

The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



April 2026 – Issue 130

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

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Through a Lens





By Francis Farrow

Last February I watched a Jay on a lawn of a large garden. It flicked a couple of leaves to the side then drove its bill into the grass and retrieved an acorn. It seems far rarer to witness a Jay retrieving an acorn than to watch it bury one. According to researchers Jays can bury some 2,200-5,700 acorns in a season and the recovery rate has been estimated at 75%, which leaves a potential 25% to germinate. This behaviour is known as ‘scatter hoarding’ and the Jay by dispersing the acorns to open areas allows the shade intolerant oak to establish itself if it is left. Further research has found that the Jays can only find acorns they have cached themselves or have observed another bird caching. Studies have shown caching distances range from 3 to 465 m from the host tree, though most caches are placed within 100 m. Remarkably when Jays have young to feed they will sometimes find an oak seedling where they had previously cached an acorn. They will uproot the young plant, eat the acorn beneath it and then replant the seedling and studies have shown that it usually survives. Such is the important role of the Jay to the oak in the landscape they are known as ‘ecosystem engineers’.



Another corvid that has intrigued me in the past is the Carrion Crow. Back in the spring 2021 I watched a crow by a small pond on Beeston Common. It was intently looking into the edge of the pond then it pulled a clump of dead grass stems that had collapsed into the water's edge up on to the ponds side with its beak. Once the grass was on the bank it proceeded to peck at it and I could see that it was eating tadpoles that had been caught up within the grass. After a few minutes the crow picked up the grass stems and dropped them back into the water and again watched intently. It seems that this crow

had learned to use the grass as a ‘fishing net’. Such behaviour again indicates the intelligence of these remarkable birds and in Sweden there was a trial that attempted to train wild crows to pick up cigarette butts and deposit them in a specialised container for a small food reward. It was estimated that there would be a considerable saving in the cost of cleaning, however, it was found that the crows were not likely to engage over time and it would not be a sustainable solution. So while wild crows can learn to do this, no one has ever been able to scale their success into something meaningful.



Rooks have also been shown to be equally as inventive as their crow cousins. As a stunt in 2018 a French theme park successfully trained some captive Rooks to pick up litter. The purpose of the project was to show visitors that ‘nature itself can teach us to take care of the environment’. Captive rooks have also bent wire into hooks to extract food out of tubes and have worked together to solve problems. Such behaviour, however, has not been observed in wild populations.

Magpies are traditionally associated with an attraction to shiny objects which they routinely steal ie ‘the thieving magpie’. Studies carried out by the Centre for Research in Animal Behaviour at Exeter University (2010) have shown this to be a myth based on observation bias. The researchers suggest that humans notice magpies when they occasionally pick up shiny objects while it goes unnoticed when magpies interact with less eye-catching items.

Our smallest corvid is the Jackdaw and is known for its complex natural calls that they use to communicate within the flocks and large social groups. Hand-reared or captive Jackdaws are capable of reproducing words and short phrases,

which often mimic the voice of their owners. Researchers have also found that Jackdaws can use their pale blue eyes to communicate warnings to competitors, indicating an advanced social intelligence.



How fortunate we are to be able to say that Ravens are back in the county and indeed even within the NENBC boundary. The last Raven nest recorded

before their return to the county around 2010 was at Beechamwell in 1859. The first Raven recorded by the club in the NENBC area was Weybourne on September 1st 2015. Only 3 more records were then received in the next five years but from 2021 to 2026 a further 198 records were made indicating a significant recolonization of Norfolk. I had to wait until March 2026 to connect to my first sighting of a 'Norfolk' Raven. While watching the fantastic Goshawks at Swanton Novers a pair of Ravens came into view and proceeded to amaze with a synchronised aerobatic display flight. The pair matched each other's wingbeats, mirrored turns and dived in parallel. Such behaviour is likely to strengthen social bonds especially during courtship. The complex communications shared between the birds turn such flights into an almost choreographed performance, revealing their extraordinary intelligence.

A Note from the Editor

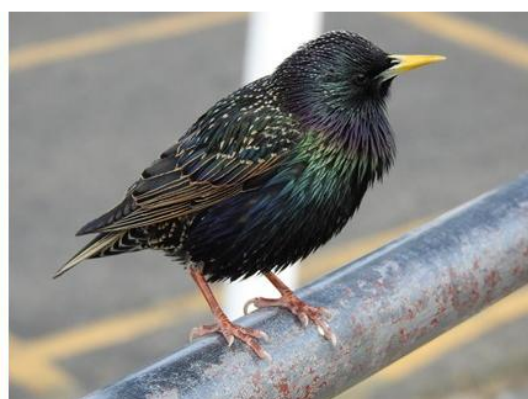
By Carol Thornton

Welcome to our April newsletter!

Well those of you who came to our **Felbrigg Park** walks (in the plural) event last month will know what a success it was, so much so that rather than referring to it as a 'trial double walk', I am now calling it out 'inaugural double walk'. We will be doing it all again this month but note we will be trialling a **new start time of 9:30am** for the second walk, finishing at 11am. It will still be a slow stroll to the lake and back but the extra half hour will give folk a bit more time for looking when they get there. We'll review start time preferences again afterwards. All the info on our other upcoming events are included from [page 16](#), including our **last talk of the season**, the 2026 **Birding for Beginners** programme (a few places left), the annual **Big Sit** and our ongoing **weekend walks**, so hopefully catch up with you soon.

The '**Through a Lens**' topic for the front cover of birds seen last month was '**migrants incoming**'. It was all about the Chiffchaff in March from the top left clockwise – Jane Crossen, Andy Clarke, Richard Farrow, Mark Clements. For April, our theme will be '**birds exhibiting breeding behaviour**' so get clicking! As it is Easter and the breeding season, here's an interesting eggy article for you [The Beauty and Biology of Egg Colour](#) from the Cornell Lab – fascinating! Hope you had a great holiday weekend and squeezed in some birding too.

Below are my **favourite member photos** from March, selected from the ones that didn't make it on to our monthly NENBC Bird Highlights section of the more unusual species ... an action shot of a Coot [Richard Farrow], an Egyptian Goose at dawn [Ken Thornton] and an iridescent Starling [Doug Cullern]. Thanks all!



Welcome to our new members
– we look forward to seeing you soon!

* Luke Jeavons * Drew Lyness *
* Kevin Elsby *

If you have any queries,
just drop us an email

RSPB Newport Wetlands · Follow
1 April at 11:46 · 🌐

📢 Important update from RSPB Newport Wetlands 📢

In response to rising costs, all birds on site are now facing a bill increase. We can confirm they've been informed and are adapting as best they can.

We appreciate your understanding at this time.

👤 **Meuan Evans**

👍 444 🗨️ 14 ➦ 16

RSPB Ham Wall · Follow
1 April at 08:30 · 🌐

Can you believe what has shown up on the reserve today?! 🤪

The Spoonbill is an unusual and rare visitor to RSPB Ham Wall as it is, however close relatives of this species, the Forkbill and the Knifebill have also been sighted on the reserve today! The collective noun for the trio is known as a 'Cutlery' and they can be seen working together to find and prepare food in the shallow waters. 🍴

The Spoonbill uses its large, elongated bill to sift through shallow waters in search of prey. Once caught, its close relative, the Forkbill, holds the prey still while the Knifebill helps chop it into bite-size pieces. Together, this trio work effectively to keep each other well fed. 🍴

Why not plan a visit to the reserve today to see if you can spot all three? You will be very lucky if you can spot them! 🍴

👤 **Photo and Editing Credit: Sandie Andrews**

Edit: Happy April 1st! Thank you for your engagement and humorous comments on our little April Fools post today, we are glad it made so many of you smile!

👍 2K 🗨️ 130 ➦ 129

April Fool!

Cromer Peregrine Project
11h · 🌐

An almost unbelievable picture captured by a fisherman at the end of Cromer pier, we can only assume it was pirated from a gull

👍 358 ➦ 16

Pensthorpe · Follow
Yesterday at 08:00 · 🌐

We're currently in negotiations with a group of ducks and ducklings who have taken up residence in our brand new outdoor play area, The Living Towers 🦆

Despite our best efforts, they've made it clear this is now their territory.

For the time being, we advise visitors to steer clear while we work towards a peaceful agreement. Thank you for your understanding.

(The ducks have declined to comment.)

👍 300 🗨️ 16 ➦ 10

RSPB Titchwell Marsh
9h · 🌐

🦆 Exciting news from Titchwell! 🦆 We've transformed Island Hide into a North Norfolk eco-sauna, complete with the option to take a refreshing cold plunge into the natural freshwater springs that bring this oasis to life. 🌊

Perfect for relaxation, restoration, and reconnecting with nature. 🦆

#sauna #saunaandplunge #coldplunge #contrasttherapy #saunabythesea #AprilFools

👍 224 🗨️ 36 ➦ 7

BTO | British Trust for Ornithology
@btobirds.bsky.social

1/ Forget tales of escapees from the film set of The African Queen. Ignore rumours of Jimi Hendrix's supposed liberation of a pair on Carnaby Street. Newly declassified documents from the Ministry Of Defence reveal how Ring-necked Parakeets colonised the UK through Operation Norwegian Blue! 🦜

Origin of the UK's Ring-necked Parakeets finally revealed!

07:30 · 1 Apr 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Well, it is that time of year again and there was certainly quite a flurry of bird-related April Fool's stories this month – hope you all had your wits about you!

Here's a sample of the ones I came across. That Peregrine one made me look twice and it really shouldn't have!

National Coastwatch Institution
Yesterday at 07:00 · 🌐

Introducing a revolutionary addition to our coastal watchkeeping toolkit. Welcome to our new CGULL (Coastwatch Gulls Using Local Liaison) drone programme 🦅

These new smartly-branded drones are under trial and enhance our "eyes along the coast" without disturbing the natural habitat.

Powered by chips and seaweed, the drones are cleverly disguised as common Herring Gulls.

Key Features:

- 🦅 Beak-sharp Aerodynamics: Built for speed. Mimics genuine seagulls to blend in with local flocks.
- 🦅 Chip-Guard AI: Advanced sensors prevent the drone from dive-bombing people to steal their lunch.
- 🦅 Squawk-Sync Technology: High-fidelity speakers allow our watchkeepers to communicate with coastal users using authentic seabird voices.
- 🦅 Guano-Grip Landing: Specialised feet allow for seamless landing on any pier, railing, or ice cream van.

"We've always been the eyes and ears of the coast, keeping a daily watch for people in difficulty and now our new low-energy CGULL fleet means that we are the wings too. Just please do not feed them," says NCI Project Lead April Fuel.

Look out for the CGULL fleet hovering near your local station today!

#EyesAlongTheCoast #CoastalSafety #drone

CGULL PROGRAMME NEW EYES IN THE SKY

NEW EYES IN THE SKY Squawk Sync Speakers: hi fi seagull noises

Guano grip landing pads

Chip Guard: Advanced anti dive bomb sensors

👍 292 🗨️ 30 ➦ 40



By Carol Thornton

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

≈ 9,400 individual records covering 142 bird species were added in March

March 2026 | A couple of **Manx Shearwater** on the 26th were the first since October and on the gull front, **Caspian, Little and Mediterranean** all put in an appearance along with **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Great Northern Diver**. Eyes to the skies for some lucky members rewarded them with **Merlin, Crane, Goshawk, Raven, Peregrine, Whooper Swan, Great White Egret** and **Spoonbill**. Also dropping in during March were **Ring Ouzel, Water Pipit** and **Rock Pipit**. Reports of **Woodlark** and **Dartford Warbler** on a local heath increased during the month, a **Hooded Crow** (maybe the one which has been about for a while in Mundesley) popped up in Cromer and a few **Snow Bunting** were still about. The long-staying **Eastern Black Redstart** at The Leas in Sheringham put in an appearance on the 1st but has not been reported on our website since.

During the month 9,686 records were submitted and 142 species recorded which is a little up on last March.

Brent Goose | Reported throughout the month, predominantly off Weybourne (records on 17 dates, high count 59 on 24th), but with other sightings from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs (records on 4 dates, high count 13 on 21st), West Runton (records on 2 dates, high count 2 on 16th and 24th) and Sheringham (records on 4 dates, high count 19 on 26th). *Photo 1 courtesy of Mark Clements*

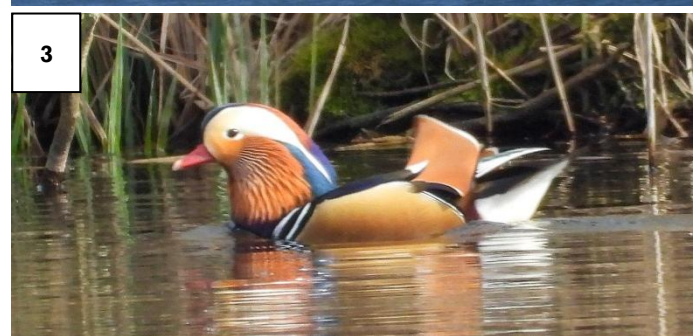
Barnacle Goose | On 3rd, 35 were reported east from Weybourne with 25 approaching Cromer from the east before turning tail and heading back the way they had come. Additionally there was a flock of 40/42 east off Weybourne and West Runton on 5th, 6 north-east and then north-west over sea off Weybourne on 7th and 6 east there on 8th.

Whooper Swan | A flock of 25 were initially reported flying north-west in the Mun valley on 5th before dropping on the sea at Cromer. They were tracked along the coast past West Runton before dropping again on the sea at Weybourne for half hour before continuing on in a north-westerly direction. One was reported east offshore at Weybourne on 10th. *Photo 2 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Mandarin Duck | A single record of a drake emerging from the reeds at Selbrigg Pond on 20th. *Photo 3 courtesy of Steven & Barbara Lines*

Garganey | One lucky member observed a pair of Garganey for 30 minutes on a private lake near Bale on 24th. *Photo 4 courtesy of Paul Morris*

Eider | There were 34 records over 18 dates this month with high counts of 119 at Sheringham on 1st, 54 at Weybourne on 3rd, and 115 at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on the same date. The majority of other counts were in single figures.



Goosander | All records were from Weybourne, with single birds reported on 15th, 16th and 22nd, with 2 there on 7th and 31st.

Red-breasted Merganser | Singles east at Weybourne on 21st and 22nd, 2 west at Sheringham on 25th and an impressive 12 at Weybourne on 30th (10 west and 2 east).

Grey Partridge | Virtually all of the 14 records were of solitary pairs, with Bodham being a hotspot. A record of a single bird there on 1st then no further Grey Partridge records until 17th when 2 were observed at Little Barningham. The only other non-Bodham record was a pair at Weybourne Camp on 30th. *Photo 5 courtesy of Doug Cullern*

Crane | A pair flew south-east over Cromer towards Overstrand on 4th.

Little Grebe | Twenty-nine records throughout the month of 1-3 birds from predominantly Felbrigg Park, but other reports from Thornage, Baconsthorpe, Mannington Hall Park, Selbrigg Pond, Baconsthorpe, Wolterton Park and Gimingham. The stand-out report was of 8 on a WeBS count from the private Old Briton's Quarry site. *Photo 6 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

Great Crested Grebe | Mostly coastal records of 1-2 birds from Weybourne (with 4 there on 1st and 9 on 5th), Weybourne Cliffs, West Runton and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. Inland records from Blickling Park (1 on 3rd and 4th and 2 on 22nd) and 2 at Wolterton Park on 22nd. *Photo 7 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Grey Plover | Up to 5 reported from West Runton on 1st and just 1 there on 15th. *Photo 8 courtesy of John Wheeler*

Bar-tailed Godwit | A flock of 10 east past Weybourne and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 20th was the only report of the month.

