

The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



February 2026 - Issue 128

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

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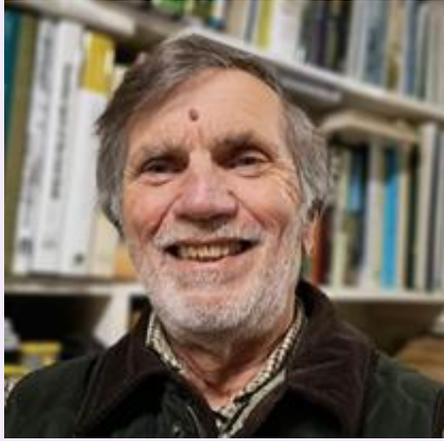
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By our new President Francis Farrow – WELCOME!



First of all, thank you inviting me to be your 4th President. I am genuinely honoured to step into this role. I follow Nigel Redman who over the last four years as President explored many subjects and continents with birding content. My globe-trotting days are

generally past nowadays and I may be a bit more home spun in my approach but I hope to be interesting.

For my first topic I do, however, start in the far north and was prompted by an online headline "**Sweden has lost the Snowy Owl**". On reading the '[Birdlife International](#)' article it seems no breeding has taken place in Sweden since 2015 and in autumn 2025 the species was declared regionally extinct. How did this happen? Well basically it is down to habitat loss as housing, roads, deforestation and other human related activities have expanded into the owl's Arctic territory, although the biggest threat is climate change. The warmer winters have less snow and more rain which destroy the snow tunnels of the Lemmings that make up the primary food of the Snowy Owls. As the Arctic warms the landscape and ecosystems are changing with less small rodents and natural habitat available, which makes the owl's survival harder.

The Snowy Owl is a large showy bird with very specific habitat requirements but we can look closer to home and there are birds that have and are disappearing from our local countryside. As most of you will know I have been actively involved with conservation and management of Beeston & Sheringham Commons SSSI / SAC. The combined Commons are of mixed habitat (grassland, heathland, wetland and woodland) and extend for 63 acres (25.5 hectares). One of the main factors in the decline of Beeston's birds was the housing developments on the fields and farms along the western border (1947) and eastern boarder of the Commons in the 1960/70s. One of the first birds to leave was the **Red-backed Shrike**, which last bred in 1977. Another Norfolk location, Santon Downham, was the last breeding site for this species in the UK, which was 1992. It seems Britain became unsuitable because of agricultural changes meaning the fields no longer provided the specific mix of scrubby cover or the abundant supply of large insects they needed to survive and breed. In 1990 the Commons lost the **Willow Tit** and now this species has become a very scarce bird in south-east England. This is generally attributed to a deterioration of habitat through, woodland management changes, overgrazing by deer and possibly climate change as populations in the north

of England which are mainly on specific post-industrial sites such as old coalfields are surviving.

In the early 2000s **Yellow Hammer**, **Turtle Dove** and **Reed Bunting** were also lost. All three were most likely lost through habitat changes and loss of field margin feeding areas. More recently there has been a loss of **Cuckoo**, **Willow Warbler** and **Marsh Tit** from the Commons.

The **Cuckoo**, according to the BTO, not only faces a loss of its primary food source, large moth caterpillars, which is linked to intensive agriculture but also has climatic factors eg droughts along its migration routes. The Cuckoo has shifted northwards to Yorkshire and Scotland in the main as suitable habitat still exists although the Norfolk Broads are still an attractive location.



Willow Warbler

Recently the **Willow Warbler** has become less of a constant on the Commons with no regular breeding for around five years. Studies have linked this decline in the south-east of England not only with habitat loss and reduced insect food but climate change making warmer areas less suitable for them.



Marsh Tit

My last example is the **Marsh Tit**, which 1 or 2 were recorded 19 times in 2024 but only on two occasions in 2025 and the last report was of two birds displaying on April 2nd. The factors often cited for such population changes are habitat loss and degradation through woodland management and



Muntjac [male]

increased deer browsing. As the Commons has quite a lot of 'messy' woodland habitat and deadwood I would put the blame mainly on Muntjac browsing pressure which prevents any scrubby understory from regenerating.

All is not lost, however. Large landscape 'rewilding' projects have shown that habitat recovery is possible, as for example at [Knepp](#). This rewilding estate in Sussex has witnessed annual increases of singing male **Nightingales** with a record 62 noted in 2025 (up from 9 in 1999). Even in our own gardens, simple choices can make a real difference: keeping hedges instead of replacing with fences, leaving flower seed heads through winter, planting berry-bearing shrubs, and, where space allows, adding a native tree. Our local birdlife will benefit - and so will we.

A Note from the Editor



By Carol Thornton

Welcome to our February newsletter!

Thanks to all of you who loaded up their records to our website from their RSPB Big Garden BirdWatch activities. You can see the basic stats on [page 24](#) and we'll get some more info when the full RSPB results are released in April. Whilst on garden birding, don't forget to get your garden nestboxes cleaned this month before the new season – more info on [page 16](#) in relation to National Nest Box Week.

Our club events are all over from [page 14](#) so hope to see you at one soon.

'Through a Lens' for the front cover last month was 'geese' but I was surprised at the low number of photos uploaded across the geese species. Here's a selection covering species we had images of, from the top: Brent Goose [David Griffiths], Greylag [Mark Clements], Pink-foot [Richard Farrow], Barnacle [David], Tundra Bean [Mark] and Egyptian [Richard]. The background was a library pic also from Mark. For February, our theme will be 'birds on the shoreline' so get clicking on any waders, gulls, cormorants. Pigeons etc!

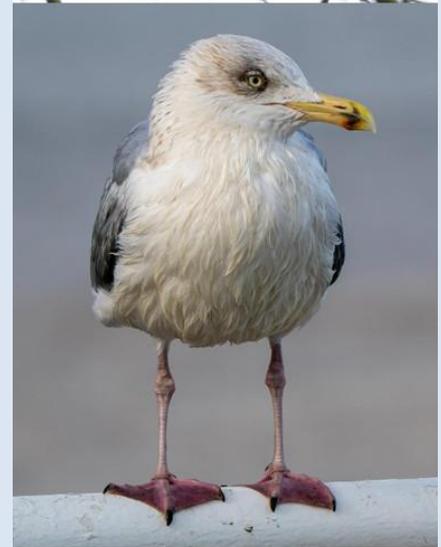
Here are my favourite member photos from January, selected from the ones that didn't make it on to our monthly NENBC Bird Highlights section of the more unusual species ... Redshank [Steve Barford], Blackcap [John Hayward], Skylark [Steven & Barbara Lines], Robin [Ken Thornton], Sparrowhawk [Ken Thornton], Herring Gull [Richard Farrow], Great Black-backed Gull [Richard Farrow].

Thanks all!

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

* Graeme & Karen Garner * Rob Lucking *
* Delia Cox & Sam Geoghegan * Jessica Grant *
... and welcome back Annie Brough!

If you have any queries, just drop us an email



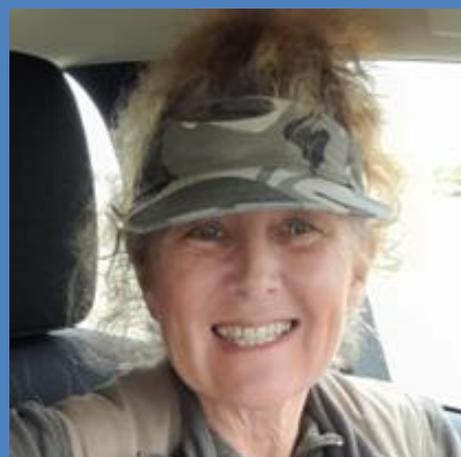
A change of staff - Here's a reminder of your Committee Members, President and VPs for 2026. Do feel free to get in touch with any of us or stop to say hello if you see us out and about



John Swallow: Chair



Roger Unite: Treasurer



Carol Thornton: Secretary / Newsletter



Andy Clarke: Records / Deputy Chair



Colin Blaxill: Membership



Alan Stevens: Indoor Events



Seán Dempster: Young People



Stella Baylis: Walks



Russ Malin: Anything else at the mo!



Francis Farrow: President



Val Stubbs: Vice President



Trevor Williams: Vice President



By Carol Thornton *with a bit of help!*

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

≈ 10,400 individual records covering 140 bird species were added in January

This month I started to delve into the scary world of AI and have compiled this report with some input from an AI tool. Everything within had to be double checked and to be honest at this first attempt there was a fair bit of rewriting of suggested species accounts (and me shouting at my laptop when the AI made things up and denied it!). What this exercise has showed me though is that with quite a bit more work on refining the prompts I give it and increased understanding of its limitations and quirks, that this has the potential to be a very useful tool for me, so long as I can stop myself worrying about the outcome of all the Terminator movies I have watched!

January 2026 | The highlight remained the **Eastern Black Redstart** that has been around The Leas in Sheringham since 24th December. Also of interest were **Velvet Scoter**, **Lapland Bunting** and a nice selection of geese including **Brent**, **Barnacle**, **Tundra Bean** and **White-fronted Geese**. During the month 10,436 records were submitted and 140 species recorded which is a little down on recent years, but not by too much.

Brent Goose | Brent Geese were widely reported off the coast between Sheringham and Weybourne throughout the month. Peak counts included up to 30 past Sheringham on 10th and further double-figure movements at Beeston Regis and Weybourne later in the month. Birds were mainly noted on seawatches, with additional records from Sheringham beach and Weybourne Camp. *Photo 1 courtesy of David Griffiths*



Barnacle Goose | Barnacle Geese were closely associated with large Pink-footed Goose flocks around Weybourne and Sheringham from 14th onwards. Most records involved 1–2 birds, but numbers built to 7–9 by the end of the month, especially in harvested beet fields north of the railway and around Weybourne Heath. Several observers commented on the difficulty of picking them out among thousands of Pink-feet. *Photo 2 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Tundra Bean Goose | Low numbers were present with Pink-footed Geese in the Weybourne Cliffs/Coast Path area from 13th, mainly in harvested beet fields. Early records were of 2–3 birds, increasing to 6 on 28th and a peak of 9 at Weybourne Heath on 31st. *Photo 3 courtesy of Tim Wright*



White-fronted Goose | Geese were recorded in small numbers at Letheringsett & Ford (Bayfield Park) early in the month, with 3–4 birds on several dates. Later in the month, 2 Russian-race birds were noted with Pink-footed Geese in harvested beet fields around Weybourne and Weybourne Heath on 28th–29th

Whooper Swan | A single bird was tracked moving through the area on 11th, seen from Weybourne (inland and then west), and also noted high and west off Sheringham.

Mandarin Duck | The long-staying female at Dilham Canal (Anchor Road) was noted again on 20th, reported as having been settled there for some months and roosting in an owl nest box.

Pochard | A female was on Felbrigg Park lake on 1st and 16th and a single was at Weybourne on 21st.

Scaup | A notable record of 12 Scaup west off Weybourne on 5th was the only report, all birds seen passing at sea.

