September 2024 – Issue 111 **The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter**

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Through a Lens

Chair's Corner

By Trevor Williams

After a fairly hectic summer we were looking forward to our Spanish break, a week immersing ourselves in raptor migration across the Straits of Gibraltar - a birding spectacle we've enjoyed on many previous occasions. However things didn't go to plan. Who knew that there was something called 'the ten year rule' - turns out almost everyone except me! Despite having seven months left on my passport before the expiration date, a change in EU regulations meant that I was turned around at the gate at Luton. We returned home dejected but determined to salvage something from our holiday. A quick bit of internet shopping for late bookings to non-European destinations, and we were soon enjoying a week in south-west Turkey. It was hot and migration was slow but we still managed to see some lovely birds.

Of course, as is frequently the case it seems, back home in Norfolk the best fall of autumn migrants in twenty years was occurring! With plenty of Pied and Spotted Flycatcher, Wheatear, Whinchat, Redstart, warblers, Wryneck and shrike for Club members to enjoy, along with a host of interesting sea-birds. Perhaps I should have stayed at home.

Anyway, enough of my holiday tales and back to Club business. September sees the start of our new programme of indoor meetings with a varied menu of interesting talks to look forward to. The first of this season's special events - the Coordinated Seawatch is happening in a week or so and the new walks programme kicks in as well. The 2023 Bird Report has arrived back from the printers and is currently being distributed to members - another great read from the team with plenty of birding memories to relive.

The recent change in weather has hastened the arrival of autumn and the early return of some of our wintering birds - skeins of Pink-feet have been seen in our skies in the past few days. It won't be long before Redwings and Fieldfares are feeding up in Felbrigg. They might be there on our next mid-week walk on 18th September. See you there - no passport (in or out of date) required!

A Note from the Editor

By Carol Thornton

Hi folks. Welcome to our September issue and the beginning of a new season of events!

Walks and talks are back on (see pages 13 and the website or last month's newsletter for the full programme) and don't forget we have our 1st special event with the **Coordinated Seawatch on Saturday 21st**. Have a look at the info on page 15 and although booking isn't essential – just turn up on the day if you fancy it – if you know you are definitely coming, please let us know so we know the leader at each site has a bit of support and we can keep you posted if there are any last minute changes. Hope to catch up with some of you soon.

Last month's **Through a Lens** subject for the front page was **FINCHES** and our cover images this time from the top are from Francis Farrow (both Chaffinch), Ken Thornton (Goldfinch), Mark Clements (Linnet), Mark Clements (Bullfinch) and Ken Thornton (Greenfinch). Thanks all! The **theme for September is – BIRDS IN THE GARDEN.**

Here on the right is my pick from August of some great photos from our website of the more common birds that don't make it to the Monthly Bird Highlights section: Herring Gull (Dave Billham), Robin (Ken Thornton), Grey Heron (Doug Cullern), Oystercatcher (Jane Crossen), Moorhen (Mark Clements) and Blackbird (Doug Cullern).

Membership News & Statistics 2024

Welcome to Our New Members - we look forward to seeing you soon!

*** Sue Montgomery * Maureen Roose ***

431 individual members across 281 households

61,072 bird records logged

216 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 & Tweets** from page 34.

Club Achievement Awards

Star Badges

No new achievers this month but we are looking forward to a few more coming through soon!

Currently, **4** members have achieved GOLD STAR status, **21** members have been awarded SILVER STAR status and a fabulous **83** 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

Congratulations to Francis Farrow on achieving his Super-Green (Coastal)! Plenty of time to get going in this new season!

We currently have **27** members who have achieved their GREEN ECO-BADGES [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 10] and 5 who have achieved SUPER-GREEN [Coastal: 5 | 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.

NENBC Bird Highlights – August 2024

By Carol Thornton

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

≈ 4,962 individual records covering 144 bird species were added in August

There were 4,962 records submitted for August which is 1,236 less than those submitted for the same period last year and 265 less than the previous month of July. A total of 144 species were recorded which was 25 less than was recorded in the same period in 2023. Listed below are summaries of the less common species in our area last month.

Egyptian Goose An unusual record of 14 over Felbrigg Park lake on 14th heading towards Cromer and 4 at Weybourne Camp on 29th.

Shelduck Records throughout the month from Weybourne Camp, Weybourne, Sheringham and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. A group of 20+ were speed checked from Cromer to Weybourne Camp on 4th.

