



June 2025 - Issue 120

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

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Through a Lens



By Nigel Redman

I recently had the pleasure of travelling around Lapland with former club president Moss Taylor. Our road trip, together with other like-minded wildlife enthusiasts, focused on the extensive taiga forests and wetlands of northern Finland, and the tundra and seabird cliffs of the Varanger peninsula of arctic Norway. Of course, many of the birds we saw would have been familiar to British birders, either as breeding species, regular visitors or scarce migrants, but Fenno-Scandia also holds a suite of species that never occur in Britain, or reach our shores only exceptionally. Not surprisingly, it is these species that are the most sought-after for visiting birders. The birds most associated with Finland are the owls, and we were not disappointed, racking up six species, with four of them at nests. And that was all in the first two days. Nearby, Ortolan Buntings showed well at what is almost their most northerly distribution. Terek Sandpipers have long had a very small breeding outpost near Oulu, but this year we discovered that an industrial complex has been built at the site. The birds are still there, for the time being at least, but it was strange seeing one surveying its territory from the top of a huge warehouse. Oulu used to have the westernmost breeding Yellow-breasted Buntings in the world but, sadly, these are now long gone, and the species is extinct in Finland. This is the result of excessive and uncontrolled trapping on their wintering grounds in southern China and Thailand. On the plus side, Red-flanked Bluetails have been spreading westwards for years and there are now more than a thousand breeding pairs in the country – which is probably why we are getting more of them in Norfolk in the autumn, although it's still a big rarity here.

Late May is a great time for birding in this region, particularly as most birds are in full breeding plumage and actively nesting. Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes were simply stunning in their summer dress, as were the hundreds of Little Gulls. Grouse are also a feature of Finland and Norway, and we had multiple views of all five species. As we headed north, the taiga slowly gave way to tundra, and waders became more of a focus. On the top of a bleak fell in northern Finland, Moss walked straight to the nest of a male Dotterel. It leapt off its three eggs just in time, performing his distraction display at Moss's feet. Fortunately, the agitated bird returned quickly. This bird was prominently colour-ringed, and it turned out that he was ringed as a chick at the same site in 2019, and has returned every year since. I wonder where he goes for his winter holidays? Presumably somewhere in North Africa. And had his mate already moved on? There was no sign of her. A little further north, Red-necked Phalaropes were commonly encountered, often at close range and in full breeding plumage; on one pool there were no fewer than 43 of them actively feeding or courting. This year, north Norfolk was blessed with a mini-invasion of Temminck's Stints, with at least 10 together at Cley on one occasion. There seemed to be more of them in Varanger too, and we had many great encounters with them this year. But

the wader that everyone wants to see in Lapland is the Ruff, and in particular displaying male Ruffs. We were not disappointed, and had multiple opportunities to watch fluffed-out males prancing around and interacting with each other in their attempts to attract a dowdy female.

As we all know, seawatching in Norfolk can be quiet, and the birds are often distant. In Varanger, there is always something to see: flocks of seaducks drifting on the sea, divers (of four species) loafing offshore, or small parties of auks flying to and from their spectacular crowded colonies. King Eiders showed well this year, with sightings on five days. A flock of 60 immature birds was the largest number, but the single adult male in Vadsø harbour was the bird of the trip for some. But for me, our best bird was a Gyrfalcon chasing gulls over the sea, hotly pursued by a couple of Arctic Skuas. That's not something you see every day.



Six-year-old Dotterel defending his nest.
(Photo by Nigel Redman)



Adult male King Eider in Vadsø harbour.
(Photo by Nigel Redman)

Take a look at Moss's article too from [page 20](#)



By Carol Thornton

Welcome to the July edition of our club newsletter. We are just recovering from our 10th Anniversary Conference which we hosted at Gresham Village Hall this past weekend. The theme was “**Anglo-African Bird Migration – whose birds are these?**”. We were really happy with how the day went and judging from the comments coming in, the attendees had a great day too. There will be a full write up in the July newsletter but in the meantime **a huge thank you** goes out to all those who participated or contributed and the dedicated folk who made it happen. It was a team effort that took months of planning to make it go so smoothly on the day – a big commitment and a fantastic job!

Last month’s **Through a Lens** subject for the front page was **BIRDS EXHIBITING BREEDING BEHAVIOUR** and our cover images this time are Greylag Goose (Doug Cullern); Starling (L), Sand Martin, Moorhen (Richard Farrow); Starling (C) (Philip Cartlidge); Robin (Jane Crossen); Whitethroat (Claire Brayne). Thanks all! The **theme for this month is Anglo-African Migrants** so our cover will reflect the write-up of our conference contained within.

Below is my pick from May of some great photos from our website of the more common birds that don’t always make it to the Monthly Bird Highlights section: Meadow Pipit and Starling (Andrew Crossley); Grey Heron (Claire Brayne); Rook and Swallow (Richard Farrow) Thanks all of you.

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

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

We received a rather **large contribution of 2nd hand bird books this week from John Scannell** of Sheringham who is downsizing and asked friend and NENBC member Carl Chapman to find a home for his many wildlife and nature books. We are delighted to have been considered alongside other recipients Wild Ken Hill (to kick start a library for their guests and researchers) and the Sea Watch Foundation (who are extending their reach from just cetaceans to include seabirds). Look out for this new stock at our evening events from September. Monies raised from donated books go towards club funds supporting all aspects of our activities. Thank you John – and Carl for transportation!





By Paul Laurie

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

≈ 7,900 individual records covering 167 bird species were added in May

May 2025: May provided some very good birds in the NENBC area in 2025 countered with some dreadfully low numbers, of what are normally common migrants, including Northern Wheatear and Yellow Wagtail. During the month the NENBC recorded 167 species, from 7,877 records. The May five-year average is 169 species. The 7,877 records were somewhat lower than the May five-year average of 10,420 records during 2021 – 2025.

Headlining May was the return of the **Booted Eagle** as it flew south over the NENBC area. Weybourne proved the place to be during the last few days of the month with **Purple Heron**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Common Rosefinch** and **Marsh Warbler** all being seen.

Mandarin Duck A female with four ducklings was observed on the 31st at Gunthorpe and is welcome proof of this species breeding within the club area.

Velvet Scoter One – two birds present all month off Weybourne, increasing to four birds on the 3rd and 12th and finally three birds on the 31st.

Quail Two records late in the month as a general influx occurred in the East of England, with birds calling from Weybourne Heath on the 30th and along the Cley Road, Holt on the last day of the month.

Nightjar The first were reported on the 8th with an impressive eight birds being encountered. Birds were then recorded frequently at the two regular sites. Other reports of interest included a bird recorded by Noc-Mig on the 11th at Sheringham and then on the 15th a trail camera captured an image of a bird in a garden at Southrepps Common. *Image 1 of sonogram courtesy of Andy Clarke and 2 from Sue Parsons*

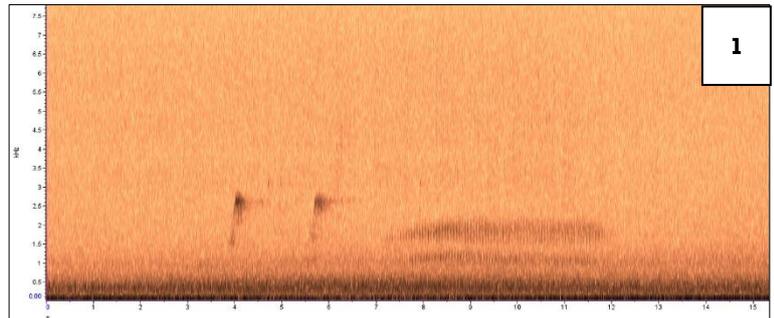
Turtle Dove Away from their traditional site only one record during the month of a bird west over West Runton the 30th. *Photo 3 courtesy of Doug Cullern*

Black-tailed Godwit An impressive 58 flew west off Weybourne on the 1st and on the 31st twenty flew east at the same site. Inland a bird flew over Felbrigg Park on the 17th, during the “Big Sit”, this being the first recorded bird at Felbrigg since May 7th 2017, oddly the day of the “Big Sit”.

TEMMINCK’S STINT On the 2nd a bird was reported west along the beach at Weybourne.

Spotted Redshank An inland bird on a small pool at Saxlingham on the 2nd was the only report, it was in the company of a Greenshank.

Greenshank The bird with the Spotted Redshank on the 2nd at Saxlingham was the only report of this species in the club area. *Photo 4 courtesy of Paul Laurie*



Roseate Tern A bird was reported flying east off Weybourne on the 19th of the month.

Black Tern On the 15th a bird was reported flying east from Weybourne.

Manx Shearwater One on the 14th and two on the 15th were the only records with both from Weybourne.

Spoonbill Several records of single birds moving along the coast during May. A group of three birds flew north at Felbrigg Park on the 17th of the month. *Photo 5 courtesy of David Griffiths*

PURPLE HERON Three club members watched a bird flew west over Weybourne on the 27th, only the second NENBC record, the first being on the 30th of May 2017 also at Weybourne.

Great Egret Sightings in May included five birds east off Weybourne on the 13th and five west from Sheringham Cliffs on the 31st.

Osprey The excellent spring for this species continued into May with the following five reports; on the 2nd a bird flew east at Weybourne and was then seen at Sheringham, Beeston Bump and Cromer. Weybourne had sightings on the 7th, 19th and 22nd. The final bird of the month was seen at West Runton on the 25th of the month.

Honey Buzzard On the 25th a bid was seen with the Booted Eagle over Muckleburgh Hill.