Velvet Scoter | Birds were recorded off Weybourne with 1–2 on 7th–8th. Birds were usually slightly apart from the main Common Scoter flock, sometimes drifting on the sea and sometimes flying west.

Goldeneye | All singles, with a female at Hanworth on 1st, a drake west at Sheringham and Weybourne on 4th and a drake west at Sheringham on 20th. *Photo 4 courtesy of David Griffiths*

Goosander | Birds were well recorded both at the coast and inland. At Weybourne/Weybourne Camp, a drake and redheads moved west on 4th–6th and later dates, while inland records included a pair at Felbrigg Park & Lake on 19th and a drake on the river at Buxton & Little Hautbois on 8th. *Photo 5 courtesy of David Griffiths*

Red-breasted Merganser | Single west off **Sheringham** on 2nd and a redhead west at **Weybourne**, on 4th.

Grey Partridge | Four records from Plumstead on 12th, Weybourne Cliffs (2) on 19th, Hempstead (2) on 24th and Bodham on 29th. *Photo 6 courtesy of Philip Cartlidge*

Slavonian Grebe | A single bird flew east off Cromer on 10th.

Grey Plover | Eleven records, all from West Runton up to the 18th of the month. Mostly single figures with highs of 10 on 1st and 12 on 18th. *Photo 7 courtesy of Mick Rebane*

Ringed Plover | Records from West Runton (max 10 on 18th), Sheringham (max 5 on 11th), Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course (max 12 on 6th) and Weybourne (max 12 on 11th). *Photo 8 courtesy of Richard Farrow*



Woodcock | Over 60 records during January from 24 locations. Most reports were of 1-2 birds but there were 7 at Swafield on 13th and 6 at Weybourne on 16th where birds were regularly observed flying in to roost. *Photo 9 courtesy of David Barrass*

Jack Snipe | Four records this month, three of which were with the aid of thermal imagers. Two birds were at Buxton Heath on 12th with singles at Holt Country Park & Lowes on 3rd and Gresham and Thornage on 4th. *Photos 10 courtesy of Louis Parkerson*





Kittiwake | Most of the 23 records were in single figures with number of records picking up after the 22nd. High counts at Sheringham on 9th (40) and at Weybourne on 22nd (up to 217 east). *Photo 11 courtesy of Francis Farrow*

Little Gull | Little Gulls showed a notable influx around 10th–12th, with multiple records from Sheringham, Weybourne, Cromer, Cromer Pier, Weybourne Camp, Weybourne Cliffs, West Runton and Walcott with a few records at the tail end of the month. High count was 12 off Cromer on 10th. *Photo 12 courtesy of Andy Clarke*

Mediterranean Gull | Mediterranean Gulls were regularly recorded along the coast from Weybourne to Cromer throughout the month, mostly as single adults. High count was 3 birds at both Cromer Pier and East Runton (Coastwatch Station) on 12th. *Photo 13 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Great Skua | A single Great Skua flew west off Weybourne on 8th, landing on the sea but remaining distant.

Red-throated Diver | Small numbers were present from 1st between Weybourne and Cromer with high counts including 425 at Weybourne on 19th and 339 past Sheringham on 20th. The record of 120 at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 31st included 55 counted on the sea in one sweep.

Great Northern Diver | Seventeen records of birds recorded throughout the month off Weybourne, Sheringham and Cromer. Most records involved 1–2 birds with 3 at Weybourne on 11th.

Fulmar | Fulmars were recorded mainly from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs, Sheringham, Weybourne and East Runton (Coastwatch Station). Early in the month, single birds were noted on New Year's Day seawatches at Cromer, with later counts including 9 at Sheringham on 9th and 10 at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 24th, where notes suggest local breeding birds returning to the cliffs. Smaller numbers were logged off Weybourne and Sheringham through to the end of the month.

Shag | A single Shag was seen off Weybourne on 27th, an adult arriving from the west and fishing northeast of the beach car park.

Great White Egret | Singles were recorded at Felbrigg Park & Lake, Buxton & Little Hautbois, Letheringsett & Ford and Aylsham on 5 occasions between 1st and 19th. *Photo 14 courtesy of David Griffiths*

11



12



13



14



Goshawk | Four records this month – 1 at Holt on 7th, possibly juvenile (record shot), 2 displaying at Hempstead on 24th but possibly 2 additional distant birds towards Holt Lowes, and 3 at Swanton Novers on 31st. *Photo 15 courtesy of David Griffiths*

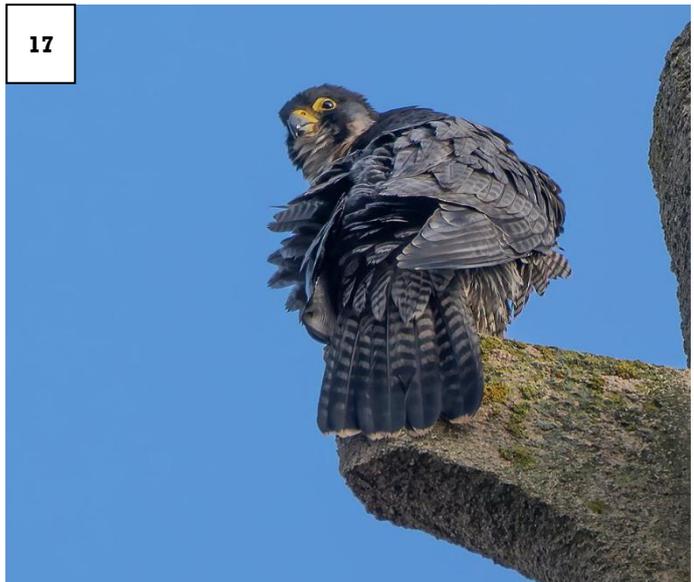


Rough-legged Buzzard | A single third party report was from Gresham on 1st, seen in a field south of Gresham Castle before flying west and not being relocated. The record was considered reliable and was uploaded from Norfolk bird news.



Kingfisher | Singles were recorded at Dilham Canal, Brinton, Weybourne and Blickling Park NT.

Merlin | All records were of singles on 6 occasions from Weybourne Cliffs (3 sightings 14th and 17th), Weybourne on 23rd and 26th and Hempstead on 24th. *Photo 16 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Peregrine | Eighteen of the 27 records came from around Cromer Church with numerous records of a single bird on the pinnacles, nave roof or nearby buildings between 3rd and 28th. Elsewhere, several New Year's Day Challengers were lucky enough to see 2 birds at Felbrigg Park & Lake on 1st, one of them in a tree with a prey item. Other reports were from the Weybourne area, singles on 13th, 14th and 16th with 2 interacting and calling noisily on 7th. *Photo 17 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

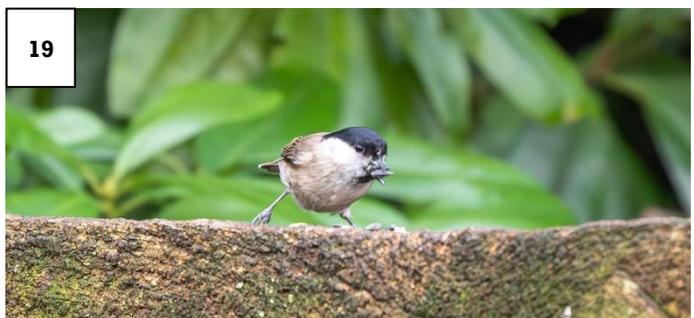
Ring-necked Parakeet | A single Ring-necked Parakeet was seen at Blickling Park NT on 17th, flying to a tree near the overflow car park.

Hooded Crow | The wintering bird at Mundesley was seen again on 6th, briefly over a garden with a Carrion Crow before heading back west.



Raven | Singles were recorded from Sheringham Park on the 4th, Letheringsett & Ford on 13th, Holt on 18th and Gresham on 26th. Two birds were reported at Sharrington on 17th and Suffield on 31st. *Photo 18 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Marsh Tit | It was pleasing to see Marsh Tit records from 7 locations in January, particularly interesting as one of our prospective UEA student consultant projects this year is around the decline of the Marsh Tit. The twenty five records were mostly of singles with Selbrigg Pond being the most reliable spot and the only one to attract 2 birds, but garden feeders in Gresham and High Kelling also proving popular places with several visits reported. Other locations included Holt Country Park, Swanton Novers, Mannington Hall Park and Hempstead. *Photo 19 courtesy of Richard Farrow*



Dartford Warbler | Just 4 records, all from Kelling Heath. Two calling simultaneously were noted on 25th.

Firecrest | Seven records, all of singles, were logged at High Kelling, Holt Country Park, Beeston Common, Weybourne, Kelling Heath and Aylmerton.

Black Redstart | All 68 Black Redstart were of the Eastern Black Redstart that remained at Sheringham throughout the month, and at time of writing on 8th February was still there. An amazing 45 members have

recorded it on our website thus far. If you haven't viewed it yet, The Leas and nearby gardens, and St Nicholas Place are your best bets. *Photo 20 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Wheatear | A single, unseasonal Wheatear was reported at Felbrigg Park & Lake on 1st, flying over the flooded area and landing near a bramble bush before being lost to view.

Grey Wagtail | Forty seven sightings of mostly 1-2 birds throughout the month from 13 locations. Good areas were the west Prom at Sheringham – perhaps an uptick in records from there from folk looking for the Eastern Black Redstart – and Holt Sewage Works. Recorded there on several dates with a high count of 3 on 6th. *Photo 21 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Brambling | Single figure records at Thornage from the beginning of the month rising to 20 by 14th and up to 50 on 24th. Other records of 1-3 birds came from Aylmerton, Letheringsett & Ford, Bodham and Hempstead. *Photo 22 courtesy of Ken Thornton*

Redpoll | A single Lesser Redpoll was recorded at Bodham on 4th.

Common Crossbill | Just 3 records, 4 over Aylmerton on 5th, 5 over Kelling Heath on 10th plus a pair in treetops at Dilham Canal on 14th.

Lapland Bunting | All 6 records were of singles at Sheringham Cliffs on 6th, and around Weybourne Cliffs and coastal path on 4th, 8th, 12th and 13th.

Snow Bunting | Snow Buntings were present in good numbers along the Weybourne Cliffs beet fields, with counts ranging from 7–14 early in the month to 30–40+ up to 23rd. Flocks were often mobile, difficult to count and sometimes split by disturbance. Additional records came from Weybourne beach and a single bird at West Runton. *Photo 23 courtesy of Mark Clements*



February: What to look forward to



February is a short month but there are still plenty of things to be on the lookout for.

If you are heading out why not visit the coast? There will undoubtedly be some sea duck, divers, possibly grebes and maybe even a skua too. Geese flocks are still around, particularly near Weybourne, and it is always worth looking closely as recently these have included several Tundra Bean Geese, White-fronted Geese and Barnacle Geese lurking amongst the Pink-feet.

