was home to a **Caspian Gull** and a **Yellow-legged Gull**. Scarce passerines were very poorly represented during June with a **Rosy Starling** being the exception. The “Weybourne” **Marsh Warbler** remained into the first week and the sea watchers were rewarded with a **Roseate Tern** and a few **Puffin** sightings. During the month 5,026 records were logged and 138 species recorded by 63 members.

Grey Partridge. Only one report of a bird at Weybourne on the 6th of June.

Quail. Three records this month with a bird at Weybourne on the 1st and the next day a bird recorded via Noc-Mig over Beeston Common. The only other record was a bird calling on the 10th from an undisclosed site.
Image 1 courtesy of Francis Farrow

Nightjar. The four main sites for this species recorded birds during the month. A bird was also heard “Churring” near West Runton on the 10th. *Photos 2 courtesy of a) Tony Pope, b) Jo King*

Cuckoo. Six sightings from five sites of single birds during the month, including a juvenile on Weybourne Camp on the 28th. In June 2020 the NENBC area recorded 55 sightings – we were in lockdown then but even so this is a stark difference.

Stone Curlew. A bird was flushed from Weybourne Cliffs on the 3rd of the month.

Golden Plover. A flock of 50 east off Weybourne on the 4th of the month.

Black-tailed Godwit. Birds recorded off Weybourne from the 21st when sixteen birds seen, then six on the 22nd, 39 on the 25th and 27 on the 30th.

Common Sandpiper. One record of a bird at Felbrigg Park lake on the 23rd of the month.

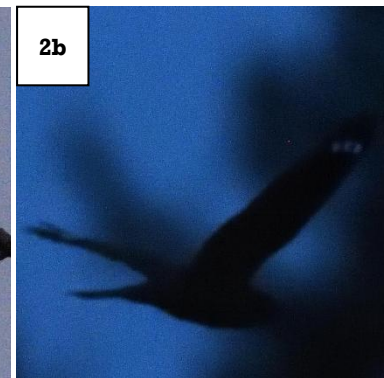
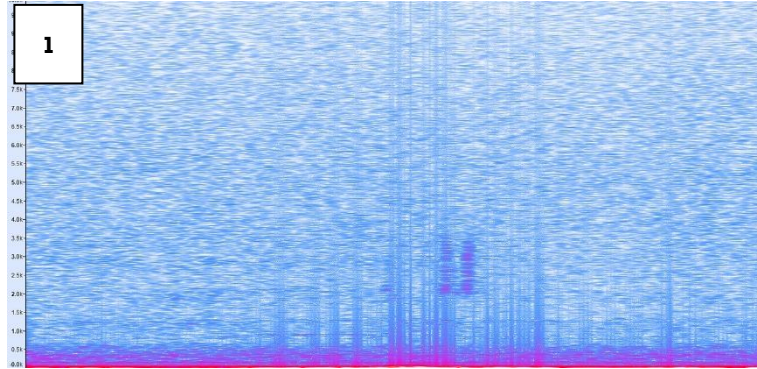
Green Sandpiper. A bird on the 26th in Felbrigg Park.

Little Gull. A bird reported as a juvenile on the 15th was settled on the sea off Weybourne.

Mediterranean Gull. Recorded along the coast in various numbers during the month with the peak at Weybourne of 58 on the 18th. *Photo 3 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

Caspian Gull. A first summer bird was seen at Cromer on the 7th of June.

Yellow-legged Gull. The second-year bird was seen around Cromer Pier between the 22nd and 26th. *Photo 4 courtesy of Trevor Williams*



Roseate Tern. A bird flew west past Weybourne camp on the 10th of the month.

Arctic Skua. Three birds were seen harassing terns on the 10th off Weybourne.

Puffin. One to two birds present off Weybourne from the 6th until the 9th of June.

Manx Shearwater. One to three birds reported throughout the month on the coast. Peak numbers included ten from Cromer Lighthouse on the 6th and thirteen off Weybourne on the 29th of June.

Spoonbill. Sightings of two birds west at Weybourne on the 12th and 13th with singles off Weybourne on the 22nd and 23rd.

NIGHT HERON. On the 2nd and 3rd an adult was present on the village mill pond at Mundesley. This is the first record for the NENBC area since the club was formed in 2015. *Photos 5 courtesy of a) David Griffiths, b) Trevor Williams, c) Derek & Dianne Hazell, d) John Hurst.*

5a



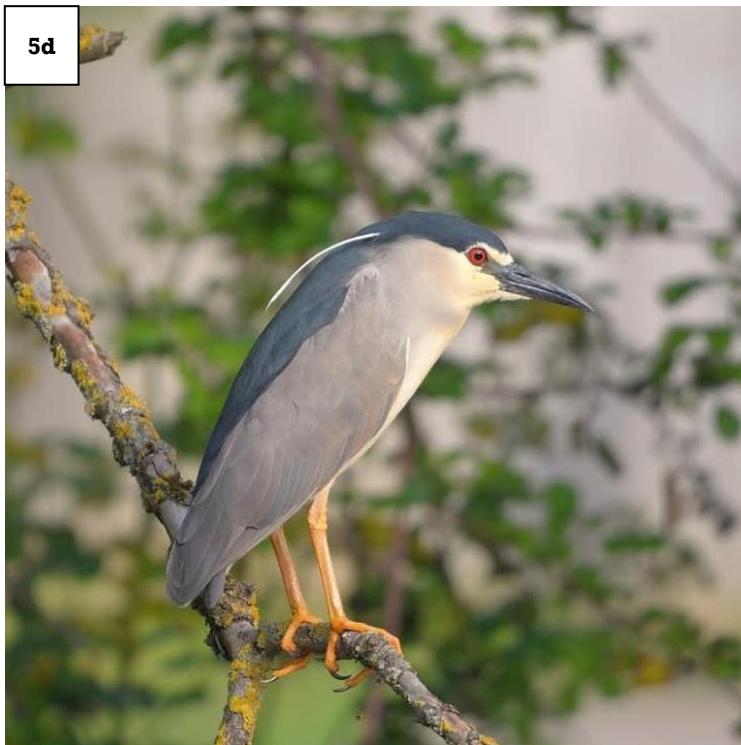
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5c



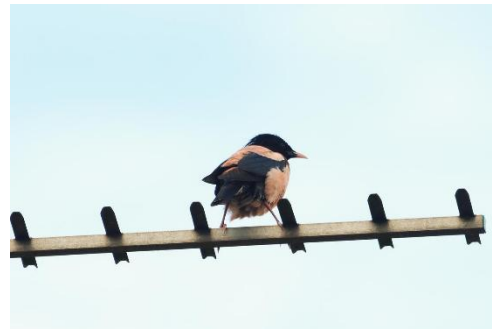
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Marsh Warbler. The singing male found on the 27th of May remained until the 5th of June, singing from the reedbed around Weybourne Hope.

Rose-coloured Starling. A bird found at Melton Constable on the 6th showed well. *Photos 6 courtesy of David Griffiths*

6



Spotted Flycatcher. Four sites reported birds during June with birds being seen to feed young at the nest. Photos 7 courtesy of a) Chris & Kathrin Turner, b) John Hayward

7a



7b



July: What to look forward to



July: Sea-watching can be rewarding, and a bit warmer, in July with the first returning adult waders still in splendid breeding plumage. Terns will be travelling to feed further offshore often attracting the marauding Arctic Skua and north-west winds have produced Cory's Shearwater twice in July, off Sheringham, in both 2021 and 2022.

Member Extras: observations from last month

Extra!

Ringed Bird Highlights

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. Project coordinators love to get data on their birds – after all, that is the reason for ringing them - so here is a reminder on how to do it from Chris Lamsdell:

“Please report your colour ring birds to the relevant project co-ordinator which can be found through the EU Colour Ring website <https://cr-birding.org/>. Locally ringed Turnstones (red flag three letters starting JAA), Black-headed Gulls (red rings starting 2C00) and Marsh Tit (white rings 00-99) can be reported through <https://iceni.shinyapps.io/sightings/> Metal only rings can be report to the BTO <https://app.bto.org/euring/lang/pages/rings.jsp>”



A note of interest from Chris Lamsdell for information, a number of birds were ringed at Scolt Head on 25th June:

- Sandwich Terns - will have green darvic on left leg with 3 letters/numbers starting K**
- Black-headed Gulls - will have a red darvic on left leg with 4 letters/numbers starting 2C** & 2H**
- Mediterranean Gulls - will have yellow darvic on left leg with 4 numbers starting 21**

If you see any locally or further afield, please report them via <https://iceni.shinyapps.io/sightings/> where you will get full details.

Just one ringed record from the website this month:

07/06/2025 | **Great Black-backed Gull** | Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs | Trevor Williams | "individual with colour-ringing (probably Norwegian)"

Noc-Mig Highlights



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!

Just two noc-mig records this month:

02/06/2025 | **Quail** | **Barn Owl** | Beeston Common | Francis Farrow |

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!

Swift | "6x High over the village, mid air bathing in a light shower that's clearing the air." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 21st and "Running rings round a hobby!" 28th

Cuckoo | "At last! Neighbours told us about a cuckoo frequenting the valley through Lower Street this Spring, present from mid May, heard from west end of the stream, calling frequently in advance of a thunderstorm" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 7th

Woodpigeon | "270x On newly emerging peas, much to the farmer's annoyance!" | John Hurst | Mundesley | 16th

Moorhen | "2x Our garden pond. Once again our resident pair have lost their one chick and possibly other to a regular Heron or Crow, Magpie or Buzzard." | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 1st

Oystercatcher | "Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary pond - Three of the four eggs have hatched! Two adults present and three chicks." | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 7th and "Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary pond - sadly all three of the chicks are missing this morning. Both parents still present and back on the pond platform they nested on." | 8th

Sandwich Tern | "114 east (44 west) - during 2 hour sea-watch. Very few noted carrying Sand Eels" | Trevor Williams | Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs | 7th

Little Egret | "Seen when I paused by the little lake on my way home from the migration conference via a random route." | Stephanie Witham | Hanworth | 14th

Great Spotted Woodpecker | "A young one having a drink and trying out the niger seed feeder. I was pleased to see him as last Sunday morning one flew beak first into a window and was stunned for an hour before it managed to fly off. I suppose if anything is designed to cope with flying head first into a hard object it might be a Woodpecker!" | Stephanie Witham | North Walsham | 20th

Kestrel | "Good raptor session lazing on a deck chair in the garden!" | David Griffiths | At Home | 11th

Hobby | "In attack mode chasing sand martins. First record of this species over the garden." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 26th

Sand Martin | "At least 50 On new fencing and around large puddle on paddock following last nights thunder storm2 | Julia & David Ivison | West Runton | 14th

Sand Martin | "100x Impressive colony in cliffs, best viewed from beach. 120 holes with minimum 50 occupied, with an adult in or out of a hole or young birds seen at entrance" | Stella Baylis | Happisburgh | 20th

Swallow | "8x Included 3 juveniles, sitting on overhead wires in village centre and being fed by attentive parents, adults surely will go for a second brood this year!" | Stella Batlis | Southrepps Common | 19th

House Martin | "8x Collecting mud in tank tracks on Muckleburgh" | Jo King | Weybourne Cliffs | 13th

Marsh Warbler | "Singing from dense cover near the teasel clump; recorded but not seen. Mimicry included Blue Tit, Blackbird, Skylark, Swallow, Sand Martin, Blackcap and Pied Wagtail. According to Merlin a Bluethroat was also singing, but I rather think it was the Marsh Warbler..." | Andy Clarke | Weybourne | 2nd

Rose-coloured Starling | "adult. absolute stonker, you won't see a better one. Mobile around village, showing well on rooftop aerals" | Phil Borley | Melton Constable | 6th

Blackbird | "2 ads and 6 juveniles feeding on Amelanchier berries. You can tell the newly fledged ones, as they don't so much land in the tree as crash into it, and then have to work out how to reach the berries." | Andy Clarke | Sheringham | 16th



Welcome back to our returning members – look forward to seeing you soon!