Knot | Two records in March. The first was an unusual record of 2 birds on the Sheringham prom with the Turnstone flock on the 9th and the second was of a winter bird west at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 12th. *Photo 9 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Dunlin | Most of the 12 records of single figure counts were reported from Weybourne between 7th and 18th with a high count of 31 east there on 10th. Elsewhere, a winter bird in off the sea at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 10th and 2 west at West Runton on 16th.

Woodcock | Seven records from seven locations, starting with 2 at Thwaite Common on 1st and followed by singles at Beeston Common, Sustead, Holt, Holt Country Park & Lowes, Kelling Heath and finally West Runton on 21st.

Jack Snipe | A single at Felbrigg Park on 2nd and two there on the rough grazing meadow below the dam on 22nd. The only other record was a single on a survey of the private Thornage Hall on 31st.



Kittiwake | On 20th, 3 east past Weybourne and 4, including two first winter birds, also east at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on the same day. Two east at Sheringham on 25th and again there on 26th.

Little Gull | A single west past Weybourne on 29th was the only report.

Mediterranean Gull | Twenty three coastal records throughout the month of mostly 1-2 birds, generally heading west and reported from Weybourne Camp, Weybourne (high count 5 on 18th), Sheringham, West Runton, Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. The only inland record was of an adult summer bird in a mixed roosting gull flock on the eastern boundary of Felbrigg Park on 16th. *Photo 10 courtesy of David Griffiths*

Caspian Gull | On 24th, a single bird on the groyne at West Runton before heading off west was the only record of the month. *Photo 11 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Sandwich Tern | The first birds of the spring were reported on 25th east at Sheringham, followed by singles at Weybourne on 27th and Sheringham on 28th.

Red-throated Diver | Sixty seven records throughout the month from Weybourne to Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. Triple-figure counts were reported on 10 days, mostly during seawatching sessions. A group of 60 east were reported from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 21st.

Great Northern Diver | Two east at Weybourne on 10th with just the one being reported from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on the same day. Further singles east at Weybourne on 12th and 30th plus on the sea and then east at Cromer on 20th.

Fulmar | Forty five records throughout the month of 1-6 most likely local birds along the coastline. A report of 13 off shore, with 10 in a single raft, was unusual.

Manx Shearwater | One record of 2 birds west off Sheringham on 26th.

Spoonbill | Two birds west offshore at Weybourne on 1st was the first record since September. Further reports of one west close in from Weybourne Cliffs on 11th, a single west at West Runton on 16th and an early morning inland report of an individual heading north-west over Gresham on 28th. *Photo 12 courtesy of Ken Thornton*

Great White Egret | Records of 1-3 birds on 4 dates off Weybourne between 15th and 24th. Inland, a single over Southrepps Common flew in from north and continued west along the valley. *Photo 13 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Goshawk | Plenty of records during March from a variety of locations. At Swanton Novers up to 3 birds were reported, with observers at the beginning of the month noting flight displays. A single was reported at Selbrigg Pond on 7 dates and Holt Country Park & Lowes had 2 birds on 17th and 29th plus a single on 30th. Elsewhere, reports were of singles at Hunworth on 10th, West Beckham on 19th, Weybourne Heath on 26th, Letheringsett & Ford on 28th, Aylmerton on 29th and Weybourne Heath on 30th. *Photo 14 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Marsh Harrier | Reported on 17 dates across 7 mostly coastal locations. Singles variously reported at Weybourne Camp, Weybourne (3 on 15th), Beeston Bump and West Runton with inland records at Aylmerton on 10th, Edgefield on 11th and Letheringsett & Ford (4 birds at Bayfield Park) on 28th. *Photo 15 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Kingfisher | Singles were reported from Blickling Park on 2nd and 3rd with 2 there on 6th.

Merlin | A single was west along the tideline at Weybourne on 19th before landing on the beach.

Peregrine | Mating was reported with the Cromer church pair at the beginning of the month and 3 eggs were subsequently laid. Food passes have been observed. Away from Cromer, singles reported in off the sea at Weybourne on 5th, over the reservoir at Thornage on 12th and west along the cliffs at Beeston Bump on 21st. *Photo 16 courtesy of Jane Crossem*

Hooded Crow | One reported at Cromer on 24th with a possible hybrid at Aylmerton on 4th. *Photo 17 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Raven | Reports of singles from Kelling Heath on 5th, Sheringham Park on 9th, and both Felbrigg Park and Holt Country Park & Lowes on 20th. Displaying pairs were reported from Swanton Novers on 11th and Weybourne on 16th with other reports of pairs at Weybourne on 22nd, Southrepps on 29th and Selbrigg Pond on 21st with an additional report of 6 birds there (5 together) on 16th. *Photo 18 courtesy of Francis Farrow*



Marsh Tit | Reports of 1-2 birds on garden feeders on and off during the month in both Brinton and Gresham. Up to 3 birds were reported at Swanton Novers on a club walk on 14th, with singles at Mannington Hall Park on 18th and 27th and at nearby Mossymere Wood on 15th.

Woodlark | A single was in song flight at Buxton Heath on 17th and all other records came from Kelling Heath where 1-2 birds were heard more often than seen but up to 5 were observed in song flight there on 10th.

Cetti's Warbler | Sixty six records from 10 locations throughout the month, mostly of singles but with 3 at Pigneys Wood on 5th and 4 at Dilham Canal on 2nd, 2 there on 11th and 3 on 28th. Most reports stated they were 'heard only', with no records explicitly stating the bird had been seen too.

Dartford Warbler | All records were from Kelling Heath and were of 1-4 birds, with two pairs reported. *Photo 19 courtesy of Ken Thornton*

Firecrest | Forty records from 10 locations throughout the month, mostly of singles. Two were reported from Sheringham Park on 11th, Holt Country Park had 2-4 birds with the 4 reported on 20th, Selbrigg Pond hosted a displaying pair on 25th with 2 males singing on 28th and Weybourne Heath held 3 birds on 30th. *Photo 20 courtesy of Richard Farrow*



19



20



Ring Ouzel | A Third Party Report of a single male very briefly in paddocks at West Runton on 15th before moving on west.

Black Redstart | Our last record of the long-staying Eastern race bird was at the Sheringham Esplanade on 1st. A female type was reported in Cromer gardens on 27th and 29th and around the same time, a single female was also reported in a member's Paston garden. *Photo 21 courtesy of Rob Dibgy*

Wheatear | A male was reported on a cultivated plot at Weybourne Cliffs on 26th and an individual was also recorded in the horse paddock east of the beach car park at West Runton on 30th.

Grey Wagtail | Most records came from Selbrigg Pond where there were reports on 13 days, mostly of 1-2 birds but with 2 pairs on 27th and 3 birds on 28th. Other records were of singles from Beeston Regis, Dilham Canal (with 2 on 17th), Kelling Heath, Sheringham, Wolterton Park, Spa Common, Southrepps Common (with 2 on 29th) and 2 at Blickling Park on 22nd. *Photo 22 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Water Pipit | At Sheringham on 1st, a single came in off the sea and was harassed by a gull before landing briefly on a groyne before heading off west. A recording was made at Beeston Bump on 21st which was later identified as this species. More on that in an article next month!

Rock Pipit | Singles west at Weybourne on 3rd, 10th and 27th with one at West Runton on 6th.

Brambling | Reported on 12 days, with locations covering Bodham (high count 4 on 28th), Gresham (3 on 17th), High Kelling (2 on 1st), Southrepps Common, Thornage (4 on 17th) and Weybourne Heath. *Photo 23 courtesy of Ken Thornton*

Redpoll | Single Lesser Redpoll were reported at Thornage on 1st, Swanton Novers on 4th, with 2 at Holt Country Park & Lowes on 29th and a flock of 6 at Kelling Heath on 28th.

21



22



23



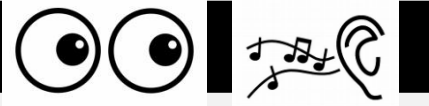
Common Crossbill | Singles were at Selbrigg Pond on 24th, 27th and 29th with 2 there on 17th and 22nd and a single at Bodham on 22nd with 2 there on 1st. Elsewhere, singles at Sheringham Park on 1st, Kelling Heath on 3rd, Aylmerton on 18th and Holt Country Park & Lowes on 20th and 29th. *Photo 24 courtesy of Mark Clements*

24



Snow Bunting | Only recorded at Weybourne Cliffs during March, with 20 there on 2nd, 3 on 14th and 2 on 19th and 20th.

April: What to look forward to



Migrants will be flooding northwards (fingers crossed!) and anything is possible with some favourable weather and time spent in the field. South easterly winds may bring good numbers of **Ring Ouzels** as well as **Yellow Wagtails** and ever-increasing species of warblers. Look out for our more common migrants like **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Sedge Warbler** and **Garden Warbler** but also our less common visitors like **Cuckoo**, **Pied Flycatcher** and **Redstart**. Keep an eye out for pipits - **Tree Pipit** is a possibility and we have already had **Richard's Pipit** and **Water Pipit** recorded this month. Pea fields are worth checking for **Dotterel** as we have had spring records in 2015, 2018 and 2021 and eyes to the skies for raptors such as **Osprey**, **Goshawk** or the odd passing **White-tailed Eagle** and even cruising **Cranes**. Any north-easterly wind with rain fronts could produce Scandinavian birds with **Wryneck** and even **Icterine Warbler**. April is the peak month for **Alpine Swift** with records in 2018, 2019 and 2023 and **Black** or **Arctic Tern** are a good possibility.

If you look at the Wordsearch on [page 42](#), you'll see what a great collection of birds we had turn up last April, so you never know what you might be lucky enough to catch up with!

Library photos courtesy of Mark Clements (Ring Ouzel, Lesser Whitethroat), Jane Crossen (Yellow Wagtail, Redstart), Alan Stevens (Sedge Warbler), Andrew Crossley (Garden Warbler), Andy Clarke (Pied Flycatcher)



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>”

16/03/2026	Turnstone	21	West Runton	Mark Clements	Including Flagged JAJ
29/03/2026	Turnstone	39	Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course	Jane Crossen	Prom in front of the Crown - inc JAJ

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!

All records this month were from Andy Clarke at Sheringham.

07/03/2026	Moorhen	1	Nocturnal flight call (1 burst) 2340
08/03/2026	Golden Plover	2	Nocturnal flight calls, 0054 (2 calls), 0402 (2 calls); also probable Green Sandpiper 0444 and possible LRP 0510 but calls too faint for certain identification
14/03/2026	Redwing	1	Nocturnal flight call over garden, 0130 (1 call)
14/03/2026	Turnstone	1	Nocturnal flight call over garden, 2050 (13th March), 1 call
14/03/2026	Common Scoter	1	Nocturnal flight calls over garden, 0105 (2 calls)
14/03/2026	Wigeon	2	Nocturnal flight calls over garden, 2136 (13th March); 8+ calls, at least two birds

Member Highs, Lows and Ponderings



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

Greylag Goose | “Owning the pond with aggressive behaviour to all other waterbirds.” | David Griffiths | Selbrigg Pond | 20th

Mallard | “Four drakes on small pond by bridge into holiday home area. Never seen one there, let alone four!” | Jane Crossen | West Runton | 18th

Teal | “Sustead Road. On garden pond and being continually harried by resident Moorhen pair.” | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 17th

Stock Dove | “Investigating/already nesting in the dove cote near the pond at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary - they regularly breed in it each year” | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 9th

Wood Pigeon | “flew onto fence with nesting material and then sidled along & jumped into bay tree, another feeding under seed feeder” | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 13th

Wood Pigeon | “Evington Lawns. Early start on the BTO's Birds In Greenspaces survey” | Andy Gorton | Cromer | 28th

Little Grebe | “Out near dam and dived not to be seen again - nuclear submarine style!” | David Griffiths | Selbrigg Pond | 29th

Oystercatcher | “On the pond platform they nested on last year at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary, arguing over it

with the resident Herring Gull pair (who also nested on it previously)" | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 1st

Knot | "I've occasionally seen Knot on the rocks here (usually single birds) but I've never seen two in amongst the Turnstone on the actual prom (by the tank). Fantastic views of the two birds - first with the Turnstone and then on the beach" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 9th

Great Black-backed Gull | "on sea, presumed to be attempting to swallow a large fish, when viewed through scope was astonished to see it was actually a large squid, which was duly swallowed down. That gull probably wouldn't need to eat again for days." | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 16th

Lesser Black-backed Gull | "Seen on golf courses near turf slope. Unusual as normally herring gulls and black headed gulls; no other species." | David Harper | Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs | 13th

Sparrowhawk | "in field with wood pigeon kill, was trying to get into cover of field hedge to eat its catch, the pigeon was too heavy and the hawk could only fly a very short distance at a time. After four attempts it successfully made it to the field edge." | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 14th

Goshawk | "Bird on a mission flew fast and low across an open ride and into the trees, only feet above the ground. My first ever encounter with a Gos hunting in woodland." | Andy Clarke | Weybourne Heath | 30th

Marsh Harrier | "landed in field, where a hare ran towards it, the harrier took off carrying a small leveret. I have previously seen this once before, but on that occasion involved a buzzard. Obviously a hare is willing to try and chase of birds of prey of that size to protect their young." | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 14th

Red Kite | "6x Including 5 definitely in off (3 together)" | Andrew Kershaw | Weybourne | 18th

Red Kite | "West towards Weybourne - together - although one ventured out to sea for a bit! Being mobbed at one point by gulls and a crow." | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course | 18th

Buzzard | "8x kettling over house (local birds or preparing for a sea crossing?)" | Chris Mason | Beeston Regis | 5th

Tawny Owl | "Heard only, hooting. May have been answering a train whistle! (Could have been a coincidence.)" | Tont Pope | Weybourne | 28th

Jay | "One bird heard to produce repeated song(?) - a warbling 'di di di doo' that I have never heard before.." | Tony Pope | Kelling Heath | 16th

Rook | "60x Rookery around the main car park. About 20 nests in the main tree, with another ten spread out in nearby trees." | James & Cathy Emerson | Blickling Park | 15th

Carrion Crow | "I counted 47 into highest oak on southern edge of Bacton Wood at dusk 18:10 with some disputing on rights as numbers grew and flock splitting between two trees" | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 11th

Marsh Tit | "Picked up by John Swallow on call, then seen moving around in bare tree - the benefits of group birding; Club walk" | Val Stubbs | Swanton Novers | 14th

Cetti's Warbler | "It's back! After first appearing last Spring at this site, one appears to be ranging quite widely along the valley, heard from near to main entrance and later heard further west from School Common, also been recorded along Bramble Lane" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 10th

Blackcap | "Singing in the wood opposite my house. The first I have heard this year." | Andrew Crossley | Gresham | 20th

Firecrest | "4x Outrageous behaviour - such noisy and almost aggressive birds. How can a small bird look so angry at times." | David Griffiths | Holt Country Park & Lowes | 20th

Starling | "100x Fascinating! Clearly they were feeding up ready to head home. Started with around 30 feeding ferociously in the cemetery itself - then moved to the field west of the cemetery and were gradually joined by incoming one, twos and small groups to total around 100+. Still feeding when I left at 17.50! Really interesting to watch." | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 10th

Starling | "350x flew out of hope reed bed. Murmuration over / around reed bed for several minutes until the flock split and they dispersed in several directions" | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 20th

Blackbird | "My balcony pair are feeding young now. Although a Magpie is sadly lurking!!" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 23rd



Blackbird | "Presumably the return of our resident male as he flew onto car roof awaiting meal worms." | Doug & Jenny Cullern | Holt | 25th

Fieldfare | "At last! Was beginning to think I wouldn't see any locally before the end of the winter!" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 30th

Song Thrush | "Giving its all at 07:15. Great to have one singing in the garden but not appreciated at 05:50 by Mrs G when it started singing!" | David Griffiths | Holt | 10th

Robin | "Sitting in the middle of the road - it only flew off after I actually stopped the car" | Val Stubbs | Selbrigg Pond | 1st

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



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!