We are fortunate to be able to see Goshawk in our area and they start their impressive aerial displays on sunny days from mid-February. It is a late winter spectacle not to be missed. Swanton Novers remains the most reported from spot for them in the club area but sightings have also been recorded in recent years at Weybourne, Felbrigg Park and Holt Country Park & Lowes.

With a little less cover on trees, hedges and the like, February can be a good time to try and glimpse an elusive Cetti's Warbler; try sites like Pigneys Wood, Dilham Canal or the Weybourne reed bed. Similarly, species like Water Rail and Snipe are a little more visible in reeds in cold weather – the overflow from Felbrigg Park lake is a good spot for a rail and Snipe are in evidence on the water meadow there.

Winter thrushes like Redwing and Fieldfare are still about, albeit often in small numbers, and last month brought us Snow and Lapland Buntings in the NENBC area.

Recent sightings have included a Purple Sandpiper in Sheringham (none having over-wintered there this year), so you never know when you could be lucky. Wherever you are out and about, happy birding, and please try and upload your records and photos to the club website.

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 | “3x South-west honking away madly!” | David Griffiths | Holt | 1st

White-fronted Goose | “4x bayfield park. Use of the ordnance survey, locate app, confirmed birds to be in club recording area” | Phil Borley | Letheringsett & Ford | 7th

Mute Swan | “2x On the pond of the house at the south-east corner of Beeston Common; they have been here for over a week and due to the small area (for a Swan!) and surrounding trees I am not convinced they will easily be flying out.” | Dave Billham | Beeston Regis | 4th

Whooper Swan | “Alerted by MC and on lookout for bird passing out to sea and then, checking inland watched said bird fly south of Weybourne Village!” | David Griffiths | Weybourne | 11th

Mallard | “Male, just sits in middle of pond - could almost be mistaken for a plastic one!” | Sue Parsons | Southrepps Common | 17th

Mallard | “Keeping close to the edge, or on land - large dog Otter feeding voraciously!!” | David Griffiths | Selbrigg Ponds | 23rd

Goosander | “Drake seen flying around then relocated fishing on the river just downstream of Buxton Mill. Presumably the same bird I saw fly past my window in Horstead a few days ago.” | Louis Parkerson | Buxton & Little Hautbois | 8th

Rock Dove | “15x Feral pigeons . The Great New years day garden challenge” | John Hurst | Mundesley | 1st

Water Rail | “Birding gods with me. Saw that a water rail posted a couple of days ago at the bottom of the dam and on the off chance detoured to have a peak and got lucky” | David Barrass | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 8th

Water Rail | “Below Dam. watched it grab a frog by its leg and then scoot off to devour it.” | Richard Farrow | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 8th

Water Rail | “At Anchor Road bridge. I looked over the wall into a ditch and it was right below me. It ran out of sight across the weeds with the usual nervous hesitant panic.” | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 26th

Little Grebe | “Little grebes normally dive and disappear on my approach, these didn't. They skittered off along the canal with much fuss and splashing. I stood still and waited until the otter that had alarmed them appeared and swam towards me coming very close before I lowered my binoculars, whereupon it dove and disappeared.” | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 26th

Lapwing | “5x Over Mill area en route to Sheringham (me, not the Lapwings!)” | David Griffiths | Weybourne | 1st

Lapwing | “100x flew high out over sea, maintaining that position for a while, suspected a predator being responsible, after scanning the sky, sure enough a peregrine was on the hunt high over coastal fields.” | Phil Borley | Weybourne Cliffs | 14th

Black-headed Gull | “1,000x Impossible to count as experienced a conveyor belt of feeding gulls for the 2.5 hours I was watching!” | David Griffiths | Weybourne | 4th

Little Gull | “Gorgeous winter-plumaged adult feeding in surf zone with Black-headed Gulls” | Andy Clarke | Sheringham | 10th

Great Black-backed Gull | “In the bird bath !” | Judith Anderson | Cromer | 1st

Herring Gull | “Seawatch 1000-1300; 100 plus, past and feeding on dead crabs along the shoreline. A dead Sunfish, which we watched being washed ashore, and thought would be enjoyed by the gulls, was completely ignored by every bird!” | Dave Billham | East Runton (Coastwatch Station) | 12th

Herring Gull | “There had been a "wreck" of Starfish and crabs and a large amount of gulls were in a feeding frenzy by the tank. Lovely to see and they were catching a lot of starfish and crabs!” | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 12th



Razorbill | "One east, one on sea and later killed by GBBG. No attempt at devouring sad creature and left to float off on the tide!" | David Griffiths | Weybourne | 27th

Little Egret | "My second record here in Erpingham in 22 years." | Stephen Green | Erpingham | 20th

Red Kite | "Snatched a roadkill morsel in front of the car....close!" | John Hurst | Roughton | 2nd

Red Kite | "34x Singles and small groups (largest 9 birds) heading for roost. Counted over a period of approx. 15 mins." | Francis Farrow | Little Barningham | 11th

Kestrel | "Female on telegraph pole - had a disagreement with a bullying Rook - on this occasion

the Kestrel won!" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 24th



Ring-necked Parakeet | "flew to a tree near the overflow car park - for a brief moment I thought I was back in Surrey!" | Walter Sadler | Blickling Park | 17th

Carrion Crow | "16x All in one tree. So it's not true that more than one crow is a Rook..." | Andy Clarke | Sheringham | 8th

Marsh Tit | "Someone has put a feeder there so Marsh Tit at Selbrigg may be a banker this winter" | David Barrass | Selbrigg Pond | 10th

Chiffchaff | "sewage works. feeding on filter bed, first time I have observed chiffchaff doing this, presumably copied from the wagtails?." | Phil Borley | Holt | 4th

Chiffchaff | "Siberian (tristis), feeding alongside nominates for nice comparison. Very clean and pale looking, with no hint of green on mantle or wings." | Third Party Report | Holt | 6th

Blackbird | "Including "white-headed" leucistic bird" | David Griffiths | Beeston Bump | 21st



Fieldfare | "10x In the cemetery area feeding on the ground and berries. Most I've had all winter - anywhere!! Just lovely to watch. I only left when they flew off to roost. Well, it WAS gone 4.00pm by then!!" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 28th



Contributions to the Newsletter

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

Looking forward to hearing from you!

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

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

Telephone 01263 710203
salesbirdventures@aol.com

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



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!

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

We hope you will continue to support the club in 2026 by renewing your membership with us. The subs, which were due on 1st January, remain the same as last year:

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.**

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.

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!

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 a couple of our regular **Felbrigg Park Walks**, a monthly mid-week favourite, a walk along the **Happisburgh Coast**, maybe a rescheduled **Strumpshaw Fen** walk and in March a wander around **Swanton Novers**. Our **February Evening Talk** is about **Turtle Doves** with the RSPB's Louisa Claxton. Look forward to seeing you at these events soon.

Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk 9:00am to 11:00am with Trevor Williams

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

18th February | 18th March

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

NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET: Main Felbrigg Hall car park – free for National Trust members | **DISTANCE:** 2 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Not suitable for wheelchair users but could be for those with limited mobility – please get on touch. | **FACILITIES:** Café and loos at the Hall | **CLUB BADGES:** In area so all appropriate individual records count.

By popular request, on 18th March we will be trialling an *additional* shorter distance, slower, 1-hour walk with Nick Kimber, starting at 10am, and all meeting up in the café afterwards at 11am.

26th February 7:30pm to 9:30pm
Gresham Village Hall and via Zoom

"Turtle Doves" a talk with Louisa Claxton

Louisa is an adviser for Operation Turtle Dove, a partnership project focused on reversing the decline of one of England's most loved farmland birds, supporting farmers and landowners in creating the right habitats to help Turtle Doves breed successfully. Her talk will give a quick overview of Turtle Dove ecology, the story behind their decline, and the latest updates along their migration route before exploring the habitats they need, how we can help create them, and some of the practical challenges faced. There will also be a bit of local info from our Felbeck Trust colleagues.

Happisburgh – sea and coast in winter

Saturday 14 February 2026

9.30 am to 1pm

optional afternoon wander to Cart Gap assuming suitable weather
Walk Leader: Andy Clarke

A winter adventure awaits! Always something of an enigma, Happisburgh can turn up interesting species at any time of the year. Expect some scanning of the sea for divers, passing geese and sea duck. The cliff top fields may hold geese and curlew, along with flocks of roaming finches and buntings. Below the cliffs is a sandy beach, popular in summer but in the quieter winter months loafing gulls and possibly a few waders may be present. Scrub with larger trees complete the range of habitats to explore, with resident woodland birds along with wintering thrushes possible. Heritage is also on offer with views of the famous Happisburgh Lighthouse and listen out for the evocative 'Time and Tide Bell' (depending on tides and how submerged it is).

NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET: Happisburgh Community Car Park, Beach Road, Happisburgh, Norfolk, NR12 0PR - charges apply £1.50 per hour, up to £7 for 24 hours (details on website). | **DISTANCE:** approx 5-6km | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Paths are generally level. We will be walking on grassy tracks and some gravel tracks, which may be uneven and bumpy in places. Paths are likely to be damp or wet. The access ramp down to the beach may not be accessible on the day, this part of the coast is prone to cliff falls, especially after wet or stormy weather. Sturdy footwear advisable and please come dressed for winter weather on exposed sites. | **FACILITIES:** Public toilets available at the car park. There is a café nearby at Cart Gap and a pub in Happisburgh village although stops are not a formal part of this walk. Do consider bringing a packed lunch and refreshments. | **CLUB BADGES:** Some parts will be in the club area so check with leader for boundary.

No prior booking is required for this walk

.... some advance notices

Strumpshaw Fen and Buckenham Marshes

A Grand Day Out

***** 10th Anniversary Walk *****

XXX Sunday 4th January | 10:00am to 4:00pm XXX



Sadly this walk was postponed as there was flooding at Strumpshaw and the site was closed for a few days. We intend rescheduling and will post a note on the website as soon as we have had it confirmed.

Unfortunately the BTO's Drew Lyness who is a local expert and has birded these sites for more than a decade as his local patch, has no free dates this winter **so we will either be organising a club-led walk in the coming weeks or sorting out a trip nearer the tail end of this year.**

If you booked for the initial date we will let you know by email of the revised date and you will have first refusal; if you didn't sign up for the initial date but would like an email sent with the revised date, please drop Carol an email at nenbc@aol.co.uk

Swanton Novers – searching for Goshawks

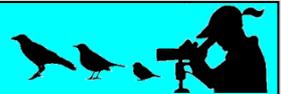
Saturday 14th March | 9am to midday

Walk Leader: Seán Dempster

The aim of walk is to see Goshawks which should be performing their aerial courtship displays at this time of year. Hopefully, we will get a bright, warm, sunny morning which will encourage the Goshawks to fly. Mid-morning is often the best time so we will start off by walking through the Swanton Novers woods to a water meadow where the Norfolk Rivers Trust have created a new river through a wetland. We will walk for about 2 hours, covering a distance of about 3 miles. We will then return to Swanton Novers church, set up a watch point and hope to see Goshawks displaying. Telescopes would be useful as the birds can be distant. Common woodland birds should be seen on the walk but the main aim of the morning is to see Goshawks and other birds of prey.