BOOTED EAGLE On the morning of the 25th, the juvenile that had been journeying around Norfolk since April, visited the coast again and was seen and photographed over Muckleburgh Hill for several minutes before drifting away. The bird then reappeared at Letheringsett mid-morning remaining in the area until the afternoon. *Photo 6 courtesy of Mark Clements*

HOOPOE On the 3rd a bird was seen briefly in the churchyard in Upper Sheringham.

Red-backed Shrike A female present for the day on the 19th at Weybourne. *Photo 7 courtesy of David Griffiths*

GOLDEN ORIOLE The first of the year was a bird west past Beeston Bump, the second was not until 30th seen to fly west through West Runton at 6 am.

Hooded Crow On the 13th the Mundesley bird put in another brief appearance.

Marsh Warbler A singing male was found on the 27th in the reedbed around Weybourne Hope and remained until at least the end of the month. Only three accepted records in the NENBC area prior to this bird; June 2017 on Beeston Common, June 2022 on Beeston Common and June 2023 on Weybourne Camp. *Photo 8 courtesy of Alan Stevens*

5



6



7



8





9
Redwing A bird was seen at High Kelling on the 3rd and a bird was recorded at Sheringham on the 11th, via Noc-Mig.

Fieldfare Three late records; Edgefield on the 7th, Felbrigg on the 9th and one recorded on the 16th via Noc-Mig at Sheringham. *Photo 9 courtesy of Paul Morris*

Ring Ouzel Only two records in May; two flying west over Beeston Bump on the 1st and a male present in Felbrigg Park 7th – 9th frequenting the dam. *Photo 10 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

Spotted Flycatcher Recorded at six inland sites during the month with the only reports of migrants being two at West Runton on the 30th and one on Beeston Common on the 31st. *Photo 11 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Bluethroat A male “Red-Spotted” at Weybourne during the early morning of the 20th was the only report.

Redstart One report of a bird at Weynor Gardens on the 5th of the month.

Whinchat On the 1st a female was found inland at Saxlingham and on the 11th a bird was in the cattle paddocks at West Runton. *Photo 12 courtesy of Paul Laurie*

Wheatear May was poor for passerine migrants and this species was an indicator of just how poor it was; Between the 5th and the 26th none were reported. The highest count was of four at West Runton on the 1st and with just one inland record of a male on the 2nd at Saxlingham. The total of ten records during the month were seen by just seven observers. *Photo 13 courtesy of Doug Cullern*

Yellow Wagtail Only recorded at coastal sites with just eight reports from six observers of between one and six birds.

Tree Pipit Two records of single birds both at Weybourne on the 1st and 20th of the month.

Hawfinch Two flew west on the 25th over West Runton.

COMMON ROSEFINCH An immature male at Weybourne on the 27th and 28th was a long-awaited list addition for many observers. *Photo 14 courtesy of Stu Buck*

Crossbill West Runton saw fifteen fly west on the 24th and a further six west on the 25th of the month.

Snow Bunting A male flew west over West Runton Cliffs on the 26th being the first May record of this species for the NENBC. Formerly the latest spring record was one found dead on the 4th of April 2018 on Weybourne Camp.





June: What to look forward to: There are classic June birds that should keep your “Merlin” App occupied during the month; including European Bee-eater. Evening walks around local farmland may provide a singing Quail and there is always the prospect of an influx of Rosy Starling from Eastern Europe. Sok Szerencset!



Member Extras: observations from last month

Extra!

Noc-Mig Highlights

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

Species	Number of records		
	Beeston Common	Sheringham	Total
Avocet		1	1
Barn Owl	1		1
Brent Goose		1	1
Common Sandpiper	1	1	2
Coot	1	1	2
Curlew		1	1
Dunlin	1		1
Fieldfare		1	1
Golden Plover	1		1
Grey Heron	1	1	2
Greylag Goose		1	1
Little Grebe	3	1	4
Mallard	1		1
Moorhen	3	1	4
Nightjar		1	1
Oystercatcher	4	1	5
Pink-footed Goose		1	1
Redshank	4	2	6
Redwing		1	1
Ringed Plover	1	1	2
Sandwich Tern	1		1
Whimbrel	1	2	3
Wigeon	1		1



We had two members posting Noc-migged records in May – Andy Clarke in Sheringham and Francis Farrow at Beeston Common. Full list of species on the left. We had 44 records of 23 species in total, with 25 coming from Beeston and 19 from Sheringham.

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!



Brent Goose | “80 east. 80 west. 70 on sea. Could the rain that arrived cause these birds to abandon their migration and turn back, the seventy on the sea flew in from the north east, they should of been heading that way to the breeding grounds.” | Phil Borley | Sheringham | 24th

Mute Swan | “Sadly two of the youngsters from last year got caught by foxes after leaving the pond at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary” | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 22nd

Tufted Duck | “including the Tufted X ferruginous hybrid on the lake - where were you when we needed you for the Big Sit!” | Trevor Williams | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 18th

Red-legged Partridge | “I say "singing" - very loud and not very tuneful male on roof opposite my flat. There has been a female over the last few years and they've produced young, but she's certainly not very visible atm.” | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 7th

Nightjar | “One displaying/wing clapping. My 100th bird in NENBC area” | Gary Bunting | Holt Country Park & Lowes | 10th

Cuckoo | “Brief view with a couple of calls as chased east by a Jackdaw!” | David Griffiths | Blickling Park | 29th

Rock Dove | “Racing pigeon, in the kitchen - very tame, so when I approached to shoo it out it just waddled further in. I managed to evict it, but it soon reappeared in the living room. Having cornered and caught it I took it outside and threw it into the air so that it could fly off, but it just fluttered onto the windowsill, obviously exhausted, so I took it into my wildflower meadow in the front garden where we feed millet to attract Turtle Doves (so far we have Woodpigeon, Stock Dove and

Collared Dove), so that it could rest and feed up, and drink from the pond.” | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 29th and “Racing pigeon - the same bird that I had released from our house the day before - I hope it's not going to take up residence!” the following day.

Woodpigeon | “So much for the dawn chorus. Overslept, then all I could hear was the sound of the wind and one Woodpigeon!” | Stephanie Witham | North Walsham | 4th

Woodpigeon | “1 very wet juv sitting on the garden table - probably first time it's seen rain. 2 adults on garage and 2 on roof of no 41” | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 24th

Turtle Dove | “Flew past whilst I was photographing the yellowhammer.” | Andrew Crossley | Kelling Heath | 28th

Collared Dove | “Under seed feeder in back garden, eating dried mealworms that I had put out for the Blackbirds - I thought they were granivores” | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 7th

Oystercatcher | “on nest. tray of stone placed on shed roof has provided nest site” | Phil Borley | Mannington Hall Park | 20th

Oystercatcher | “The pair on the pond at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary have now got 3 or 4 eggs” | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 22nd

Herring Gull | “Loafing at edge of new wetland creation area, Bradfield Bridge” | Stella Baylis | Antingham & Bradfield | 8th

Booted Eagle | “the now famous juvenile pale morph which has been touring the country made a spectacular entrance into the NENBC area. First seen over muckleburgh hill, Weybourne at 8:55, could not be certain it was in NENBC area. Following a report to be heading towards Bayfield park, we pitched up and waited, within ten minutes it appeared high over letheringsett, gliding on the wind, north over the park, subsequently appearing overhead , on and off, during the afternoon.” | Phil Borley | near Letheringsett | 25th

Marsh Harrier | “Picked up by merlin app. Raced for binoculars and male flew high over garden. Mobbed by H.martin's.” | Gary Bunting | Edgefield | 11th

Red Kite | “In dead tree eating something with long legs ???” | Anne Sims | Bessingham | 4th

Buzzard | “Over the village. Fourth predator seen in five minutes!” | John Hurst | Metton | 12th

Barn Owl | “Lucky enough to slowly follow it from Glen Farm to Hanworth Common watching it quarter fields and perch along the way. At one point, by standing still at the end of a hedge it passed within 15 ft of us, silently. The best of birding by bike on an early summer evening.” | Hilary Stevens | Hanworth | 19th

Tawny Owl | “ Second owl sp seen from my sofa this week!” | Roger Unite | Thornage | 25th

Raven | “As I got out of my car on arriving home from work I saw a large corvid croaking deeply high above me chasing a hirundine or possibly a swift which looked tiny by comparison. By the time I had found binoculars the bird had gone. I think it can only have been a raven. Very odd. Is this behaviour unusual?” | Bob Farndon | Spa Common | 23rd

Great Tit | “Making a call that I didn't recognise.” | Tony Pope | Weybourne Heath | 23rd

Skylark | “Wish I could fly like they do” | Anne Sims | Gresham | 8th

Cetti's Warbler | “I've been away for 2 weeks, was pleased to hear him still at the Sewage Treatment Works, end of Warren Road, Lower Street” | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 5th

Long-tailed Tit | “Family party at feeders; one newly-fledged young begging food successfully from adult Blue Tit!” | Andy Clarke | Sheringham | 15th

Sedge Warbler | “One seen foraging in canal side vegetation. They all seem to have stopped singing now” | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 12th

Grasshopper Warbler | “I could actually hear one of these close by!” | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 14th

Blackbird | “They say the early bird catches the worm !!! This one was more determined to wake me up ...” | Anne Sims | Gresham | 11th

Blackbird | “Adults feeding three fully fledged young with full length tails. The first time in my 74 years that I have seen such successful fledging. No doubt due to the fatballs.” | John Hurst | Mundesley | 12th

Spotted Flycatcher | “Perched up and feeding from wires. Many thanks to PL for posting this quite scarce bird. Normally would have had at least a couple on migration by now!” | David Griffiths | Gunthorpe | 28th

Robin | “Adult feeding young (note to self: you STILL need to clean the balcony!)” | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 2nd

Grey Wagtail | “Bizarrely, catching insects on a roadside puddle resulting from crop irrigation. Just shows how dry it's becoming.” | John Hurst | Metton | 12th

Grey Wagtail | “standing on algae jumping at insects” | Stuart Jones | Selbrigg Pond | 13th

Our trawl of records logged on our website in May didn't spot any reports of any ringed birds



Welcome to our new & returning members – look forward to meeting you soon!