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

NENBC WhatsApp groups

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



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

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

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

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

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

Membership Renewal

Subscriptions for 2026 – LAST CALL!!!!

Just to let you know that if you haven't renewed your membership for 2026 we will reluctantly taking you off our circulation lists this month and switching off your website access.

If you are still wanting to renew, our preferred method of payment is by standing order, but one-off payments can be made electronically to the club account (Account Number: 20842968 / Sort Code: 30- 94-34; TSB) or by posting a cheque to the membership secretary Colin Blaxill at Caitlins, Bernard Close, High Kelling, Holt NR25 6QY. Cheques need to be made payable to "North East Norfolk Bird Club" and not NENBC. If you want to pay by cash then catch Colin or one of the other Committee Members at one of our events.

Note: We aren't intending to issue membership cards to existing members this year due to the rising costs of postage. Our club sponsor BirdVentures, who offer discounts on their own brand bird food to members at their Holt shop, are happy to accept your 2025 cards as proof of membership. Please get in touch if you can't find yours!

Many thanks for your continuing support and engagement and happy birding for 2026!

2026 calendar year membership of **£15 per household to include a copy of the club's printed 2025 Annual Bird Report** which we hope will be ready for publication in the summer, or **£12 without the report.**

Dear Members of the North East Norfolk Bird Club,
Thank you very much to everyone who took the time to complete the recent survey on the impact of AI in birding. Your responses are greatly appreciated and will play an important role in shaping the findings of this consultancy project. I really appreciate your support and interest in this project.

Kind Regards,
Maisie Royal UEA

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!



Call for Volunteers Beach nesting bird season 2026

The Plovers in Peril project are looking for volunteers to help vulnerable beach nesting birds at a Nationally important nesting site between Snettisham and Heacham.

- Varied roles - from beach ranger to community events
- Flexible commitment to suit your availability
- No experience needed - full training provided
- Expenses covered plus additional volunteer benefits



Find out more or apply

email us at PloversinPeril@rspb.org.uk



The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654

The 2026 Members' Night of 4 Mini Talks

We are once more looking for volunteers to take to the floor at our 2026 Members' Night to give us a 20 minute talk of their choice about birds or any other related subject. This has been a popular event previously – some would say the night of the year - with an eclectic range of subjects embraced by members. We plan to run this in our November indoor event slot.

It doesn't have to be scientific or funny (but could be!) – an appreciation of any aspect of a birding life, a birding patch or holiday, a related hobby, a cause you are passionate about, a grumble to get off your chest, a project you would like some help with.

A simple talk would be lovely, but slides are a great addition and if you needed some support with that, help is at hand!

Please get in touch if you want to have a chat about it first or to put your hand up.

| Alan Stevens | 07765 892515 | ahstevens@gmail.com |

What's On?

General Event Information – please see our **website** or ‘upcoming events’ in this newsletter for **fuller details** of what we have on offer



Overview

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

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

General Walks Information

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

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

DOGS: We regret no dogs except assistance dogs.

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

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

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

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

General Talks Info

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

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

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

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

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

Upcoming Events

In the coming weeks we have another double **Felbrigg Park Walk** offering a short or a standard stroll, and walk around **The Runtons**. Our **April Evening Talk** is about **The Holkham Spoonbills** with Andrew Bloomfield. Don't forget our **Birding for Beginners Programme** later this month and next month's **Big Sit**, always great fun. Look forward to seeing you at these events soon.

Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk 15th April 2026

Following the success of our March double event, we will offering two walks on the 3rd Wednesday of the month for the next few months at least.

In addition to our usual romp with Trevor we will also be leading a second shorter and slower walk for those who find our normal offer more than they are willing / able to do. We really hope that many of you will come and join us. The plan is a staggered start with us all meeting up in the café afterwards at 11am.

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

Walk 1 | 9:00am to 11:00am | ≈ 2+ miles
A bit of a romp with Trevor Williams

Walk 2 | 9:30am to 11:00am | ≈ 1 mile
Slow and steady with John Swallow

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

15th Apr | 20th May | 17th Jun

Please come and join us on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except August), you would be most welcome!

30th April 7:30pm to 9:30pm
Gresham Village Hall and via Zoom

'The Holkham Spoonbills' with Andrew Bloomfield

Andrew is the reserve warden at Holkham National Nature Reserve and has spent a lifetime studying the birds of the area having grown up locally. He is the author of *Birds of the Holkham Area* (1993) and *North Norfolk's Wildlife* (2008). In his illustrated talk Andrew will talk us through the success story of Spoonbills at Holkham.

If you want a sneak preview of what is happening there at the moment then have a look at the new Holkham Spoonbill live webcam [here](#).

The Runtons

A spring walk around the Runtons

Saturday 18th April
9.00 am 1.00 pm

Walk Leader: Trevor Williams

By mid-April spring migration should be getting started. This walk, around the villages of East and West Runton, will explore a variety of coastal habitats and local migrant 'hot spots', looking for a mix of late wintering, summer breeding and migrating birds. Depending on weather and the state of the tide this circular route will include some beach walking as well as mostly quiet country lanes. At this time of the year anything could turn up but we'll be particularly looking for Wheatear, wagtails, warblers, hirundines and displaying raptors. Suitable for all skill levels - beginners to experts welcome!

PARK & MEET: Meet at the entrance to the Runton Road carpark in Cromer, between Blue Sky café and the toilet block. The Runton Road (cliff-top) car park in Cromer It is a North Norfolk District Council coastal site and fees apply | Grid reference: TG212424 | What3Words: seagulls.river.tilts | GIS: Easting 621226, Northing 342421

DISTANCE: approx 4 miles

ACCESSIBILITY: Paths are generally level but with some hill climbing / steep ramps involved. We will be walking on grass and gravel tracks, which may be uneven and bumpy in places. Paths could be damp or wet in places. Some beach walking involved. Sturdy footwear advisable and please come dressed for the seasonally changeable weather.

FACILITIES: There is a café en route (run by long-time NENBC supporters Martin & Louise) which we may call in at, time permitting - also toilets available.

CLUB BADGES: The walk is in the club area so records count towards relevant club badges.

No prior booking is required for this walk

Burnham Overy Staithe Walk – grazing marsh, sea, dunes and beach

Sunday 19th May | 9.30am to 1.00pm

Walk Leader: Colin Blaxill

A walk during May along the Norfolk coast is always exciting, with resident and passage migratory birds likely to keep us entertained. Starting along the sea wall, we will look over grazing marsh and explore the dunes and walk to the beach, returning back through the dunes. We will be looking for waders, ducks, raptors and a range of passerines. The sandy beach, popular in summer, depending on the weather but should hold a range of gulls and possibly different waders. The dunes on the south side are grass and scrub with Holkham Pines to the east end. We will try to enter the pines, if time allows.

NO ADVANCE BOOKING REQUIRED | DETAILS ON WEBSITE AND WILL BE IN NEXT MONTH'S NEWLETTER

Birding for Beginners Programme 2026

Three consecutive Wednesday evenings | 6:30pm to 9:30pm

29th April | 6th May | 13th May | Gresham Village Hall

After a couple of years of not running this course, Trevor and Carol are back on track again this year with a spring course. Cost to members is £10 total for the programme (£15 for non-members) towards hall hire.

The basics of bird ID including: bird topography, feathers, moult, size, structure, colour, behaviour, sound

Finding and seeing birds including: field guides, optics, fieldcraft, where to watch, attracting birds to your garden

Migration including: reading the weather, bird movement, visible migration, vagrancy

Taking your interest further including: birding specialisms, the club website, new technology, an alumni story

Please let Carol know as soon as you can if you are interested [Delia & Sam, Kala & Mike, Tam & Mary, David & Maureen, Wendy, Wynne, we have you down already].



The Big Sit | Saturday 9th May

NENBC's Annual Dawn to Dusk Static Bird Count

How many bird species can we see from the same spot dawn to dusk? – join us to find out! We very much hope you can come along to give us a bit of support and join in the general excitement of the day. For those of you new to it, there is a bit of general info in the box below but basically we hang about in the same spot watching, listening and taking note of what is about. It is always a fun day out with the chance to chat during the slower periods, engage with the passing public and with the added bonus (at Felbrigg at least) of an events shelter if the weather is a little inclement! You absolutely don't need to be a birding expert to take part and we would love to see you for all or some of the day. If you can make it down for dawn to either of the sites for the dawn chorus that would be great but if you just want to pop by at a more civilised hour then please do!

FELBRIGG PARK with Trevor Williams & the gang | Dawn (5am) to Dusk | Above the lake on 'The Warren' so we have a view onto the water, across the grassland, a bit of the water meadow in the scopes and of course the trees and sky. We will also be running both a morning and lunchtime walk out from our camp.

BEESTON COMMON PILLBOX with Francis Farrow & the gang | Dawn (5am) until 13:00 (possibly longer if plenty of birds and it's not too cold!) | At Pill-box Hill, towards the south of Beeston Common as usual. Grid ref: TG164240 / W3W: edgy.yourself.wolves

Not able to make it? Why not have your own Big Sit at home? The event coincides with Global Bird Day & World Migratory Bird Day and we will making a donation to a worthy birding cause based on number of records added to our website by members over the weekend so please get logging!



The Big Sit Made Easy



- Choose a site with good views and set a notional 17 feet diameter circle to base your team in
- Record all bird species seen or heard from the circle during a 24 hour period (realistically dawn to dusk)
- Where possible records should be confirmed by a 2nd team member and spotters out in the field are allowed as long as the bird is recorded from the circle
- Maintain a birdlist in 10 minute intervals during the day and later log results on the club website
- Keep in touch with other teams for possible fly-throughs and bragging rights
- Bring a picnic and enjoy the company of others
- The club will compare results across sites and years in the newsletter

Last Month's Evening Talk *with Drew Lyness* "Scarcities & Swallowtails: 50 Years of Strumpshaw Fen"



All photos courtesy of Drew Lyness

By Alan Stevens



Over 50 members joined our March meeting for the penultimate talk of our winter programme. We invited Drew Lyness along to tell us something of Strumpshaw Fen, what can be found there and explain why it is so special to him.

For readers who do not know him, Drew is currently the Development and Engagement Coordinator for England at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), a freelance guide for Birding EcoTours and, perhaps most importantly to him, a passionate volunteer at his favourite nature reserve, RSPB Strumpshaw Fen, where he largely **organises** and leads guided walks. Drew is a dedicated 'patch birder', having spent over a decade watching birds and other fantastic wildlife at Strumpshaw, making new discoveries as he goes. His talk celebrated this fantastic reserve, now into its 50th year since it was opened to the public by the RSPB, showcasing the incredible, scarce and surprising species that call this special place home.

Drew started his talk with an overview of Strumpshaw and most importantly for a bird club, a bird. For this he took us back to his home turf of Linstead Springs, Green Sandpipers and their migration to breed in Finland, some 1,700km covered in just two days and where once the chicks are hatched, the females head back on the return journey leaving them in the care of the male.

We then came straight back to Strumpshaw and Drew explained its location in the Yare Valley with mixed habitat of ancient woodland, Alder and Willow Carr and wet meadowland all of which (to date) support 90 species of breeding birds, over 400 moths, 30 butterflies, 21 dragon and damsel flies and 550 wild flowers including 6 orchids.

By way of history, we learnt that the RSPB took over the area in 1975 and had only a short time frame to complete arrangements, including the condition that there had to be a resident warden. There wasn't a queue of candidates for the job, but Mike Blackburn was drafted in from Leighton Moss, complete with his caravan, to take on the job. The only buildings on site were an unmodernised cottage and dilapidated boathouse which have now been repurposed into accommodation and the visitor centre.

At this time the reed beds were tidal and in a degraded condition due to eutrophication resulting from sewage discharge and leading to an infestation of Great Hairy Willowherb and Canary Grass. The provision of a dam helped alleviate this problem, but not without creating another problem as the dam prevented the local police patrol boat getting to the river!

A slide of a Starling murmuration led to an unexpected twist in that they have all but disappeared on the Fen because of the success of Bitterns which were eating them while roosting! Bitterns are a success story for

Finding your way around RSPB Strumpshaw Fen

Fen trail

This relaxing 3.5-km walk through reedbeds and sloughs pools takes about 1.5 hours.

The lower fen offers stunning views. Keep a lookout for marsh harriers, bitterns and other reedbed birds.

This is a gentle route, but the paths are uneven, and can be muddy or flooded in winter. If you encounter flooding, please turn back – don't try to wade through!

Meadow trail

Open in spring and summer only, this trail takes you on a 30-minute, 0.5-km stroll.

As you wander through meadows buzzing with insects and dotted with beautiful wild orchids, keep your eyes peeled for rare swallowtail butterflies with their striking yellow and black wings (late May to mid-July).

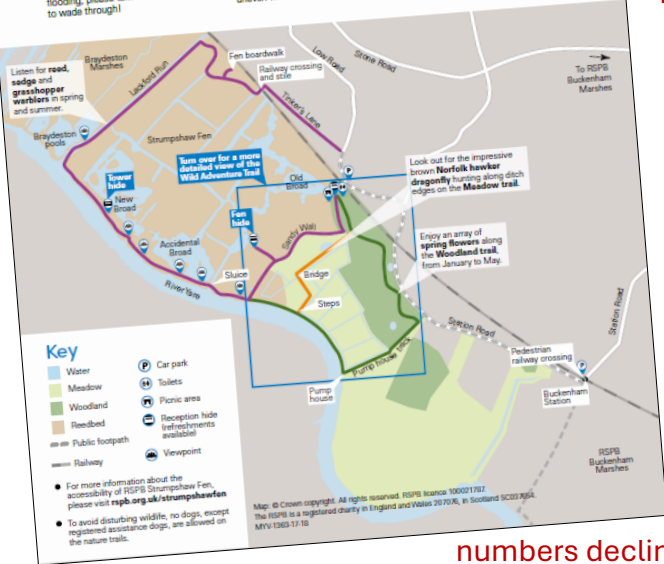
This trail is gentle, but the path is uneven with steps to the riverbank.

Woodland trail

Discover the magic of the woodland throughout the year on this 1.8-km walk, which takes about one hour.

Enjoy carpets of bluebells in spring, stumble across a family of stoats in summer, admire fascinating fungi in autumn and watch secretive treecreepers in winter.

The paths on this trail are gentle, but are uneven in places and slope up to the riverbank.



Strumpshaw as are Marsh Harriers, not forgetting they had been reduced to a single pair by 1940. 6 or 7 nests now recorded at Strumpshaw each year with up to 50 in winter roosts. Hen Harriers also put in an appearance.