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

Birding for Beginners Programme 2026



After a couple of years of not running this course, we hope to get back on track again this year with a spring course. We are still in the planning stages but we will be plugging this over the next few newsletter issues and very much hoping that sufficient of you will express an interest ASAP so we can sort some dates out. *[Kala, Tam and Mary, I have you down already]*. Trevor and Carol run the programme one evening a week over three successive weeks and we charge members £10 towards the hall hire costs, £15 for non-members. General outline below

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

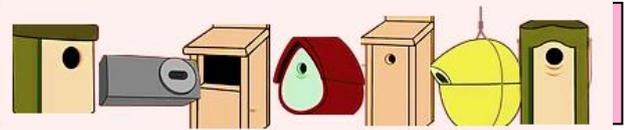
Finding and Seeing Birds including: field guides, optics, attracting birds to your garden, where to watch

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

Taking your interest to the next level including: the club website, new technology

National Nest Box Week

14th to 21st February 2026



National Nestbox Week is an established part of the ornithological calendar. Celebrated from February 14th each year, it puts the spotlight on breeding birds and asks everyone to put up more nestboxes in their local area. There is loads of info available on the official website [National Nestbox Week | Nestbox Week](http://NationalNestboxWeek.com) and on those of many other wildlife organisations.

Here's some info from Suffolk Wildlife Trust:

"Many birds are in need for a safe place to nest. Natural nesting sites include nooks and crannies in trees, standing deadwood, hedgerows and gaps in buildings. But there are fewer choices to nest due to, garden management becoming neater, holes in old buildings being filled up, and loss of habitat among many other reasons. An alternative and popular option for garden birds are nest boxes. When placed in the right place, these provide a secure and safe nesting site for birds. Every year National Nest Box Week highlights the importance of nest boxes for local wildlife and gardens are a great place to start."



How to build a bird box | Norfolk Wildlife Trust

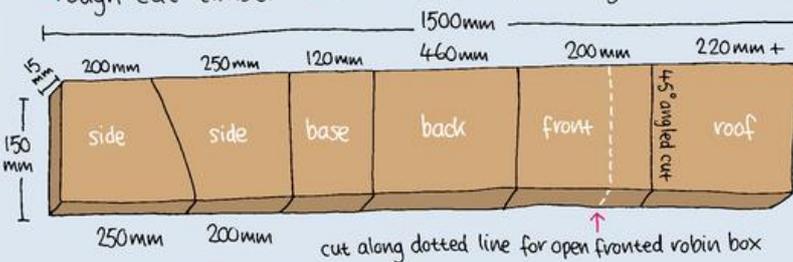


How to make a nest box



What you need:

- rough cut timber
- some old rubber or a hinge
- 20mm nails
- tools:



- ▶ saw
- ▶ hammer
- ▶ hand brace or drill
- ▶ pencil, ruler and scissors

always get an adult to help with tools!

1 Mark out and saw panels

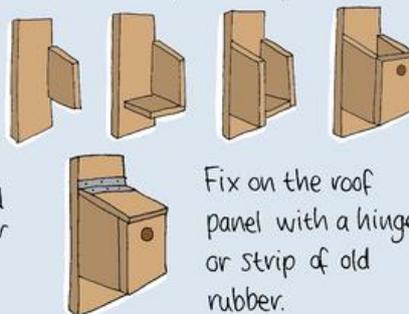
Use diagram above, and write the name of each panel onto the marked out wood.

2 Choose your box type

- hole fronted box:
 - blue tits (25mm)
 - great tits (28mm)
 - sparrows (38mm)
 - starlings (45mm)
- open fronted box for robins

3 Assemble the box

Nail the panels together:

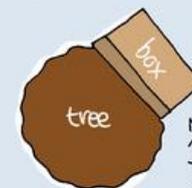


Fix on the roof panel with a hinge or strip of old rubber.

Where to put it:

2-5 metres above the ground, somewhere sheltered.

2-5m above ground



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Further info at [RBA National Nest Box Week](http://RBANationalNestBoxWeek.com). If you don't fancy making your own, call into club sponsor [Bird Ventures in Holt](http://BirdVentures.com). They have a range of nest boxes and great advice too.

Blue Tit photo courtesy of Dave Billham

Last Month's Evening Talk *with Rob Lucking* "Aride – the story of a Seychelles Island"

zoom



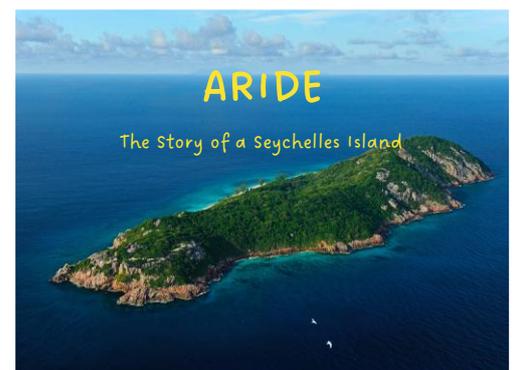
By Alan Stevens

For our first indoor meeting of 2026 we welcomed Rob Lucking to talk about Aride, a Seychelles Island with which he has a long association. By way of background Rob has worked in nature conservation for over 30 years, initially for BirdLife International and then for the RSPB leaving in 2019 to pursue a freelance career in ecology consultancy. His main conservation interests lie in land management, species recovery and habitat restoration and he also has expertise in project management and commercial development. Rob first visited Aride after leaving university in the 1990s and stayed for several years. He is now the chairman of the Island Conservation Society UK, the charity that owns Aride. This wide-ranging talk, packed with information, took us from pre-history to today and told of the trials and tribulations of living and working there and concluding with a view to what the future holds.



Starting at the very beginning Rob reminded us of how the modern world was formed and how the Seychelles, the only oceanic granitic islands in the world came into being. Left in isolation for millions of years with an absence of predators much of the fauna and flora flourished into endemic species.

A brief insight into the human history of the island began with the arrival of the French in 1742 who went on to colonise it 14 years later. Remaining under French control until 1794 the focus was on growing spices. After then the islands came under British control and by the late 1800s naturalists were documenting the wildlife found there. Edward Newton, Colonial Secretary of Mauritius sent specimens back to his brother Alfred, a professor at Cambridge University, a leading ornithologist of the time and one of the founders of the British Ornithologists Union. From these Alfred described



seven of the twelve extant endemic landbirds of the Seychelles. Rob showed a series of great images (having earlier giving credits for them) of **Seychelles Black Parrot**, **Seychelles White-eye**, **Seychelles Kestrel**, **Seychelles Swiftlet**, **Seychelles Robin-Magpie**, **Paradise Flycatcher** and **Fody**. Two extinct species were shown with earlier illustrations of **Seychelles Green Parrot** and the **Marianne White-eye**.



As is so often the case with human activity the ecological balance of the Seychelles islands was soon disrupted by the introduction of invasive species rats, cats, goats and pigs and vast areas of habitat were destroyed to plant crops. The islands lost most of their indigenous wildlife with the smaller distant islands becoming what Rob described as 'arks' for what remained, and Aride was one of these. Here Rob detailed some remarkable numbers to describe the Seychelles – and Economic Zone of 1.3 million km² with just 455 km² land – the size of the Isle of Arran, made up of 115 islands with most of the population living on the 41 inner granitic islands with the outer 70 or so islands being coral, atolls and cays.

Returning to Aride (pronounced Areed) Rob told us it is around 74 hectares in area with a maximum height of about 125m and was named Aride as it is very dry.

The first naturalist proper to arrive on the island was Dr Edward Wright who recorded massive numbers of seabirds and described two new species Wright's Skink (a lizard) and a flowering shrub Wright's Gardinia. By now much of the island had been cleared to grow crops and, together with the practice of harvesting seabird's eggs and young Shearwaters for food, resulted in serious consequences for the islands ecology. Turtles were also harvested on a commercial scale for their carapaces and for food. Campbells Real Turtle Soup of the 1920s contained real turtle!



Despite all this Aride was still host to large seabird populations and until the early 1900s two endemic landbirds, **Black Paradise Flycatcher** and **Seychelles Magpie-Robin**, both of which subsequently fell into extinction, likely due to the introduction of cats to catch mice and habitat loss. For unknown reasons rats failed to establish on Aride allowing the seabirds to continue to thrive.



By the 1920s another blow to the habitat came with the introduction of palm trees for the production of coconut oil. By the 1960s the Seychelles International Airport was built, independence from the UK was gained and as tourism took off the coconut plantations fell into disuse.

Protection of Aride began on another island named Cousin, the sole stronghold of the endemic **Seychelles Warbler** but where coconut production had also taken a toll. The International Council for Bird Preservation (now BirdLife International) launched an appeal to raise £4500 to buy Cousin which was soon supported by the philanthropist Christopher Cadbury resulting in the island being purchased in 1968 and to be managed by the ICBP. Christopher was the President of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation and over his lifetime helped to buy over 100 nature reserves and donated them to the relevant County Wildlife Trust – they also finished up owning Aride. Following this success Cadbury went on to buy Aride in 1973 passing it to the care of RSNC. The first task was to record the island's wildlife as a base line for the work to turn round an island from the ecological damage that had been wrought,

replacing indigenous flora with commercial crops and the clearance of wooded areas to maximise seabird nesting and egg production. With no rats seabird populations remained high and we learnt that the island boasts a dense population of reptiles, lizards, skinks and the Wolf Snake. So much so that Aride is in the topflight for reptile biomasses in the world.

Our speaker then turned to birds, their numbers, breeding patterns and fortunes. The tree nesting **Lesser Noddy** with 100,000 pairs, **Sooty Tern** (110,000), **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** (10,000) and **Tropical Shearwater**.



Rob unpicked the differences between tropical and temperate seabird reproduction much due to the availability of food. Put simply, tropical water provide less food resulting in smaller clutch sizes and longer incubation/fledging periods. Tropical birds tend to feed young with regurgitated food rather than whole fish allowing them to take longer foraging trips. Rob said that it is unusual to have two species of Shearwater nesting together and that they avoid competition for nest sites by the Wedge-tailed favouring areas allowing deeper burrow lengths and steeper cliffs whereas Tropicals nest under rocks and fallen trees.

There are two species of tropic bird, the **White-tailed Tropic Bird** the most numerous at up to 10,000 pairs and the **Red-tailed Tropic Bird** with just a handful of pairs.

Brown Noddy number around 20,000 pairs and the beautiful, **Blue-billed White Tern** (formerly **Fairy Terns**) between 10 and 20,000 but which are difficult to count as they bred year-round laying a single egg on a suitable branch. **Roseate Terns** on Aride are unique as it is the sole global location where they nest in vegetation where they also follow temperate traits of laying multiple eggs and feeding whole fish (see above). **Bridle Terns** rounded up the nesting seabirds on Aride with numbers in the low 100s. **Great and Lesser Frigatebirds** frequent the waters around the island.