* Tina Lowe & Steve Paston *

435 individual members
across 288 households

52,959
bird records logged

221 bird species reported

Please keep adding all your sightings to our website at www.nenbc.co.uk. Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting or need assistance on how to upload your records. More information from our website records, posts and social media presence in **Data, Records & Posts** from [page 35](#).

Club Achievement Awards

Star Badges

No new achievers this month but the Peer Review Panel are reviewing at a few soon so we are looking forward to a few more coming through!

Currently, **4** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **21** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **85** 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. It always helps to get on to more birds when you are in a group of like-minded folk.

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.

Eco-Badges

No new achievers his month but a couple in the pipeline for the near future!

We currently have **26** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 10] and **8** who have achieved **SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 7 | Inland:1].

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!



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.

Conservation Corner - can you help??

Would you be interested in joining or team of article writers for the Conservation Corner slot? We currently have two members writing excellent articles alternate months but a bit of back up would be very handy for months when they have other commitments.

If you don't fancy writing an occasional article, please let us know

WhatsApp Groups.....



The club runs two WhatsApp groups:

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 of interesting birds within the club area – no gossip allowed!

The advantage of both these groups is that you can get instant details about a bird sighting rather than having to rely on looking at the website later in the day and missing out. If either of these groups are of interest, drop us an email on nenbc@aol.co.uk and we'll put you in touch with the appropriate administrator. You'll need to provide your mobile number and sign up to the group rules. Both groups are free but to get the most out of them you'll need to be able to use the internet on your phone when you are out and about.

Speaker Suggestions

We are always on the lookout for recommendations for speakers for our indoor programme, or ideas you may have of subjects you'd like us to find a speaker on. If you have any thoughts, please drop Alan an email on ahstevens52@gmail.com

Thank you!

Contributions to the Newsletter

The newsletter is reliant on input from others, is certainly much richer from having a wide range of articles included and we could really do with some of your interesting stories! You really don't have to be a birding 'expert' to write something for our newsletter. It can be long or short, with or without photos, whatever suits. Please have a think about whether there is anything you could write about for a future publication. The copy deadline for any issue is the last day of the previous month, but it would be good to know in advance if you are planning to submit an article.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Club Sponsor **Bird Ventures** offer a 5% discount on own-branded wild bird food to NENBC members all year. Have a look at the Bird Ventures website www.birdventures.co.uk as they also supply feeders and much more with good advice and help for garden bird enthusiasts. Free local delivery available

Bird Ventures, The Wildlife Shop,
9B Chapel Yard, Albert Street,
Holt, Norfolk NR25 6HG

Telephone 01263 710203
salesbirdventures@aol.com

Opening Hours:
Monday
10:15am–4:00pm
Tuesday to Saturday
9:00am–4:00pm
Sunday Closed














Restocking our 2nd hand bookstall

We could do with some more book donations for our birds and other nature stall at our indoor events. We have rather a lot of Field Guides to the rest of the world so don't really need any more of those, but we could do with some more reading material from a bit closer to home. If you have any books languishing on your shelves that might suit, bring them along to one of our events or let us know on

nenbc@aol.co.uk

Summary of our annual offer directly below with info after that of upcoming events. Our website is the place to go for the most up to date and detailed info.

-  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

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

INFO FOR ALL WALKS:

Please wear clothing suitable to conditions - footpaths can be muddy at any time of the year - and continue to respect social distancing on the walk if appropriate.

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.

EQUIPMENT: Binoculars are always recommended to gain full enjoyment from your birding and for some of our walks, a scope is definitely useful.

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 Status badges & if you walk or cycle from home, they also count towards your Eco-Badges.

BOOKING: For the Felbrigg Park Walks no booking is required so just turn up on the day if you fancy it, although it is always nice to know to expect you so feel free to let us know! For the other, generally weekend, walks that are led by Janice, booking is essential and numbers are limited to 15. Please book with Janice at least 2 days prior to the walk on janicedarch@gmail.com

Wednesday 16th July | 9.00am-11.00am |
Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk
with Trevor Williams



No advance booking needed

This sociable walk caters for all levels of birding ability so come and give us a try. We take a leisurely stroll around the park and lake, route dependent on the local bird and other wildlife recently reported or likely to be present on the day. We regularly see over 40 bird species on an average walk and even on the 'worst' of days more than 30

MEET: Main car park | **PARKING:** Although access to the grounds is free to all and parking is free in the main car park for National Trust [NT] members with their machine-validated membership card, a parking fee is payable via the machines for non-NT members (£5 per vehicle at time of writing). Sexton's Lodge car park at the western end of the estate however remains free to all users and you can walk up from there along the internal estate road to the start point. | Check out the [NT website](#). | **DISTANCE:** up to 2-mile circular walk | **ACCESSIBILITY:** The walk is usually 'off-road' along dirt footpaths and tracks, across fields, through woods and can include a few stairs by the lake. As such, this event isn't suitable for wheelchair users. | **FACILITIES:** Toilets and café facilities available at Felbrigg Hall. | **BADGES:** Walk within the club area so records count for Star Badges plus Green Eco-badges if non-motorised transport conditions are met.

Future Walks



We advertised the July weekend walk in last month's newsletter as it was pre this newsletter publication, so no walk to advertise this month. Traditionally August is our month off from activities whilst we get our plans in place for the following year. Consequently, no August walks planned but we'll let you know nearer the time if we decide to squeeze an extra one in.

Anyone got any **suggestions for locations for next year's walks** programme? Drop us a line and let us know where you think we should visit and why and what time of year is best. Thank you!

We are hoping to do a **Walks Week** in the autumn **but only if folk would be interested in taking part** as we had lower numbers last time. **Are you up for it?** Also, fancy leading one if we go ahead? You don't have to be a 'regular' walks leader - in fact we would prefer it if you weren't! - just someone enthusiastic who would be willing to take a group of up to 6 folk around a place you like, preferably but not essentially somewhere we don't usually cover in our standard walks programme. Please get in touch!

Anglo-African Bird Migration



- whose birds are these?

NENBC 10th Anniversary Conference

Saturday 14th June 2025 | Gresham Village Hall, Gresham, Norfolk

*Turtle Dove, Pied Flycatcher and
Whinchat artwork courtesy of
James McCallum*

After months of planning by a dedicated group of club members to whom we are so grateful, at last the morning of the 14th of June dawned wonderfully bright and sunny with no rain forecast. We had set most of the hall up the night before so it was with calm and unrushed efficiency (honestly!) that the remaining bits and bobs were sorted (well almost) electricity on following the thunderstorms the night before despite being off in the neighbouring property – *CHECK* (and breathe out!); tables and chairs set up in café form on the patio out the back of the hall – *CHECK*; sound system, laptop and projector wired up and working – *CHECK*; video camera set up and working – *CHECK*; speakers all present (phew!) – *CHECK*; home-made cakes sliced and put out – *CHECK*; tea urns working – *CHECK*; Morrisons' delivery of the buffet lunch arrives – *CHECK* – wait, what, substitutions? ... more on that later!; attendees turn up – *CHECK*; car park and extra spots big enough to cope – *CHECK*; Good to go! **So, on to the event itself**



Setting the Scene

An introduction to the Conference from the NENBC Chair Trevor Williams

“Let me turn to today and the reason we are here.

This Club was formed a decade ago to be a focal point for local birders, to share information and collect data across the 300 square miles of our recording area - you can see our full objectives on the back of your programme and find out more about us from the information board at the back.

But in the room today we have representatives from several more long-established Norfolk bird clubs, other clubs with over 2,000 members or whose origins go back over 100 years - so you might think it rather ambitious or even audacious of us to invite you to join us here, as we celebrate our 10th anniversary.

But there is something far more important for us to consider today... According to research the UK is among the most nature depleted countries on earth - in the bottom 10% and the worst of the ‘so called’ G7 developed nations. The most recent State of Nature reports considers 1 in 6 species is at risk of extinction - birds more so than over taxonomical groups. Declines of some of our iconic species have been dramatic - Turtle Dove down 98% since the nineties, Spotted Flycatchers by two thirds, Cuckoo numbers in ‘free-fall’ - the pattern is similar across most of our summer visitors and annual migrants.

We wanted to put a spot-light on the birds that breed here in Norfolk or further north in Scandinavia or the Arctic and pass through the county to spend their winters in Africa, many in the Sahel south of the Sahara. We want to learn more



about the perils they face on their journeys along the migration fly-ways - the impact of habitat destruction, hunting, climate change and extreme weather events and the loss of food due to changes in agricultural practices.

Hopefully we will hear about the successes of international collaboration to stem the declines and come up with ways we can all help save our birds for future generations. It's time that birders and bird clubs started paying back for the pleasure that birds bring to our lives.

To address the question 'Whose birds are these?' - and whose responsibility is it to help them. Thank you."



"Our Birds in Africa"

Will Cresswell | Professor of Biology | University of St Andrews



Stella Baylis: The starting point was the decline of many of 'our' common migratory species. This was far from a downbeat presentation though! The tedium of much biological fieldwork has led to some amazing insights. It turns out that birds such as Common Whitethroat and Whinchat don't need a large amount of habitat in Africa and individuals are site faithful, even to one small bush.

At the same time, the population exhibits 'low site connectivity' meaning it is spread out over a large area, which is an adaptive response to a variable climate. The migratory journeys appear to be well within their physical capabilities, although the loss of a stop-over site can be problematic. Although these birds are resilient and adaptable, there are limits. Anthropogenic

habitat change in Africa means that suitable habitat patches are decreasing along with the likelihood that an individual hits a good spot to spend the winter. More positively, there is now a substantial evidence base that sustainable development is required – to benefit both migratory and resident African birds. Crucially, the capacity building and training of local ornithologists means that they are now occupying positions in

Governments, NGOs and academia across many African countries.

A key take away was that many of ‘our’ migratory birds are African birds, they are survivors but are reaching their limits, with ongoing work by locally trained ornithologists key to the future.



Lunch and networking

..... food, drink and a chance to chat



Carol Thornton: On such a lovely warm day our delegates were very pleased to have the chance of a sit down outside. The patio area behind the hall worked really well as a food terrace after folk had filtered through the side room where the tables were supporting a veritable feast of sarnies and wraps, salads and dips, fruit and cheese, squashes and juices, the obligatory home-made cakes and biscuits and even some sushi!

There was a bit of an incident though. Returning to those Morrisons’ substitutions Coleslaw in stock and delivered. Potato salad not in stock – potato salad with coleslaw substituted. Vegetarian platter not in stock – coleslaw substituted. We are calling it coleslaw-gate!



“Food was excellent and helped by the weather enabling us to escape outside to eat and socialise.”