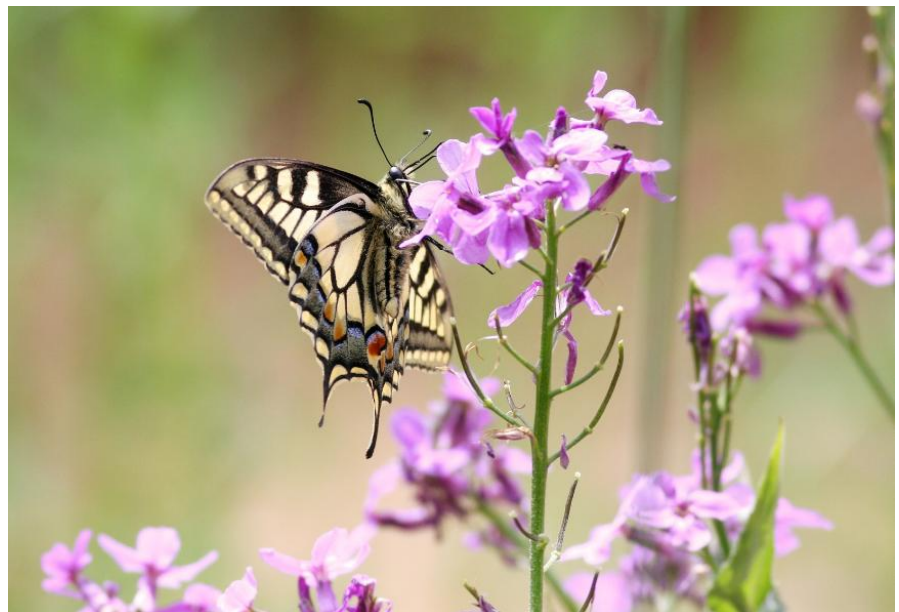
Drew's talk then continued with a look at some more of the birds associated with the reserve. Waxwings visit in the winter when Common Snipe are everywhere, and Jack Snipe are to be found. Around 50 to 100 Water Pipits are thought to overwinter in the UK and this year Strumpshaw was host to c25 and an interesting map of their dispersal from their alpine breeding ground illustrated how widespread they are during the winter. Bewick Swans take advantage of the valley on migration in late autumn and Drew was really pleased to tick a Smew in 2025. An interesting little story came out of this from a social media post which suggested the same bird had been seen on the Flemish coast a couple of days earlier and identified by a close look at its plumage.

Our speaker then took us over to Buckenham Fen acquired by the RSPB in 1990 to have a look at the fortunes of the wintering geese there. Once the stronghold of the UK's population of Taiga Bean Geese, in the 1990's they outnumbered Pink-Footed Geese, but since when their

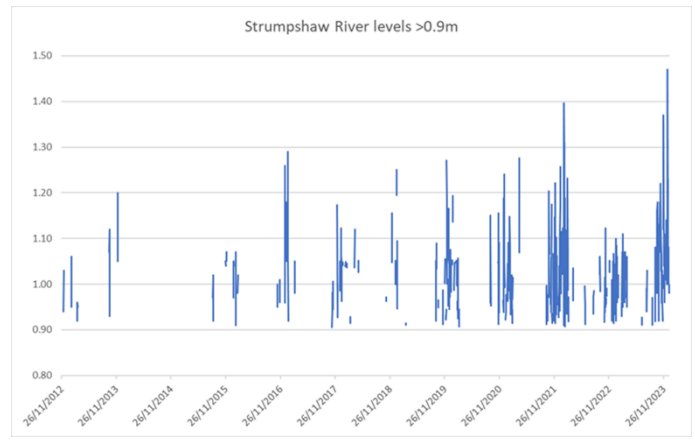
numbers declined to 2 in 2023 since when they have been absent. On the upside between 10 and 20,000 Pink foot can be present together with a regular 5% of Wigeon and perhaps 20% of the UK's White-Fronted Geese populations.

Then, back to Strumpshaw, and Drew took a look at Garganey and Green Winged Teal ID before turning to Little Gulls dropping into the fen in rainstorms, the increasing number of Spoonbills and Swallows and Sand Martins roosting in the reed beds. A brief visit to the fortunes of the Cuckoos and Bullfinches showed and downside whereas the Firecrest, as elsewhere, appears to be on up. Drew reminded us that while dawn is regarded as the best time to go birding, dusk is under rated illustrating this with Sedge Warblers when on 22nd April 2022 100 were singing in the evening whereas by dawn this number was reduced by two thirds. A quick mention of Savi's Warblers was followed by drawing the first half of his talk to a close with an update on Common Cranes for which there are ongoing efforts to attract them to the Fen. Absent for 100 years a pair produced a single chick in 2023, which was killed by a dog. The following two years also produced one offspring and up to three pairs have been showing interest.

Refreshments taken, books bought and catch-up chats among members completed, Drew returned to the Fen and the star of the show, the **Swallowtail Butterfly** for which he has a passion. The *britannicus* Swallowtails are found only in the Norfolk Broads and Strumpshaw is the stronghold. They over winter as a chrysalis emerging in May and June, and feed almost exclusively on Milk Parsley, which is vital to their success. The green caterpillars have a defensive system which excretes a fluid that smells of rotten pineapple and they pupate in August. There is a success story with these beautiful butterflies in that in 1975 only three adults were seen and now the record stands at 45 in one day helped by the expansion of Milk Parsley. Still on a tenuous thread, nonetheless the Swallowtail is hanging on.

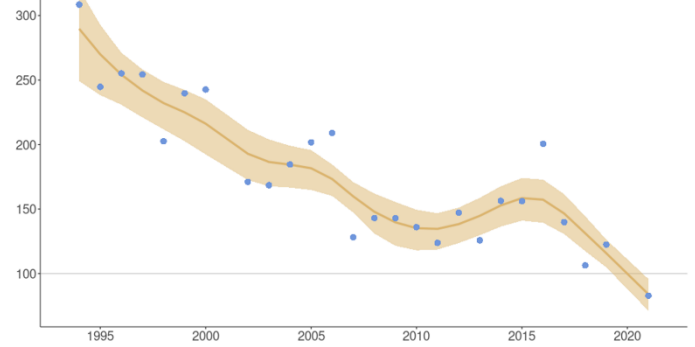


Almost every talk we have now, at some point, must refer to climate change and the challenges it brings to both habitat and species. As far as Strumpshaw is concerned it has bought increased frequency, and to a higher level, of flooding as severe storms raise river levels flood habitat, destroy infrastructure and with the Yare being slightly saline fen plants can perish. This last event is exacerbated by more frequent storm surges. Fifteen years ago there were three events of this nature per annum and now they peak at 40 plus.



On a brighter note our speaker ran through a show case of the wildlife at Strumpshaw including Hummingbird Moths, Kingfishers and Otters. Chinese Water Deer which, while attractive mammals, are also a cause for concern due to their numbers (they can produce 3 litters per annum of up to 5 fawns!) and the Yare Valley has perhaps the highest density of population in the world following escapees from Whipsnade Zoo in 1920. The whirlwind tour continued with **Grass Snakes** (there are no Adders on the Fen), Water Voles, Slow Worms, White Admiral and Purple Emperor Butterflies, Clearwing Moths and allegedly huge **Fen Raft Spiders** before returning to the birds. **Spotted Flycatcher**, where the record in the Fen mirrors that elsewhere of a collapse in population, Honey Buzzards, now regularly seen, Spotted Crake, Bearded Tits, and **Osprey**.

Spotted Flycatcher population abundance
Long-term trend (1994–) in United Kingdom



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Giant spiders the size of rats making a comeback in UK

Up to 3,750 female fen raft spiders believed to be at 12 sites across the UK now

Athena Stavrou

Tuesday 20 August 2024 08:03 BST



To conclude, Drew turned towards the future and what the Fen may look like in the years ahead and, taking birds a reference, will there be more Great White Egret, Night Herons, Glossy Ibis Black-winged Stilt, Caspian Tern, Penduline Tit or White-spotted Bluethroat as climate change moves populations? To round off Drew bought the story of his discovery of a nesting pair of Long-eared Owl in 2022, the first for 10 years in the Valley – what away to sign off!

Drew gave us a great evening, and we thank him for his time, sharing his expertise, enthusiasm and thoughts together with his love of Strumpshaw Fen and a few laughs along the way. I am sure there will be an uplift in the number of club members paying a visit to this wonderful reserve. He said he will be happy to return as he has lots of others talks so we will try and arrange that at some time in the future.



zoom

Apologies to those who tried to join by Zoom. There was no internet in the hall and despite my best efforts and those of the village hall committee on the phone, I just couldn't get it to work. Hopefully you all got my email explaining the situation a little after start time – sent from the car park where I managed to get mobile data (apologies for any typos – it was dark!). With Drew's permission, I took an audio recording of his talk and if you haven't yet received a link then I am still working on splicing it together with the presentation slides ... bear with me as I remain optimistic I can sort it! *Carol*

Last Month's Double Mid-Week Walk

Felbrigg Park | Wednesday 18th March



What a success! Our double walk at Felbrigg Park last month proved a real hit! In addition to our usual 2 hour romp with Trevor, we also had a second shorter and slower 1 hour walk with Nick for those who find our normal offer more than they fancy. The staggered start allowed us to all meet up in the café afterwards. The pic above was when the front section of the long-walkers met up with the short-walkers at the end. We are missing a few as the long-walk stragglers were some way back and by the time we caught up the short-walkers had run off (yes literally!) to the café closely followed by the others when they all realised what the length of the queue for refreshments would be like! Here's a few comments from participants

- 👤 "I really enjoyed our walk yesterday, many thanks to Nick for leading it at a nice manageable pace. I was surprised by how many birds we saw in that short distance."
- 👤 "Everyone was pleased with the opportunity of a slower birdwatch and a social get together with other members."
- 👤 "Suited me fine !!! Thank you so much for arranging it."
- 👤 "I was so pleased that a nice size group of people turned up yesterday."

Off to the horizon and beyond | by Dave Billham

It had to happen one day; after years of not getting to fifty species on a monthly club Felbrigg walk, we finally did it – and some extras! The fifty total used to regularly feature in the earlier years of the walk, but had not been achieved since (almost unbelievably) May 2019. Whilst this number of species can be found around Felbrigg Park on practically any day, if you are willing to put the time in, doing it within the two hour duration of the walk has got progressively harder. However, achieving this total was not all we managed on the morning; we had our highest number of members turning up, definitely for a long time, and possibly the largest group total ever; and the first 'double walk', a new innovation. And there was even more – we took a

new route, never before trod on a Wednesday walk. On top of all that, it was a sunny, DRY morning – what more could you want!

The first group were meeting at the usual time of 9am for the usual two hour walk, but this time we had a second group meeting at 10am for a gentler, one hour walk. If all went to plan, both groups would finish back at the house at 11am for a joint summing up of the morning, followed by coffee and buns. Nick Kimber was to lead this maiden 10am outing, with Trevor heading up the earlier one. As I was on the first walk, I will have to leave Nick to write up his one!

Having arrived a little earlier, Trevor, Carol and myself watched in amazement as more and more club

members arrived, resulting in a grand total of twenty-eight, a fantastic turnout. This number included Maisie, a student from UEA, who is working with the club looking at the use of technology in birding, with an emphasis on the Merlin birdsong recognition and bird ID app. She was hoping to get information and feedback from us by chatting to members during the walk, something she achieved in greater numbers than she was expecting!

The car park list, put together as we waited to start, consisted of **Rook**, **Carrion Crow**, **Jackdaw**, **Woodpigeon**, **Feral Pigeon** and **Magpie**, whilst we were serenaded by **Robin**, **Blue Tit**, **Goldfinch** and **Blackbird**. Overhead we saw **Herring Gull** and a very nice **Red Kite**, whilst a single **Common Buzzard** was sat in a dead tree in the adjacent field. The route we were to take was an arc around the southern extremities of the park, mainly through small areas of woodland, which on the National Trust's map of Felbrigg are named The Belt, Metton Carrs and Common Plantation. Just as we were about to set off, Trevor called a pair of **Shelduck** flying over us, heading determinedly south; also, a new addition to the walk list – a great start to the morning.

The route initially took us across the fields towards the entrance to the park; here the next addition to the list was a **Wren**, heard singing from scrub as we crossed the bridleway. Reaching the start of the trees we found a small, mobile flock of **Redwing** up in the treetops; a bit of patient watching gave a total of 16 individuals. As we neared a manure heap in the adjacent field I glimpsed a wagtail, which promptly hopped behind the heap; this turned out to be a **Grey Wagtail**, looking resplendent in fresh summer plumage. A singing **Song Thrush** and a calling **Pheasant** were next found, then, as we crossed an area of open ground, on the edge of a nearby crop we saw a pair of **Red-legged Partridge**, a species last noted in May 2025.



Entering back into a wooded area, a **Great Tit** was seen, feeding alongside a small flock of **Long-tailed Tit**. A **Great Spotted Woodpecker** could be heard drumming,

and for the first time this year we came across **Chiffchaff**, a single bird constantly calling. We spent a bit of time looking for it in the treetops, as many of the group, though familiar with the call, were not so certain of its appearance. Fortunately, it did oblige us by spending a bit of time fully in view on the edge of its favoured tree. However, it was knocked into second place for 'viewability' by a **Robin**, whose territory was on the track we were following, and who carried on singing as we stood right in front of him, literally a foot or two away – he was not going to give way! Another singer, this time a **Skylark**, was next on the list, and the calls of a pair of **Nuthatch** alerted us to this smashing bird, which again gave us good views.



Coming out of the woods onto the bridleway, we spied another Red Kite overhead, along with a single **Common Gull**, a reminder of the large number of this species that had been present on the Park's fields all winter. We were now walking alongside a tall hedge, and inside it could be seen definite movement; however, it was too thick to see what. Alan volunteered to walk in the field on the opposite side of the hedge to see what might be flushed out as our group passed; a very nice **Yellowhammer** turned out to be the answer. This species was last noted in roughly the same area in April 2025, the only sighting of it that year. A large cloud of

gulls seen in front of us were following a plough; they were mainly Herring, but amongst them were **Black-headed Gull**, a new addition to the list.



In the fields bordering the bridleway we could see further Red-legged Partridge, and a running Hare, but the only new bird species noted was a distant **Kestrel**, spied as it flew out of a tree. Emerging onto Weavers Way we could hear many **Skylark** all around us; passing the black-painted barn we did not find any owls, but we did find Peacock butterflies basking on the wooden sideboards, which had been heated nicely by the sun. (I was later informed that the rear of the group had found **Meadow Pipit** here). At the end of the bridleway we reached the lake, where we walked along the recently cleared north-eastern bank towards the house. Visible on the water were **Mute Swan**, **Coot**, **Tufted Duck** (including the Tufted / Ferruginous hybrid), **Gadwall** and **Mallard**, whilst in the usual tree was a mis-matched avian couple; a **Cormorant** and a **Grey Heron**. At this point I caught up with the back-half of the group, to see if they had seen anything that those of us at the front had not; Val informed me she had spotted **Dunnock** and **Chaffinch** earlier in the walk, a **Greenfinch** had been heard and seen in the woods, and Richard Fisher had found **Pied Wagtail** in the fields.