In the 1970s just 6 land breeding birds were noted including 4 non-native species. **Indian Mynas** now eradicated and **Barn Owls** both predating eggs and chicks of sea and land birds. The prolific **Barred Ground Dove** and equally common **Madagascar Fody**. The **Madagascar Turtle Dove**, chosen as a native species as Rob illustrated the differences between the endemic purple head birds and the introduced grey-headed form and their hybridization. Lastly, we came to **Moorhens**, just like ours, but on Aride they are woodland birds due to the absence of ponds and the like.



The surveys of the 1970s made clear how damaged Aride was but also its potential and the need for protection and management. The mid-1980s heralded the arrival of wardens to work towards aims. For them living there was fairly primitive lacking most home comforts and convenience. Tourism soon became a revenue stream for the project. Hawksbill Turtles, previously hunted for their shells, were winners from the conservation project and work continues to protect them and their nest sites and young.



Rob then delved into the flora of Aride where a non-interventionist policy was adopted to allow the forest areas to recover. An important fast growing species in this process was *Pisonia grandis*, but while their sticky fruits adhere to birds and aid seed distribution this can also result in the loss of birds incapacitated with too many stuck to them. Some areas required clearing but were soon improving with trees growing up to 2m per annum in the tropical climate. Fig trees flourished aiding the recolonization of the **Seychelles Blue Pigeon** and the reintroduction of the **Seychelles Warbler** now with a population of 1,000+. This success was followed by another with the reintroduction of the **Seychelles Fody**.



Rob then devoted some time to the third species to be reintroduced, the **Seychelles Magpie-Robin**, once globally one of the rarest birds with a population of perhaps dozens, reduced because, like others, it was unable to cope with the problems aforementioned. Several attempts to bring back this bird have alas not been overly successful to date. The last of the endemics landed on its own with no help and although not common the **Seychelles Sunbird** is present largely due to the planting of non-native shrubs.



The island, which via the connection with Christoher Cadbury, had been managed by The Wildlife Trusts, but being UK based, what were they doing on an Indian Ocean island? A decision was made in 2000 to form a new

charity, Island Conservation Society (ICS) to take ownership and the Cadbury family offered financial support. The ICS is also involved with projects on other islands.



Important up-grades to infrastructure have been completed and better research facilities are enabling projects to be undertaken including many centred on seabirds. Population and breeding monitoring is undertaken and the use of geolocators give an insight of where the birds of Aride roam over the ocean. As data emerges the fortunes of species are laid bare as it has become clear that **White-tailed Tropicbird** numbers have fallen from 10,000 breeding pairs to perhaps 1,500 due, it is thought, to adult mortality. A similar fate has befallen the **Sooty Tern** with numbers over 50 or so year falling from 100 to 10,000 pairs mainly due to increased vegetation robbing nest sites from them but while giving other species a better chance – a balance then. However, concerns over ‘Sootys’ also come from other islands most likely due to egg harvesting on which there is now a moratorium.

Our speaker then raised the problems of commercial fishing in the Indian Ocean, a threat we have heard about in previous talks from other parts of the world. With 20% of the global Tuna catch coming from there the usual political and economic arguments are bought into play while allowing practices effecting the environment to continue. Fish Aggregation Devices (something for you to look up!) result in the wholesale capture of Tuna as well as all and sundry other species. Tuna stocks are nearing collapse as limits are ignored and this in turn reduces the food for seabirds. We only have to read about the fortunes of **Sooty Terns** on Ascension Island to appreciate that what has happened in the Atlantic can easily be duplicated elsewhere.

Here Rob brought back in the **Magpie-Robin** (MRs) and why its reintroduction had failed. Surprisingly the answer may have been the lack of a grazing animal, in this case the Giant Tortoise. A brief history of the tortoise in the Seychelles was followed by the news that they are ‘ecosystem engineers’. So, the tortoises eat of lot of vegetation, quickly converted to nutrients improving impoverished soil encouraging invertebrates and therefore food for the MRs. The tortoise also play an important role in ground clearance and seed distribution. The aim is to soon have 150 tortoises on Ardie.

Drawing to a close our speaker looked at the future, continuing the work to date but also building in resilience to climate change and rising sea levels and temperatures and saving coral reefs. Inevitably finance entered the ring. Unbelievably the ICT budget for Aride runs at £150,000pa, less than the annual salary of the RSPBs CEO (first world and third world!) They were impacted by Covid when tourism income stopped instantly but they are still there doing their important work.

This was a fantastic new talk from Rob packed with detail from a speaker immersed in the subject from inception to today. If you want to learn more of their efforts visit their website or Facebook pages ICS Seychelles

Photo credits – All were from Rob’s presentation but not sure which belongs to whom! Contributors were: *Rob Lucking, Adrian Skerrett, Dr Gerard Rocamora, Stephen Warman, Island Conservation Society Seychelles, Annie Simons, Reef Design Lab, Prof Nick Graham, Prof Chris Feare, Merشيا Rose, Dr David Richardson, Rich Baxter/Indian Ocean Tortoise Alliance, Chris Tagg, Matty Lucking, Lucy Cadbury, Pete Carty*





14 x Shoveler
Club Walk, well this is embarrassing, a new NENBC bird for me ;-)

John Swallow

By Dave Billham

The day of the first club walk of 2026 dawned calm and bright, though rain was very much on the way, due to arrive halfway through the allotted time. With Trevor away enjoying mid-summer on the other side of our planet to chilly Felbrigg, I had been asked to lead the walk, though Carol would be there to ensure that we had a signing-in sheet, we lost no-one, and I got it right. The threat of rain was not enough to put off the twenty-one members who turned up, including our new club president John Swallow, and two new members on their first walk, Delia and Astrid.

The species list was started in the car park, where for the first time in a few months we were met by the welcome sound of birdsong - **Blackbird, Robin, Blue Tit** and **Great Tit** – practically a chorus! Also noted were the hundreds of **Common Gull** scattered all around the grassland, and lesser numbers of **Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow** and **Woodpigeon**. These were joined on the list by **Herring Gull, Black-headed Gull, Feral Pigeon, Greenfinch** and **Chaffinch**. A small flock of twenty or so **Redwing** were on the grass a few hundred yards away, and an equally distant **Common Buzzard** was sat on a fence post. Just before we set off, a flock of around twenty geese flew silently over our heads; their identity eventually pinned down as **Greylag Goose**.

Due to the approaching rain, the plan was to head for the bridleway behind the church to allow us to check

out the fields for any feeding flocks, then to the lake and the shelter of the trees before the heavens opened (though 'shelter' was a somewhat optimistic term due to the lack of leaves). Once the group had been appraised of said plan, we set off towards the church, checking out the grassland for any sign of avian activity, and found – nothing. Going through the churchyard, we scanned the fields to both sides – nothing. A call came from the back of the group - "What have you done with all the birds?" - Carol was obviously not impressed with my abilities!



Reaching the wet and well-puddled bridleway, we set off hoping to see birds aplenty, but the adjoining fields were virtually devoid of birdlife, the only additions for the list being distant, but welcome, **Magpie** and **Starling**. It wasn't until we reached a smaller field, which had both

sheep in it, and an area of bare earth, that we found any visible movement of birds on the ground. Pausing here, we could, thank heavens, see that there were Blackbirds aplenty under, and Chaffinch in, the hedgerow to our left. New to the list was a singing **Skylark**, high above us. Some **Fieldfare** were then seen, and with everyone checking we eventually realised there were over thirty of them, feeding on the ground, then rising and dropping as they moved across the field. A few **Meadow Pipit** were spotted by one keen-eyed observer, along with **Stock Dove** and **Goldfinch**. None of the above were very close to us but, phew, some birds at last on my chosen route!

Turning right onto the bridleway that leads towards the lake, Nick spotted a lone **Bullfinch**, which promptly disappeared behind the hedgerow before we could alert the remainder of the group. A pair of Roe Deer caught our attention for a while, as did a **Dunnock** on the track in front of us. A small **Lapwing** flock was noted, along with a pair of **Red Kite** over the woods. A single **Grey Heron** flew past us, then off top our left up came a very large flock of Woodpigeon from a distant field, but we could not see what might have spooked them. At last a **Pheasant** appeared (where had they all been hiding?), and the last species noted before we reached the path above the lake was **Pink-footed Goose**, a flock of seventy or so noisily flying over, the wonderful sound of winter in Norfolk.



The rain that had been forecast was now putting in an appearance, and it was a slightly damp group who arrived at the lake, where we could see that it was well populated with waterfowl. Fifteen or so minutes spent scanning the water revealed the following; ten **Mute Swan** (including last year's young), **Moorhen**, **Mallard**, **Gadwall**, **Tufted Duck**, three **Coot** and a pair of **Shoveler**. A lone **Cormorant** was sat in a tree by the lake's edge, and a small pool on the water meadow pleasingly held a small flock of **Teal**. Entering the trees along the lakeside path gave scant cover from the rain and rising wind, but revealed no new species, least of all the hoped for Water Rail which had been evident on the last two walks of the previous year. At the other end of

the lake, and back out in the open, we stopped to examine the flooded water meadows, where, as well as getting wetter, we found a few motionless **Common Snipe**, doing their best to be invisible, along with a further two Shoveler.



As we were now approaching the gate to the path that led back to the hall, a decision was needed; did we head for the woods for twenty minutes in the hope of finding some of the woodland species we had not yet seen, or end the walk a little early and head for the café, to warm up and avoid getting any wetter? Voicing this quandary to Nick, who was walking alongside me, he said that he was heading to the café regardless of what we decided to do - he knows his own mind, does Nick! I then went to the rear of the group, to speak to them and see what they thought; upon getting there, I turned around to discover that the front of the group had all followed Nick through the gate and back towards the hall – oh well, decision made!



No new additions to the list were noted on the walk back, but we had found a reasonable **41 species**; not too shabby considering the conditions. With the front of the group already in the café ordering drinks(!), Carol briefed the remainder of us on upcoming club walks and talks, following which we headed for coffee or cars. A big thank-you from myself to all those who decided to brave the rain and come along, and if you have not yet tried a Felbrigg walk, why not give it a go? If you are really lucky, you might not even get wet!