Bursary Award - Naffie Sarr

Roger Walsh | Kartong Bird Observatory

Seán Dempster: In January, Roger Walsh gave NENBC members a superb talk about the Kartong Bird Observatory (KBO) in The Gambia. KBO supports several Research Assistants who carry out surveys, education

and conservation activities. One of these Research Assistants is a young lady called Naffie Sarr. At that club meeting, we announced that NENBC was going to provide a Bursary of £1,000 to support Naffie coming to

the UK for 4 months to gain work experience with a variety of organisations including Skokholm Bird Observatory, Rutland Ospreys, Glaslyn Ospreys, the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation White-tailed Eagle reintroduction project on the Isle of Wight and the BTO in Thetford.

After lunch, Roger informed the conference that, very sadly, Naffie's visa application had been denied. UK border control had required a remote interview with Naffie during which she was interviewed in English by someone in Sheffield on behalf of the Government. They asked her difficult questions that she didn't really understand and she struggled to give in depth answers.

KBO has been allowed an appeal which was submitted at the beginning of May and we wait to hear from them. Roger believes that denial of Naffie's visa is due to concern about females finding and marrying a UK resident as KBO has had no problem with the previous two males coming to do voluntary activities in UK. In the meantime, Naffie continues to work for KBO in Kartong along with 4 other Research Assistants. They have been busy doing survey work on colour-ringed birds, ringing activities and conservation awareness in schools.

Even if Naffie doesn't make it to the UK this year, NENBC is committed to providing the Bursary to support her work in The Gambia.



"A really worthwhile initiative by NENBC and the KBO with their dedication to science, training and local engagement. I really hope Naffie's trip will be back on soon."



Juliet Vickery in conversation with Nigel Redman
The BTO CEO and the NENBC President



"It was great to see Juliet waving her copy of our 10th Anniversary Commemorative Book, and referencing points within it during her responses."

Nigel Redman: Juliet has enjoyed a varied and successful career in conservation science, starting with a DPhil on Dippers at the University of Oxford, followed by a post-doc on Brent Geese at the University of East Anglia and a lectureship at the University of Edinburgh. After a short spell of time with Scottish Natural Heritage, she spent ten years at the BTO as Head of the Terrestrial Ecology Unit, leading the BTO's work on the ecology and conservation of farmland birds. Her most recent post, before returning to BTO, was as Head of International Conservation Science at the RSPB. She held this position for 11 years, leading a team of scientists delivering evidence to underpin the conservation of species and sites around the world, most notably West Africa, the UK's overseas territories and South-East Asia.

Nigel started by asking Juliet how she first got interested in birds – which was at university – followed by some questions about farming and what farmers can best do to conserve birds on their land. Juliet was candid and optimistic in her responses. Given the theme of the conference, the conversation quickly switched to West Africa and the threats facing birds that winter in Africa. The BTO has been heavily involved in monitoring migrant

birds for many years, especially in West Africa, and new insights are being discovered all the time. The Cuckoo's migration is perhaps the flagship species of this work but many other species, including small passerines, are now revealing the secrets of their migration routes and strategies. As we are only too aware now, birds breeding in the UK should not really be regarded as British birds as they spend more time away from our shores.

Nigel also asked Juliet for her views on UK environmental policy, now that we are no longer part of the European Union, and the role of citizen science in helping to understand birds. On a lighter note, Juliet was asked if conservation was done differently by women – both the RSPB and BTO are currently led by women. Inevitably, in some ways it is, but in others not. The subject of the BTO's environmental credentials also came under scrutiny (for example, staff are only allowed to fly to meetings or conferences in exceptional circumstances).

Finally, we learnt about Juliet's local patch in the fens of Cambridgeshire and her own birding activities. But Juliet's passions extend beyond birds, and we heard about her love of cycling, swimming and running, and indeed she is an accomplished triathlete.



“Conserving birds that move between the UK and Africa”

Wenceslas Gatarabirwa | Head of Flyway Conservation | RSPB



“As an NWT volunteer on the reserve at Cley on Sunday I looked at the Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler and others with greater admiration than ever.”

Andy Clarke: Wenceslas gave us a talk that was wide-ranging in both geographic scope and subject matter. The heart of the approach to conserving migratory birds is the flyway: considering all the places that birds live, be it to breed, to stop-over or to winter, is the only way that we can adequately conserve them. We need larger, better and joined-up conservation landscapes in all the key locations to support birds that are frequently on the move, covering thousands of miles, and doing so twice a year. Essential to this is the BirdLife International

family of NGOs which allows UK conservation organisations such as RSPB to have very natural allies in most of countries covered by the flyway programme. In 2015 it was decided to form the BirdLife's East Atlantic Flyway Initiative (EAFI) with around 40 organisations represented. The wide geographic range of the talk was emphasised by describing work in Iceland on birds that breed there but which we host in winter, before moving to talk about birds which breed with us in UK but which winter in Africa. Here it was important to involve the

local people in any initiative, based on a knowledge of and respect for how those local communities work. There were encouraging examples of how this approach had engaged people and led to positive outcomes. There is hope yet for our beleaguered birds.

A key take-away for many of us in the audience was a wonderful reflection from an African birder, who described Europe as the motherland for many species, but Africa as the fatherland.



Panel Question and Answer Session

Will, Juliet and Wenceslas in a lively discussion chaired by NENBC's Richard Porter



"It was great to see the young members of the audience participating so confidently in this session when asked about how clubs can better engage with a new generation of birders."

Alan Stevens: Richard started by asking the panellists for their favourite bird, with Juliet opting for Dipper, Wenceslas Skylark and Will whatever bird he was looking at that moment! Then it was onto a whole range of questions that had been submitted by members in advance or which developed from discussions on the day. Topics covered included the relationship to climate change and habitat availability of species declines in Norfolk; the changing migratory behaviour of both common species and vagrants and how this could impact conservation initiatives; views on the potential of creating a coordinated network of patch-birders so their observation data can supplement that from bird observatories; the pros and cons of advancements in the use of technologies such as Merlin and AIs; how birders can make a difference to conservation initiatives and objectives; the potential impact on conservation of changes in government environmental policies. As you

would expect, a range of answers from the panellists but with common threads rooted in their own experiences and visions and hopes for the future. The subject that caught the attention of many was how to broaden the reach of bird clubs so that they appeal more to those not currently involved in birding or associated conservation, particularly young people. We heard from a county bird club who has made huge inroads into youth engagement in recent years by listening to what they wanted and in that vein, we also listened to the views of the three young folk in the audience who gave some great advice on what they thought could work.

All in all, a very interesting session of audience participation and lively discussion with a lovely panel and all led admirably by Richard. Thank you all.



Conference Close

Closing remarks from the NENBC Vice-Chair Andy Clarke

After presentations to the panel with thanks from us – including a pot of coleslaw each - Andy closed the formal sessions by remarking that events like these do not organise themselves, and that huge thanks are due to a number of people who helped make the day a success. In particular, enormous thanks to the catering team, the diligent car-park attendants and the organising team, all of whom put in stellar performances (pun intended). That the food and drink worked smoothly (apart perhaps from the commercial supplier taking it upon themselves to provide industrial quantities of coleslaw), nobody crashed or got stuck in the car-park and the logistics all worked seamlessly is a vindication of a great deal of hard work.

The event itself has been a huge success. We were treated to entertaining talks which managed perfectly to deliver some hard science in an engaging and informative way, and also to insightful discussions at lunchtime and at the end. It was particularly pleasing to hear about African birds from an African perspective. I think we all learned something today, and now it's time for a farewell drink.



Drinks reception Unwinding after a successful event

It was great that so many folk stayed for a drink and chat afterwards. It was also a chance for those who had been involved organising all day to relax and unwind alongside attendees and speakers after a busy day. And of course we had a chance to get rid of more of that coleslaw!

A huge thank you to everyone who rolled up for the event – members, guests (including from other Norfolk wildlife clubs), speakers, the contributors - the team that made it happen and to Tasso Leventis for his generous contribution.



North East Norfolk Bird Club

Anglo-African Bird Migration



- whose birds are these?

Saturday 14th June - 10.30 - 16.30
Gresham Village Hall NR11 8RT

BlueSky: @nenbc.bsky.social

website: www.nenbc.co.uk

Contributors



Juliet Vickery is Chief Executive of the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU). In a varied career Juliet has worked for the RSPB and Scottish Natural Heritage. She has a particular interest in the conservation of birds in West Africa and the UK. Juliet has received several awards for her conservation work. In her spare time she swims, cycles & runs and birds her local patch Cambridge Heathlands

Will Cresswell has been watching and recording birds in the field since he was 12. He has studied the hunting behaviour of Sparrowhawks, Peregrines and Merlin and the anti-predation behaviour of their prey, the life history of tropical birds, migration and dispersal, and the life history of tropical birds in agricultural habitats. He is currently Professor of Biology at the University of St Andrews, where he also lectures in ecology and conducts conservation-based research. Will has been researching what determines the density and distribution of Palearctic migrants in West Africa since 1994, and his garden list: 2,515; 245 and 145 respectively, but all are works in progress



Wenceslas Gatarabirwa started birding in his native Rwanda in 1991 and trained in bird ringing with the Nairobi Ringing Group a few years later. In 1998 he completed a Master's degree in Applied Ecology and Conservation at UEA (Cambridge). In 2000 he joined BirdLife International (self-employment) where he worked for six years. After ten years International Conservation Officer in Africa. He was then promoted to Head of Flyway Partners in Africa. He was then current extra responsibilities include serving as Chair of the Pan-African Ornithological Congress to be held in Marrakesh in 2027, and as a member of the African Bird Club

Conference Schedule

10.30 - coffee on arrival
Conference introduction - **Trevor Williams** NENBC Chair
11.00 - 12.00 - **Will Cresswell** University of St Andrews - 'Our birds in Africa'
12.00 - 12.45 - lunch & networking
13.00 - 13.45 - **Juliet Vickery** CEO BTO - in conversation with **Nigel Redman** NENBC President
14.00 - 15.00 - **Wenceslas Gatarabirwa** RSPB 'Conserving birds that move between the UK and Africa - a multi-pronged approach'
15.00 - 15.30 - tea
15.30 - 16.30 - Panel Q & A and discussion - Chaired by **Richard Porter**
Conference close - **Andy Clarke** NENBC Vice-Chair
Followed by drinks reception - 16.45 - 18.00

Catering

If you have any food please talk to a member of the catering team. Refreshments are provided and any donations would be appreciated.

This conference was made possible by a generous donation from Tasso Leventis

Thanks to NENBC members, speakers and contributors who have helped deliver this event

Donations made by John Hurst from sale of 10th anniversary painting

Programme artwork by James McCallum

The NENBC objectives:

- Encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching in North East Norfolk
- Put the interests of birds first and respect other people, whether or not they are interested in birds, in line with the birdwatchers' code
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all its activities
- Share information between members
- Promote the conservation of birds and wildlife within Norfolk
- Administer the Club in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Liaise with other conservation groups within the local area and beyond
- Organise indoor and outdoor meetings and special events throughout the year

www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club







"The topic was relevant, interesting and had consequences for birders in Norfolk."

"It was a privilege to be invited and to attend."

"The quality of the speakers and their presentations were excellent"

"The talks were excellent and of course the speakers were amazing. And the refreshments were amazing too! I can't wait to attend more club events and go on some of the walks."

"The best thing was that I found the speakers very uplifting. We hear so much bad news about the environment that it's easy to get despondent. It was great to get a dose of optimism."

"It was a very considerate action to invite representatives from other Norfolk bird clubs."

"It was memorably good. So impressive that a young Club like ours can mount an event with speakers of the calibre you laid on."

"I enjoyed this very much and took away a number of things. It puts seeing whitethroats and stonechats sticking near individual shrubs in a whole new context!."