Shoveler One at Weybourne on 9th, with other records from Weybourne Camp on 13th (2), 17th (5) and 29th (1). All birds were westward bound.

Wigeon All records were at the coast and all west bound from Weybourne Camp on 13th (1), 18th (3) and 30th (4) with 3 at Weybourne on 31st.

Tufted Duck Again, all records were at the coast and west bound. Reports of singles from Weybourne Camp on 1st and 17th , Weybourne on 25th and 3 past Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on both 11th and 29th.

Eider Two west past Weybourne Camp on 28th.

Grey Partridge A single still with a covey of Red-legs at Weybourne Camp on 24th a third party report of 4 at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 31st.

Nightjar Records throughout the month from Kelling Heath, virtually all were heard churring, flight calling and wing-clapping with fleeting glimpses.

Swift Seen and heard throughout the month across the area with double figure counts from Sheringham on 1st (13), 5th (30), 8th (21) and 9th (10), Weybourne Camp on 3rd (10) and 4th (16) , Holt on 3rd (10), Weybourne on 5th (10) and Mundesley on 27th (38). *Photo 1 courtesy of Mark Clements*

1

Cuckoo A rather late juvenile in pines on northern boundary of Sheringham Cemetery on 28th and again the following day. *Photo 2 courtesy of Andy Clarke*

2

Water Rail Singles heard at Pigneys Wood on 18th and 'chipping' at Weybourne Camp on 20th.

Coot Four birds at Blickling Park on 8th, 10 at Wolterton Park, including 2 juvenile, on 18th and a single at Felbrigg Park on 24th.

Little Grebe An adult and 2 juvenile at Gresham on 2nd, a single in the castle moat at Baconsthorpe on 11th, 14 at Wolterton Park on 18th, including 5 juvenile, and up to 4 (2 adult and 2 juvenile) at Mannington Hall park on 5th, 20th and 22nd.

Red-necked Grebe A single west at Weybourne Camp on 13th.

Great Crested Grebe Records from Blickling Park (up to 2), Sheringham (1), Weybourne Camp (2), Weybourne (1) and Wolterton park (3 – including 2 juvenile).

Avocet Just one record of 3 birds east offshore at Weybourne Camp on 1st.

Golden Plover Most records were of birds heading west at the coast at Weybourne Camp (3 birds), Weybourne and Sheringham (2). Also a record of a single with worn summer plumage flying over fields at Weybourne Cliffs.

Grey Plover A single in summer plumage came in from the north then headed east at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 11th with up to 2 birds west at Weybourne on 25th.

Ringed Plover Records from Weybourne Camp, Weybourne, Sheringham and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs of 1-5 birds, predominantly west during seawatches. One record of a juvenile with Turnstones on the beach at Sheringham on 24th.

Dotterel A single record of a juvenile in harvested pea stubble field with Common Gulls at Briningham on 28th.

Whimbrel Over 30 records from mostly coastal locations, lots of 1-2 birds, with just one double-figure count of 12 west at Weybourne Camp on 24th. *Photo 3 courtesy of Dave Billham*

Curlew Nearly 50 coastal records of this species during August with a high count of 67 off Weybourne on 25th and 51 there on 31st. The only inland record was 4 in a field north of the church at Bodham on 6th.

Bar-tailed Godwit Records of singles on 4 days, all heading west along the coast, from Weybourne on 7th, 8th and 27th and Weybourne Camp on 13th.

Black-tailed Godwit There were 9 west offshore at Weybourne on 8th, 4 east at Weybourne Camp on 13th and 1 west there on 18th plus a single high west at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 25th.

Turnstone Records of mainly 1-6 birds from Weybourne Camp, Weybourne (15 west there on 21st), West Runton, Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs and Walcott, with the majority of the reports, including all the remaining double-figures ones, coming from Sheringham, with a high of 19 there on 23rd. *Photo 4 courtesy of Roger Emmens*

Knot Reported west at coastal locations on most of the 18 occasions reported this month, with high counts of 13 off Weybourne on 9th and 24 off Sheringham on 21st. *Photo 5 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Sanderling Singles west at Weybourne on 4th and 11th, 2 there on 21st and a high count of 10 there on 31st plus 6 past Weybourne Camp on 18th. *Photo 6 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Dunlin With the exception of the single with Turnstones at Sheringham on 23rd, all records were of birds heading predominantly west seen on seawatches. Double figure counts were all from Weybourne with13 on 9th, up to 25 on 25th and 10 on 27th. *Photo 7 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

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Snipe Just one record of a single bird in the scrape in the rough grazing at Felbrigg Park on 17th.