* Min McDonald * Kate Mackenzie * Jo King * Chris Mason *

434 individual members
across 287 households

50,119
bird records logged

221 bird species reported

Please keep adding all your sightings to our website at www.nenbc.co.uk. Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting or need assistance on how to upload your records. More information from our website records, Twitterings and social media presence in **Data, Records & Posts** from [page 33](#).

Club Achievement Awards

Star Badges

Congratulations Gary Bunting on your Bronze – we will be getting a badge and certificate to you soon!

Currently, **4** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **21** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **85** members now hold the **BRONZE STAR** status.

For any of the club events that take place in the club area you can include all of the species you see or hear so join us for a walk. It always helps to get on to more birds when you are in a group of like-minded folk.

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



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

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

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

Eco-Badges

No new achievers his month but one that slipped through our holey net from March – congratulations Tony Pope on your Coastal Super-Green!

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

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



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

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

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



**Conservation Corner
- can you help??**

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

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

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!

WhatsApp Groups.....



The club runs two WhatsApp groups:

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

NENBC Alerts is administered by Tony Forster and is solely for club members to share news of interesting birds within the club area – no gossip allowed!

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

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

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

Telephone 01263 710203
salesbirdventures@aol.com

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



Restocking our 2nd hand bookstall

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

nenbc@aol.co.uk

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!



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

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

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

INFO FOR ALL WALKS:

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

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

DOGS: We regret no dogs.

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

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

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

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

Wednesday 18th June | 9.00am-11.00am |
Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk
with Trevor Williams



No advance booking needed

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

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

Saturday 5th July | 10.00am-1.00pm |
Cley and Salthouse Reserve
10th Anniversary Walk
with Janice Darch & other Committee Members



No advance booking needed

From the viewing area on terrace of the Visitor Centre we will head to the Central Hides overlooking 3 three scrapes where we can look for Marsh Harrier, ducks, waders and perhaps some early returning migratory geese. Species to expect are Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Avocet, Mallard, Shelduck, Gadwall, Shoveler, Greylag Goose and perhaps Brent Goose. Overhead we should additionally see Buzzard and Kestrel and we may be lucky enough to spot a Bittern. We'll walk along the boardwalk to East Bank scanning the reed beds for Bearded Tit, Cetti's Warbler and Reed Bunting as we go and keep an eye on the sky for passing birds such as Spoonbill, egrets and Red Kite. We will have a wander to the beach for a spot of seawatching scanning the reedbeds to our left plus the Serpentine and Arnolds Marsh to our right for Cormorant, Curlew, godwit and other waders.

MEET & PARK: NWT Cley Marshes Visitor Centre car park, Coast Road, Cley next the Sea NR25 7SA. NWT members free, otherwise pay and display | **DISTANCE:** 2 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Most of the 'walk' could be suitable for wheelchair users - check [here](#). | **FACILITIES:** loo & café at VC | **BADGES:** Outside the club area so records can't count for Star Badges, or Green Eco-badges this time.



By **Dave Billham**

Grey, cloudy and a bit windy; how many times have I started the monthly walk report with those words this year? Well, May's walk turned out to be no exception, for just those conditions greeted the fourteen club members who had turned out. With the Felbrigg Big Sit having taken place on the previous Saturday, Trevor bemoaned the small number of species they had seen (48 for the whole day), and hoped for better this time. With few of the expected summer species putting in an appearance, the not-too-promising weather and the fact that the numbers we see decline across the summer months anyway, it was going to be a real 'fingers crossed' walk!

I have mentioned before that the number of species seen in and around the car park can be an indicator of the final total, and we hoped that would be the case this time as we saw or heard a reasonable number; singing **Dunnock**, **Blackbird**, **Great Tit** and **Goldfinch**, overflying **Swift**, **Swallow** and **Magpie**, and on the grass or in the trees **Red-legged Partridge**, **Pied Wagtail**, **Jackdaw**, **Rook**, **Carrion Crow** and **Blue Tit**, though, amazingly, no sign of any Woodpigeon! Trevor had been speaking to club member Andrew who had been down to the lake earlier and had reported a 'funny duck' on the water, so this determined our initial destination for the morning.

Setting off towards the lake we soon picked up **Woodpigeon** (phew), along with a distant soaring **Buzzard** and a singing **Skylark**. Nearing the lake, a grey blob high in a tree resolved itself as a **Grey Heron**; on the approach to the lake itself we could see little, but hear much more; from the reeds the songs of **Reed Warbler**, **Chiffchaff** and **Whitethroat**, and a more distant **Pheasant** calling, with the only visible bird being a **Reed Bunting**, actively flitting around the lake margin. Feeding over the water could be seen **Sand Martin**, surprisingly the first sighting of this species on a monthly walk since May 2023. At this end of the lake, on the water we found **Moorhen** and **Coot**, and the **Mute Swan** pair complete with all seven goslings (including the polish example); no casualties yet. The one remaining juvenile from last year's brood was also still present, the adults having given up their attempts to drive it away, something we had witnessed them doing on the previous month's walk. Having said that, it was keeping a very respectful distance from them! As we walked along the length of the lake we heard **Linnet**, **Greenfinch** and **Stock Dove** singing, and sharp

eyes spotted a **Tufted Duck** as it flew up the valley before dropping into the scrapes area. The sight of another, paler grey blob in a tree, this time revealed itself to be the resident pale Buzzard, and a brown blob on a fencepost as a **Kestrel** – well, they were both rather far away!



At the far end of the lake we found some **Mallard** on the water, and amongst them the aforementioned 'funny duck' – obviously mainly Mallard, but a real 'who were your parents?' example. We all had a go at guessing which other species might have been involved in its conception; Gadwall looked probable, but wouldn't seem to account for all of its markings.

Walk lead Trevor: "In the company of three male Mallard was a smaller duck, which resembled a Gadwall from the rear but with a blue not white speculum. The front end however was more like a Baikal Teal, with a bottle-green head and a butter-cream face patch split with a black chin strap. The parentage of this curious creature causing considerable speculation amongst the group."

One for the DNA enthusiasts I think!



An active **Robin** and a singing **Wren** were also seen and heard respectively here. Moving into the woods the calls of **Long-tailed Tit** alerted us to a small flock busily feeding over our heads; we also heard **Green Woodpecker** and **Blackcap**. We paused at an area that, in the past, has been favoured by **Spotted Flycatchers**, but with no luck today; we had to be content with a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** calling and a skulky **Jay** in the nearby undergrowth. Passing an old Oak with loose bark evident, one of our number explained that this was the sort of tree needed by Barbastelle bats, as they would crawl into the space created by the loosened bark to roost.

We remained within the wooded areas for the remainder of the walk, but the earlier 'rush' of species found now slowed considerably; the Big Sit total of 48

was looking safe as we only had thirty-nine in the bag. A distant and brief view of **Red Kite**, spotted by Nick, was much required, and a foraging **Chaffinch** another welcome addition. The final species for the list was seen as we neared the house; **Feral Pigeon** in the area of the farm buildings behind the house – a desperate bird, but desperate measures were needed! This brought our total for the two hours to **42**, about average for May. We also got a first, brief glimpse of the sun at this moment too! However, we had all had a good time, and for those who wished there was coffee and buns in the café, with a chance to chat and ruminate over what we should have seen or heard – Cuckoo, anyone?

Dodgy duck pics courtesy of Dave and group shot from Trevor

Wood Pigeon library photo courtesy of Doug Cullern



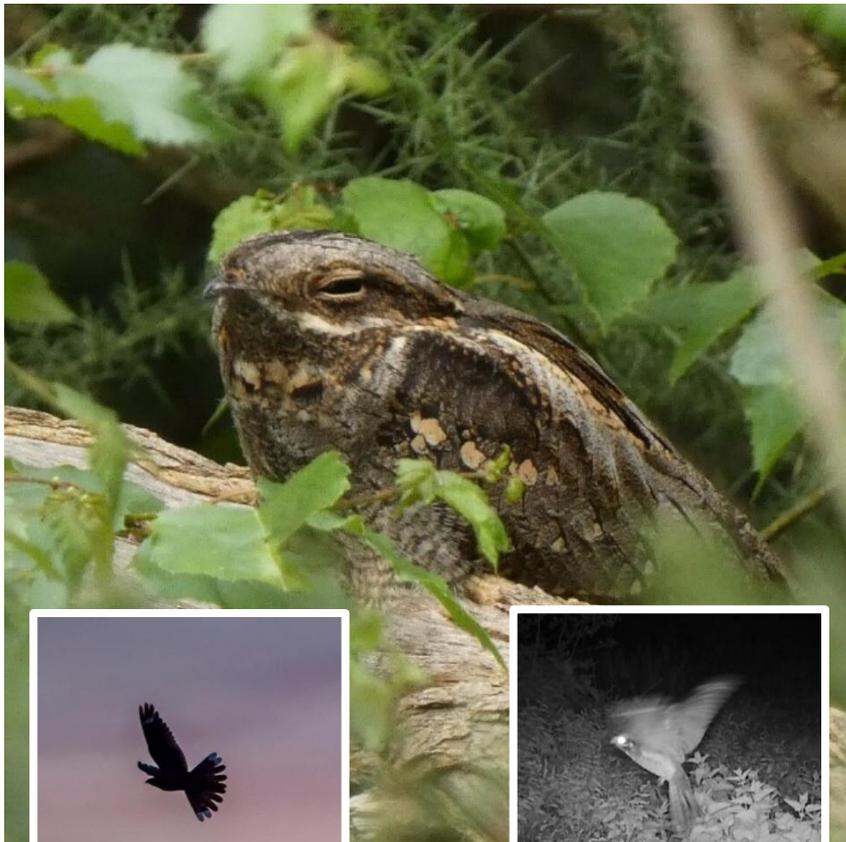
May's Annual Evening Club Walk Nightjars at Kelling Heath | 27th May