"All the people I talked to thought it was a great day and personally I thought the science was brilliant and I would never have guessed that some of our summer visitors wintered in a single bush! It makes you look at habitats differently."

"Congratulations to everybody involved in yesterday's conference. A really interesting and stimulating day, with an opportunity to catch up with many old friends from yesteryear."

"There was a lovely, warm atmosphere!"

"It was a fantastic opportunity, and we really appreciate the effort you and your team put into making it such a valuable and welcoming experience."

"I was so impressed with the conference, the ethos of the club and the work some members are doing."

"The speakers were extremely good both in expressing their presentations and in their state of the art knowledge and expertise and the day ran very well."

"I was greatly impressed by the energy and imagination of all concerned in creating this meeting and would very much like to join the NENBC."

"What a great day yesterday!"

"It was thought provoking and stimulating: excellent knowledgeable speakers."

"We were thrilled to have attended. I ran a walk the day after and there were several people there that had attended the conference. There was much talk about how everyone had enjoyed the day!"

"I was on a NNNs walk at Ken Hill with several people who were at the conference. There were so many positive comments throughout the day and discussing points on the farm coming from the talks whilst discussing the rewilding and regenerative successes."

"It was a resounding success, in my view, and I did thoroughly enjoy it."

"A really rewarding event!"

"It was a brilliant event. The speakers were engaging and informative - I learned a lot. The organisation was superb and the catering was super-generous. I also welcomed the opportunity to catch up with people I already know and to introduce myself to others to discuss points of common interest or ideas."

"I should like to send a very warm thank you to all of you who arranged Saturday's conference as well as your three excellent speakers, and your indefatigable catering team of ladies who fed us exceedingly well, and often!"

"I felt proud to be an attendee."

"It really was a fitting way to celebrate our 10th anniversary. NENBC is surely the best local bird club in Britain! Here's to the next ten years!"





By Dave Billham

When writing these walk reports I am normally concerned with the number of species of bird we are able to find, not the number of club members in the group (other than an initial count). This time, however, was a little bit different, as the question of the morning turned out to be – “how many are in the group now?” Also a bit different - it was a bright, sunny and warm morning (a description not often written here) that greeted the fourteen members in the car park, waiting for the nine-o'clock start time. Looking around at who was present most of us thought that we must be late setting off, as Val and Nick, traditionally a wee bit tardy, were stood amongst us. But no, they are now a “new and reformed couple” (Val’s words) with punctuality as a key trait! Trevor’s briefing warned us that June is traditionally a quiet month, so if the bird numbers were down, butterflies and dragonflies would be on the agenda. The car park list bore out his words, with only **Jackdaw**, **Rook** and **Woodpigeon** seen, and **Chaffinch** and **Goldfinch** heard singing. Trevor also said that we would visit the park’s restored area of heathland during the walk; normally a quiet area bird-wise, but you just never know. Carol, as ever, would be keeping an eye on everyone from the rear of the group.

Before we left the car park Trevor announced he was checking the house for Pied Wagtail, but nothing was found. As we started walking towards the woods behind the house a shout from a member of the public alerted us to a late arrival, so Carol left us to wait for them; on her return we were now fifteen in number – welcome Bernie! Val asked me if I had **Pied Wagtail** on the list; she had seen one on the house. When I replied that Trevor had said there wasn’t one, she told me that she had been looking at it when she heard Trevor

mention it, so presumed he had. I left them to sort that one out! We soon found our first butterfly species, Meadow Brown, in the short grass. A **Blackbird** was singing loudly from the nearby trees, but we could not see it. Passing the dovecote a **Feral Pigeon** was noted circling over the gardens, otherwise it was rather quiet.

Once into the woods proper it became all about what we could hear. As we slowly wandered along the sun-dappled tracks, we heard singing **Chiffchaff**, **Wren**, **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit**, **Coal Tit**, **Stock Dove**, **Nuthatch** and **Robin**, and the calls of **Treecreeper** and **Long-tailed Tit**, this last species being the only one we properly saw, despite much searching. Arriving at the heath, recently restored by the National Trust, Trevor remarked that the Western Hemlock trees, which had covered the area for many decades, appeared to be taking over once more, as saplings are rapidly springing up again. **Linnet** and **Blackcap** could both be heard singing, and we also heard a single call from an airborne **Common Buzzard**.



Otherwise it was all about butterflies, with the following identified as we moved across the heath and

into the adjacent woods; Red Admiral, Ringlet, Comma, Small Skipper, Small Copper, Large and Small Whites and a probable Green-veined White. Also found was a Southern Hawker dragonfly, along with a Common Darter, which despite being sat on the ground right in front of us was very hard to find until you got your eye in!

At this point we realised that we were getting short of time to visit the lake, and also had a very small list for the walk so far. The decision was made to backtrack on our route and speed up the pace; Trevor asked Carol to start heading lake-wards and he would catch up. This she did, but not everyone had got the new plan and the group got split into three parts. The part I was in was fairly whizzing along, and we had passed at least two junctions in the path when it was realised some were missing. A phone call from Carol revealed she had one other with her, however we were missing five! After some to-ing and fro-ing we managed to reassemble everyone, and set off again for the lake at a quick pace. Mutterings of 'route march' were heard, but there were birds to find!



"The group that didn't get lost!" Trevor

Emerging from the woods by the ice pond we found a lone **Moorhen**, and we paused to search for more dragonflies, with Broad-bodied Chaser found, along with an Azure Blue damselfly.

Following the path above the water meadows, we saw a Buzzard being energetically mobbed by a **Kestrel**, which was showing no signs of giving up any time soon! A pair of **Swift**



overhead were a welcome sight, as was a **Carrion Crow** on the grass in the field.



Bumping into Carol's Ken, he told us that there was a **Little Egret** on the lake, and so it proved when we arrived, finding it sat patiently in a tree. This is the first sighting of this species on a club monthly walk since I started writing these reports in early 2022. Also present were **Mallard** and a single **Tufted Duck**, along with a hybrid Tufted Duck; of the swans, however, there was no sign. A singing **Skylark** was picked up, being the only other species noted in the area of the lake. We did manage to collect another two members here though; they had arrived after we left and decided to intercept us en-route. A good plan, but our increased pace had thrown them.



Leaving the lake we heard a **Reed Bunting** calling from the reeds, and the scratchy song of a **Whitethroat** from some scrub, this being the final species noted for the walk. A total of **31 species** for the two hours, this being fairly typical for June, but with lots of butterflies and some dragonflies as a consolation. Coffee and cake in the café in the sunshine as a finisher; what more could you ask for!



June's Weekend Club Walk

Weeting Heath and Lakenheath | 7th June



By Janice Darch

A Yellow weather warning for rain and thunder- here we go again and its our Breckland Day! The day dawned sunny in north Norfolk but we ran into abit of rain on the drive to Weeting Heath. Nothing too bad and so the day went on. Hold your nerve, it'll be OK, and it was apart from one little shower when we weren't near to shelter. I was sad to have to tell the group that I had heard from several sources that the Stone Curlews had had their nest predated and had departed some time ago. Weeting was worth 45 minutes despite no Stone Curlews though but even so we scanned in the hope that one or both may have reappeared. However we drew a negative but we were greeted by a pair of obliging Marsh Tits and also saw Blue and Great Tits, Chaffinch, Mistle Thrush, Lapwings, Shelduck, Rook, Jackdaw and Curlew. *(Weeting pics from NWT website)*

Moving on to Lakenheath, where I planned to spend the majority of our morning , we soon increased our list of species seen list firstly with passerines on the feeders, where we added Goldfinch, Wren, Robin, Common White Throat, Reed Bunting and Chiffchaff. On the Visitor Centre scrape we saw the first of several Moorhen, Coot and Little Grebe. During our walk to the first hide we first heard and then saw the first of several Cuckoos. Hobbies, Sedge Warblers and Wood Pigeons were showing too. The Fen Hide provided shelter during a heavy shower and we happily watched Great Crested Grebe chicks and adults. A Kingfisher shot across from the water and into the wood as we regained the main path. I later learned from the warden that the Kingfishers were nesting in the wood. We scoped a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers on our way to Joist Fen where we had views of Little and Great White Egrets, Grey Heron, Marsh Harrier, a Buzzard, Swifts, Black headed and Herring Gulls and more Hobbies. The riverside walk was pretty quiet but new were Mute Swans. Groups of Mallard flew over. The scrapes towards Hockwold were productive with Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Gadwall, Avocet, Swallow, a Common Tern and a pair of Stonechat. During the walk the 5 of us saw 52 bird species which was a pleasing total given the unseasonable weather.



A bonus photo of our official photographer for the day Nick who, allegedly due to the rain and the gloom, forgot to switch his phone camera off 'selfie' before starting!



Birding through the year in Norfolk

Comments on some interesting observations

March 2025



By Moss Taylor

This year Moss is going to give us a commentary inspired by some of his interesting sightings around Norfolk during each month, a great pointer for some of the birds and features we can all be looking out for with a nice bit of background. Here is his June offering

June 10th | Grey Heron eating rabbit - Weybourne Camp

The Birds of the Western Palearctic lists the food of the Grey Heron as chiefly fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects and small mammals (water shrew, water vole and mole), but does not include rabbits. However, two videos have been posted on-line of a Grey Heron eating a dead young rabbit, on one occasion dipping into the water to make it easier to swallow, and another video of one eating a young rabbit while it was still alive. So my observation of one attempting to swallow a dead young rabbit by Weybourne Hope reed bed was not unique.

I watched it making repeated attempts to manipulate the rabbit into a position from which it could get it into its bill, both with its neck bent towards the ground and with it extended, but with no success. Eventually it flew off with the rabbit, crosswise in its bill presumably to try again elsewhere. Demonstrating that it is not always necessary to see a rare or unusual bird to make it the highlight of an otherwise uneventful morning. *The accompanying photo was taken at Weybourne Camp on June 10th.*



June 28th | Juvenile Cuckoo - Weybourne Camp

This year, Cuckoos have been conspicuous by their absence on Weybourne Camp compared with 2024, when 1-2 were present throughout the summer. So far this year, only two, possibly three, have been seen: an adult in late May and early June, and a single juvenile. Whereas in the rest of the NENBC area, roughly the same number of adults have been recorded up to the end of June in 2024 and 2025.

Therefore I was delighted to find a juvenile near the scrape on Weybourne Camp on June 28th, which I think was probably a juvenile rufous morph. The Common Cuckoo is one of five species of cuckoo in which a rufous morph occurs, and the adult females are unmistakable with their bright chestnut upperparts. However, the juveniles can be more difficult to assign to their colour morph, as only the tips of the feathers are brown. Over the years, I have been fortunate enough to find several of these rufous morphs, both adult females and juveniles, on the Camp.

Adult Cuckoos from the BTO radio-tagging project are already making their way south through France and I suspect that the juvenile on the Camp probably fledged further north and was on its southward journey, as it was not present the following day. *The accompanying photo of an adult female rufous morph Cuckoo was taken at Weybourne Camp on 15th May 2017.*



June | Buzzards nesting - Weybourne Camp.

While occasional pairs of Buzzards nested in Norfolk in the 19th century, they were still surprisingly scarce in the 1950s with an average of only six records per year. Increasing numbers of migrants began to appear in the 1970s, then in the 1980s a few overwintered with a pair remaining during the summer in 1984. However, it was not until 1992 that a pair nested at an undisclosed site in central Norfolk – the first successful breeding in the 20th century.