As we neared the end of the lake, the call of **Cetti's Warbler** stopped us in our tracks – it was still here! Having heard it on the last three walks of 2025, it had been silent for the first two of 2026. It was certainly being vocal now – could there be a possibility of it breeding; the habitat appears ideal? Time will tell. Moving on to the path above the water meadows, we found **Shoveler** and **Teal** on the pools, and a **Moorhen** wandering the grassy banks. From the reedbeds came the call of an invisible **Reed Bunting**, which, after a bit of looking, was eventually found. I had been keeping a running total of species seen throughout the walk, and was now able to tell Trevor that we were only two species away from the magical total of fifty, that we had been hoping for on so many walks. We felt that it must

now be possible; for a start, there had to be a **Common Snipe** somewhere on the water meadows. Some diligent searching revealed just such a bird, soon pointed out to the group. Forty-nine; oh so close, but our time was almost at an end. Then, a high-pitched, whinnying sound from the water meadow – **Little Grebe**! Species number 50 for the morning - hooray. Fittingly, the only record of this species in 2025, was also a calling individual heard on that year's March walk.



We now headed for the house, slightly behind time, in order to meet up with the second walk's group. As we got a move on, we wondered how many might have turned up for this inaugural short walk; would it be just one or two, or possibly more? Worst case, would we only see Nick there! We should have known better; as we approached the house we could see a large group of people, and getting nearer, we saw Nick amongst them; wow, there were lots of them. It turned out that fourteen members had joined Nick, a marvellous result, giving a grand total of 43 club members present. Equally as good, they had seen two species we had not; Linnet, and a Sparrowhawk, which had attempted to catch the Reed Bunting we had seen! Incidentally, both were first species sightings for the year. Adding these two to our fifty gave a grand total of 52 species for the walks, what a great result.

It turned out that there was one drawback to having two such large groups of people though; as we approached Nick's group, who were waiting by the house, they saw us coming and obviously thought "If we wait for them to get here, we will be in a very big queue for coffee and cake." So, despite Trevor's calls for them to stay for a mass group photo, a number of them high-tailed it for the café before any such event could take place! Still, even without this evidence, it had been quite a morning, and one thoroughly enjoyed by all. So if you have not yet tried a Felbrigg walk, with the luxury of two options on offer now, why not come along and give it a go? You will be most welcome.



A slow and steady lake loop | by Nick Kimber

What a glorious day for a club walk at Felbrigg, and what a pleasure to see such a good group turn out for the trial of a shorter, slower walk for club members. Fifteen of us met in the Felbrigg car park at 10:00, both old members and some new, and quickly started adding birds to our list, no doubt aided by the warm sunny weather.

We set off along the drive, and turning down from the front of the house, made our way to the bench above the corner of the lake, where we found a pair of **Linnets** on the gorse. From our position here we could easily scan across the lake and soon added **Cormorant** and **Grey Heron** to the list, both of which were perching in the usual roost. A **Cetti's Warbler** was heard calling, as well as a **Green Woodpecker**. Sharp eyed Denise brought our attention to a **Sparrowhawk** circling high above with some **Buzzards**, and a **Kestrel** flew above the water meadow. Many **Tufted Duck** remain on the lake along with the usual **Mallard** and **Mute Swans**. We moved our attention to the water meadow, and took the path overlooking the reeds, where Linda spotted a **Reed Bunting** and further along we found **Coot**, **Shovelers**, **Teal** and three **Snipe** enjoying the spring warmth.

We had taken our time, and I was surprised to find that it was already a quarter to eleven, so we made our way back up to the front of the house, to arrive just ahead of the earlier group led by Trevor. Most retired to enjoy coffee in the courtyard with other club members. In total we recorded **37 species** – not just the 30 I reported at the time – I always forget to write down some of the more obvious!



Snipe – Nick Kimber



**Catching up in the
café afterwards**



Last Month's Weekend Walk

Swanton Novers – Searching for Goshawk | Saturday 14th March



By Seán Dempster

Bright, reasonably warm and with a decent breeze – the conditions were perfect for displaying Goshawks. All we needed now was for them to perform!

At 0900 we set up a brief watch point at Swanton Novers while people arrived. Several **Buzzards** were soaring on the thermals and there was a tantalising glimpse of a Goshawk but only a couple of people got onto it. In the meadow by the church, we picked up a few interesting species such as **Grey Heron, Yellowhammer, Skylark, Linnet** and **Reed Bunting**.

With all 16 people gathered together, we headed off through the oak woodland, gathering a number of common species along the way. **Marsh Tit** was the highlight - we reckoned we had three or four in total – and it was nice to see **Treecreeper** and **Nuthatch** and to hear **Goldcrest**. Exiting the woodland, we explored the newly created sinuous stream that Norfolk Rivers Trust established a few years ago. We followed this downstream towards the Hindolveston-Fulmodeston road before stopping to admire a **Siskin** and then retracing our footsteps back to the church.

At 11.00 we set up telescopes and it was all eyes to the sky as we scanned for the elusive Goshawk. In the next half hour we added a couple of unexpected species including **Egyptian Goose** and **Mute Swan**, both flying over the woods. Eventually, a raptor was spotted high up in the clouds and for once we could discard Common Buzzard. After a while we were confident that this was our first proper view of a **Goshawk** and it was followed swiftly by another bird much lower over the woods. Later, a nearby **Sparrowhawk** enabled us to compare and contrast the characteristics of these two similar species. By the time we wrapped up the session at midday, we had probably added another couple of Goshawks and I think that all of us were confident that we'd had decent views of this marvellous bird of prey.

In total, **44 species** were observed. Hopefully we can repeat this trip next year, maybe going a week or two earlier when the Goshawks are displaying more actively?

Library pic, Goshawk, Geoff Snelson





Old hands will know all about Weybourne Camp but as we have quite a few new members, we thought a quick note about it was needed. 'The Camp' is the land to the west of Weybourne Beach car park, seen in the top half of the photo above. It was used as a military base during the Second World War and was converted into the Muckleburgh Collection, a private museum of militaria, in the early 1970s and over the next few years, many of the Nissan huts were demolished and the area to the north of the main buildings was allowed to develop into scrubland and overgrown hedges. In 1987 a conservation management plan was drawn up resulting in the excavation of a small freshwater pool and extensive planting of mainly willow, oak, sycamore and elderberry. Unfortunately in recent years the area has been generally "tidied up", almost all of the hedges have been uprooted and much of the area has been converted to arable farmland. Despite this, almost 290 species of birds have been recorded on or from the camp and both spring and autumn still never fail to produce some outstanding rarities. Over 23,000 birds have been ringed on the camp since ringing first started in 1972!

As Weybourne Camp is a private site, there is **no access for the general public**. Moss Taylor has permission from the landowner to access the site and has been documenting the wildlife there for over 50 years. However, the coastal path runs along the outside of the Camp and anyone can look in and see some of the rich habitat along this coastal belt and the birds and other wildlife it supports.

By Moss Taylor

The year started well with a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** flying west close inshore on **January 1st**, while a raft of **Common Scoters**, present offshore for the first four months of 2025 and peaking at a record count of 3,000 in late April, were joined by up to 13 **Velvet Scoters** and 2 drake **Long-tailed Ducks**. Also offshore in January were up to 25 **Great Crested Grebes**. In the Muckleburgh Collection compound a **Little Owl** was regularly seen until early March.

The highlight of **February**, otherwise a quiet month, was a **Spoonbill** flying west on 23rd.

March began with 2 **Great White Egrets** flying in from the west and landing in the pine plantation by the scrape, where they remained in the tree tops for ten minutes before flying back west. At the time it was initially hoped that they may have been prospecting a new potential nesting site but unfortunately it was not to be. Offshore a herd of 40 **Whooper Swans** spent all morning resting on the water several miles out to sea, while a **Kingfisher** flying west 200 yards offshore on 20th was a surprise. As I drove on to the Camp shortly after dawn on 23rd, a **Goshawk** flying south-east was a good start to the day. More surprising was a skein of 7 **Lesser White-fronted Geese** that flew east and then back west on 25th. These were part of the group of birds from the Swedish re-introduction programme, which had been present at various sites along the north Norfolk coast, and constituted a new species for the Camp. The month ended with up to 2 **Jack Snipe** feeding in the habitat specially-created by James McCallum at both the scrape and Weybourne Hope.

The first summer migrants began to arrive in **April** and the more common species, such as **Wheatear**, were joined by a female-type **Black Redstart** around the Muckleburgh Collection buildings on 4th -7th, the first of several **Ring Ouzels** on 7th, a **Hooded Crow** flying east with 6 **Carrion Crows** on 8th and a reeling **Grasshopper Warbler** by the scrape on 14th (the earliest ever date for the species). Wildfowl were also well represented with a drake **Garganey** on the pool at Weybourne Hope on 15th, a drake **Mandarin Duck** on the scrape on 16th and a drake **American Wigeon** (another new species for the Camp) flying west offshore with a female **Pintail** on 17th. Staying with wildfowl, a pair of **Greylag Geese** nested on the island at Weybourne Hope and on 18th the pair led their 7 two-day old goslings along the edge of the Camp before crossing the beach and swimming westwards 200 yards offshore. A second pair appeared with 4 newly hatched goslings on the scrape at the end of May, presumably having nested there undetected. Finally, single **Little Ringed Plovers** flew west on April 29th and 30th.

Male May is traditionally the most exciting month of the spring and 2025 did not disappoint. The month started with an **Osprey** flying east on 2nd and the first **Hobby** of the summer on 12th. A female **Shelduck** was seen to enter a rabbit burrow on the south side of the Muckleburgh Collection plantation on 19th but there was no further evidence of nesting there. On the same day a female **Red-backed Shrike** was found in the bushes at the east end and a **Ruff** flew west offshore. The following day a fine male **White-spotted Bluethroat** was also located at the east end. May 25th was a red-letter day when the pale morph **Booted Eagle**, which had been present in the county for the last three days, was reported over Muckleburgh Hill. Not only a new bird for Norfolk but the first British record, when it was initially seen in Cornwall. Two days later a singing male **Marsh Warbler** was found in the reed bed at Weybourne Hope, where it remained for the next nine days, while a second-year **Common Rosefinch** was present by the scrape and a **Purple Heron** flew in from the north and continued west over the Camp. May had certainly lived up to its reputation.

Interest in **June** is centred around the breeding birds on the Camp and included 4-5 pairs of **Stonechats** (one pair fledging 5 young from one clutch), 8 pairs of **Whitethroats**, 5 singing **Skylarks**, 3 pairs of **Meadow Pipits**, 2 pairs of **Pied Wagtails** and 9 pairs of **Linnets**. A pair of **Buzzards** once again nested on the north side of the Muckleburgh



Male Wheatear in spring



Drake Mandarin Duck on the scrape



Pair of Greylag Geese with goslings on scrape



Male Pied Wagtail in breeding plumage

Collection plantation, fledging two young, and a rufous morph juvenile **Cuckoo** was seen on several days near the scrape. Although a pair of **Kestrels** was present throughout the summer there was no other evidence to suggest that had actually nested on the Camp.

The highlights in the usually quiet month of **July** included a **Honey Buzzard** on 6th, a **Curlew Sandpiper** west on 8th, the second **Roseate Tern** of the year on 16th, 2 **Spoonbills** flying west on 22nd and a flock of 18 **Arctic Terns** flying west offshore on 24th. August started with a **Black Guillemot** flying west on 4th but little else of note until 25th when 2 adult/sub-adult **Long-tailed Skuas** flew west close inshore, a **Corn Bunting**, now a rare bird on the Camp, flew east and the first **Pied Flycatcher** of the autumn appeared by the mound on 25th.

YounSeptember started with a juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** at the east end of the Camp, a species that was recorded in every month except for January. One of the highlights of September was a flock of 31 **Glossy Ibises** on 7th, first seen flying north-west over Eccles before passing Weybourne and many other sites along the north Norfolk coast as far west as Hunstanton. On the same day **Pied Flycatchers** peaked at 4 and two days later the first returning **Pink-footed Geese** were recorded. Mid-September is often a rewarding time for seawatching, depending on the wind direction, and 2 **Pomarine Skuas**, a juvenile **Long-tailed Skua**, **Black Terns** and single **Cory's** and **Sooty Shearwaters** and 3 **Curlew Sandpipers** were recorded passing offshore. The month ended with 2 **Cattle Egrets** flying east on 29th.

For many years, October and November rather than September, have been the months in which the rarest passerines have appeared, accompanied by the first winter visitors, and 2025 was no exception. The first **Whooper Swans**, a flock of 7 adults flew west on **October** 7th and the first **Snow Bunting** two days later, while 3 **Crossbills** flew west on 12th. The wind swung around to a gentle north-easterly on 13th and on the following day the first of 2 **Yellow-browed Warblers** was found in the willows by the mound. After a few days of northerly winds a **Short-eared Owl** flew in from the north on 19th and 2 **Grey Phalaropes** flew past close inshore, on 26th, one resting briefly on the sea before continuing to the west. On the same day a **Siberian Lesser Whitethroat** was present by the mound to be followed three days later by the

Buzzard pullus on nest in Muckleburgh Collection plantation



Female Kestrel



Juvenile Mediterranean Gull at east end



A flock of 7 adult Whooper Swans flying west offshore



first of 2 **Siberian Chiffchaffs**. On 28th a **Sandwich Tern** was resting with the **Black-headed Gulls** at the east end. The month ended with a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** and the first **Little Auks** of the autumn.

The best day of the year was undoubtedly **November 8th**. On arrival at the Camp, another **Yellow-browed Warbler** was heard announcing its presence by calling repeatedly from the willows and shortly afterwards the distinctive 'tchik' of a **Dusky Warbler** was also heard in the same area. While looking for it in the dense foliage, a second **Dusky Warbler** was heard calling from the scrub around the pond by the mound. After a while both were feeding together in the willows and were joined not only by the **Yellow-browed Warbler** but also by a **Siberian Chiffchaff**! An amazing collection of eastern warblers. Later in the morning a **Raven** flew south-west, drawing attention to itself by its repeated 'cronking', followed half-an-hour later by a **Crane** flying high west. What a morning! A northerly gale with rain on 17th produced ideal conditions for seawatching and we weren't disappointed with good numbers of **Eiders** and **Common Scoters** flying west, but the highlight was a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** also flying west. Fortunately both a **Little Gull** and a **Kittiwake** had flown past a few minutes earlier to provide extremely useful comparisons. By the following day the wind had eased and backed to the south-west and a **Tundra Bean Goose** flew in from the north-east before continuing west along the coast. A most unusual observation on 25th was of a **Bittern** flying west several miles offshore. Thus ended a most interesting month.

The year ended with a flock of 60 **Stock Doves** feeding on the set-aside fields on **December 23rd**, while Weybourne Hope reed bed hosted 2 **Water Rails** and 2 **Cetti's Warblers** and the willows on the east side of the reeds held a **Firecrest** and up to 3 **Chiffchaffs**. Finally an adult **Mediterranean Gull** was present almost daily at the east end of the Camp.



Sandwich Tern in winter plumage with Black-headed Gull



Dusky Warbler in willows by mound



Crane flying west over the Camp.



Adult Mediterranean Gull in winter plumage with Black-headed Gull



By Jonathan Anderson

My Mum (Judith) and I returned to Suffolk for our annual birding trip. We called in at Lynford Arboretum for Coffee and heard Nuthatch and finches from Carpark before heading to **SWT Lackford Lakes**. Lackford is near Bury St. Edmunds (so easy to get to our accommodation in Sweffling (near Saxmundham), where we saw and heard lots of wildfowl including Egyptian Goose and Greylag Goose as well as Muntjac. We also saw Red Kites on our journey to Suffolk.