Common Sandpiper Inland records were of a single at Felbrigg Park on 13th and 29th, and up at the coast there were singles west along the tideline at Weybourne Camp on 3rd, west at Sheringham on 9th, 11th and 18th and one on the rocks at east end of the seafront there on 25th. *Photo 8 courtesy of Ken Thornton*

Green Sandpiper Five flew north across the lake at Felbrigg Park on 1st and weren't relocated and a single west at Weybourne Camp on 4th.

Redshank Over 30 coastal records during August heading both west and east at times. High counts of single flocks were 16 west at Weybourne on 9th , 20 east at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 16th, 22 west at Weybourne Camp on 17th and 20 west Weybourne Camp on 29th. On 24th, a flock of 14 in from the north at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs landed briefly on the east beach before flying west, where they were speed-checked at Sheringham. *Photo 9 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

Greenshank Singles reported calling over Felbrigg Park on 14th and Sheringham Cemetery on 21st.

Kittiwake There were 17 records throughout the month along the coast with high counts being 26 (15 east and 11 west) during a 2 hour seawatch at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs and 25 west at Weybourne on the same day and here were up to 24 there (23 east and 1 west) on 31st. *Photo 10 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Little Gull A sub-adult west at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 11th.

Mediterranean Gull Twenty two reports in total of 1-2 birds from Weybourne Camp, Weybourne, Sheringham, Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs and Mundesley throughout the month with 13 of mixed ages, first feeding off shore then slowly east during a seawatch at Cromer Lighthouse and East Cliffs on 28th. At Walcott on 23rd, a minimum of 100, all ages - a flock of 70+ were rafting offshore and around 30 were on the sand bar opposite the slipway – plus 75 with a similar split on 26th.

Caspian Gull Up o 3 birds were reported around Cromer from 4th to 17th, an ringed adult and 2 juvenile / 1st winter birds. Additional reports of a juvenile at Walcott on 7th with other large gulls and a 2nd calendar year bird there on 14th plus 2 juvenile / 1st calendar year birds at Sheringham on 13th with one there on 27th. *Photo 11 courtesy of Mark Clements*

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Yellow-legged Gull Two juveniles close inshore at Weybourne Camp on 4th and a single at Cromer on 5th.

Sandwich Tern Around 90 records with 15 of them being in triple figures during seawatches. High counts were 321 at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 4th (308 east, 13 west) and 297 (279 east and 18 west) at Weybourne Camp on the same day plus 279 at Weybourne Camp on 13th (272 east and 7 west). *Photo 12 courtesy of Mark Clements*

12

Arctic Tern Seven records towards the end of the month from Weybourne Camp on 22nd (15 in a tight flock east), Weybourne on 22nd (80 probably all Arctics but possibly some Common) and 23rd (56, again possibly including some Common), Sheringham on 22nd (a single east), Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 22nd (13 west in two groups) and Mundesley 23rd (5 in a tight flock). See article from Andy Clarke on page 35 about suggested protocols of recording species where ID isn't 100% down to species level.

13

Great Skua A single bird east at Weybourne on 31st.

Pomarine Skua Two sub-adult pale morphs east together at Weybourne Camp on 28th.

Arctic Skua Twenty seven records throughout the month of both pale and dark morph birds from all of the usual coastal locations. There were double- figure counts during seawatches on 1st at Weybourne Camp (2 west. 2 offshore constantly harassing terns, 7 east) and on 3rd at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs (8 east, 1 west & 2 off shore). *Photo 13 courtesy of Mark Clements*

14

Guillemot Just one record of a single around the pier at Cromer on 24th. *Photo 14 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Red-throated Diver Twenty nine records throughout the month all of 1-3 birds mostly on the sea off Weybourne / Weybourne Camp. A single was speed-checked between Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs and Weybourne on 11th. *Photo 15 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

15

Great Northern Diver A single west at Weybourne on 11th. *Photo 16 courtesy of Russell Page*

Fulmar Nearly 60 records of 1-6 birds off the usual coastal locations throughout the month.

Manx Shearwater Sixteen birds in three groups from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 20th (one speed-checked from Sheringham) and 4 east there (2 speed-checked from Sheringham) on 22nd. There was an additional Sheringham record of one west on 13th.

16

Cattle Egret Three birds west offshore at Weybourne on 8th and a single there the following day, also west. A single was also recorded west a Weybourne / Weybourne Camp on 26th.