In 1994 the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology began a release scheme in Norfolk with two artificial nests constructed in Sheringham Park, in which a total of five small, translocated nestlings were placed, all fitted with radio-transmitters. To avoid

human imprinting, they were fed from below by a pipe-and-plunger feeding system, operated several times each day by John Wallis, a local Weybourne birder. Four of the nestlings successfully fledged and it was from these and subsequent releases, that the current population originated, as well as incomers from other counties. During the next two years, these radio-tagged Buzzards were frequently seen over Weybourne Camp.

Buzzards first nested on the Camp in 2016, in a tree on the south side of the mound. Unfortunately military activity in the area disturbed the pair and no eggs were laid, and a similar story unfolded the following year when the pair built a nest in the Muckleburgh Collection plantation. However, successful nesting was first recorded in 2018 when a pair raised a single fledgling from a nest in a pine in the plantation by the scrape. In 2020, the same pair nested in the pine plantation by the Muckleburgh Collection fledging two young, and have done so annually since then, including this year, and it is now possible to see the family party of two adults and two juveniles hunting on and over the Camp. *The accompanying photo of a juvenile Buzzard was taken at Weybourne Camp on 11th July 2021.*



NENBC Alerts: WhatsApp Group

April to June 2025



By Tony Forster

Update for the NENBC Whatsapp Alert group covering April 1st to June 30th, three months in which there has been both a veritable feast of exceptional records and periods of complete silence so much so that The Norfolk Bird News group put out a message confirming the group was working but no one was posting to it.

Membership remains steady at 67 and it was good to see some new faces posting sightings.

April started off with an easy **Long-eared Owl** which performed brilliantly and rumour has it there may even have been 2 before it all went quiet. Beeston Bump delivered what is probably the best trio of sightings in one day ever, starting off with a **White-tailed Eagle** followed by **Booted Eagle** and rounding off the day with **Red-rumped Swallow** which unfortunately though it had been present since just after 6pm news didn't get out but at least there are pictures. This was followed by a plethora of good birds, **Mandarin, Osprey, Little-ringed Plover, Crane, Hoopoe, Hen Harrier, Bee-eater, Red-backed Shrike** and **Bluethroat** when on May 25th **Booted Eagle** was rediscovered ranging from Kelling, Weybourne, Kelling Heath and finally Letheringsett and Bayfield before drifting off towards Glandford never to be seen again, there were a couple of hours at least where it was in and out of the club area enabling many club members to catch up with it. Things quietened down for a couple of days when news of a singing **Marsh Warbler** at Weybourne escaped on the 27th which luckily for myself, Brian Shaw and Andrew Kershaw flew over the car park as we waited in the drizzle. Only an optimist would have anticipated more goodies and so it was as a **Common Rosefinch** was initially heard at the scrape on Weybourne camp, later showing itself intermittently in the morning and again late afternoon. A **Quail** was heard before yet another outstanding bird was discovered on June 1st, many thanks to Bob Cobbold for doing the detective work and to John Hurst who arranged access allowing myself, TW and JH to enjoy, at times, views at less than 40 feet. Those seeing the bird initially were restricted to very limited viewing or in flight but either way they all count. June has been very quiet but still managed to add a **Nightjar**, Beeston Common, and **Rose-coloured Starling** at Melton Constable to complete an outstanding quarter.

In all 9 new species were added to the group list bringing the total to 125 which could have been 129 had Black Kite, Holt, Honey Buzzard, Golden Oriole and Eleonora's Falcon been seen by club members.

July to September is likely to be very quiet in comparison but you never know what might turn up so here's hoping...

NENBC ALERTS

An NENBC members-only group to share news of interesting birds within the club area.

Please share records of species early/late dates, notable counts, scarce and rare birds.

Be mindful of potential rare breeding birds, sensitive locations and locations with no public access.

Please post news in a single message and keep messages to bird news ONLY, this is not a chat group.

The Norfolk Recorder may extract records for the bird report, please be as accurate as you can with locations and dates.



In the genes? Birding down the female line

By Val Stubbs

I grew up in a family dominated by women – I have two sisters, no brothers, my Dad was on shift work so often not around, while my Mum was a force to be reckoned with. Both my parents were keen on nature and we spent much of our time outside, exploring the world, getting mucky and experiencing things for ourselves. My mother (top right) was a keen birdwatcher and my sister (bottom right) – four years older than me (middle right) – was obsessed by birds: whilst most two-year-olds might know the word “bird”, she had already mastered the ID of common garden birds such as Blackbird, Robin, Blue Tit. Later in life she went on to volunteer for the RSPB and ended up working for them as a teacher naturalist. So there I had two female birders as role models, and it seemed an entirely natural and indeed unremarkable thing for me to do. As I became increasingly interested in birdwatching, I joined the YOC (Young Ornithologists’ Club) and was given my first pair of binoculars at the age of 13. However, while I would watch birds in the garden or seen whilst out walking, and occasionally go to a bird reserve, birdwatching was very much a side interest, with my focus on languages, reading and academia. When I married it was a pleasure to share my love of birds with Nick, and when we had children of our own, it was a joy to show them birds too.



Roll on 25 years and we moved to Norfolk, with more birdwatching one of our ambitions – how could it not be, with Cley on our doorstep? Here, Len Bentley introduced me to the North East Norfolk Bird Club. Now you may not know that Len was my uncle, and it was he who had started the birdwatching ball rolling: Len and his sisters were evacuated to Walton-on-the-Naze where they spent the harsh winter of 1939-1940 and Len became fascinated by the strange dead thrushes with red under their wings that he found. Though again, there was a female influence, as it was my grandmother that decided to give him The Observer Book of British Birds for Christmas. Len later gave my Mum an old pair of his binoculars.

But I digress... Since joining NENBC, birdwatching has metamorphosed from an idle interest into a passion for me. Although I would not describe myself as a twitcher, I have certainly started watching the website (and more recently the Rare and Scarce Birds WhatsApp feed) and going out to see if I can find the bird. And I have discovered that I am in the minority, with the vast majority of “serious” birders turning out to be men. This has been quite a revelation to me, but I am pleased to say that I have almost universally found them to be welcoming and happy to share their knowledge, though I can’t deny it can be a bit intimidating to turn up in a field and find yourself one of only a couple of females in a sea of male birders. More recently it seems to me that there are increasing numbers of women in amongst them, so perhaps reality is catching up with my lived experience!

Following on from Val’s thoughts, here’s some musings by [Lucy McRobert](#) entitled [Imposter Syndrome](#) posted on [Birdguides](#) on 26th February 2025, originally published in the November 2024 edition of [Birdwatch](#) magazine.

“A few weeks ago, I made a grave error. I was talking to my boss at The Sound Approach, Mark, about birds and flippantly commented that I was ‘a bit thick’.

Twenty minutes later, he hadn’t drawn breath. All I could do was mutter a few apologetic ‘mums’ in response to a friendly but sincere telling off. Of course, he was entirely right. I’d made a self-deprecating remark as a joke, a way of deflecting attention from deep insecurities and a serious case of imposter syndrome. I’d fallen into the classic trap, largely (but not exclusively) occupied by women, of

disparaging myself before someone else could: a fine line between humour, modesty and self-criticism.

‘What man made you feel like you were thick?’ he demanded. Ouch. Right again.

When I started birding, aged 20 or so, I knew nothing about birds. My British list racked up quickly, giving me a sense of achievement, but the actual time I devoted to studying birds, learning about them, reading and researching, was limited. I’m a much better sociologist than biologist, so was equally enamoured by the hobby and the birders as I was the birds.

Part of my issue was that I didn't work hard enough to find my own learning style. I was taught shortcuts that I now know to be lazy: Baird's Sandpiper looks like Weetabix and Black-tailed Godwits like freshwater. These may be useful pointers, but they didn't help me learn. Juvenile Baird Sandpipers don't look like breakfast cereal, and why is that Black-tailed Godwit on a brackish marsh?

I don't think any man ever said "you're stupid" to me. But there were times I was blanked when I asked a question about birds. Or when I would get on to a bird first, point it out and be ignored. Or when I had to miss a bird or leave the field quickly to resume mum duties. I've been patronised in bird hides by strangers. I've been made to feel guilty for seeing a bird that someone else hadn't, as if I didn't deserve it. On occasion, I was scoffed at for not knowing something. I was advised not to participate in certain events in case I showed myself up. I've been criticised online and via email for writing this column.

Some of these things aren't necessarily intentional, but my response was simple. I'd go quiet, the introvert in me winning out. I became so afraid of getting it wrong that even now, if asked my opinion about a bird, I fall silent and feel anxious. My boyfriend, James, asked me what my favourite bird sounds were. I couldn't answer. I was afraid that there was a right and wrong response, and that I might make an idiot of myself. Logically, I know this is foolish, but years of imposter

syndrome will do that. Even though I have huge respect for the various rarities committees around the country, I would struggle to submit a rarity form, because I couldn't handle my work being 'marked' by (sorry!) men. Silly, eh? Fortunately, I don't go outside enough to find many rare birds, so no worries there!

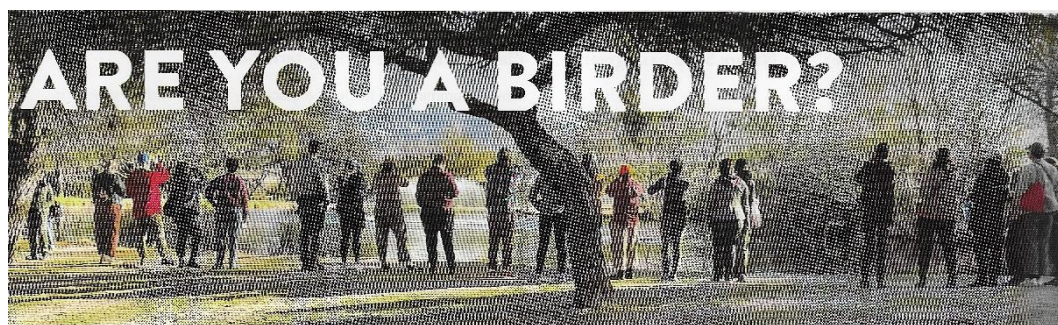
At The Sound Approach, I listen to conversations that many birders would give their binoculars to hear. It is a privilege and I learn a little more every day. Naturally, I feel even more stupid. How do they know so much? But I have opportunities to research and ask questions, and James and my colleagues are helping my confidence to grow. I am finding my own learning style that involves understanding and observation, not catchy shortcuts.

I've nearly completed my 10th year as a Birdwatch columnist. I'm grateful the team has stuck with me. A decade ago, when I was given the opportunity, there were plenty of dissenting voices (there still are). I agree – there are much better birders who could potentially fill this page. One person dislikes me so much that he must've resigned his Birdwatch subscription about 18 times. I joke, but it takes immense willpower not to let it bother me.

So I'm sorry, Mark. I'm not thick, and I won't say it again. He gave me a badge just to drive the point home, and I read it often. It says: 'Who suffers from imposter syndrome?' I do."

Interesting reading, perhaps resonating with some of us sadly. But did you know that the original members of the RSPB were all women? And we now have Beccy Speight in charge at the RSPB and Juliet Vickery over at the BTO. Whilst we were away on holidays in Arizona earlier this year, I picked up a copy of the '**Vermilion Flycatcher**', the quarterly magazine of the Tucson Bird Alliance, from the Paton Centre for Hummingbirds in Patagonia. I was intrigued when browsing that evening that there seemed to be quite a lot of female input. A quick look at their Board of Directors list revealed all four officer posts were held by women as were three of the other seven board members roles. The magazine designer was female and of the 16 articles, 10 were written by women. Food for thought definitely. Here's an article from that Spring 2025 publication.