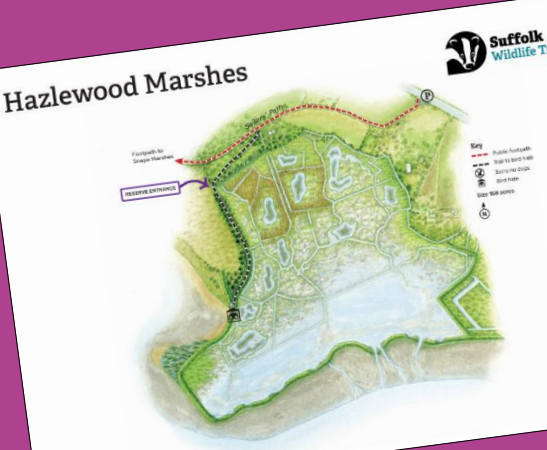
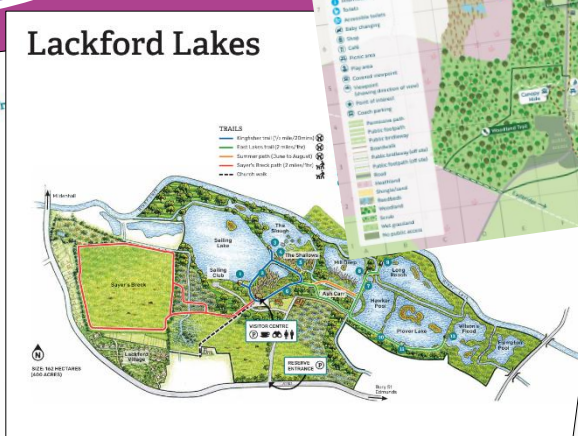
On Tuesday we went to **Snape Maltings** for a walk along the river Alde and saw waders (including Greenshank) and heard stock dove in **Snape Warren**. After Lunch, we continued to **SWT Hazelwood Marshes** and added Pintail to our growing bird list. We decided to do a local walk and added Song Thrush to our list as well as Blue Tit in a (nestbox with Camera) at the bungalow we were staying in.

On Wednesday we paid a visit to **SWT Trimley Marshes** which despite being next to Felixstowe Docks was productive with Waders, Wildfowl and Marsh Harriers. We also saw a herd of Fallow Deer in the Reeds, but the visitor centre closed but hides open. We also did a circular walk-through woodland, along the River Orwell and added Turnstone, Great Northern Diver, and other waders.

On Thursday we went to **RSPB Minsmere** and saw Black Redstart amongst Stonechat (by the sluice) and added Ringed Plover on the scrape and Mediterranean Gulls amongst Black Headed Gulls. Then after lunch, we popped into the Island Mere hide and added Little Grebe, Great White Egret and Snipe to our growing list. However, the main highlight was a Bittern feeding in front of the Hide. Another Bittern flew past, then we popped into the Bittern Hide and saw 2 Bitterns emerge from the Reedbeds.

On Friday we went to **NT Dunwich Heath**, saw Kestrel mobbing Marsh Harrier, and heard Dartford Warbler, and Linnet. We also saw Male Dunnocks fighting each other. Then it was time to return home to Cromer.

In Total 82 varied species seen or heard. *Library photo | Bittern at Minsmere | Ken Thornton 2022*



NENBC Alerts: WhatsApp Group Update

Quarterly Summary - January to March 2026



By Tony Forster

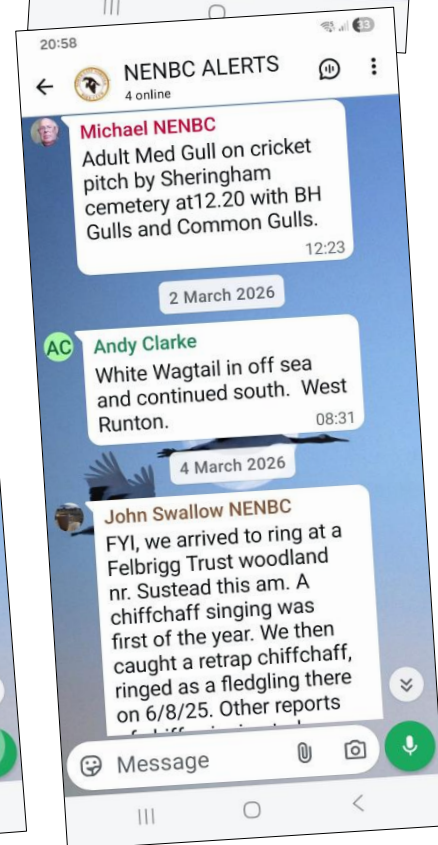
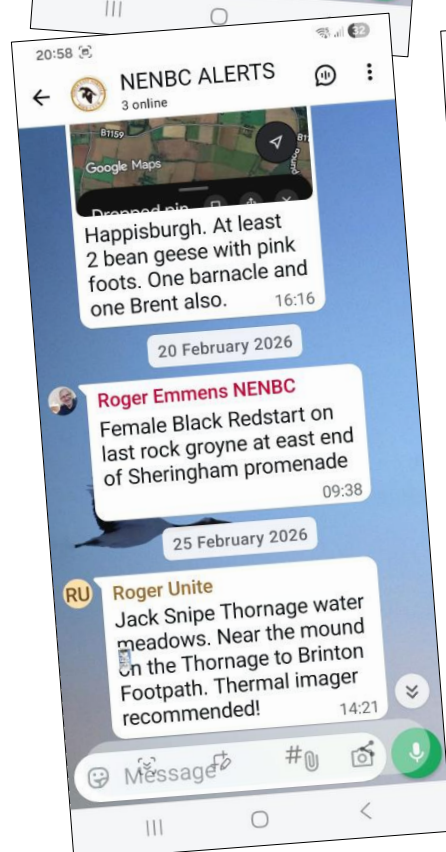
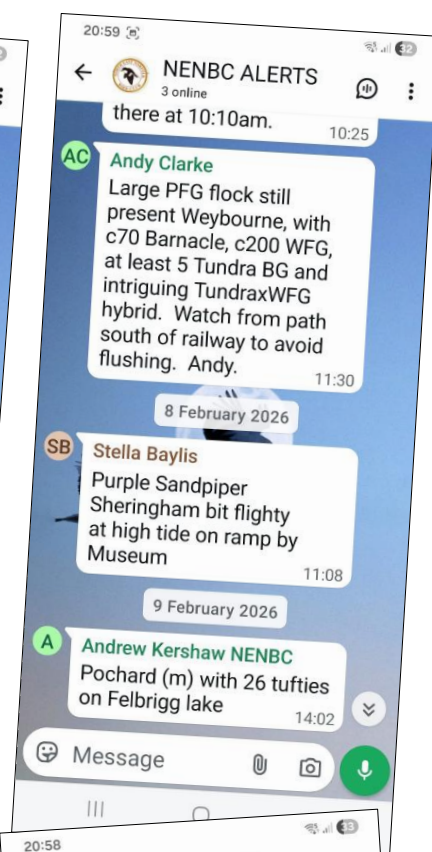
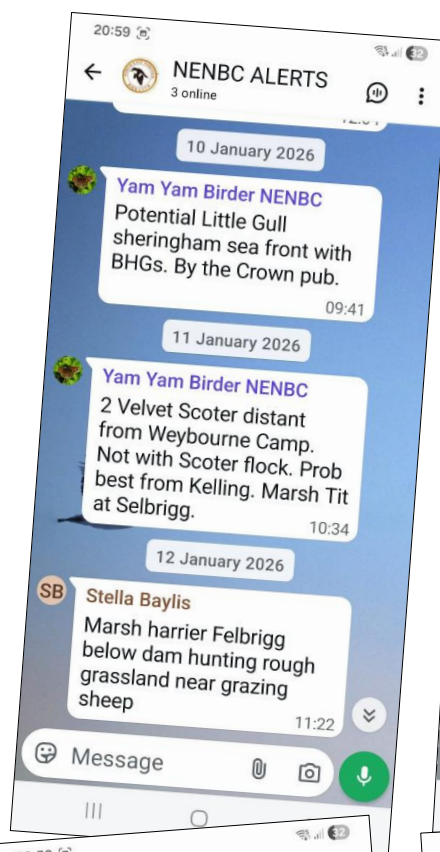
With 3 new members (82), 35 plus species recorded and 1 new addition to the group list (135) it was a typical quarter to start off 2026.

The new bird for the list was a **Water Pipit**, an incredibly difficult bird to see in the club area, there have been just 11 records since 2015 none of which appear to have stayed around for very long and one that knowing the call is probably essential.

Despite getting to the site in less than 5 minutes there was no sign of the (Norfolk Bird News NBN) reported Rough-legged Buzzard or the birders on Jan 1st. The stunning **Eastern Black Redstart** was last reported on Feb 1st, now DNA confirmed as from West / Central China, bringing a dash of colour during those cold and rainy days. There were 5 reports of **Ravens**, (what are the chances they will breed in the area?) along with a **White-tailed Eagle**, **Hen and Marsh Harrier** but no mention of the Cromer Peregrines despite the fact they now have 3 eggs in their church tower nest.

Barnacle, **Bean**, **White-front**, **Pink-footed** and **Tundra Geese** were all reported during January and February, **Velvet Scoter** on the sea with **Snow Buntings** nearby could all be seen, with luck in one day. Two **Pochards** were reported along with **Med Gulls**, **Great White Egret** and just the one **Goosander** which was seen flying over Tesco's in Sheringham where a **Purple Sandpiper** was occasionally seen on the sea front; the 41 **Turnstones**, my max count, were however more reliable.

The first singing **Chiffchaff** was mentioned March 4th and with both Swallow and Sand Martin reported elsewhere in Norfolk, the clocks having sprung forward with the sun shining, today at least, let's hope a spring influx is on its way to brighten our days.. .



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 & dates.



By Russ Malin

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust(WWT) started life as the Severn Wildfowl Trust in 1946, when the organisation was established by Sir Peter Scott. Scott has been described by Leicestershire's own Sir David Attenborough as '*the patron saint of conservation*'. The vision then, and still, was to create a world where healthy wetland nature thrives and enriches lives. This article looks at the early days of the Trust's first, and arguably, its flagship reserve, Slimbridge in Gloucestershire, together with a glimpse of some of birds that can we encountered there.

Before we look at the site it might be prudent to look at the man. Peter Scott was born in London in 1909 and was the only child of the explorer, Robert Falcon Scott. Although Peter was only an infant when his father died, Scott senior, in a last letter to his wife, advised her to 'make the boy interested in natural history if you can; it is better than games.' Peter was educated at Oundle School, in neighbouring Northamptonshire, and went on to study at Trinity College, Cambridge where he read Natural History before going on to graduate in the History of Art in 1931.

In 1946, Peter Scott founded the Trust, at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire. The reserve was opened on 10th of November as a centre for research and conservation. In a move unusual at the time,



Scott opened the site to the public so that everyone could enjoy access to nature. Slimbridge sits halfway between Bristol and Gloucester on the eastern side of the estuary of the River Severn. The reserve comprises some 800 hectares (2,000 acres) of pasture, reedbed, lagoon and salt marsh.

Besides having the world's largest collection of captive wildfowl, the reserve is involved in research projects and internationally run captive breeding programmes. An early success story in the 1950s was the saving of the Nēnē, or Hawaiian Goose, from extinction. Birds were brought to the site and breeding at Slimbridge was successful. Initial releases into the wild in Hawaii were a failure however, because the Nēnē's natural habitat was not protected from the predators that had been introduced to the islands by man. Once that problem was alleviated, successful reintroduction became possible.

A little closer to home, Slimbridge has also been involved in trying to increase population levels of Common Cranes which had bred spasmodically in the UK since the late 1970s. As part of the 'Great Crane Project' a purpose built 'Crane School' was used where the young birds were taught to forage and avoid danger. This project led to 23 birds being released onto the Somerset Moors and Levels in September 2013 and 93 being released by the end of 2015.

Personally, I have only ever seen two, what I consider, truly wild Lesser White-fronted Geese. One was in Kent, but the first was at Slimbridge in the early 1980s. Some say that they are the reason why Peter Scott set up the Wildfowl Trust in the first instance. He was watching an area of marsh known as the Dumbles (using an old pillbox as a hide) when he found two Lesser White-fronted geese with a flock of 2,000 Russian White-fronts. Apparently, he decided at that moment that this was the place for him to live.

As well as geese, Bewick's Swan is another regular wintering species. Other wintering waterfowl include Eurasian Wigeon, Gadwall, Eurasian Teal, Northern Shoveler, Common Shelduck, Common Pochard and Tufted Duck. Mandarin Duck breeds ferally in the area and sawbills are regular in small numbers on the estuary in winter. Waders are attracted to the slatings at Slimbridge during passage periods and in winter. Eurasian Curlew, Common Redshank and Dunlin are numerous but many more can be seen during peak



times. Water Rail is resident, and I have watched them on occasions scavenging under the many feeding stations on the site. The large concentrations of wildfowl at Slimbridge attract predators and Hen Harrier, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon are regular in winter with Short Eared Owl and Barn Owl. Away from wildfowl, a very interesting record involves a male Bluethroat which has held territory in the foreshore reed beds at Middle Point on the reserve for the last five summers. I wonder if he will be back in 2026.

If this article on Slimbridge has piqued your interest, then you can plan your visit using this link [Slimbridge Wetland Centre | WWT](#). If you aren't planning a visit, why not check out their webcam [here](#).

Footnote – On checking it appears the other Lesser White-fronted Goose I saw in the Elmley/Swale area in Kent in 1992 was eventually rejected as it was considered to be an escape...



Photos: Both Slimbridge courtesy of Nick Cotterel / WWT | Sir Peter Scott statue courtesy of Bec Greenway / WWT

The Blue Badge Challenge

Ready, Steady wait for it wait for it Go!



By Val Stubbs

When Trevor first mentioned the idea of a Blue – sea watching – Badge I was, of course, enthusiastic (like being back at Girl Guides collecting badges). So when the Coordinated Sea-watch was announced as the launch date for this new challenge, I was raring to go, and happily signed up to do the recording with Phil Borley at Sheringham. However, things were not destined to go to plan and I went down with a horrible stomach bug that prevented me from joining. I thought I would soon get my first Blue Badge records, with plans to go down to Weybourne sometime in October but it turned out that this bug had a sting in its tail and I just couldn't manage to get myself out of bed in the mornings! Never mind, November or December would be sure to give me plenty of chances to go down to the sea. But no, it turns out that was not to be as I was offered an appointment to have my cataracts removed at the end of October – putting me out of action for the month, and the second one was done at the end of November taking December out of the equation. Still, on the positive side, I can now see a lot better so was excited to try out my new improved vision on a sea-watch.

I resolved to make 2026 the year of the Blue Badge, determined to get plenty of sea-watching under my belt in January. Again, I was thwarted, this time by, the debilitating winter virus that so many people have suffered from and which was generously given to us by our two delightful grandsons! Surely February would work out better... But the days passed and I remained lethargic. At the club meeting on February 26th, I was chatting with Trevor and Cherry about the Sheringham town Council Garden Badge scheme and Trevor commented something along the lines of "I'm a great believer in badges". I concurred, and then mentioned that I had not yet even started on my Blue Badge. I muttered something about "maybe I'll manage to do a sea-watch on Saturday", whereupon Trevor piped up that Phil Hall and Roger Unite would be watching at Cromer on Saturday? Why didn't I join them? So I did!