By Carol Thornton

Well, as usual, the weather wasn't great all weekend and if our garden was anything to go by, the birds were hiding, tittering rather than twittering you could say. The graphics I got back after loading our garden birds on to the RSPB website are shown here on the right. We will have to wait until April until we get all the RSPB stats to compare to ours but top 3 Norfolk birds thus far are Blue Tit, Woodpigeon and House Sparrow



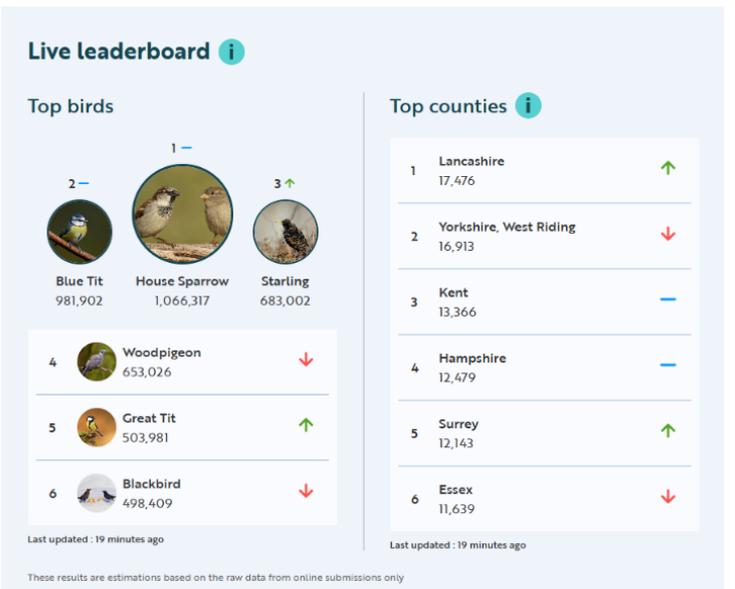
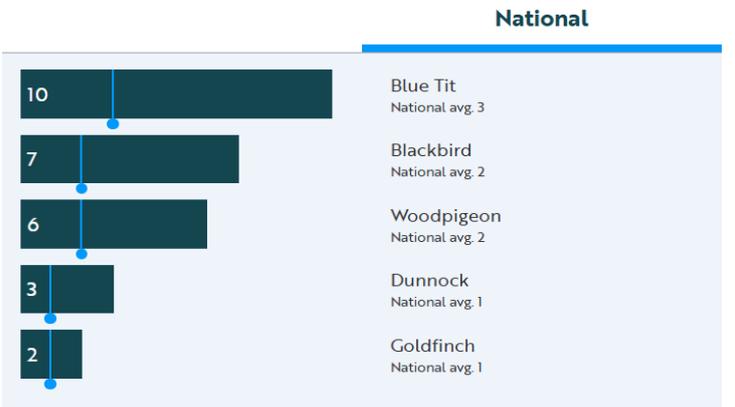
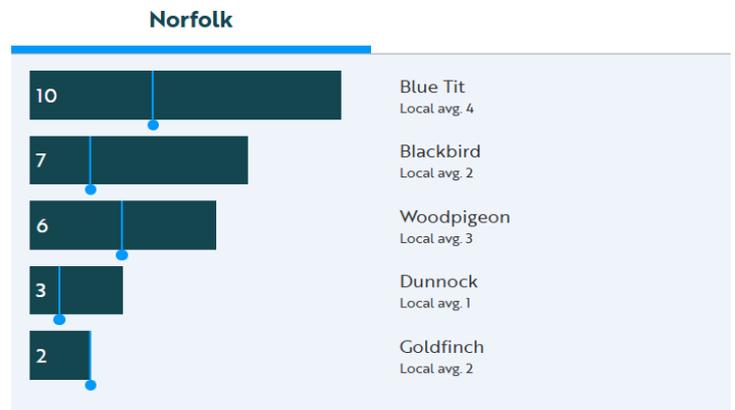
Many thanks to the 21 of you logged RSPB Big Garden BirdWatch records on our website over the weekend or dropped us an email with your results. Between us, we recorded 34 species. I have listed these below, along with the number of gardens they appeared in

Blue Tit	20	Stock Dove	4
Woodpigeon	20	Carrion Crow	4
Blackbird	18	Great Spotted Woodpecker	3
Dunnock	18	Herring Gull	3
Great Tit	16	Jay	3
Robin	16	Nuthatch	3
Chaffinch	15	Siskin	3
Goldfinch	13	Wren	3
Greenfinch	12	Starling	2
Long-tailed Tit	11	Green Woodpecker	2
Coal Tit	9	Redwing	2
Jackdaw	9	Rock Dove	2
Pheasant	6	Rook	2
House Sparrow	5	Blackcap	1
Collared Dove	5	Kestrel	1
Magpie	5	Linnet	1
Black-headed Gull	4	Song Thrush	1

Note the top two spots match the Norfolk results but we have Blackbird in 3rd place and the Norfolk-wide bronze medallist House Sparrow is way back in 14th. Interestingly, House Sparrow currently holds the top spot nationally. Highest number of species per garden came from Richard Kershaw (22), John Cole (17) with Loz Malabar and Carol & Ken Thornton in joint third place (16). The national average garden count was of 28 birds (not species) per garden. Fourteen of our participating members reported more than this average with Richard Kershaw on 174 (!), Di & Richard Farrow 82 and Chris Mason 62. Many thanks all of you!



How you compare





Creek and Marsh
The view from my 'office window'

By Andrew Gorton

A few years back I started a job in the National Trust information centre at [Morston Quay](#), where visitors can take boat trips to see the seals at the [Blakeney Point Nature Reserve](#), also owned by the National Trust.

As I'm sure many of you know, Blakeney Point is not only known for its seal colony, but for its importance for migrating birds, particularly terns during the summer, and **Pink-footed Geese** during the winter.

My main role at Morston is customer service rather than conservation, but it is a good opportunity to engage with the visitors regarding the important work carried out on Blakeney Point and the wider area. I have a very good view from the window of the information centre, as many visitors comment on when they first walk in.

During quiet periods on shift, I try and steal a few minutes birding. My main target is the nearby tidal creek, and the marsh beyond it. When the tide is out, a few waders take the opportunity for a spot of lunch. **Redshanks**, **Greenshanks**, **Oystercatchers** and **Egrets (Little and Great)** are often seen poking through the mud in search of a snack. **Whimbrels** and **Curlews** can also be found there. The air is often alive with the distinctive calls of these birds.

The marsh on the far side of the creek seems to be a favourite spot for geese, particularly **Brent Pink-footed Geese** are over en masse in winter, their almost constant honking heard in the nearby farmers' fields. **Spoonbills** are sometimes seen flying over, and at one point I was able to see one at relatively close quarters in the creek.

On the opposite site of the visitors' centre is the car park and surrounding hedges, trees and fields. A small flock of **House Sparrows** and one or two **Pied Wagtails** hang around a lot of time, no doubt attracted by crumbs left by the café customers in the picnic areas. **Greenfinches** and **Blue Tits** call away in the hedges and trees and **Skylarks** can be heard from the fields. **Kestrels** and **Red Kites** are occasionally to be seen soaring overhead.

Another nice aspect of the job is visitors and walkers coming in to the centre to discuss the sightings they've had on their travels. I've helped identify birds for them with the aid of a guide and their descriptions of size, colours, behaviour, where it was etc. There was a section on this in the club's [Birding for Beginners course](#) (see [page15](#)) I did

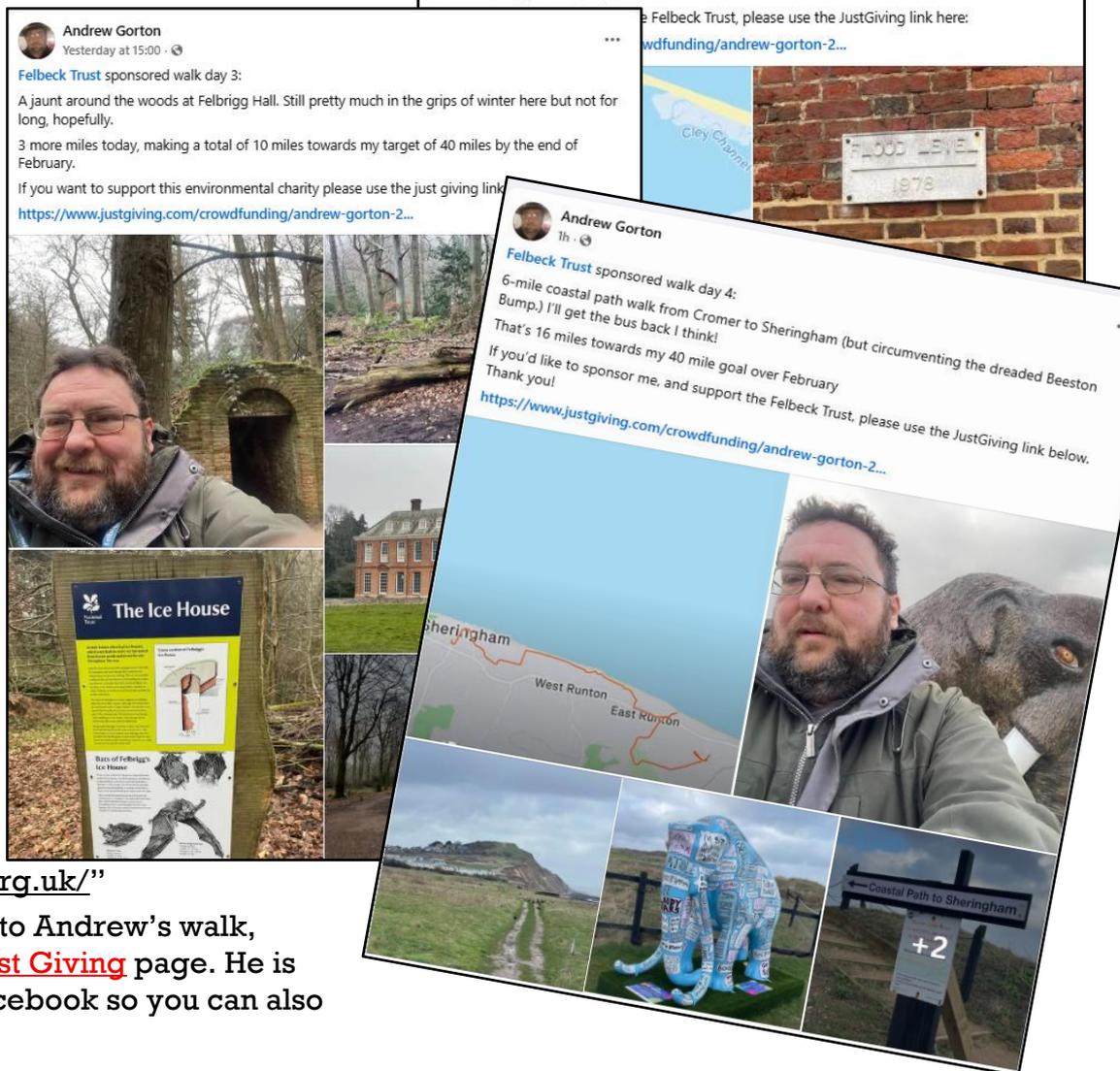
a few years back. I'm glad I am able to put this to use. I often get to speak to more experienced and knowledgeable birders than myself, a great learning opportunity.