Over the years at NENBC we have run our 3-evening **Birding for Beginners** series of workshops on seven occasions with over 80 alumni and we have received only positive feedback from those who used it as a confidence booster or springboard for their birding journeys. We hope to run another one next year spring but it obviously depends on whether there are enough of you out there who want to come along. We have only had limited interest expressed over the past couple of years so haven't run the programme since 2023. If this is something that you think you would benefit from – and not just women! – then please let us know and we will work to get some dates pencilled in that would suit.



Feminist Bird Club, Tucson Chapter, Jennie Duberstein

If I asked, "What makes someone a great birder?" how would you respond? Perhaps you think of someone who has a large number on their life list? Possibly you picture a person who can identify many birds by sight and sound? Or maybe someone who leads birding field trips and tours? I subscribe to Kenn Kaufman's perspective of what makes someone a great birder. To paraphrase his words, the act of birding is something we do for enjoyment—if you enjoy it, you are a good birder. If you REALLY enjoy it, you are a great birder.

That's it. If you enjoy looking at or listening to birds, you are not only already a birder, but you are a good one. And if you really enjoy it, you are a great birder. It doesn't take anything more than that.



Feminist Bird Club, Tucson Chapter, Jennie Duberstein

In late 2021, as we were starting to tentatively gather in outdoor spaces again, I was fortunate to be part of the team that founded the Tucson Chapter of the Feminist Bird Club ([INSTAGRAM.COM/FBC.TUCSON](https://www.instagram.com/fbc.tucson)) which serves to make birding and the outdoors more inclusive and affirming to people who may not have safe access to it. We began offering monthly "Second Sunday" outings at different locations in the greater Tucson area.

There are many things that make our Second Sunday Outings different than your standard birding field trip, but the most obvious to me is who attends—people who have not felt welcomed or safe in other birding spaces, and people who are too shy about their "beginning" birding skills to join a field trip led by an official bird club. We always have at least a

few people who are formally birding for the very first time, and the vast majority of participants have been interested in birds for less than two years. I start our outings by asking, "Who here is a birder?" A few people tentatively raise their hands, looking around shyly, as if someone might challenge them. Most of the group remains still, hands at their sides. I follow up by asking, "Who here likes looking at or listening to birds? All hands raise. "Who REALLY likes looking at birds?" All hands remain raised. You can see where this is going. Everyone is, of course, shocked to learn that not only are they already birders, they are already GREAT birders, even if they have never been on a field trip or used binoculars and don't know how to identify a single species.

We tend to think of "birding" as going into the field with expensive gear like binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras, and traveling to see brightly-colored birds in distant lands. And that absolutely is one way that birding happens. But birding can also be looking out your window at White-winged Doves. It can be waiting at the bus stop and enjoying the busy, small birds moving about in a nearby mesquite tree, even if you can't identify them. It can be walking your dog in the park and enjoying the ducks swimming in the water. The simple fact is that just by enjoying birds, you are engaging in the act of birding.

Thinking back to a 1/3 of Americans birding, I'd guess that many of them do not have fancy equipment, don't have thousands of species on their life lists, and don't participate in birding tours. But they maintain bird feeders in their yards, plant gardens to benefit birds and other wildlife, vote in support of people and policies that support conservation, and generally enjoy looking at and listening to birds wherever they encounter them. This does not make them any less "great" than someone with 6,000 species on their life list. It just highlights the wonderfully different ways in which someone can be a birder.



Jennie Duberstein is a wildlife biologist and conservation social scientist who builds partnerships for bird and habitat conservation across the United States and northwest Mexico. She has also worked with young birders for many years, helping to connect them with opportunities and each other. A past member of the Tucson Bird Alliance Board of Directors, Jennie has lived in Southeast Arizona since 2001.

Everyone Has a Nature Book in Them

An invitation to write, reflect, and share the stories only you can tell



By Steven Sonsino

If you were awake at the NENBC members' evening a while back, I shared a short presentation with a simple message: if you love birds and nature, you're probably sitting on a book's worth of stories – even if you don't know it yet.

Think about it: some of us in the club have birded the same patch for decades. We know every turn of the seasons, every returning migrant, every change in the calls and habits of our familiar birds. Others are experts in a single species or sound, able to pick out a contact call in the wind, or even in the dark. (Andy, I'm looking at you.) Some of us are adventurers, with birding stories from the far corners of the world, and some simply have a magical gift for noticing – and recording – what's happening in the garden, the woods, or on the Norfolk Coast Path.

The thing is, the most powerful nature writing isn't necessarily about science or statistics. It's about *connection*. Whether it's seasonal diaries, species profiles, funny encounters, field notes, or quiet reflections, great nature writing comes from personal experience – and our club is full of this experience. (*Bee-eater Diary*, anyone?)

Don't believe me? Try the **Bookshelf Experiment**. Next time you're in a bookshop with a nature section – the one at Cley NWT is a good place to start – take a look at the books on offer. You'll see they tend to fall into four familiar themes: **places, species, people, and planet**. Flip through the tables of contents and you'll find they're not that different from the kinds of observations and stories you probably already jot down in notebooks or share over tea after a walk. Your voice, your patch, your experiences – that's the story.

We've got some great authors and publishers in the club – Moss Taylor for one and of course Nigel Redman. Huge experience, **right there! But Jacqueline and I believe that many more people in NENBC could write a nature book – and should. We've been through the process and know it's**

more accessible than ever. Whether you want to write a memoir, a personal diary, a photographic journal, or something hybrid, you *can* do it – and we're happy to help. You don't need to be a 'writer'. You just need stories and the desire to share them. (Can't write? No worries. My sister-in-law dictated her book into her phone!)

So we're proposing a low-key, low-pressure writing circle. A few of us could meet up (in person or online), share ideas, and read each other's work for friendly feedback and encouragement. Writing's always easier when someone's cheering you on.

If there's enough interest, we could even run a workshop this summer. Think tea, cake, maybe something stronger, and a walk-through of how to get your book from your head (or notebook) onto a printed page. We can explain how to use platforms like Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, IngramSpark, or BookVault – tools that let you publish without spending a penny upfront.

What this means is your book can be printed on demand, so if someone wants to buy yours, they just order it online and it's shipped straight to them. No boxes in your garage!

We're not promising you a bestseller. But we *are* promising that writing about the birds, places, and people you love will be one of the most rewarding things you ever do.

If this sounds even a little bit interesting – whether you're curious, nervous, or already drafting your first chapter – drop me a line at steven@stevensonsino.com. We'd love to hear from you. And if enough people are keen, we'll set up that summer session at Gresham Village Hall – maybe with a small donation to cover room hire and snacks.

Let's tell our stories. Let's inspire each other. And let's put NENBC on the map not just as great birders – but great nature writers, too.

Cromer Peregrine Project

The 2025 Season ...



By Jane Crossen

So, as of 6th July the really good news is that all three safely (eventually!) fledged juveniles are doing extremely well. They are following exactly the same pattern as the previous seven years (six years in reality as we were obviously unable to monitor the 2020 birds away from the webcam and after they'd fledged). They are now invariably located around the church – on ledges or the pinnacles – so excellent views from the watchpoint which will be open until at least the end of July – and then it will be more of an ad hoc basis throughout August. We've had excellent viewing numbers and excellent donations this year. Very often a £20 note has been slipped into the box after we've been talking to folks – it's a really important part of the project set up. In another bit of good news, an anonymous donation has funded keeping the live webcam online until the end of July.

The webcam + the watchpoint = one very successful Peregrine project!



The juveniles are feeding themselves now

The adults are still bringing prey in but much reduced, to try and encourage the juveniles to start thinking about catching their own prey.

There have been one or two food drops (from adult to the juvenile as it flies underneath) that we've witnessed and probably have been some we haven't seen.

The juveniles make A LOT of noise when reminding the adults that it's food time and, if they don't get a response, they dive bomb them, which is quite amusing!

They can be very vocal when hungry!



Soon they'll be actually flying off with the adults and learning to catch their own food. Last year one of the adults and the one remaining juvenile were seen together at Cley. So they are away from the church more and more. In the meantime - lots of excellent views! Next month I'll have a roundup of the project's season and, hopefully, some more information about the 2020 ringed juvenile female who is now in Grimsby with her own brood. The irony is that quite a few Sheringham and Cromer fishermen went to Grimsby – so it's in the genes!

The juveniles often sit close together



Outside the museum is the ideal spot for a watchpoint – we often talk to school parties who are going into, or coming out of, the museum. It's great to get the youngsters interested. Bev puts her phone on the 'scope which means that more children can look at the bird(s) at the same time. Some were watching the adult female feeding on the eastern edge, when a juvenile flew

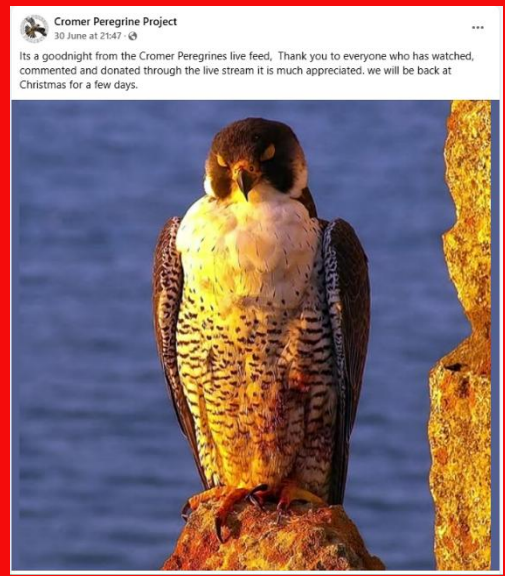
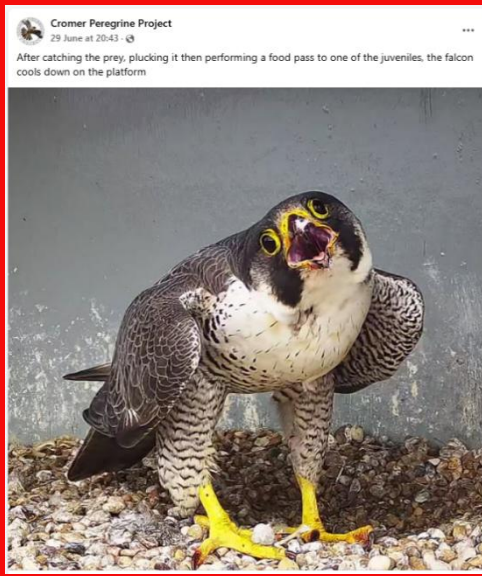


down from the pinnacle and knocked the adult away, forcing it to fly off, so that it could have the food – that got a LOT of wows, giggles and excited jumping up and downs (and that was just the volunteers!).

Occasionally we get distracted! A lovely Humming-Bird Hawk Month put in an appearance!



Photos above courtesy of Jane Crossen; those below from the [Cromer Peregrine Project](#) webcam stills via their [Facebook](#) page – acknowledgement to Chris Skipper for some of those pics.