Having managed somehow to set my alarm clock for a quarter of an hour later than I had intended, I was on the back foot from the start. As I drove from Weybourne to Cromer very light drizzle turned to heavy rain. By the time I had managed to wrangle my telescope and backpack onto my shoulders and walk down to North Lodge Park I was cold and wet. Turning the corner into the shelter there was no sign of my supporting cast. I sat myself down and looked out to see – well there wasn't much of that to see because it was very misty. Tempted to abandon ship, I gave myself a stiff talking to, set my scope up and began to see what I could see, which turned out to be **Red Throated Divers** – lots of them. In the first hour the Red Throated Divers (70 or them) were all flying west, but in the second hour, they all went east (only 14). I wonder what that was about? From among the gulls that were drifting about over the sea, the unstable stiff winged flight of a **Fulmar** crystallised, a local bird putting on superb display.



Red-throated Diver | Library pic: Julian Thomas

A few minutes later Roger and Phil arrived and we knuckled down to the serious business. The visibility ranged from appalling to moderate with the occasional lifting of the mist to show us a distant horizon and blue sky, but never for long. A number of

Gannets appeared out of the gloom bright white with black wing tips – stunning – and I remembered why I loved to sea-watch. Over the course of the next two hours, I counted a total of 95 Gannets, the vast majority of which were heading west with just two heading the other way. They were mainly in groups of 3-9, and were all adults, heading back to their breeding grounds.

Roger spotted a couple of **Common Scoter** far out in the murk, but I couldn't pick them up. Phil found another two, but again I was unable to get on to them. Was this bird that I regard as bread-and-butter sea-watching going to become my bogey bird? Finally, with much coaching from Roger and Phil, I did manage to get a view of two fairly close in. Phew! Then to add insult to injury, another five and another two flew into my scope (not literally!).

Three geese flew east; to start with I wasn't sure what they were but as the light improved and they turned their rumps towards us, it became clear that they were **Brents**. A fourth bird flew west later in the morning. Close-in, but high, a couple of **Shelduck** also headed east. In the opposite direction, a **Guillemot** flew low over the water. A single **Cormorant** made its way east.

Roger picked up a couple of **Great Crested Grebe**, travelling west, close in. When I finally managed to find them, I was really pleased to be able see all the detail of their plumage – the cataract surgery has made a huge difference.

Four species of gull made it onto my list: **Herring Gull**, **Black-headed Gull**, **Great Black-backed Gull** (one on the basket at the end of a groyne and two on the sea), and the star species, a **Mediterranean Gull** picked out from among a lot of other gulls by eagle-eyed Roger.

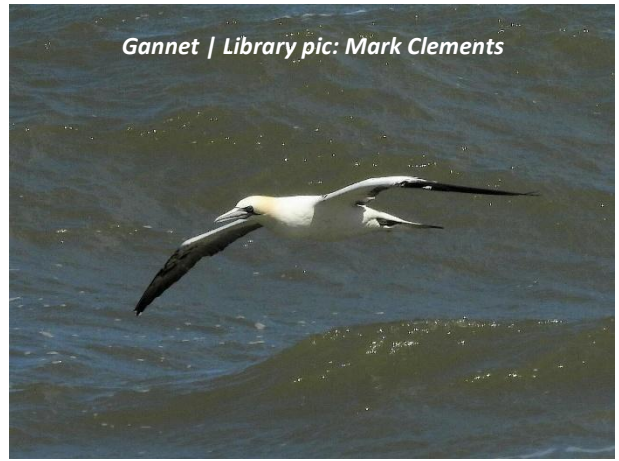
By the end of my two-hour stint, I had racked up **13 species, and was 240 points into my Blue Badge target** – nearly a quarter of the way, but it will get harder to add new species as time goes by



Herring Gulls
Library pic: Mark Clements

inset

Great Black-backed Gull
Library pic: Richard Farrow



Gannet | Library pic: Mark Clements



Guillemot | Library pic: Richard Farrow



Shelduck | Library pic: Mark Clements

My Species List		My Sightings Session 1
Black-headed Gull	10	1
Brent Goose	10	4
Common Scoter	10	9
Cormorant	10	1
Fulmar	15	5
Gannet	10	95
Great Black-backed Gull	10	3
Great Crested Grebe	15	2
Guillemot	15	1
Herring Gull	10	10
Mediterranean Gull	15	1
Red-throated Diver	15	84
Shelduck	15	2

My Current Points Tally	
Duration Points	80
Event Bonus Points	0
First Time Species Points	160
TOTAL	240

Volunteers Needed! The Cromer Peregrine Project is entering its eighth year! The survival rate from egg to successful fledging has been extremely good with only one completely unsuccessful year. We continue to monitor these wonderful birds and a hugely important part of that is the volunteer-run watchpoint. Situated outside the museum our visitor numbers have gradually increased over the years. BUT we desperately need more volunteers to set up the telescopes, table, leaflets etc. If you are interested, please can you contact our volunteer organiser Mick Hill via email: mick.hill@btinternet.com. He will go into more detail. It cannot be stressed enough that you do not need to be Peregrine experts. Most of our volunteers knew hardly anything about the breeding process at first, but they do now! You would never be on your own – we aim to have at least two volunteers per session and the person you will be on with will be more than happy to ease you in gently! It's a really informal, friendly group. So why not give it a go?



Welcome to the 2026 season of the Cromer Peregrine story! The webcam, this year sponsored by The Cliftonville Hotel, went live on 1st March and you can watch it here [Cromer Peregrines 2026 Live Stream](#). There is also a Facebook page here [Facebook](#) and a website here [CPP | Home](#) so lots of choice if you are not local, or even if you are!

By Jane Crossen

The three eggs are all looking good now. Three distinct colours so that should be good in identifying the order they should hatch. Lightest one was laid first. First chick should emerge around about 23rd April and fledging should be around 2nd June.



From the watchpoint it was evident that they are now caching prey. For example, we witnessed the male coming in with a just-caught Starling. He plucked and devoured it and then moved along the ledge, picked up prey (looked like another Starling) and moved it along the ledge. He then flew to the nest box to take over incubating duties and the female came out and went straight to it! The recent strong winds have been really useful in helping us gather up remains of the prey. A search of the church grounds after a couple of particularly windy nights produced a plethora of bodies (of the bird kind of course): four Starlings a beautiful, and totally intact, Redwing, Fieldfare and the skull of what looks like a small duck.



Photos courtesy of Jane Crossen | Female on 5th April eating a Jay | Redwing | Fieldfare and duck head! | and stills from the CPP webcam.



Brilliant number of visitors already!

Check This Out!

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



- [Can you spot white-tailed eagles in Norfolk? | Great British Life](#) [17-Mar]
- [Picking Up Binoculars Could Change Your Brain For The Better | MindBodyGreen](#) [26-Feb]
- [Shorebird extinctions: a lesson from history | wadertales](#) [09-Mar]
- [Four eggs or five? | wadertales](#) [06-Mar]
- [David Campbell: of nightingales and neighbours - BirdGuides](#) [14-Mar]
- [Satellite tracking shows limited flyway switching in East Asian wildfowl - BirdGuides](#) [11-Mar]
- [Mark Avery: royal rumble - BirdGuides](#) [04-Mar]
- [Earliest-ever arrival of BTO-tagged cuckoo in Europe - BirdGuides](#) [02-Apr]
- [Pied Crow excluded from British list due to concerns over ship assistance - BirdGuides](#) [27-Mar]
- [Shooting restrictions proposed for six declining British bird species - BirdGuides](#) [26-Mar]
- [Rewilding linked to dramatic increases in birds across Scotland - BirdGuides](#) [15-Mar]
- [Peatland revival at Lakenheath Fen boosts breeding waders - BirdGuides](#) [13-Mar]
- [RSPB urges public to help protect ground-nesting birds this spring - @RareBirdAlertUK](#) [26-Mar]
- [Fox swims with ducks and geese at RSPB Blacktoft Sands - BBC News](#) [07-Mar]
- [Harper Adams University birdsong project spots rare species - BBC News](#) [25-Mar]
- [UK's smallest bird of prey among 200 species at risk of extinction, study finds - The Guardian](#) [31-Mar]

The White Falcon
@markgolley.bsky.social

The DNA results are in! Sheringham's superstar visitor, the pardoxus 1w Eastern Black Redstart was (as expected) consistent w/ P.o.phoenicuroides/murinus & a near-identical sequence to birds from west/central China/Tuva Republic.
@linnetincley.bsky.social
#norfolkbirding
#ukbirding
#rarebirdsuk

21:37 · 27 Mar 2026 · Everybody can reply

bridgetjanejones.bsky.social
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

Lovely views of the White-Tailed Eagle at Cley marshes this morning. Carrying a fish! Nice size comparison: that gull is hardly Firecrest-sized!! Nice to see my first Swallow of the season too - odd that it's before I've seen a Sand Martin this year! @nenbc.bsky.social @rspbengland.bsky.social

17:13 · 30 Mar 2026 · Everybody can reply

"Hi Jane, great photos! The bird you saw was G834, a wild fledged male bird from a nest in Dorset last summer. His parents were two birds released in 2020 as part of the reintroduction project on the Isle of Wight, it's fantastic that they successfully bred and that he is now on his first ventures across the country." *Imogen Lloyd*

Also, Jane's video clip made it to the [ITV Anglia News](#) and she got a mention in the [BBC News online](#). Well done Jane!

Do you enjoy listing and like a challenge? Take a look at the [NWT website](#) for some great new Norfolk spotting lists to have a go at completing in this their centenary year. The Norfolk 'Top 10' or 'Challenge 20' or 'Go for Gold' with the full 100 species.

Go for Gold

How many of our 100 species can you spot?

This list is a snapshot of our county's wildlife in 2026, the 'common' and familiar to the exceptional and rare. It ranges from a tiny obscure reedbed moth to our large spectacular grey seal colonies. Please note that some of the species are endangered, in sensitive areas, or protected by law and must not be disturbed.

Log this activity at norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/DoOneThing

Use the tick boxes to keep track of the species you have seen!

- Swallowtail butterfly** *Papilio machaon britannicus*
The UK's largest butterfly. It is very colourful, and arguably our most beautiful. Habitat loss and butterfly collectors initially caused the species to decline. However, better protection, education, habitat improvement and reedbed creation work has increased its population over the last 100 years. Found on NWT Broadland reserves in May and June.
- Eurasian bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*
A large brown heron that hides deep in reedbeds, the male delivers a loud 'booming' call in the spring. Became extinct in the UK, but in the early twentieth century returned to breed at NWT Hickling Broad. Can be found year-round, and recent habitat improvements and reedbed creation have seen numbers and distribution around the UK significantly improve.
- Mad blue** *Plebejus argus*
The male's wings are blue with a dark outer rim. Females are a

Top 10

Here are the 'Top Ten' species to spot during our centenary year. All are celebrated as conservation successes for the county and can be seen, with patience, on at least one of our reserves.

Log this activity at norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/DoOneThing

Use the tick boxes to keep track of the species you have seen!

- Swallowtail butterfly** *Papilio machaon britannicus*
Brief overview
The UK's largest butterfly. It is very colourful, and arguably our most beautiful. Formerly restricted across the Norfolk Broads but starting to widen its distribution. Exclusive to tall here reedbeds.
- Swallowtail butterfly** *Papilio machaon britannicus*
Where and when to see them:
NWT Hickling Broad. Can be seen all year, but early spring best to hear booming males.
Conservation status and management:
The bittern became extinct in the UK, but in the early 20th century returned to breed at Hickling Broad and Marshes nature reserve. Its numbers have fluctuated since then, nearly becoming extinct as a breeding bird in the 1970s. Recent habitat improvements and reedbed creation have seen numbers and distribution around the UK significantly improve.
- Norfolk hawk** *Accipiter nisus*
Brief overview
A large brown dragonfly with clear wings, eyes. Originally restricted to the Norfolk Broads but has recently widened its range.

Challenge 20

Here are the 'Top 20' species to spot during our centenary year. How many can you spot?

Log this activity at norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/DoOneThing

Use the tick boxes to keep track of the species you have seen!

- Swallowtail butterfly** *Papilio machaon britannicus*
Equally our most beautiful. Habitat loss and butterfly collectors initially caused the species to decline. However, better protection, education, habitat improvement and reedbed creation work has increased its population over the last 100 years. Found on NWT Broadland reserves in May and June.
- Norfolk hawk** *Accipiter nisus*
The male delivers a loud 'booming' call in the spring. Became extinct in the UK, but in the early twentieth century returned to breed at NWT Hickling Broad. Can be found year-round, and recent habitat improvements and reedbed creation work has increased its population over the last 100 years. Found on NWT Broadland reserves in May and June.
- Swallowtail butterfly** *Papilio machaon britannicus*
The male's wings are blue with a dark outer rim. Females are a chocolate



100 YEARS

Contemplating Conservation

The State of the UK Barn Owl Population



The Barn Owl Trust have recently published their assessment of the **State of the UK Barn Owl Population 2025**. The full 2025 report is available [here](#) and their website includes their [reports from previous years](#). Below are some extracts directly from the current sobering document....

Introduction

“The State of the UK Barn Owl Population (SOUKBOP) report is a collation of data from independent groups and individuals from around the UK, who all monitor a certain number of potential Barn Owl nest sites each year.

This report holds information from 6,102 potential Barn Owl nest sites that were checked by dedicated individuals over the 2025 breeding season. We are delighted to include data from new contributors Northants Ringing Group and Chris Batey (who is monitoring Lincolnshire Fens and Wolds area).

Since the catastrophic decline in Barn Owl numbers following the Second World War, it is now largely considered that Barn Owl numbers have at least plateaued, if not actively increased, over the last decade. While this report does not attempt to estimate the current UK population size, it does provide a valuable resource to evaluate how Barn Owls have fared regionally and how this compares to previous years. As well as highlighting these regional differences and annual fluctuations in breeding successes, these reports may also highlight overall trends emerging across the years - something which is particularly pertinent with our changing climate.

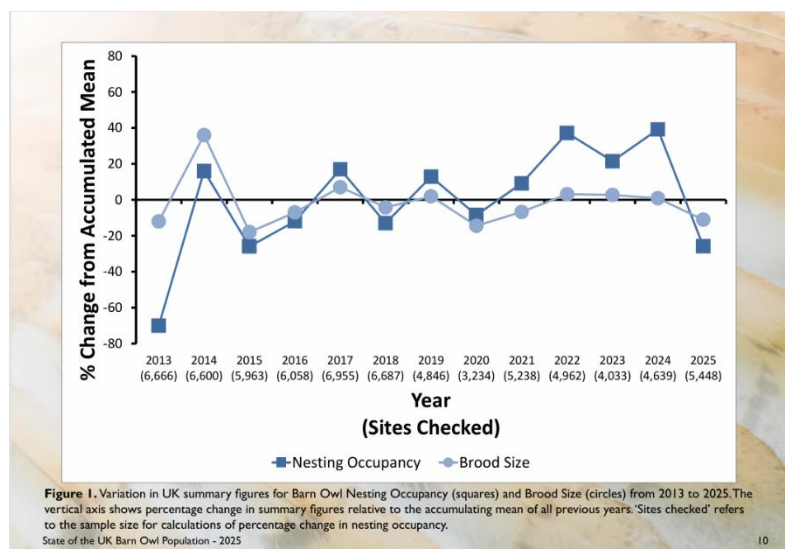
A changing climate could significantly impact Barn Owl survival and breeding success. rainfall in spring and summer months stimulates grass growth (along with other vegetation growth) resulting in small mammal numbers multiplying, which enables Barn Owls to get into breeding condition and supply their offspring with adequate food. If climate change results in dryer and hotter spring and summer months, this will reduce vegetation growth and food supply which will hinder their ability to breed and rear young. Conversely, an increase in persistent rain and storms throughout the winter can prevent Barn Owls from hunting altogether and thus could reduce overwinter survival and overall population size. As with most species, a delicate balance of weather systems is crucial for their survival, with shifts away from the normal potentially having huge impacts.”