By Janice Darch

Some would have thought us mad, others optimistic that the weather would take a turn for the better, but whatever, 7 of us set off to try and see Nightjars on Kelling Heath after a day of rain. The forecast had changed during the day from drying up at 6pm to rain stretching into the evening. It wasn't looking good as the departure time drew close but it was too late to cancel so I decided to go anyway and see who else arrived. We splashed across the road and over the railway and found a good spot with views in all directions. The sky showed some brightness and the rain stopped and as dusk arrived we started to hear Nightjars churring. Showers came and went and some of us were lucky enough to have one brief flight view of a Nightjar. More rain then more churring. Fly, fly I thought ... but no, the rain came down harder and the show was over. Vexing but such can be the reality of birding when events are planned months ahead. After weeks of dry weather who thought though that the very night we wanted to be dry would be the wettest north Norfolk has experienced all year!

It's not too late to see or at least hear Nightjars yourselves at Kelling or one of other heathland spots such as Weybourne Heath, Holt Country Park & Lowes or, if you are very lucky, Roman Camp. Most of the recent records on our website that state a time in the comments are from about 21:15 to 21:25. Why not pick a warm and dry evening and take a wander out yourselves? This is what you should be listening for xico-canto: Caprimulgus-europaeus and here's a lovely shot from our archives from Mark Clements of what a Nightjar looks like in daylight plus a couple of shots of what you might see of an evening from Richard Farrow and Sue Parsons.



Dawn Balmer
@debalmer.bsky.social + Follow Back

Off out this evening to survey Nightjar for the BTO Heathland Birds Survey. Are there any birders around Holt or Weybourne that could take on a square or two? Must be birders living in that area? Just two visits required.

www.bto.org/get-involved...

#BirdingNorfolk

Please note the above request from Dawn Balmer of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. Full details of what is required on the BTO website:

[BTO Heathland Birds Survey](#)

[Taking Part](#)

If you can help, please get in touch with them!



How many bird species can we see from the same spot from dawn to dusk? ... as it turns out, not a lot this year!

Felbrigg Park with Trevor Williams

“Yesterday was the NENBC annual Big Sit and as usual the Felbrigg team took up their positions on The Warren, overlooking the lake. It was 05.00 and, as is the tradition, the weather was overcast and decidedly chilly. Birding was slow but steady for the first hour, when we took a break and erected the shelter – providing a welcome relief from the brisk north wind. Our first good bird was at 07.20 when a lone Black-tailed Godwit flew up the Scarrow Beck valley and low over our heads before continuing north towards the Hall. There have only been a handful of previous records in the park and this was the first since the Big Sit in 2017. The other remaining ‘good’ birds came a couple of hours later. Three Spoonbill appeared out of the gloom over the western shelter-belt, also heading north. Unfortunately, as is often the case when the pressure is on, my fellow observers failed to get on to them before they disappeared again in the clouds. Bother! The final bird of ‘significant interest’ was also seen by only a couple of us. A distant raptor was clearly different from the steady movement of Common Buzzard – we logged over ninety during the day. It was obviously a ‘ring-tail’ harrier, with a clear white rump flashing as it headed north beyond the trees – but which? From the date, impression of size and flight-style I say Montagu’s but nowadays you can’t rule out Hen or even Pallid. I’ve never properly recorded Monty’s in the NENBC area – the last one (seen by multiple competent observers) on another Felbrigg Big Sit was never submitted to the NRC ... so the wait continues! The best bird of the afternoon was a female Marsh Harrier. All these good birds belie the reality that, in overall species terms, this was a terrible Big Sit. We joked at the start that, despite the weather, it couldn’t possibly be as bad as last year, when we only managed to scrape together a total of 50 birds. How wrong we were! After thirteen hours constant effort, involving up to a dozen dedicated club members, we only managed to amass a list of

The Big Sit Made Easy



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

48. But ... the Big Sit is not all about the birds. It's a great social event – a meeting of the tribe – and we'll be back next year for this firmly established NENBC tradition."

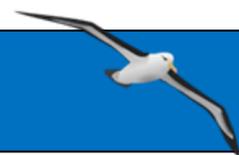
Beeston Common with Francis Farrow



As the 'Big Sit' was delayed a week there was some hope that the weather would be at least warm, however, it was the usual cold northerly with heavy cloud obscuring the sun for the most part, as it has been for at least the previous two events. A number of brave souls trudged up to Pill-box Hill on Beeston Common determined to record the birds between 5 am and 12 noon. In all seven members participated during the morning and 43 species were identified despite the chilling wind. Highlights were an Egyptian Goose heading south, 4 Mallard heading north, a large female Sparrowhawk, 2 Grey Herons and five minutes before stopping time a Hobby heading northwest. The Hobby was the only new bird record that had been made for 2½ hours! Would it be possible to hold the 2026 'Big-sit' in August please? Many thanks to Dave Billham, Phil Borley, Cherry Farrow, Ellie Farrow, Stuart Jones and Thomas Wright.

Pop-up Seawatching Review – 23rd May

Our new initiative to get more of you seawatching



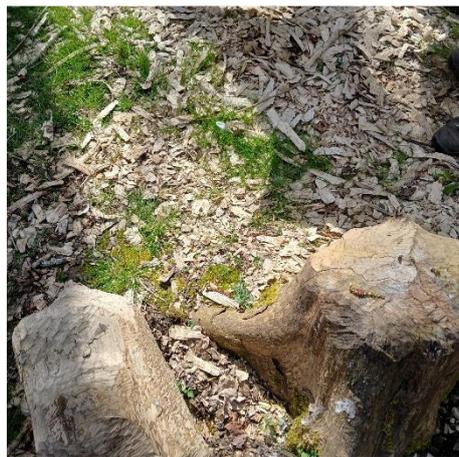
"At the end of last month we had the last trial NENBC 'pop-up' sea-watching event of the 'Spring' migration. Four of us spent a couple of hours watching the sea at Cromer North Lodge Park and seeing a few birds in the process. There are still reasonable numbers of geese, both Brent and Pink-feet, generally going east and west respectively; Common Scoter in small numbers with a couple of Teal; small numbers of Kittiwake (presumably failed breeders) and Gannet. Surprisingly we had just one tern – a Common, heading west. The advantage of the 'pop-up' events is that they can be more spontaneous – better geared to the weather and bird movement. I think we'll continue with them but the next one is unlikely now to be much before the end of July – the start of the 'Autumn' migration."

Trevor Williams

April's Beaver Enclosure Visits



Back in February we had an excellent talk from Jonah Tosney from the Norfolk Rivers Trust. At one point he touched on beavers and drew us all in with the promise of a guided walk around the new 7-acre beaver enclosure near Baconthorpe. Dates were fixed and in April two wellie-wearing groups of lucky NENBC members had very enjoyable visits to this newly established habitat. We completely forgot to pop all the lovely photos in the April newsletter so rather belatedly, here are some pics.... Thanks Julia Harvey for sending them in!



Birding through the year in Norfolk

Comments on some interesting observations



By Moss Taylor

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

April 28th | Wryneck - Cley.

Serendipity is one of my favourite words, and it certainly applied to my encounter with a Wryneck at Cley on April 28th. After leaving Weybourne Camp after my daily visit, I decided to drive along to Cley to collect a report that I had lent to Steve Gantlett. As I drove up the rough track to his house on the Coast Road, I noticed a small gathering of birders outside the entrance to his garden. They all kindly stood aside as I drove into his garden and I duly collected my report from his porch. As I was about to drive out, Richard Webb, indicated that I should look in the garden of Thrums, next door, as unbeknown to me the Wryneck had re-appeared that morning. Apparently it was not visible in Steve's garden but by driving in I had inadvertently flushed it into the next garden, where it was showing very well on the lawn. It's not often that one is praised for flushing a bird!



Wrynecks are summer visitors to Europe, wintering in the savannah and dry scrub of sub-Saharan Africa. They commence their return journey in early April and usually fewer than ten are seen in Norfolk during the spring. More are recorded in autumn, especially during periods of easterly winds, the highest counts being made in the NENBC area in 1965, when nine were found in both Sheringham and Cromer, while a total of seven was present on Weybourne Camp on 26th August 1987. I moved to Sheringham in 1972 and well remember my late wife, Fran, phoning me at the surgery on August 30th to say that a Wryneck was feeding on our patio. I don't know what excuse I gave to the patient with me, but I was back home within a couple of minutes! Over the course of the next four years, no fewer than three more Wrynecks graced our garden, but sadly none since.

The Wryneck has been described as an 'aberrant, long-tailed woodpecker' and it is not only its appearance that is most un-woodpecker like. It feeds almost exclusively on ants, mainly larvae and pupae, so it is not surprising that it spends a good deal of its time creeping around on the ground. It is often seen in areas of short grass on stony ground. Its other characteristic, from which it gets its name, Wryneck, and its colloquial name of 'snake bird', is its bizarre habit of twisting its head around in the hand, as I discovered when I ringed my first one on Lundy in September 1963.

The accompanying photo of a Wryneck was taken on the East Bank at Cley in September 2014.