© National Trust / John Miller from the website nationaltrust.org.uk

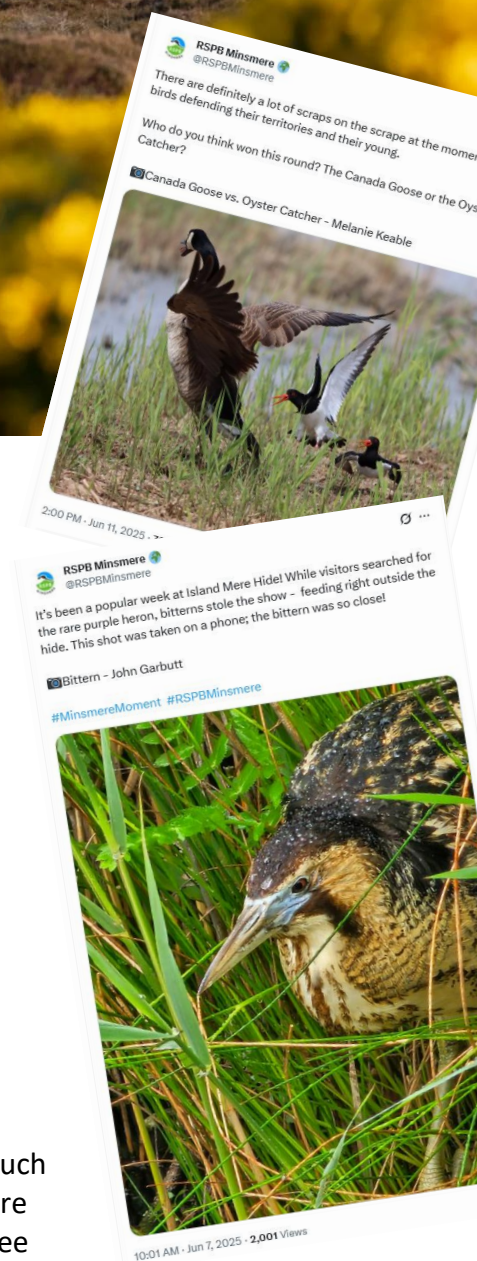
By Stephanie Witham

I don't often go on holiday, this was my first time away from home for 6 years, not counting hospital to get a hip replacement. Living in North Norfolk I never really feel the need to go far, but I do also like the Suffolk coast, so I went to stay on Dunwich Heath in one of the National Trust Coastguard cottages apartments. I had been there to stay once before many years ago in the month of March. Since then, the apartments had been updated and made more comfortable. I'm sure some other people reading this will have stayed there too, as it's such a brilliant place to stay if you like wildlife and walking. Once there, the heath itself, Minsmere and Dunwich village with Dingle Marshes are all accessible on foot. The heath is very peaceful between 6 in the evening and 9 the next morning as no cars are allowed in. The heather looked stunning this year after a couple of years when it struggled with problems.

I sometimes wish I was a photographer as I had my best ever view of a Dartford Warbler against blue sky and heather. In the evenings Nightjars were not far from the door and the fine weather helped seeing and hearing them. I had a couple of sessions at Minsmere, even I can't fail to see a good lot of birds there with all the different habitats. I caught up with a few things I don't manage to see very often such as Barnacle Geese, Marsh Tits and some good views of Hobbies hunting. There were some Roseate Terns on the scrapes, but they were always too far away for me to see properly. One day while I was there the staff and volunteers were doing a Bittern survey from the hides overlooking the marshes. They were trying to work out how many there were and plot their locations and flight paths on maps. Quite challenging as there was a lot of Bittern activity that morning! On the scrape viewed from the West hide I was watching an Oystercatcher shepherding a very tiny chick. It turned out not to be an Oystercatcher chick at all, but an Avocet which she had adopted! One of the volunteers said that it a been going on for a couple of days. If she kept that up I should think the chick stood a good chance of survival.

One day I met up with a friend and we enjoyed delicious fish and chips at Dunwich beach before taking a stroll along Dingle Marshes. I hadn't walked along there before and was pleasantly surprised to find more birds than I expected in spite of there being quite a few people around. There was even an unexpected Wheatear, something else I don't have much luck with.

Altogether it was a lovely break, helped by good weather, but I was pleased to get home before it got too hot!



Contemplating Conservation

How large should a woodland be for birds?



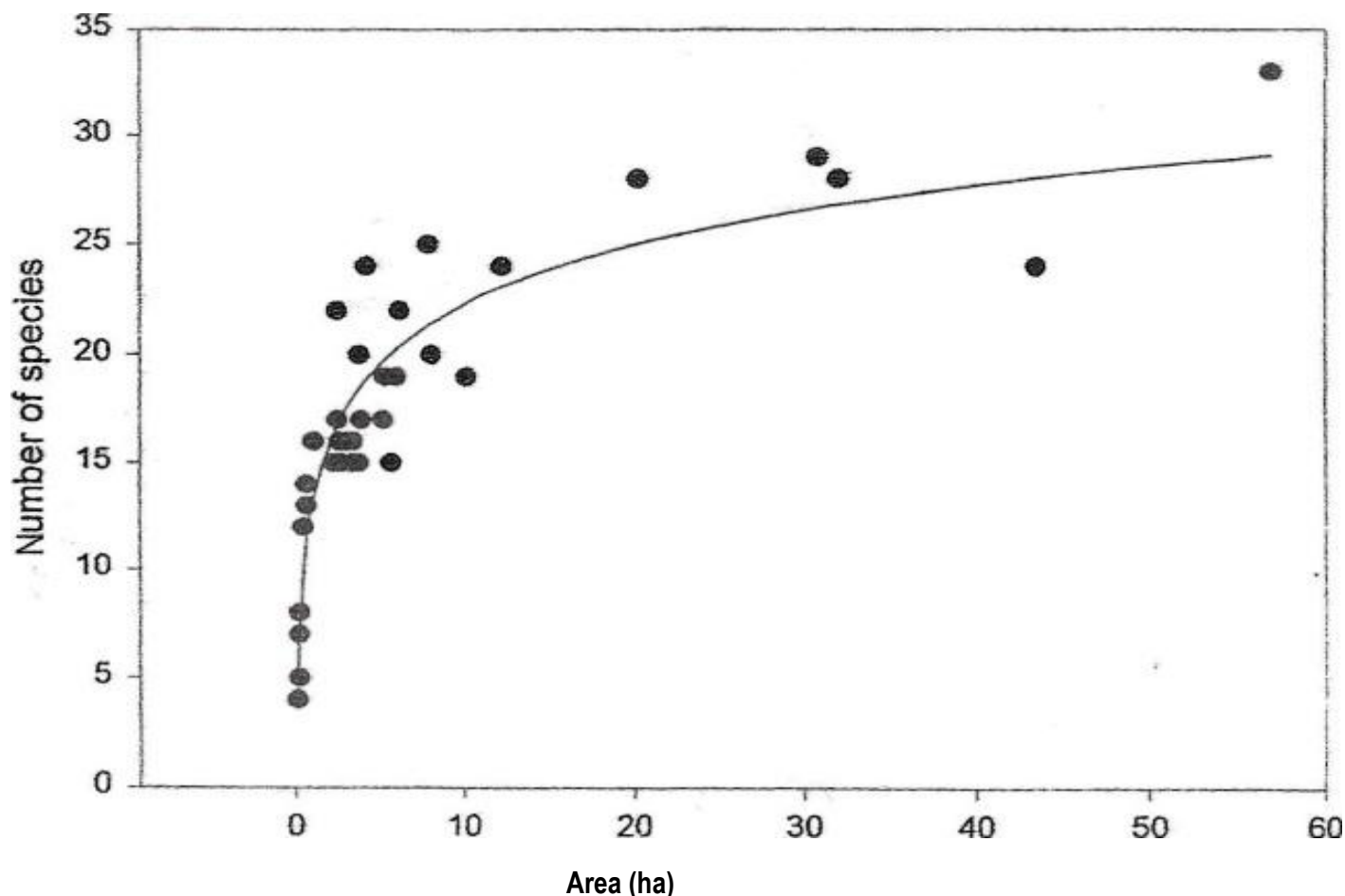
By Chris Mason

There is much current interest in the planting of new forests and woodlands to capture carbon and lessen the impact of climate change, these wooded areas also being good for wildlife and providing amenity opportunities. The previous government had a target to plant up to 30,000 ha per year, though this target was nowhere near achieved. Most woodlands that have been planted are less than 5 ha in area.

With modern farm machinery, it became uneconomic, even impossible, to farm odd-shaped field corners, so these were seen as ideal places by the then Countryside Commission to add new landscape features to areas of arable farmland, resulting in grants to farmers to plant mixtures of tree species native to the local area. I was involved in the Demonstration Farm Project set up in the 1980s by the Countryside Commission to promote these ideas to the farming community, which was at the time generally rather sceptical.

In 2010 the Government released a report, Making Space for Nature (the Lawton Report) which concluded that the state of protected areas for wildlife was inadequate. It concluded that wildlife areas should be bigger, better managed and connected, so that species could more easily move between them. This latter recommendation is of particular importance as climate change may make current habitats inhospitable for those species with limited powers of dispersal.

But how large should a woodland be to accommodate a typical assemblage of woodland birds? In the 1990s I surveyed 35 woods or wood fragments in north-east Essex, an intensively farmed district, over a four-year period. The wooded areas ranged from 0.1 to 57 ha. The majority were ancient semi-natural woodland, though some of the smallest were field-corner plantations. Each wood was surveyed four times in spring over the four years of study. A total of 46 species was found holding territories over the period. The relationship between number of species and woodland area is shown below:



The number of species recorded increased rapidly with woodland area up to a size of 10 ha, supporting 20 of a total of 33 species, but above 10 ha species number increased only slowly with area. Larger woodlands tended to have more habitat diversity, were better managed and had more interconnecting hedgerows. In the smallest woodlands, populations were unstable, so species present in one year may be absent in the next.

Small field corner plantations are significant landscape features but are they of value to wildlife? I examined the soil nutrients and flora of 40 plantations aged between one and fifteen years old. Soils became more acidic with age (resembling ancient woodland soils), while nitrogen and organic carbon increased with plantation age. The majority of 182 plant species recorded were ruderals (early colonizers) or competitors but many occurred in only a few plantations. The presence of a good quality hedgerow adjacent to a plantation increased the number of species of shade-tolerant plants typical of ancient woodlands, which were otherwise absent. *Photo of Bacton Woods courtesy of Stephanie Witham*
















How might this study inform conservation? Obviously, the larger semi-natural woodlands should be protected, ideally in law, and managed to optimise their wildlife. Unfortunately, even some of the best sites for wildlife can be damaged or destroyed “in the national interest” (think HS2), and legislation currently passing through parliament seems set on weakening wildlife protection. But what of the many small fragments of ancient woodland scattered through our countryside? Rather than planting new woodland isolated from other wooded areas, it would be much preferable to plant, or indeed allow natural regeneration, adjacent to these ancient woodland patches, to enlarge them to 10 ha or more. As well as creating habitat for a typical woodland bird community, it would enable the, albeit slow, colonization of woodland plants and invertebrates from the ancient woodland fragments, something unlikely to happen in isolated tree plantations. Linking these up with good quality hedgerows would enable movement of species between them and provide some resilience against climate change – i.e. bigger, better and more joined up, as recommended in the Lawton report.

Check This Out!

A few bits and bobs in the news in the past month ...