Great White Egret Singles west over a lucky member's garden at Brampton & Oxnead on 3rd, plus over Kelling Heath and west offshore at Weybourne Camp both on 17th. Four birds were east during a 2 hour seawatch at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 26th and 2 west there on 29th.

Little Egret An inland record of one at Wolterton Park on 18th with remaining 19 records from the 4th through to 29th coming from the coast between Weybourne Camp and Cromer Pier, predominantly west. High count was 10 west close in shore at Weybourne on 10th. *Photo 17 courtesy of Russell Page*

Marsh Harrier Singles near west Runton on 8th, Wolterton Park on 18th and Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course (immature) on 31st. Two birds were east offshore separately on 26th at Weybourne. *Photo 18 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Red Kite Records of 1-3 birds from 19 mostly inland locations across the club are throughout the month.

Barn Owl No records of more than one bird or of juveniles. The 11 records came from across the area between 4th and 27th from Aylmerton, Bale, Briston, Gresham, Kelling Heath, Weybourne, Weybourne Camp and Weybourne Cliffs.

Little Owl An adult and a juvenile entertained folk for most of the month by consistently being in he same spots in the oak at the dam end of the lake at Felbrigg Park. There was a report of 2 or possibly more fledglings in the same area on 7th. Elsewhere, singles were reported at Ingworth on 17th and Weybourne Camp on 20th, 25th and 28th and Weybourne on 7th, 16th and 21st (2). *Photo 19 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

Kingfisher Singles reported from Mannington Hall Park, Beeston Common, Felbrigg Park, Beeston Regis, Brinton, Wolterton Park, Selbrigg Pond with an obliging bird on the rocks at Sheringham on 27th. *Photo 20 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Green Woodpecker Over 50 records from suitable habitat at over 20 locations, mostly of singles, throughout the month. Only one record specifically identified juveniles with 2 at High Kelling on 20th. Maximum count was 3 at Mannington Hall Park on 20th.

Hobby Twenty two records in August, mostly of singles, with no identified juveniles and pretty evenly split between coastal and inland locations. Two birds were reported a Felbrigg Park on 11th, Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 12th (a pair - breeding has been separately confirmed a Deadman's Wood)and Weybourne Cliffs in 26th.

Peregrine All records in August were of the Cromer brood, with just one record of both adults and the juvenile roosting on 16th.

Marsh Tit Just 4 records with singles from a Gresham garden, Weybourne Heath and Beeston Common with 2 near Sheringham on 9th.

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Skylark Just 3 records of singles on the clifftops a Sheringham (12th) and Weybourne (25th) with an additional record from Sheringham Cemetery on 21st.

Sand Martin Over 60 records of mostly double-figure counts from mainly coastal locations. High counts were 70 at Weybourne on 7th and a flock of 150+ hirundines over Felbrigg Park lake that included Sand Martin.

Swallow There were 126 records from over 35 locations throughout the month. High count was 127 west off Sheringham on 27th. *Photo 21 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

House Martin Over 70 records from 23 mostly inland locations. Flock sizes not as large as the other hirundines, with the high count being 33 a West Runton on 26th.

Cetti's Warbler Two birds at Weybourne Camp on 20th and a single there on 28th along with one a Blickling Park on 8th.

Willow Warbler Most records were of singles with reports from Beeston Common on 8th, 18th (juvenile), 20th (juvenile), 26th and 29th, Kelling Heath (20) on 17th, Mundesley in 28th plus at Weybourne Camp, in addition to a single on 20th, there were 4 on 25th and 6 on 26th. *Photo 22 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Sedge Warbler Records of singles at Beeston Common, Felbrigg Park on several dates, East Runton (Coastwatch Sation) with up to 3 at Weybourne on 25th. *Photo 23 courtesy of Francis Farrow*

Reed Warbler Singles at Dilham Canal on 5th, Pigneys Wood on 18th and 21st, with 2 at Weybourne Camp on 25th and 3 at Wolterton Park, including a juvenile, on 18th.

Garden Warbler One report from near West Runton on 8th.