May 1st | Grasshopper Warbler - Weybourne Hope.

This spring has been characterised by the number of singing Grasshopper Warblers that have been reported in the NENBC area, and one of the best sites has been Weybourne Camp, where at least four have been recorded. The most popular, and at times visible, reeling Grasshopper Warbler has been one singing in the scrub at the south-eastern corner of Weybourne Hope reedbed, from late April into early May.

The species is a summer visitor throughout most of Europe, returning in the autumn to wintering areas in sub-Saharan West Africa. Since 1970, Grasshopper Warblers have declined in Britain, partly due to the reclamation of marginal land for agriculture.



It is a small, streaked olive-coloured member of the *Locustella* genus, characterised by short, rounded wings and a broad, rounded and graduated tail. However, it is very secretive and skulking, and is reluctant to fly in the open, and is best known for its very distinctive reeling song, which is mainly delivered in the evening

or at night. The singing may continue without stopping for up to an hour and in still conditions can carry for up to a kilometre. On occasions it is very difficult to be certain from where the song originates, as although a Grasshopper Warbler may sing from the top of a bush, it is ventriloquial as it repeatedly turns its head while singing. One of the many problems as one ages is that high frequency sounds become less audible from the age of 50 onwards and many birders in their seventies are unable to hear the song of a Grasshopper Warbler. Similarly Goldcrest and Treecreeper songs become increasingly difficult to hear. I am extremely lucky, despite approaching 82, I can still clearly hear these high-pitched songs.

Grasshopper Warblers, or 'Groppers' as they are colloquially known, breed in areas of thick, low, tangled vegetation in damp situations and also in dry locations such as heathlands, commons and young conifer plantations. When I first visited Weybourne Camp in the 1970s, up to 10 could be heard reeling from the overgrown brambles around the many Nissan huts, and on Muckleburgh Hill. As the buildings and scrub were cleared the number of reeling birds fell and the last definite breeding record was in 1989. However, the presence of one at Weybourne Hope for over a week this spring may be an indication of nesting once again in the area.

On a visit to County Kerry last spring to see one of my sons, I was delighted to hear two reeling Grasshopper Warblers in his meadow where he had planted many small saplings two years earlier. He had heard them singing on his smallholding but thought that they were insects – a mistake easily made.

The attached photo was taken in County Kerry in May 2024.

May 2nd | Osprey - one flying east at Weybourne Camp.

It's always a thrill to see an Osprey, and rarely does a year pass without me seeing one over Weybourne Camp. By putting it out on the NENBC Alerts app, Tim Wright was able to pick it up as it continued east over Beeston Bump, still being mobbed by Herring Gulls, and seven minutes later it flew over Cromer. This was the first Osprey for which data are available for inclusion in the NENBC's 'flight speed database', and from the timings of its sightings from Weybourne to Cromer (a distance of 8½ miles) its average speed was 21mph.



Ospreys are summer visitors to Great Britain, wintering in sub-Saharan Africa. They are one of the world's most cosmopolitan species, breeding in temperate and tropical regions on all continents except for Antarctica. Ospreys nested in England up to 1910, when they became extinct as a breeding species. But in 1954 a pair famously nested at Loch Garton in Scotland. Since then breeding pairs have become established in many parts of Great Britain, especially where freshwater lakes, with tall pines in the vicinity, provide ideal feeding areas and nesting sites. Since 2022 a pair has built a nest at Ranworth Broad but to my knowledge has not yet fledged any young.

Ospreys are the sole member of the genus *Pandion*, the name arising from the mythical Greek King of Athens, while the specific name *haliaetus* is from the Greek meaning 'sea-eagle'. Like the owls, Ospreys are the only other raptors whose outer toe is reversible, enabling them to more easily grasp fish with two toes in front and two behind. Other adaptations are the presence of special spines on the underside of the toes to aid gripping the slippery fish on which they prey, and closable nostrils and dense oily plumage that helps to prevent their plumage becoming waterlogged as they plunge into the water.

The attached photo was taken in Thailand in 2019.

May 7th | Red-footed Falcon - 2cy female at Hickling Broad.

As a result of high pressure and a south-easterly airflow, early May saw one of the biggest influxes of Red-footed Falcons in recent years. Birdguides reported at least 44 in Britain & Ireland in the first week of May with a minimum of 15 in Suffolk, including nine at Carlton Marshes of which six were in the air together on May 4th. Norfolk did not miss out with at least two joining the Hobbies feeding on dragonflies over Brendan's Marsh at the NWT reserve at Hickling. To see one of these charismatic birds was an opportunity not to be missed! My first was an adult male as long ago as 1969 in the Camargue and my next was the 2cy female found by Giles Dunmore and Steve Joyner on Kelling Heath in May 1979.



Red-footed Falcons are summer visitors to Eastern Europe and Central Asia, wintering in southern Africa. They are normally rare spring vagrants to the British Isles, but occasional influxes occur, as happened this year. Being colonial breeders and also migrating and spending the winter in groups, it is not that surprising that small parties are found occasionally in Britain. Like Hobbies, with which they often associate in Britain, they feed mainly on insects, especially dragonflies, which they catch and eat in flight. However, unlike Hobbies they also hover and alight on the ground.

Adult males are a beautiful slate-grey with chestnut under-tail coverts and 'trousers'. On the upperwing, pale silvery grey primaries are also apparent in good light. The females are no less attractive with dove-grey upperparts and upperwings, contrasting with a rufous-buff head and underparts.

The attached photo of a 2cy female is a digitized image of a slide that I took on Kelling Heath in 1979.

May 13th | Temminck's Stint – 3 at Cley.

Yet another bird that has been far more numerous this spring than usual is Temminck's Stint. The species breeds in wetland habitats in northern Scandinavia and winters in the northern Tropics, and is a scarce spring migrant that passes through Norfolk in April and May. Usually seen singly, up to 13 have been present on Pat's Pool at Cley, providing excellent views from Bishop's Hide.

Although Temminck's Stints are often unobtrusive, creeping around and feeding along the edges of thinly vegetated areas of mud, those this year have been out in the open, often alongside Redshanks and Wood Sandpipers, when their diminutive size is so striking. At all times of year their plumage is rather plain, even if browner in spring, and with their well-marked upper breast have been likened to a very small Common Sandpiper. Compared with the similarly sized Little Stint, they have a more attenuated rear end due to a longer tail and their legs are pale yellowish. They often 'tower' like a Snipe on taking off, when the clean, white outer tail feathers are apparent.

Prior to this year the only record of a Temminck's Stint in the NENBC area was one seen flying south-east off Bacton on 7th September 1967 by Ian (D.I.M.) Wallace. However, at the same time that the Osprey flew east over Weybourne Camp on May 2nd, Phil Borley and Russell Page recorded a Temminck's Stint flying west along the tideline at Weybourne Beach car park. They used this as an excuse for initially missing the Osprey - I know which one I would have preferred to have seen!

May 19th | Red-backed Shrike – female at Weybourne.

Red-backed Shrikes are widely distributed as breeding summer visitors to Europe and Central Asia but have declined in recent years. Various causes have been put forward to explain this: destruction of habitat for agriculture, afforestation and the heavy use of pesticides and inorganic nitrogen fertilisers. During the nesting season they are found in open areas with scattered bushes, scrub and low trees, such as farmland and heathland, favouring areas with hawthorn and blackthorn, on which they can impale their insect prey, known as 'larders'. They winter in Eastern and Southern Africa, using a different route in spring and autumn, known as loop migration.



Adult males are unmistakable with a blue-grey crown, black face mask and a chestnut back, while females and juveniles are characterised by fine vermiculations on the breast and belly. Despite their comparatively small size for a shrike, they are easily spotted as they perch conspicuously on top of low bushes, although they can also be surprisingly elusive as they hunt for their insect prey from lower perches on the sides of bushes.

The female at Weybourne this spring was the 14th record since the formation of the NENBC. Four coastal sites have hosted the species: five at Weybourne Camp (where Red-backed Shrikes bred annually up to 1971 and last did so in 1979), four at West Runton (which hosted the only multiple sighting: two juveniles on 19th August 2018), three at Kelling Heath (where the species nested up to the mid-20th century) and one at Happisburgh. The only inland location at which the species has been found was Aylmerton. Of the 14 records, nine have been in spring/summer (5 males and 4 females) and 5 juvenile/1cy in autumn. The one this spring was found by Phil Borley on his early morning arrival at Weybourne Beach car park, his purple patch continued on the following morning when he found a male Bluethroat on the northern edge of Weybourne Hope reed bed!

The attached photo is of the female at Weybourne Camp on May 19th.

Now, as you will know from Nigel's President's Piece, Moss has also been away on his hols this month so we have a bonus section with a little more of an exotic offering

I have recently returned from a Rockjumper tour of Finland and Norway with our President, Nigel Redman, as the leader. Of the 180+ species that were recorded I have selected three of my personal highlights for this month's article:

Black Woodpecker

We were joined throughout the trip by a Finnature leader, Anttu, who was able to take us to many stakeouts, especially the nest boxes for breeding owls, such as Great Grey and Ural, but also for the known nesting site of a Black Woodpecker. This is one of the species that I have had on my 'most wanted' lifer list for many years, and I was certainly not disappointed. On arrival at the site, the bills of two nestlings were just visible protruding through the nest hole but as soon as the adult male appeared the entire heads were thrust out eager to be fed. The male took no notice of the assembled group around the base of the tree nor the almost constant clicking of camera shutters.



I had always imagined that my first view of a Black Woodpecker would be a crow-sized, all-black bird flying away through dense woodland, but it was not be, this was an experience never to be forgotten.