-  [Mark Avery: ageing atlas - BirdGuides \[05-Jul\]](#)
-  [Pheasant releases linked to higher Lyme disease risk - BirdGuides \[03-Jul\]](#)
-  [Plans backed to revive tern colony in southern Scotland - BirdGuides \[04-Jul\]](#)
-  [Record-breaking year for European Nightjar on RSPB reserves - BirdGuides \[03-Jul\]](#)
-  [How to become a birder: 10 easy ways to start this life-changing hobby | Birdwatching | The Guardian \[19-Jun\]](#)
-  [UK's oldest White-tailed Eagle dies aged 32 - BirdGuides \[17-Jun\]](#)
-  [500 bird species face extinction within the next century, researchers warn \[University of Reading\] - Phys.org \[24-Jun\]](#)
-  [Study indicates use of bird-friendly glass saves birds' lives by Jordan Karnbach, University of Mississippi – Phys.org \[18-Jun\]](#)
-  [Copy of rare bird book collection worth £127k to stay in the UK - BBC News \[22-Jun\]](#)
-  [Conservationists race to rescue England's turtle doves from extinction | Birds | The Guardian \[20-Jun\]](#)
-  [Birdwatch: Britain's dry springs put beloved blackbird under threat | Environment | The Guardian \[19-Jun\]](#)
-  [Unified global taxonomy published for first time - BirdGuides \[13-Jun\] available on \[AviList: The Global Avian Checklist\]\(#\)](#)
-  [What to do if you find a grounded Swift – courtesy of \[Aylsham Swift Group Facebook Page\]\(#\)](#)



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. Can you recognise a bird from the description of its voice though? The descriptions come from three different books, but they all refer to the same bird – no

wonder it is so confusing! As you can see, some books go into more detail than others. Answers are on the last page 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! [Solution at the end of this newsletter.](#)

“Call, from perch or in flight, thin, scratchy or slightly vibrant ‘sirr’ or ‘tseeet’. Song variable, weak repetition of calls, or longer, more musical, thin, squeaky phrases.”

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

“Vocal, but repertoire unobtrusive and primitive, and often overlooked. Call a short, shrill ‘zee’. Alarm more characteristic, a call-like note immediately followed by one or two short, dry, clicking ones, ‘eez-tk(-tk)’. Song a series of simple, quiet, high-pitched, squeaky or scratchy notes, rhythm a little uneven notes well-spaced.”

from Collins BIRD GUIDE 3rd Edition by Mullaney, Svensson, Zetterström

“Call is a thin repeated ‘tzee’ that has been likened to a squeaking wheelbarrow! The alarm is a sharper clicking ‘eez-tchick’. Song is a rather quiet series of high-pitched notes and low scratchy warbles.

from RSPB Handbook of British Birds 4th Edition by Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves

Wordsearch



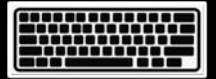
This month, we have the 19 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in July 2024 for which we have less than three records for each – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

Arctic Tern
Brent Goose
Goshawk
Greenshank
Little Stint
Marsh Tit
Pintail
Rose-coloured Starling
Ruff
Scaup
Spotted Flycatcher
Water Rail
Wigeon
Willow Warbler
Avocet
Firecrest
Grey Plover
Little Ringed Plover
Woodlark

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



No new rare bird record have been 'Accepted' by the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter update. You can view their current '**NRC work in progress**' file on their website [16th Dec 24]. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [11th Mar 24].

NENBC Website



A huge thanks to the **125** of you who have uploaded records to our website so far this year date. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports. Not started adding records yet? Make it your spring resolution this year! If you need any assistance, just drop us a line on nenbc@aol.co.uk or through the messaging element of the website. Quarterly Prolific Poster review in August.

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Juvenile Siskin appeared in the garden yesterday joined by an adult male a short time later. Siskins are normally a winter visitor to the garden so quite a surprise to see them in the middle of summer.



27 June 2025 at 19:29 · Everybody can reply

Stella Baylis
@silyab22.bsky.social

Fantastic to see Norfolk's first breeding Ospreys for c250 years, Ranworth Broad, distant but an occasional small head seen from the 2 chicks [#Norfolkbirding](#)



26 June 2025 at 19:29 · Everybody can reply

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Little Egret at Felbrigg NT a few days ago. Mute Swan cygnets are growing quickly and there are still all 7 of them.



23 June 2025 at 20:08 · Everybody can reply

Justin Lansdell
@yarevalleyjus.bsky.social

Crazy scenes between Walcott and Happisburgh this week when the Sand Martin colony survey yielded c605 AONs. Last year we counted 'just' c265 AONs although birds move depending on the suitability of the dynamic cliffs



21 June 2025 at 06:20 · Everybody can reply

Social Media

Jo King
@jokingnorfolk.bsky.social

Always a joy to see a [#MistleThrush](#) from the bedroom window and they're quite regular visitors here but this one was so close I struggled to get it in the frame! Raiding the Amelanchier tree for ripened berries. Taken through closed window [#NorfolkBirding](#)



15 June 2025 at 17:49 · Everybody can reply

Reposted by you



BTO | British Trust for Ornithology @btobirds.bsky.social · 15d

Spotted Flycatcher! 🐦 Did you know they spend our winter months in Africa? BTO research has shown that some head as far south as Namibia, around 7,000km from their breeding location. 🌍 Sadly, [@bbs-birds.bsky.social](#) report shows a 67% decline in population of this species over the last 28 years. 📉

Reposted by you



David Norgate @davidnorgate.bsky.social · 20d

To all you lovely Norfolk folk who bird and moth, can I encourage you to use the hashtags:

[#norfolkbirding](#)
[#norfolkmoths](#)

This way, us Norfolians can quickly find posts from the county.

If there are [#s](#) uses for other groups please add them in replies

🗨 4

👍 4

👍 16

🔗

...

North East Norfolk Bird Club NENBC
@nenbc.bsky.social

Anglo-African Bird Migration Our first speaker is Will Cresswell from the University of Africa".



14 June 2025 at 11:13 · Everybody can reply

North East Norfolk Bird Club NENBC
@nenbc.bsky.social

Anglo-African Bird Migration Conference Our last led session of the afternoon is a Q&A session with our speakers from the day led by Richard Porter.



14 June 2025 at 15:54 · Everybody can reply

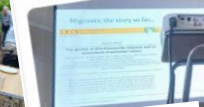
Anglo-African Bird Migration A break for a much needed lunch.



14 June 2025 at 13:05 · Everybody can reply

North East Norfolk Bird Club NENBC
@nenbc.bsky.social

Anglo-African Migration Conference Wenceslas Gatarabirwa of the between UK and Africa - a n



14 June 2025 at 14:37 · Everybody can reply

North East Norfolk Bird Club NENBC
@nenbc.bsky.social

Anglo-African Bird Migration Conference..... an update on Naffi, the young birder from The Gambia NENBC will be part-sponsoring in her birding activities, from Roger Walsh.



14 June 2025 at 14:37 · Everybody can reply



North East Norfolk Bird Club NENBC
@nenbc.bsky.social

Anglo-African Bird Migration Conference First slot this afternoon is Juliet Vickery CEO BTO in Conversation with NENBC President Nigel Redman.



14 June 2025 at 13:12 · Everybody can reply

North East Norfolk Bird Club NENBC
@nenbc.bsky.social

Anglo-African Bird Migration conference we have started with home-made cakes as NENBC events usually do!



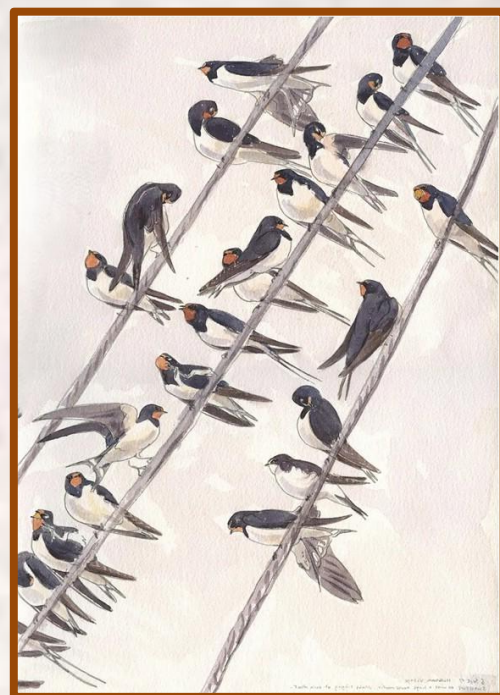
14 June 2025 at 11:08 · Everybody can reply



The Swallows by Charles Sangster

I asked the first stray swallow of the spring,
"Where hast thou been through all the winter drear?
Beneath what distant skies did'st fold thy wing,
Since thou wast with us here,
When Autumn's withered leaves foretold the passing year?"

And it replied, "Whither has Fancy led
The plummy thoughts that circle through thy brain?
Like birds about some mountain's lofty head,
Singing a sweet refrain:
There, without bound, I've been, and must return again."



Artwork by James McCallum

The poet Charles Sangster died in 1893. Although the term 'migration' was first used in the 16th century in relation to birds and animals, at the end of the 19th century it wasn't yet known where Swallows and other migrating birds disappeared to. This 2022 article has a nice bit of background.

Swallows are no longer migrating south as winters become milder [Earth.com website]

By Andrei Ionescu

"The return of the swallows has been celebrated for thousands of years as a harbinger of spring in the United Kingdom. However, it was not known until the 20th century where they went after they disappeared in the autumn. Many people – including notable scientists – believed that they hibernated on the bottom of ponds.

With the introduction of bird ringing at the beginning of the 20th century, their true destination was revealed. In December 1912, a swallow was caught on a farm in South Africa, bearing a ring that had been placed on its leg 18 months earlier in Staffordshire, UK. Because the European winters were too cold for the insects on which swallows fed, the birds headed south each winter, traveling incredible distances until the warm south of the African continent.

However, according to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), swallows have recently started to spend winters in the United Kingdom instead of migrating over 6,000 miles to South Africa. This major change in behavior is one of the most remarkable signs that climate change is severely dismantling a large variety of ecosystems.

"It is indeed remarkable," said BTO's chief executive, Professor Juliet Vickery. "We haven't got to go back too far to remember winters when it would have been impossible for swallows to survive the freezing temperatures, but as our winters get milder it is something we may see more and more."

BTO's BirdTrack survey of birdwatchers has received more than 100 reports of up to 12 individual swallows that were observed during January in the warmer south and south-west of Britain, as well as parts of Ireland. Thus, with an increase of mild winters in the past few years, it appears that a small number of swallows are able to spend the winter months in Britain, instead of migrating to the south.

"To suggest that our winters would be warm enough for swallows to survive would have been unthinkable a few decades ago," said BTO's Director of Science, Professor James Pearce-Higgins. "But the evidence that our climate is changing is building year by year."

According to BTO, swallows are not the only birds affected by climate change. In fact, almost a quarter of British breeding species may be negatively affected by the steady rises in temperature witnessed in the past years. Scientists are yet to understand all the implications of these fundamental changes in bird behavior caused by global warming, and to find solutions to minimize their negative impact."

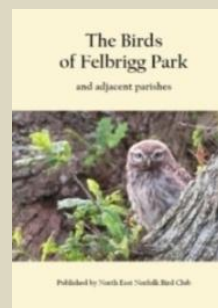
The bird voice variously described was that of a [Spotted Flycatcher](#). Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the [BTO Bird Facts Spotted Flycatcher](#) page. *Photos from the top Pauline Walton, Nik Borrow, Stu Buck, Richard Farrow*



This month's **Wordsearch Solution:**
BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN
JULY 2024

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Back Page Club Info



NENBC Annual Bird Reports are compiled from the records and photographs added to the club website by members since we were established in January 2015 and complemented by articles on club activities. Member price for the most recent report is £3 and back-copies £2 (postage extra).

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 £5.00 (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 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 / 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