Not only does Andrew volunteer with the National Trust, he also volunteers with our friends over at Felbeck Trust. This month he is undertaking a sponsored walk and hoping to raise £250 for them. Andrew says

“The Felbeck Trust helps to restore and improve the Norfolk countryside for the benefit of wildlife and to provide places of peaceful enjoyment for local communities and visitors alike. I'll be walking 40 miles over February this year to raise funds for this charity. Here is the link to their website:

<https://www.felbecktrust.org.uk/>”

If you would like to donate to Andrew's walk, please have a look at his [Just Giving](#) page. He is posting his progress on Facebook so you can also follow along over there.



UEA Environmental Consultancy Projects 2026



By Carol Thornton

It's that time of year again! Last Thursday, Andy Clarke and I headed down to Norwich to present our 3 project proposals for 2026 to a lecture theatre full of University of East Anglia (UEA) students. Most members will be aware of this annual programme but for the newbies, here's a quick summary.....

Alongside other organisations, we pitch real-life environmental consultancy projects to 3rd year students in the Environmental Science Department students in the capacity of 'client' and we get selected by 'consultant' students in line with their areas of interest. Working on the briefs provided by us, they research and document their topic, feedback regularly via Zoom or in-person, and at the end of the process present us with an individual consultancy report.

Our three prospective themes this year are:

1. **The population trend and potential for recovery of Marsh Tit in Norfolk**
2. **“There's no substitute for human experience” – or is there? The impact of AI on birding**
3. **Climate Change and UK Birds**

Along with our partner wildlife conservation charity [Felbeck Trust](#), who were also pitching a range of topics, we wait with baited breath for a few days to learn whether we have been successful in recruiting some budding environmental consultants to research our areas of interest. Watch this space!

Birding in Northumberland

By Richard Farrow

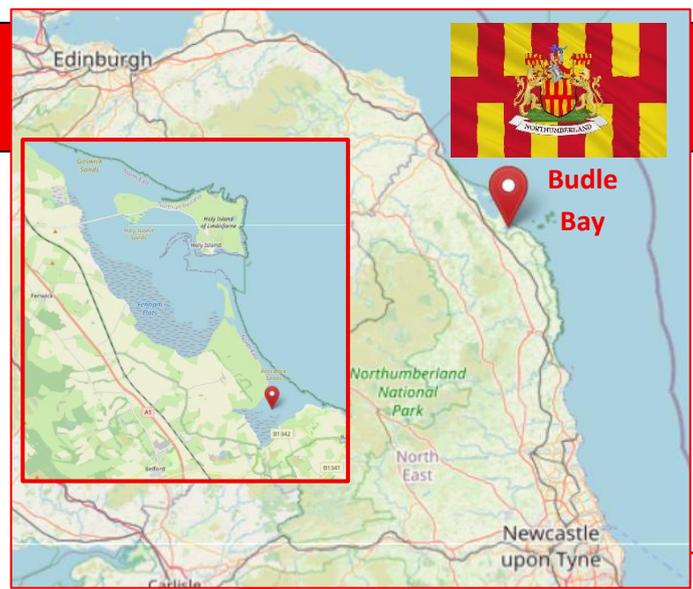
In May 2023 we holidayed in Northumberland with friends staying at Waren Mill, which is basically at the head of Budle Bay, Northumberland. The apartment was in an old mill on the first floor with stunning views over the bay. The ebb tide empties the bay, leaving a wonderful muddy feeding environment. Looking to the North we could see Lindisfarne and we were able to head off South and walk to Bamburgh with its magnificent castle. As our friends are not birders, for the sake of harmony birding was throttled back. However, there were ample birds to see from the apartment window on a high tide including **Eider, Curlew, Red Breasted Merganser, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Mallard** and a variety of waders. Unfortunately bird flu meant that we could not land on Inner Farne. However, the boat trip was still brilliant with the skipper getting close to the birds, turning at the end of a pass and returning along the rock faces so that passengers on both sides of the boat got good views. Sadly we were a little early to see Puffins with mouths full of Sand Eels.

We enjoyed our 2023 visit so much, with trips to Bamburgh, Chillingham Castle, Alnwick, Floors Castle and Cragside, visiting Raby Castle on the way up and York on our return, that for the first time ever we returned to the same holiday destination in late May / early June 2024. This time we had an apartment on the second floor and holidayed alone. The weather wasn't as good as the previous year but we managed a wonderful excursion again with Billy Shiel's Boats sailing from Seahouses. Whilst waiting for the trip to leave we encountered among the **Eider** an *Eider/Mallard cross* which we later saw photographed in the Bird Guides Magazine.

The trip and landing on Inner Farne are among my most treasured memories with, **Puffin, Guillemot, Razorbill, Shag, Common Tern, Cormorant** and **Kittiwake** in abundance. You are warned several times to wear a hat. Those who ignored this advice had a few painful pecks as the tern nest within inches of the boardwalk around the island. **Puffins** were flying in like Exocet missiles with bills loaded with sand eels trying to get to their burrows before being mugged by **Lesser Black backed**

Gulls. It was hard to know where to look there were some many birds.

There is a very long lay-by at Budle Bay which makes it a great location to set up a scope and view the many waders. Apparently at Winter the Bay is full of birds who have migrated there for the rich feeding.





We also managed to see and get a few record shots of the American Black Turn at Long Nanny.



Cromer Peregrine Project

The 2025 Season ... and looking forward to a great 2026!



By Bev Coleman

Webcams will be going live from 1 March 2026. The Watchpoint outside the museum is expected to open in early April, date to be confirmed. Volunteers always welcome!

At the watchpoint we are often asked about peregrine pellets. As owls eat their prey whole, when you dissect an owl pellet, the complete pelvis / jaws / vertebrae of the prey can identify what they have eaten. With Peregrines, as you'll know if you've ever watched them eat, they catch larger prey and break it into smaller pieces. As a result there are few whole bones but the pellets still give us clues. These are a sample of pellets collected during 2025 from below the tower. The darker pellet is most likely from the time they were eating a lot of Starlings. The lighter colour are more indicative of pigeon. The seeds in the pellet are likely from the crop of the prey bird and varies from corn to millet. We also get a few feathers, the 2 blue ones here being Jay. The



pellets vary in size between 2-3cm and up to thumb thick! Often there will also be small stones, eaten by either them or their prey to aid digestion and breaking up the food in their crop.

The watchpoint can only open with the support of volunteers and we would welcome anyone who is interested in getting involved with the project to come to our AGM at 7pm on 19th February, at the Community Centre in Garden Street, Cromer to find out a bit more about us.

Check This Out!

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



-  [Nesting on the go: incubating White Wagtail travels 2,000 km - BirdGuides \[31st Jan\]](#)
-  [Stock Dove 'mega-roost' sets French record - BirdGuides \[1st Feb\]](#)
-  [Appeal launched to save East Yorkshire Little Tern project - BirdGuides \[29th Jan\]](#)
-  [First European Robin for Canada makes headlines - BirdGuides \[22nd Jan\]](#)
-  [Middle East demand for falcons drives illegal trade in British Peregrines - BirdGuides \[9th Jan\]](#)
-  [Dalmatian pelican could be reintroduced to British wetlands - BBC News \[3rd Feb\] and Ambitious Dalmatian Pelican reintroduction plans weighed up - BirdGuides \[10th Feb\]](#)
-  [Sunken Thames barges create new Essex island for birds - BBC News \[28th Jan\]](#)
-  [Why swans may be more likely to die from bird flu - BBC News \[23rd Jan\]](#)
-  [Little Egret population considerably higher than previously thought - RareBirdAlertUK \[23-Jan\]](#)
-  [WWII pillboxes converted into nesting sites for seabirds - RareBirdAlertUK \[6th Feb\]](#)
-  [Scotland becomes first UK country to put Swift bricks into law - RareBirdAlertUK \[6th Feb\]](#)
-  [Scientists unveil the most complete interactive bird family tree ever created - RareBirdAlertUK \[29-Jan\] and Scientists Just Mapped the Family Tree of 11,000+ Bird Species | Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology \[28th Jan\]](#)
-  [No evidence that 'black-eye' symptom affects Gannets after bird flu - RareBirdAlertUK ;22-Jan\] *Photo: Northern Gannet with 'black eye' \(© Rebecca James\) from the RareBirdAlert website.*](#)
-  [20-year-old Bewick's Swan reaches Slimbridge for the first time - RareBirdAlertUK \[15-Jan\]](#)
-  [Wildlife Trust loses conservation role at Grafham Water Nature Reserve - RareBirdAlertUK \[15-Jan\]](#)
-  [Gamekeeper pleads guilty in England's first-ever Hen Harrier persecution case - RSPB \[29-Jan\]](#)
-  [The brilliant and bizarre ways birds use their sense of smell - The Conversation \[06-Feb\]](#)
-  [Tiny radio transmitters reveal a hidden survival tactic in birds - The Conversation \[02-Feb\]](#)

British Birds Rarities Committee
@britishbirdsrbrc.bsky.social

The new Missing Records file is now live on the BB website, please have a look at britishbirds.co.uk/rarities-com... and consider submitting any outstanding rarities that you may have been lucky enough to discover in 2025. Thanks.

British Birds
Home of the British Birds Journal, Rarities Committee and Charitable Trust

Missing records - British Birds
Download missing BBRC records Updated: 3 February 2025 This file contains details of all birds and/or...

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

Please report sightings of dead birds for possible testing for Avian Influenza.

- ★ In England, Wales & Scotland: [www.gov.uk/guidance/...](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/)
- ★ In Northern Ireland: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/...](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/)
- ★ In Republic of Ireland: aviancheck.apps.serv...

#UKBirding #BirdingWales #BirdingScotland

Please report sightings of dead birds

12:00 · 6 Feb 2026 · Everybody can reply



Contemplating Conservation

The Importance of Wetlands



World Wetlands Day took place on 2nd February. The United Nations initiated this annual event to celebrate the wonder of wetlands, but also to draw attention to the fact they're under threat.

World
Wetlands Day
2 February 2026



Wetlands and traditional
knowledge: Celebrating
cultural heritage

What are wetlands? The RSPB say ...

"They're areas that are wet for some, or all, of the time. It includes inland wetlands such as ponds, marshes, lakes, rivers, floodplains, peatlands and swamps; and coastal wetlands such as saltmarshes, mudflats, mangroves and lagoons. They're areas that are wet for some, or all, of the time. It includes inland wetlands such as ponds, marshes, lakes, rivers, floodplains, peatlands and swamps; and coastal wetlands such as saltmarshes, mudflats, mangroves and lagoons."

On their website in a piece entitled "[Five reasons why we're celebrating World Wetlands Day](#)" the RSPB go on to list why wetlands are important....

1. They're vital stopping places for migratory birds | Wetlands act as vital service stations for migratory birds. They offer food stops for fuelling before and during migration, resting places en route, places to breed, and safe places to spend the winter. The UK's wetland network forms the perfect 'service station' for birds using the migratory bird motorway from the Arctic to South Africa, known as the East Atlantic Flyway. England's east coast wetlands are a network of wetlands from the Humber to the Thames. The shorelines are teeming with food such as shellfish, and the marshes offer valuable roosting sites. Each winter, more than a million birds visit the area, including four species in internationally important numbers: the Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Black-tailed Godwit and the Dark-bellied Brent Goose. Wetlands along the east coast of England, from the Humber to the Thames, have successfully been added to the UK's Tentative List of World Heritage sites.