Dotterel

Surely the Dotterel must be one of the most enigmatic of all the waders. Breeding on high mountain tops, they are extremely trusting and tame in their nesting areas and in years gone by were easily caught by fowlers, who dubbed them stupid and simple-minded, and thus were named Dotterel. A word with the same origins as 'dote' and 'dotty'. Even their specific scientific name *morinellus* means 'little fool'. But back to our trip to Norway.



Our local leader had taken us up to the high fells in the Arctic Circle to a site called Kaunispa, in northern Finland, specifically to search for this species. We all spread out across the extensive tundra and purely by luck, I happened to find a male Dotterel incubating three eggs. I hadn't seen the bird on the nest and it wasn't until it started to walk around me giving its distraction display that I realised how near to the nest I was. I signalled to the rest of the group and after taking a series of photos I retreated to a safe distance, but before I had gone very far the Dotterel was back on his nest. Like the phalaropes this is one of the wader species exhibiting role-reversal.

You can imagine how delighted I was, but I was even more pleased to see that the bird was ringed with a metal ring on the right leg and a white ring embossed with the black letters YO on the left leg. On returning home I was able to contact the Finnish ringer who had ringed the bird as a nestling in the same area six years earlier on 7th July 2019. Amazingly, each year it had returned to its birthplace to breed since being ringed as a nestling.

King Eider

We saw many very attractive ducks in Finland and Norway, including Long-tailed Duck and drake Smew, but none more so than adult drake King Eiders. However, our first sighting of the species was a flock of 12 immature drakes and females, on the far side of a lake – not the sort of view I was hoping for! But the next day, we were amply rewarded with a beautiful adult drake in Batsfjord harbour, which actually swam towards us as we were busily photographing it. King Eiders are winter visitors in large numbers to Norway, in particular Varangerfjord in Northern Norway and the harbour in Vadsø, where we also encountered a flock of 65, including 3 adult drakes. In fact we were fortunate to see as many as we did, a direct result of the heaviest snow in Norway for 50 years, which meant that the King Eiders had delayed their flight back to their tundra breeding grounds in the high Arctic.





By Val Stubbs

You know that you are an obsessive birder when your first thought when you have a trip to London planned is “Ooh, I might see a parakeet”. However, I put that from my mind as we headed down on the train, determined to enjoy the bright lights of the big city and make the most of the experience of helping in the creation of a show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show. Or so I thought...

As we left the underground station and made our way to our hotel, among the bustle of humanity I noticed a Feral Pigeon, and couldn't help but smile. It turns out you can take the birder out of Norfolk, but the birder will still be in there. Anyway, that was the sum total of London birding that day, and I didn't give it any more thought.

The next morning, we set off for our first day at the show. As we reached the river, the tinkling of a Robin drifted through the air, cutting through the sound of traffic, and I couldn't help but smile. The walk along the embankment was punctuated with interesting views of the architecture of the city and the diverse bridge designs, but I found my eyes drawn to the river itself. The tide was out, prompting a discussion with Nick about the pros and cons of mud larking (pro - the excitement of finding something unusual, con - all that mud, yeuch!). Where the mud met the water, I was attracted by a movement – a Mute Swan, and then realised that it was accompanied by a couple of Mallards (Merlin's bird of the day). Strutting across the ooze was a pair of Greylag Geese, escorting three delightful little goslings. Further along the river, a pair of Canada Geese swam along with their beaks snootily raised. Another patch of mud revealed a Carrion Crow doing its own version of mud larking. The sound of a Great Tit singing in one of the green areas sliced through the rumble of the morning rush hour. Last bird of the river section was a Moorhen, looking diminutive on the vast expanse of The Thames. We arrived at the entrance to the show, and whilst waiting for our passes, a Rook flew over the showground.



We found our way to “our” show garden and were shown our tasks for the day – we would be “preening” the plants, ready for planting. This involved a painstaking examination of every leaf and flower looking for imperfections – anything faded, blemished or damaged had to be removed (it turned out my daft fancy nails were actually jolly practical for this task). And all the time as we worked, there was the squawking of parakeets, but I couldn't spot a single one until late in the afternoon, when I was rewarded with a fly past of seven gloriously green Ring-necked Parakeets – and I couldn't help but smile! [See this short article - [Birdwatch: the immigrant species bringing a splash of bright green to Britain | Birds | The Guardian](#)]



At the end of the day our walk back along the river yielded up a group of Herring Gulls loafing about on a jetty, and a most unexpected Black Swan sailing down with the tide.

The following day proved to be pretty much a case of rinse and repeat both in terms of the birds and the work, though we did hear a Wood Pigeon calling in the trees of the Royal Chelsea Hospital, and two Jackdaws flew over, while in the show ground itself the enchanting sound of a Blackbird wafted through the air and a little while later, I saw it fly up into a tree.

And in our preening area, I caught a fluttering movement out of the corner of my eye – a Robin had spied a tasty morsel. Not a new bird for the trip, but I couldn't help but smile!

We were thrilled to hear that "our" garden had won a Gold medal, as well as Best Construction for a Small Garden and Best in Show for a Small Garden."





By Jane Crossen

Well, I DID say I was hoping to be able to report three successfully-fledged juveniles by the time the next newsletter was due. Didn't expect it to be quite so complicated!

On the morning of 4th June VDP took his first flight away from the tower (we are assuming male now, as male juveniles tend to fledge before the heavier females and he weighed borderline for male/female at ringing. DNA results will determine for sure). We know it was his first real flight, as the excellent webcam recorded him flying west and he hadn't left the church roof before. As Bev Coleman and myself were due to be on the watchpoint anyway, we agreed to go much earlier so we could track him down, as he did not return to the tower. I managed to locate him, as I became aware that two Herring Gulls were dive-bombing something on the roof of Upstairs, Downstairs, which is situated on the corner opposite the west side of the church. He suddenly appeared from where he had been (we now assume there is a gully between the front and back of the roof and he'd been in their nest) but immediately dropped down again. He wasn't seen for around 6 hours when he then reappeared on the roof. We went to the west end of the church and witnessed him flying, very strongly, around the north side of the church. Good, or so we thought! Unfortunately, he had somehow managed to land in ANOTHER Herring Gull's nest. Not only that, but there were two live Herring Gull chicks there. The nest was between two rows of small chimney pots on the roof of the Big C charity shop near the museum and CPP watchpoint. He appeared to be unable to get free from the area – we later realised he was being sensible, as he almost certainly would have been attacked by the Herring Gulls. At one point he let out a blood-curdling scream and we witnessed him on his back defending himself with his talons. That was obviously completely instinctive which was really quite interesting and reassuring! So, an even worse situation than the morning!



VDP on the top of the roof of Upstairs, Downstairs in Cromer just before flying around the church



The Herring Gull and VDP!



The juvenile (second pot from the left!)

The CPP committee discussed the situation at some length and it was decided to wait until the morning (Thursday) to re-assess the situation. In the meantime, early on Thursday morning, the second (possibly male) juvenile fledged – VFP. He was first located on the Red Lion pub and then on the Hotel de Paris (a classy bird – obviously!) He was mobbed by gulls but eventually made it back to the nave of the church.



VFP on the nave end of the church following his first flight.

That's when the rescue began. Following all due protocol we got in touch with emergency services and the response from the Fire Service and Police was absolutely outstanding. Within half an hour the first crew had arrived and assessed the situation. They kept the volunteers from the CPP project who had initiated the call, updated, as they were still present. It was decided that a different engine was required in order to reach the top safely - for both crew and the Peregrine (should it be injured and need rescuing).



(if only he knew what chaos he was creating!)

In the meantime the police had arrived and successfully redirected traffic down Church Street – this worked really well with no long queues building up. We had also alerted Phil Littler who had ringed the bird (he has ringed all 13 juveniles at the site) and would have then been available to assess the condition of the juvenile, if need be. We had already been in touch with a rehab centre should the bird need to go there for treatment. The crew carefully went up to the roof. It was very interesting to watch: as the crane got level with the chimney pots the men were obviously a lot taller and so the gulls went higher (in order to mob them!) and the juvenile obviously spotted his chance and made a successful exit south - flying! It was swiftly followed by an adult Peregrine who had arrived on the scene and, briefly, the Herring Gulls. The gulls returned very soon afterwards and we had views of the Herring Gull chicks looking well both then and in the following hours. The rescue happened very quickly and Cromer was soon back to normal.

So, many thanks are due to everyone involved and the passers-by who were so concerned about the birds – it was an absolute classic team effort – from people manning the webcam, the volunteers in attendance, the rescue crews and special thanks to the church for dishing out cups of coffee! The rescue services were at great pains to say there was not a problem with them being called out to rescue a bird (especially a Schedule 1 bird). Obviously, if need be and there had been an emergency involving people or property, they would have left the site. Which we totally understood. The guy in charge said they treated these situations as training exercises – they were timing events and at one point the large engine had to manoeuvre around a car parked awkwardly – something they no doubt have to do very quickly in a serious emergency – so that was good practice.

Following VDP's departure from that nest at lunchtime on the Thursday, we didn't see him for a day and a half! He suddenly appeared back on the roof of the church on Friday evening, none the worse for wear... which is more than can be said for the volunteers who had been at the watchpoint over the previous few days! Two of us were there for around 10 hours on the

Wednesday and over 6 on the Thursday (and back again on the Saturday and Sunday!) The latest situation is that all the juveniles are now flying really strongly around the church and the adults are dropping in with prey for them on the church roof. One was seen flying from the fleur-de-lis to the other side of the roof with a juvenile Starling in its claws – so he is able to carry prey now. Hopefully next month I will have reports of them catching prey dropped by the adults for them to catch mid-flight/mid-air. Always a joy to see.