General Summary

“Overall, 2025 was a terrible year for Barn Owls across most of the UK, with fewer active nests found, reports of deserted nests and small brood sizes of those that did succeed. Across the UK, the number of active nests found was around 25% below average, making it the worst year for breeding Barn Owls in a decade. In particular, the mid south of England seemed to be particularly disastrous, with nesting occupancy rates 60% below average in Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. Of the 28 contributors included within the main table, 20 of them reported below average nesting occupancy. Despite the overall poor result, thankfully there were good successes seen in Northern Ireland, Northumberland and areas of Yorkshire.

Reading contributors’ comments on the breeding season, the words ‘terrible’, ‘poor’, ‘bad’ and ‘disastrous’ are repeatedly used to describe the season, along with comments linking this to the drought experienced throughout spring and summer. Interestingly, when looking at the Met Office weather maps, the area with the least rainfall in spring ... aligns with the worst breeding rates observed in the mid south of England. It is also noteworthy that many individuals commented it was fairly common to still find pairs of roosting adults in the boxes, just not breeding. This suggests that either birds were unable to get into good breeding condition to begin laying (perhaps due to a lack of available food), or they were waiting on an environmental cue to begin breeding, which never came. Given that adults were still around this summer, it is hoped that these birds are still surviving in the population and will breed again next year.

In addition to overall nesting occupancy being down, the average brood size across the UK was also found to be around 11% smaller than average. In particular, Cornwall, Tees Valley, Isle of Wight, Glamorgan, Oxfordshire, Powys, Somerset and Sussex had brood sizes that were more than 20% below average. The average brood size metric gives an indication of how many



young were found in successful nests. It does not however include those nests that were abandoned at the egg stage, which this year seems to have been a high number. Perhaps in the future we should also start reporting the number of abandoned/deserted nests to represent this occurrence. Interestingly, there were numerous reports of more Kestrel nests found this year, with the possible reason for their greater success being due to them switching diet to include more small birds rather than small mammals.

In conclusion, sadly 2025 seems to have been a terrible year for Barn Owl breeding across the UK, bar a few areas which did well. Hopefully 2026 will be a better year."

Here's the data from Norfolk, including from NENBC club member John Taylor who runs the Taliswood Barn Owl Nest Box Project which has installed 101 boxes in North Norfolk since its beginnings in 2019.

North West Norfolk Ringing Group - Paul Eele

Paul reports a very poor year. Out of the ~40 sites checked, only 4 nests were found but none of those eggs hatched. Many thanks to Holkham Estate for providing access permission.

	2023	2024	2025
Sites Checked	35	34	40
Active Nests	10	15	4
Average Brood size	1.9	2.0	-

North Norfolk - Taliswood Barn Owl Nestbox Project - John Taylor

I checked 58 boxes in and around North Norfolk this year. Sadly only one box was bred in, 2 owlets from a batch of 4 eggs. This has been a very poor breeding year in North Norfolk. Also in my experience the number of adult Barn Owl sightings has been less in 2025. Fingers crossed for a better year in 2026.

	2024	2025
Sites Checked	25	58
Active Nests	6	1
Average Brood size	2.5	2

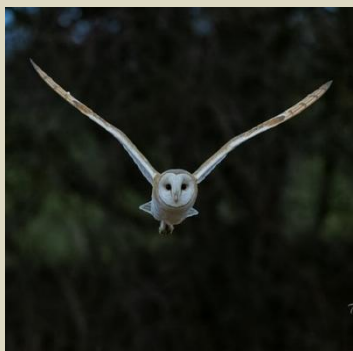
As a comparison, here's a summary from the 2024 report

2024

Overall, 2024 was another good year for Barn Owls in the UK. Nesting occupancy was 39% above average, topping last year's results and matching those numbers seen in 2022.

A common trend reported by many groups was that nesting began very early in 2024, with many broods already at ringing age by late May. As with the last few years, the UK once again had an incredibly mild winter and spring which potentially resulted in an increased number of birds surviving the winter and able to get into breeding condition early. With so many owls nesting, it is disappointing that once again this promising start to the season was not followed up with above-average brood sizes. Instead, brood sizes remained very close to average across the UK, with a negligible overall increase of 0.88%. It is possible that those birds breeding early were caught out by periods of rain during the spring, which may have reduced the amount of food supplied to the nest, and thus limited brood size. It was also noted by many that the breeding season was fairly extended, so those birds that began nesting later in the year may have then had brood size limited by the dry summer.

Photos below courtesy of John Taylor from our website





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.](#)

“Bright, musical ‘teu’ or sad ‘teu-hu’; bouncy ‘teu-huhu’, quicker, less even than Greenshank. Frenetic ‘pit-u-pit-u-pit-u’ when flushed, ‘kyip’ in alarm; rhythmic, musical ‘t’leeo-t’leeo’t’leeo’ song.”

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

“Call a distinctive, musical ‘teu’ or melancholy, down-slurred ‘teu-hu’ or ‘teu-huhu’. Alarm-call a persistent ‘kyip-kyip-kyip...’. Song (often in flight) a loud, musical ‘tül-tül-tuliiu-tuliiu ...’ and ‘leeo-leeo-leeo ...’.”

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

“Noisy and nervous wader that alerts other birds to approaching danger with ringing ‘tew, tew’ call. In spring, has yodelling ‘tu-udle, tu-udle’ that accompanies display flight.”

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

Wordsearch

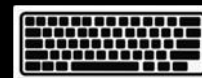


This month, we have the 21 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in April 2025 for which we have less than 3 records – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled as there were certainly quite a few exciting birds this time last year! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

- American Wigeon
- Avocet
- Booted Eagle
- Common Crossbill
- Dunlin
- Garganey
- Glossy Ibis
- Hen Harrier
- Hooded Crow
- Jack Snipe
- Nightingale
- Quail
- Shore Lark
- Stone-curlew
- Black-tailed Godwit
- Crane
- Goosander
- Little Owl
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Redshank
- Yellow-legged Gull

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





No new 'Accepted' records from the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter and their current '**NRC work in progress**' file has been updated to 24-Feb-26. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [Dec-24]. NRC have however asked for submissions that are outstanding for a good number of records in our area in 2025. If you can help on any of these, please do get in touch with them as soon as you can.

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Submissions or photos still required for 2025 Black Kites Swanton Morley March 17th, Thetford and Croxton April 2nd, Buckenham April 25th, Ormesby Little Broad Aug 21st, Kelling Heath Sept 18th

01:59 · 16 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details still needed for Great Shearwater reported Sheringham 2nd Aug 2025

02:43 · 16 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details still needed for a number of 2025 county rarities anyone help with descriptions or photos:

Bee-eaters Cley 17th May, west Runton 1st June, Melton Constable 9th July, 2 Cley 18th July, 2 Wells North Point 8th Aug

01:41 · 16 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Rarities Committee

Details still needed for 2025 Hoppoes Holt Lowes 4th April, Blakeney Pt April 11th, 2 Winterton April 15th-16th, King'd Lynn April 14th, Toftwood May 10th, Winterton Sept 12th and Runcion Holme Oct 14th

02:07 · 17 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details still needed for Leach's Petrels in 2025 at Sheringham Sept 22nd, Winterton Sept 23rd, Cromer Oct 23rd and Weybourne Oct 27th

02:10 · 17 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details required for the following 2025 Cory's Shearwater records:

Cromer and Sheringham July 7th, Cley, Cromer, Sheringham & Winterton Aug 1st, Sheringham Aug 2nd, 6th, 8th & 20th, Cley 20th, Waxham Sept 21st and Sheringham 22nd

02:21 · 16 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details still required for Wood Warbler Kelling Heath 19th May 2025

02:50 · 18 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Rarities Committee

Details still required for Sabine's Gull reports 2025 Blakeney Pt July 30th, Salthouse Aug 18th, Winterton Sept 23rd, Sheringham Oct 10th, Cley Oct 14th

02:43 · 18 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details still required for 2025 Roseate Terns Sheringham 11/5, Weybourne 19/5, Blakeney Pt 30/5, Weybourne 10/6, Blakeney Pt 11/6, Snettisham 28/6, 2/7-3/7, Blakeney Pt 12/7 & 18/7, Weybourne 16/7, Titchwell 12/8 and Salthouse 27/9

02:33 · 18 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social
Norfolk Records Committee

Details still requires for Storm Petrel records Cromer and Sheringham 8th July 2025

02:46 · 18 Mar 2026 · 🌐 Everybody can reply

NENBC Website



Many thanks to everyone who has uploaded records to our website this year to date. For the newbies reading this, we would love to see your records too! It is easy to do and we can guide you through if you are unsure. Please don't think that your records aren't of interest – they are. We submit all our data on to the BTO's BirdTrack for inclusion in the county reports, which appear in published format annually. How common species are faring is just as important to keep track of as sightings of the less common species. If you need any assistance, or have forgotten your password and need it resetting, just drop Carol a line on nenbc@aol.co.uk or through the messaging element of the website. You can access our website at www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club (or by typing 'NENBC' into your search engine will get you there). Not sure on your ID? Just ask – drop us an email or a WhatsApp or ask another birder when you are actually viewing the bird. Find it difficult to be sure or to describe what you are looking at? Well, we are planning to run a **Birding for Beginners** course this spring (see [page 17](#)) – come and join us!

Prolific Posters March 2026

By Val Stubbs

Phil Borley has now exceeded 50,000 points, almost double the closest contender, Mark Clements – has now on nearly 28,000 points. Tony Pope lies in third place, ahead of Philip Cartlidge, while Val Stubbs is the fifth birder to have surpassed 20,000 points. We now have 99 members who have logged birds so far this year, 48 have already scored over 1,000 points, with 39 of these on 2,000 points or more.

Keep logging!

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

1	Phil Borley	53,560
2	Mark Clements	27,980
3	Tony Pope	25,250
4	Philip Cartlidge	22,390
5	Valerie Stubbs	20,190
6	DAVID Griffiths	13,080
7	Doug & Jenny Cullern	9,500
8	Ken Thornton	6,790
9	Ann Gladwin	6,170
10	Stuart Jones	5,300
11	David Barrass	5,180
12	Carol Thornton	4,730
13	Stephanie Witham	4,370
14	Andrew Clarke	4,010
15	Colin Blaxill	3,940

16	Russell Page	3,840
17	Peter & Sue Morrison	3,580
18	Michael Harcup	3,500
18	Stella Baylis	3,210
20	Trevor Williams	3,160
21	Steven & Barbara Lines	3,110
22	Di & Richard Farrow	3,010
23	Philip Hall	2,980
24	Thomas Wright	2,950
25	Roger Unite	2,860
26	Ellie Farrow	2,790
27	Christopher Mason	2,700
28	Alan Stevens	2,680
29	Andrew Gorton	2,660
30	Nick Kimber	2,570



2026
Club
Stats

422 individual members
across 279 households

28,602
bird records logged

166
bird species reported

Social Media & WhatsApp – a couple of bits from social media and WhatsApp in the last few weeks. This is something we really haven't got to grips with of late so if you can tag us in any of your BlueSky posts or indeed have an interest in social media and can help us out, please do get in touch!

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social


Visit to Felbrig NT and found a Canada Goose on the water meadow, turns out there were two, one having a quick wash. A little later spotted them again as they flew over the meadow. Meanwhile the Shovelers slept through all the excitement.



20:38 - 20 Mar 2026 Everybody can reply

bridgetjanejones.bsky.social
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

My balcony Blackbirds are feeding young now and the Peregrines at Cromer Church laid their third egg last night. Excellent that they are three distinct colours as we can monitor the order they should hatch now. @nenbc.bsky.social



07:18 - 23 Mar 2026 Everybody can reply

BTO | British Trust for Ornithology
@btobirds.bsky.social

Have you signed up for our Birds in Greenspaces project yet? www.bto.org/greenspaces

Starting 1 April, we'd love to know the birds that use your local greenspaces, whether it's a single species record or complete list, so we can discover their importance for nature and people.

Birds in Greenspaces

Tell BTO what birds you encounter in your local greenspace!



Sign up at www.bto.org/greenspaces

08:00 - 22 Mar 2026 Everybody can reply

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Red Kite drifting over local fields, whilst in the hedgerow a Sparrowhawk lurks just waiting to catch any unsuspecting small bird.



19:00 - 26 Mar 2026 Everybody can reply

RareBirdAlert
@rarebirdr.bsky.social

Norfolk Wildlife Trust takes on management over country park on edge of Norwich www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/N...



Norfolk Wildlife Trust takes over management of country park on edge of Norwich

New stewardship and land acquisition set to transform Broadland Country Park into a larger and more diverse wildlife haven

www.rarebirdalert.co.uk

17:37 - 26 Mar 2026 Everybody can reply

Russ Malin
@rusmalin.bsky.social

A little blustery this afternoon at Happisburgh and was hoping for a Wheatear or Ring Ouzel migrant wise but had to settle for a couple of Chiffchaff which arguably could have been here all winter. Will see what tomorrow brings. If the earlier White Storks made it this far I didn't see them...

17:49 - 3 Apr 2026 Everybody can reply

Star Badges

No new achievers this month.

Currently, **6** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **25** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **89** 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.

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

Eco-Badges

No new achievers this month but a couple of members now really close!

We currently have **27** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 11] and **9** who have achieved **SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 8 | 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!



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

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

- GREEN ECO-BADGE:** 75 species required for lists with only inland sites / 100 for lists with any coastal locations
- SUPER-GREEN ECO-BADGE:** 125 species required for lists with only inland sites / 175 for lists with any coastal locations

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

Sea-watching Badge

Congratulations to Phil Hall who reached the milestone last month.

We currently have 7 members who have achieved their BLUE BADGE.

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



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

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

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

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



This short poem is analysed in full on www.PoetryVerse.com but here is an excerpt

“Tennyson’s short poem captures a single vivid moment of an eagle high on a cliff. The bird appears solitary and majestic, fixed above the sea and sky, surveying its domain with patient intensity. The poem contrasts immobility and imminent action: the eagle’s poised watchfulness resolves suddenly into decisive movement. It evokes themes of power, isolation, and swift, elemental motion in a compact, dramatic image.”

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred Lord Tennyson 1851



The bird voice variously described was that of a **Redshank**. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xenocanto 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 Redshank** page and their **BTO Common Shanks ID Video** too.



Photos from Richard Farrow ,Mark Clements and Trevor Willilams



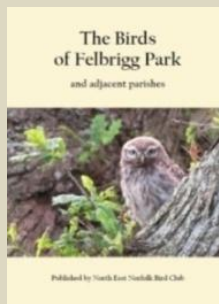
This month's **Wordsearch Solution:**
 BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN
 APRIL 2025

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

Back Page Club Info



NENBC Annual Bird Reports are compiled from the records and photographs added to the club website by members, supplemented by other local records, and complemented by articles on club activities. The reports are £3 with discounts available on back-copies. Our **10th Anniversary Commemorative Book** celebrating the first decade of the club is also available (low stock) for £5



The Birds of Felbrigg Park is a systematic review of the records of all 220 species seen in and around the park over the past 50 years, indicating their current status and highlighting, for the rarer species, every recorded sighting. The publication includes photographs and artwork from local artists. The book is now reduced to £3.00 (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