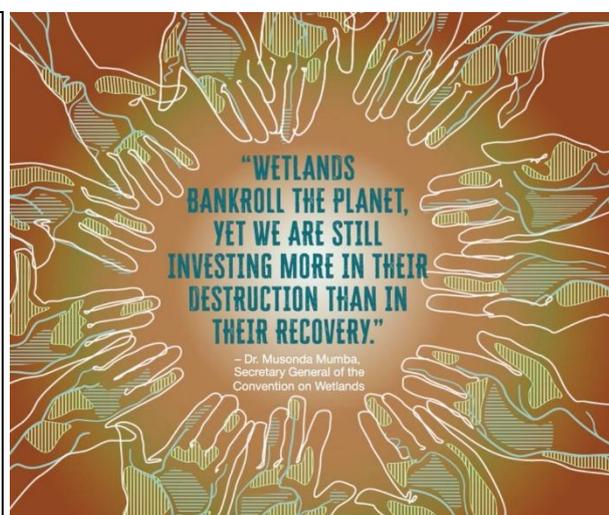
2. They're teeming with life in summer | In summer, wetlands are teeming with life as they offer everything a breeding bird might need – sources of food and places to nest close by. Look out for migratory warblers, terns and Ospreys in summer, taking advantage of the conditions. Other migratory birds, such as Swifts and Swallows, use our wetlands too, as they're often a great place to forage for insects.

3. They're a biodiversity hotspot, not just for birds | Though they cover just 6% of the earth's land surface, wetlands provide a home for a staggering 40% of all plant and animal species: not just birds. They're places where you'll find amphibians such as frogs and toads, reptiles, fish, insects, and mammals such as Water Voles.

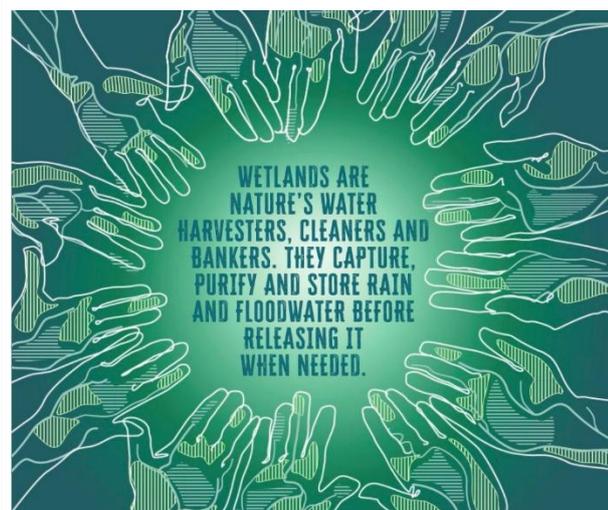
4. They're vital for people too | Wetlands aren't just great for wildlife. We also benefit as they're key to mitigating the effects of climate change. They can lock away huge amounts of carbon, and they're useful as a defence against flooding, which is becoming increasingly frequent. They can help slow down water during heavy rainfall, and retain large amounts of water, which would otherwise cause flooding. Wetlands in coastal areas are particularly useful as they can absorb energy from waves, therefore reducing their size and power.

5. They're brilliant places to watch birds

Some of the UK's best wildlife spectacles are on our wetlands ... Head to Snettisham in Norfolk for the incredible 'wader spectacular' – on spring high tides from late summer through to early spring, the sight of tens of thousands of birds taking to the skies is one that can't be missed.



ONE WITH WETLANDS.
#WWD2026



ONE WITH WETLANDS.
#CelebratingWetlands



Here's a bit more on wetlands conservation : [Wetlands: a shared heritage for birds and people - BirdLife International](#)



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.](#)

“Short, hard, sharp ‘quipl!’ or ‘plit’ from dense waterside vegetation (especially in winter) but can be a quiet note. Song loud outburst of short notes, momentary pause, then fat ‘chwee, chwee: chuwee-wee-wee-wee-wee chwit—it!’ unlike any similar birds nearby.”

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 an explosive, metallic ‘plitt!’ which may be repeated in series and turn into rattling ‘plir’r’r’r’r’. Song a sudden and loud outburst of metallic, clanging notes; rhythm characteristic: first 1-4 slightly tentative notes, usually with the last one stressed, then a half-stop followed by a rapid series of groups of similar notes, at times dying at end, eg ‘plit, plit-plüt!... tichut-tichut-tichut chütt, chutt!’ (or, why not: ‘What? ... Listen up! Listen up! ...That’s it!’)”

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

“The song is an amazingly powerful, far-carrying, almost explosive series of liquid notes ‘pwit’, pity-chewit, chewit, chewit’. The song is heard throughout the year and at night during the breeding season. The call is an abrupt ‘chup’ or ‘chip’.”

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

Wordsearch



This month, we have the 20 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in February 2025 for which we have less than 6 records – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

- Barnacle Goose
- Black Guillemot
- Black-throated Diver
- Caspian Gull
- Hawfinch
- Hen Harrier
- Lesser Whitethroat
- Tundra Bean Goose
- Velvet Scoter
- White-fronted Goose
- Knot
- Little Gull
- Mandarin Duck
- Sanderling
- Great White Egret
- Razorbill
- Goldeneye
- Hooded Crow
- Dunlin
- Great Northern Diver

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





Just one new 'Accepted' record 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 30-Jan-26. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [Dec-24].



Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Sabine's Gull Weybourne 17th November 2025

02:03 · 30 Jan 2026 [Everybody can reply](#)



Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social

Norfolk Records Committee

Late autumn 2025 saw a large influx of Dusky Warblers to the county, details received for nine of these.

Submissions still needed for birds at Brancaster, Caister, Horsey, Waxham, Wells East Hills, Wells North Point, Winterton and Yarmouth

06:13 · 10 Feb 2026 [Everybody can reply](#)



Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social

Norfolk Records Committee

Submissions still required for reports of Bee-eaters in 2025 at Cley 18th May, West Runton 1st June and Wells North Point Aug 8th.

If you were lucky enough to find these please submit details to Norfolkbirdrecs@gmail.com

06:21 · 10 Feb 2026 [Everybody can reply](#)



NENBC Website



A huge thanks to everyone who has uploaded records to our website this year to date. New Year's Day is nearly always the best day of the year and with over 1,500 records, NYD 2026 was no exception. We were a bit organised and managed to squeeze the write-up for that event into last month's newsletter so you can catch up there on the stats if you missed it. We upload our newsletters to the website so if you can't find your email, you can look under the News tab on there.

For the newbies reading this, we would really appreciate it if you start uploading any of your records on our website going forwards. The website is easy to use and we can guide you through how to do it 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, 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). Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting.

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 15](#)) so if you think that might be of use, please get in touch.

Prolific Posters January 2026

A new year, but a sense of déjà-vu: Phil Borley once again heads the leader board with over 18,340 points. Mark Clements and Tony Pope are neck and neck with over 8,000 points. Out of 79 members who have logged birds so far this year, 11 have already scored over 2,000 points, with 33 on more 1,000 points.

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.

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 **86** 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 Tony Pope on achieving your badge in January.

We currently have **6** 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 one is from an old poetry book by Betty Docking called 'Once in a Blue Moon' with illustrations by S E Axten which was published in 1960.

THE TALE OF A BIRD

A little Bird once caught a chill
Which settled on his chest.
His mother said she thought perhaps
He ought to wear a vest ;
But Father Bird said "Fiddlesticks !
Whatever next I pray ?
His feathers surely are enough
To keep the cold away."

Poor Mother Bird felt very sad
And watched with anxious eye ;
She heard him cough ; she heard him sneeze ;
She feared that he would die.

But Doctor Stork, who lived close by
Just felt his pulse and said ;
"It's nothing much ; it soon will pass,
Just keep him warm in bed.
A teaspoonful of honey dew,
A sip of cowslip wine,
And then, perhaps, a nice fat worm
And he'll be feeling fine !"

And sure enough when morning came,
And bird songs filled the air,
The Baby Bird and Mother Bird
Were up to do their share !



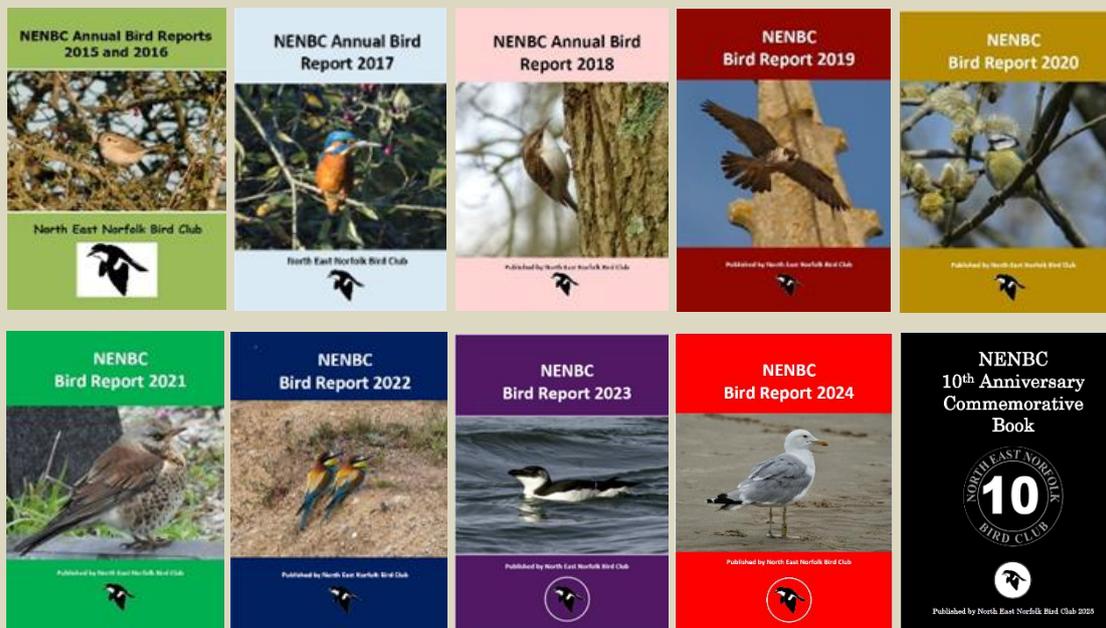
The bird voice variously described was that of a **Cetti's Warbler**. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the **BTO Bird Facts Cetti's Warbler** page too. Photos from Julian Thomas, Moss Taylor, James Appleton



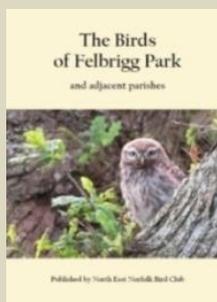
This month's **Wordsearch Solution:**
 BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN
 FEBRUARY 2025

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

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