Photos courtesy of Jane Crossen

A reminder of the YouTube webcam link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWRXa1ah9Xo>



VBP – (probably female) – the last of the juveniles to fledge

Here are some stills from the webcam, courtesy of the Cromer Peregrine Project folk ...





By Tracy Brighten

Following on from Laurinda Luffman's excellent Swift talk to us last month, here's a follow-up article from Tracy about what can be done to help. With some great local info from within the club area.

Spring is a wondrous time as migratory birds return from wintering grounds to their nesting places. But many birds don't survive the perilous journey across global flyways, with some species suffering [mortality rates more than twenty times greater during migration](#) than other times. Stopover sites are disappearing beneath urban development, energy infrastructure presents a collision risk, and extreme weather leaves birds stranded, exhausted or dead. Weary survivors arrive home to find a lack of food and loss of nest sites.

World Migratory Bird Day highlights the phenomenon of avian migration and raises awareness of the survival challenges. This year's theme is **Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-friendly Cities and Communities**. Among the globetrotters returning to Norfolk are Swifts, House Martins and Swallows. But for how much longer? Between 1995 and 2022, the UK breeding population of Swifts decreased by an alarming 66% [[BTO](#)]. Numbers of breeding House Martins declined by 44% in the same period. [[BTO](#)]. Both species are now on the UK Red List for Birds.

Alongside the RSPB, BTO, WWT, and the Wildlife Trusts/NWT, communities have an important role in protecting migratory birds. In Aylsham, residents and community groups are helping Swifts by preserving nests under pantiles, putting up nest boxes, and creating habitats for insects. We know of at least seventy-seven nest sites under tiles in Aylsham, recorded on RSPB Swift Mapper in the hope that ecologists and council planners will consider this data in planning decisions. At least fifty-nine external nest boxes for Swifts have been put up by homeowners and thirteen integrated nest bricks retrofitted. A further thirty nest boxes made by Aylsham Community Shed are ready for Swifts in the belfry of Aylsham Parish Church, a project supported by local builder's merchant C T Baker. Aylsham & District Wildlife Society's generous donation to Aylsham Swift Group will enable us to undertake nest box projects, provide copies of [Super Swifts](#) to local schools, and lend swift call systems to Aylsham residents.

The Aylsham community is also improving natural habitats to support wildlife, and these green spaces benefit people too. Broadland Tree Wardens for Aylsham planted and look after the Aylsham Community Orchard. In the same location, the Aylsham Climate Emergency (ACE) Nature & Biodiversity Group and Aylsham Town Council are partners on a wildflower project. They are also improving wild habitat in the Old Station Yard, a public open space near Millgate, an older part of Aylsham popular with nesting Swifts. On the edge of town, [Eves Hill Veg Co](#) provides training programmes about growing food with a focus on soil health and supporting pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

Conservation organisations and volunteer groups could achieve even more for nature if their work was supported by government policies. The major political parties peddle the lie that a choice must be made between people and nature. Labour ministers blame bats and newts for the stagnation in new developments, sending the damaging message that nature is in our way. Labour has made a U-turn on swift bricks too, a simple and low-cost measure to safeguard Swifts and other red-listed cavity-nesting birds. In opposition, Labour pledged support for Hannah Bourne-Taylor's petition to make swift bricks mandatory in new buildings via the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill. Unsurprisingly, the Conservative government rejected the proposal. Now in government, Labour whipped a vote against a proposed amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to include swift bricks in building regulations, despite support from NGOs, MPs across political parties, and even developers. The RSPB has been a crucial supporter of Hannah Bourne-Taylor's Feather Speech campaign, along with environmental champion Lord Zac Goldsmith, both recognising the potential of passionate individuals to influence conservation in new ways. I can recommend Hannah's latest book, *Nature Needs You: The fight to save our swifts*.

Hannah Bourne-Taylor is unwavering that Swifts' survival in the UK rests on nest bricks specified within building regulations or as a condition of planning consent in line with [BS 42021:2022](#). This British Standard recommends integrated nest boxes at a ratio of one box per dwelling. For Swifts, these would be clustered on

suitable buildings. But we cannot rely on developers to deliver nest boxes voluntarily. Even where local planning authorities require nest boxes, it often falls upon local people to check they exist. [A University of Sheffield and Wild Justice report](#) shows 75% of bird and bat boxes required as a condition of planning permission for new developments were missing on completion. If nest bricks were required by law, Swifts might receive the estimated 20,000 nest bricks needed each year to offset the loss of nest sites in the UK.



Photo courtesy of David Grix

To help Swifts, you might like to [sign this petition](#) and ask your MP to support the [Early Day Motion for the incorporation of swift bricks](#) into all new domestic buildings. On the topic of the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill, the Wildlife Trusts and RSPB are asking the Government to scrap the Nature Recovery part 3 of the bill. Instead of recovery, this would remove protections for nature regarding house building. You can help by emailing your MP and Rachel Reeves [using the Wildlife Trusts' template](#).

While we wait for this government to realise they might get more political benefit by acting on swift bricks than not, local councils can step up. This [Kingston-Upon-Thames Swift Species Action Plan](#) shows how conservation measures can easily be included in council processes. It's timely that Swift are a "shortlisted species with recovery potential" in the comprehensive and exciting [Draft Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025](#) (Urban, Built and Garden Environments, Table 39, p129), although more detail would be welcome. Swift, Starling, House Sparrow, House Martin, Swallow, Greenfinch and Barberry Carpet appear below Hedgehog, the Flagship species, but seem shortchanged with "As above" for potential measures rather than specifics for each species.

Through collaborations and partnerships, conservation NGOs demonstrate that we can grow food without polluting the environment and harming wildlife, and that we can build houses without shutting nature out. The RSPB and Norfolk Wildlife Trust support community conservation with local volunteer groups in Norfolk. NWT's [Wilder Communities](#) helps people improve their local patch by sharing knowledge and skills. BTO have long been running citizen science surveys to collect invaluable data on bird species populations. We can achieve so much more for wildlife, and human wellbeing, by working together.

HOW TO CREATE A BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

- **Preserve cavity nesting spaces.** Look for Swifts and House Sparrows under roof tiles/eaves, House Martins under eaves/gables, and Swallows in open outbuildings.
- **Create new nesting spaces.** Install nest bricks, soffit boxes or external boxes for Swifts, Sparrows and Starlings and artificial nest cups for House Martins and Swallows.
- **Grow pollinator-friendly plants.** Trees, shrubs and flowers feed pollinators and their larvae in spring and summer and provide shelter in autumn and winter.
- **Let grass grow.** Leave areas uncut in late spring and summer to allow wildflowers to bloom. Let daisies and dandelions grow - insects and birds love 'weeds'!
- **Create a wetland.** Large or small, a pond with aquatic plants or a small bog is a magnet for insects, frogs and newts. Birds will benefit too!
- **Avoid or reduce pesticides.** Pesticides harm pollinators and other insects and wildlife. Try companion planting to control unwanted insects and pull weeds by hand.
- **Consider a catio or keep cats indoors to reduce predation and fear effects.** Birds are most vulnerable overnight from an hour before dusk to an hour after dawn.
- **Ask your roofer to consider roof-nesting birds** by following [NRFCC guidance](#).
- **Connect with your local nature community.** Volunteer with Felbeck Trust, Cromer Green Spaces, Aylsham Climate Emergency (ACE) or Bure River Action, or local groups working with Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the RSPB or Norfolk Rivers Trust.

If you want to find out where Swifts are nesting in your town or village and would like advice on nest site surveys (or nest boxes/bricks or playing calls), I'm happy to help (email tracy_brighten@hotmail.com). If you find a swift on the ground, read this [Facebook post](#) for guidance or call swift carer Kerry on 07837 523418 (based in Upton), or Aylsham Swift Group (Tracy on 07857 007743 or Pat on 07752 736989).

Have you seen swifts in your street?



SWIFTS NEED A LONG-TERM LET
Your street is used by a colony of swifts in summer. These remarkable birds spend their life on the wing, only landing to raise their chicks. **Swifts love to nest under pantiles and eaves!** They are easy tenants and cause no damage.



SWIFTS IN CRISIS
Numbers of swifts breeding in the UK have declined by over 60% since 1995 [BTO]. This decline is linked primarily to loss of nest sites. **Swifts are now on the UK Red List.**

GET IN TOUCH!
Aylsham Swift Group can give you advice, information, and support to help swifts.
Email: aylshamswifts@gmail.com
X (Twitter) @AylshamSwifts
Facebook @AylshamSwiftGroup



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Carry out roof work Sept-April.
- Ask your roofer not to fit eaves fillers/combs. Consider making gaps if these are fitted.
- Consider adapting fascia/soffit boards to create self-contained nesting spaces.
- Consider fitting swift bricks or external nest boxes: min. 4 to 5 m above ground with a clear drop and flight path, and protected from extreme weather.

Do You Play Wingspan?

A Call to Fellow Gamers



By Steven Sonsino

Have you ever played [Wingspan](#)? It's a beautifully designed board game where you build your own wildlife reserve and fill it with birds from across the world. You place birds into habitats – wetlands, grasslands, and forests – where they feed, lay eggs, and activate unique powers. It's as close as a board game gets to the joy of birding, but without a northerly pinning you to the shelter walls at Cley Coastguards.



Wingspan isn't particularly competitive – you're mainly playing against yourself, trying to build the best reserve you can. Yes, someone wins, but the real pleasure is in reading the cards, learning a few things about each bird, and enjoying the stunning artwork by Elizabeth Hargrave and her team. The base set features North American species, but there are expansions for European, Oceania, and there are other world birds on the way.

I'm wondering how many NENBC members play *Wingspan* already? Which versions do you have – the base game, European expansion, Oceania? If there's enough interest, I'd love to propose a *Wingspan Weekend* in the summer – a chance to play casually, learn the game, or even try a few campaign modes.

Speaking of campaigns, for those who know the game well, there are some excellent multi-game story arcs we could try. My son Michael has even written one, inspired by the 1972 science fiction film *Silent Running* – he's not listening so I can honestly say it's brilliant.

Gotta tell you, Michael's something of a gaming brain. His Warhammer team is ranked 22nd in the UK, so he'd make a great referee if we want to run something more structured!

If this sounds like your kind of thing, or you're curious to give *Wingspan* a go, drop me a line (with what level you're at – beginner, intermediate or advanced – and what set you play with) at steven@stevensonsino.com. I'd love to hear from you.



[Latest Bass Rock gannet census reveals continued decline - BirdGuides \[11-Jun\]](#)

[Record Puffin numbers counted on Skomer - BirdGuides \[10-Jun\]](#)

[Bird flu detected in dead nesting Peregrine Falcon - BirdGuides \[04-Jun\]](#)

[Peregrine falcon chick hatches at St Albans Cathedral - BBC News \[09-Jun\]](#) – this is after their 1st set of eggs was destroyed by being trodden on by a person on the roof of the cathedral (police investigating) [Peregrine Live Cam 2025](#)

[Peregrine chicks DNA swabbed in Surrey wildlife-crime crackdown - BirdGuides \[06-Jun\]](#)

[Warning issued after drone flies close to Peregrine nest - BirdGuides \[13-May\]](#)

[Ely Cathedral welcomes first peregrine chicks in four years - BBC News \[30-May\]](#)

[Worcester Cathedral last remaining peregrine falcon chick dies - BBC News \[16-May\]](#)

[Blackbirds at risk as deadly virus spreads in southern England - BirdGuides \[31-May\]](#)

[Blackbirds in Gardens | BTO – join the survey](#)

[Cuckoos up, finches down: latest Breeding Bird Survey report published - BirdGuides \[23-May\]](#) – read the full report here: [BTO-JNCC-RSPB BBS Report 2024](#)

The population trends for 116 species are reported for England. Whilst several species are in decline in England, many — particular woodland birds — are increasing farther north in Britain.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

Period	No. species	Greatest change in English trends	
Long-term (95–23) increases	35	Red Kite	24,725%
Long-term (95–23) decreases	41	Turtle Dove	-98%
Short-term (23–24) increases	16	Kingfisher	82%
Short-term (23–24) decreases	20	Hobby	-37%

[Two new reports reveal how the UK's birds are faring RSPB website \[28-May\]](#)

[More Bird, Less Birds: North American Avian Biomass Rises Despite Widespread Declines, #ornithology news via @RareBirdAlertUK \[12-Jun\]](#)

[Bee-eaters Put Bumblebees Under Pressure, news via @RareBirdAlertUK \[30-May\]](#)

[Rare white starling spotted by Chatteris bird watchers - BBC News \[12-Jun\]](#)

[UK's oldest wild White-tailed Eagle dies aged 32 - BBC News \[02-Jun\]](#)

[Trying to get rid of noisy, food-stealing gulls is missing the point – it's humans who are the pests | Sophie Pavelle | The Guardian \[08-Jun\]](#)

[‘Half the tree of life’: ecologists’ horror as nature reserves are emptied of insects | Insects | The Guardian \[03-Jun\]](#)

[Country diary: My fear is that one year the swifts will not return | Birds | The Guardian \[26-May\]](#)

[Swift Awareness Week 2025 RSPB website](#)





What's That Song?



Many of us find it difficult learning or remembering bird song whilst others seem to have a natural knack for it, a bit like a foreign language or music skill. Can you recognise a bird from the description of its voice though? The descriptions come from three different books, but they all refer to the same bird – no

wonder it is so confusing! As you can see, some books go into more detail than others. Answers are on the last page of this newsletter, along with a link through to a website where you can listen to an audio excerpt and decide which description resonates best with you!

[Solution at the end of this newsletter.](#)

“Thin, sharp ‘tik’ or ‘sip’, weak, rattling alarm. Song strident: rich, fluty whistles, shouted and squeaky notes; even-paced repetition of short phrases. Loud ‘slap’ of snail smashed on stone characteristic.

from WILDGuides BRITAIN'S BIRDS 2nd Edition - An identification guide to the birds of Britain and Ireland 2nd Edition by Hume, Still, Swash, Harrop and Tipling

“Call a rather discreet, fine, sharp ‘zit’ (not so hard and clicking as Robin’s, and a little softer than Rustic Bunting’s). Alarm an excited series of ‘electrical’ scolding sounds, ‘tix-ix-ix-ix-ix-...’ (sharper, higher-pitched than Blackbird). Song loud and proclaiming, sounds ‘cocksure’ and ‘dogmatic’ strongly varied, often squeaky and shrill cascades of notes, pauses few and very brief; characteristic is recurring repetitions 2-4 times of same group notes, eg: ‘kücklivi kücklivi, tixi tixi tixi, pii-eh, trrü-trrü- trrü tixifix, chü-chü-chü, ko-ku-kiklix ko-ku-kiklix ...’.”

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

“Far-carrying musical song comprises a series of short phrases, each repeated 3-5 times. Pattern of song is distinctive; individuals may have a repertoire of 100 phrases. Sings during the day and also at dusk (and sometimes at night near street lights), after most other birds finish singing. It sings from March to July and again briefly in autumn and during mild winter weather. Flight call is a thin ‘tsic’, not as hard as a Robin’s ‘tic’ alarm note. It can be heard at night as migrants pass over”

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

Ficedula Fun

Wordsearch



This month, we have the 17 species or races recorded in June 2024 for which we have less than three records for each – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

- Barnacle Goose
- Crane
- Fieldfare
- Honey-buzzard
- Puffin
- Turnstone
- Wheatear
- Wigeon
- Arctic Tern
- Black-tailed Godwit
- Manx Shearwater
- Marsh Warbler
- Osprey
- Quail
- Redshank
- Ruff
- Woodcock

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





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

NENBC Website



A huge thanks to the 123 of you who have uploaded records to our website so far this year date. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports. Adding comments is always encouraged and photos are a bonus so please do upload your pics. Not started adding records yet? Make it your spring resolution this year! If you need any assistance, just drop us a line on nenbc@aol.co.uk or through the messaging element of the website.

Over the coming months we are going to try and get a bit more in this section on the data side of things and so are looking for some suggestions from members on what might be of interest. Drop us a line and I will see if we can do it!

Social Media

Not in Norfolk as club member Steve Stansfield is Warden of Bardsey Bird Observatory in his spare time

Carl Chapman
@wildnorfolk.bsky.social

Not the best photo in the world but the Black crowned Night Heron was so hidden yesterday evening it might as well have been on the moon!



Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Female Kestrel peering out from her nest hole, chick begging for food. Mute Swan with seven cygnets. Lots of poppies out on the roadside



Steve Stansfield @bardseyobswarden.bsky.social · 3d
This morning I was woken by Emma asking what was singing outside our bedroom window. I removed my AirPods from my ears and heard a few notes of an Acro - it's a Blyth's Reed I said. I got up and was just on my way out of the door when Colin, our volunteer, was heading to the door. The bird sang
1 1 20

Steve Stansfield @bardseyobswarden.bsky.social · 3d
From exactly the same spot the one on 5th June was singing from. It had a completely different vocal repertoire than the previous bird, much less mimicry, but still a BRW. I opened a net and trapped it about 3 feet from where I caught the one last week! Left facing - today, right facing 5 June

1 2 27

Steve Stansfield @bardseyobswarden.bsky.social · 3d
Today's bird was replacing three feathers on the right side of its tail, last weeks was replacing three on the left side!
L

12



Owls, Silent Magic In Flight ***by Robert Lindley***

*Owls in flight glide so deadly silent
prey dies so quickly and violent
Claws just as sharp as a razor knife
nighttime is the owl's hooting life!*

*Resting in tall trees in the hollow
the night's moon they have to follow
No shrieks as they swoop down on prey
owl's eating demands business not play!*

*A beauty shines with feathers and eyes
smooth flight in dark forested skies
Owls are held to be old and very wise
to love and admire if one simply tries!*

*A treasure to love and attempt to protect
Tragic if we fail due to ignorance and neglect!*

*Photos courtesy of Tom Hill [Little], Trevor Williams [Tawny],
Moss Taylor [Short-eared], John Mears [Long-eared] and John
Taylor [Barn]*



The bird voice variously described was that of a **Song Thrush**. 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 Song Thrush** page and their ID video **Identifying Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush**. Take a look at this YouTube ID Class on Song Thrush from the wonderful **Lucy Lapwing**, maker of those lovely illustrative models on SpringWatch.

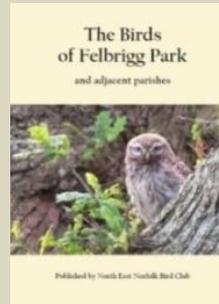
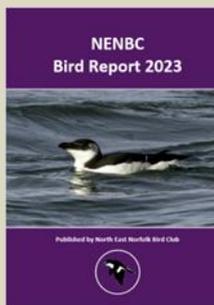
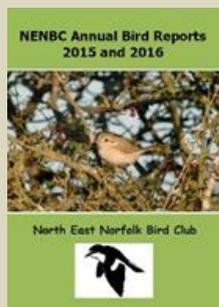
Photos from the top: John Wheeler, Richard Farrow, Mark Clements, Francis Farrow (egg)



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

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





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



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](http://www.birdventures.co.uk) 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