Lesser Whitethroat Mostly singles at Weybourne Cliffs, Sheringham Cemetery (plus 2 on 7th), Kelling Heath, Beeston Common, Beeston Bump (2 on 25th) and Beeston Regis. A couple of comments from members were "a very smart individual" and "Immacuale plumage". *Photo 24 courtesy of Francis Farrow*

Whitethroat There were 25 records of 1-6 birds from 9 locations throughout the month. Juveniles were reported at Weybourne Camp on 2nd (one of the 3 birds reported) and one was seen again there on 4th, at Beeston Common on 12th there were 3 birds, including g 2 juveniles and a further juvenile in Upper Sheringham on 22nd. *Photo 25 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Dartford Warbler One bird was seen briefly at Beeston Common on 26th and at the usual stronghold of Kelling Heath there were 2 on 17th and 3 on 31st. No juvenile reports.

Firecrest Just one record from near Sheringham on 9th but was of a female with 3 juveniles.

21

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Nuthatch There were 25 records from 14 locations, including many from parkland and heaths and with many heard only. The high count came from Swanton Novers on 11th where 5 were moving and feeding together.

Treecreeper Reports from just 6 locations in August, all of singles except 2 at Heydon on 16th but these were not together.

Pied Flycatcher An individual was calling on Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 12th and then no reports until the end of the month when singles were reported from Weybourne Camp, Sheringham Cemetery and Beeston Common on 28th and again at the latter site on the following day. *Photo 26 courtesy of Mark Clements*

26

Redstart A female at Sheringham boating lake on 4h and a 1st calendar year male at Weybourne Camp on 28th.

27

Whinchat A juvenile at Weybourne Camp, the first of the autumn there, on 24th and an individual also there on 31st.

Stonechat Most records were from the Weybourne Camp – Weybourne Cliffs – Weybourne area throughout the month with 9 birds, including 4 juveniles, reported on the camp on 19th. Other records came from Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 12th (a moulting male and a juvenile) and 31st (a family group of 3) plus Kelling Heath, where a tatty male and 5 juveniles were observed on 17th, 3 birds on 28th and 2 on 31st.

28

Wheatear A record of 2 birds at the Sheringham boating lake on 4th was the only record of more than one bird. Singles were reported from Weybourne Camp, Sheringham, Beeston Regis and Cromer Pier (in off the sea) between 1st and 6th of month, and then a flurry of records from the 20th onwards from Weybourne Camp, Beeston Bump, West Runton, Felbrigg Park and Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course. *Photo 27 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

Yellow Wagtail Records from Weybourne Camp on 18th (2), 27th (1 west) and 30th (2) plus 2 west at Weybourne on 27th.

Grey Wagtail There were 7 records from 7 locations in August with singles at Mannington Hall Park, West Runton area, Kelling Heath, Felbrigg Park, Wolterton Park and Sheringham plus 2 on the re-meandered stream at Swanton Novers on 11th. *Photo 28 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Bullfinch Twenty seven records from 9 locations. Juveniles were reported at Southrepps Common on 10th, Beeston Common on 18th , 20th and 28th.

Lesser Redpoll Two birds calling from the pines on Weybourne Heath on 14th.

Common Crossbill Two calling from pine tree at Briningham on 28th.

Siskin The only Siskin reports were from a Bodham garden with singles on 1st, 5th, 6th and 14th.

Yellowhammer Thirty records from a range of locations with highs of 6 at Sheringham Cemetery on 7th and 5 at Ingworth on 17th. The 4 observed at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 12th included 2 juveniles.

Reed Bunting Most of the 17 records were of 1-2 birds but 3 at Weybourne on 16th and 9 at Ingworth on 17th were notable. A juvenile was reported on Weybourne Cliffs on 5th. *Photo 29 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

29

NENBC Ringed Bird Records in August

Mute Swan:

"2adults, one ringed yellow 4ftf (presumably by East Winch)and 3 juv" | Julia & David Ivison | Selbrigg Pond | 14th |

Turnstone:

"crown groyne, one metal ringed bird" | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 26th |

Mediterranean Gull:

"A minimum of 100, all ages. A flock of 70+ were rafting offshore, slowly drifting west, and c.30 were on the sand bar opposite the slipway. Several c-ringed birds noted." | James Appleton | Walcott | 23rd |

Caspian Gull:

"On rocks west of pier, Identified by two local Birders, told bird had a green ring but we could not see." | Doug Cullern | Cromer | 5th |

"Polish ringed adult (P6US) plus two juveniles on rocks west of pier" | Roger & Janet Fickling | Cromer Pier | 6th |

"Adult yellow leg tag - can't read it" | Janice Darch | Cromer Pier | 7th |

"Polish rung adult P6US and 2 1st winter just west of pier." | Dave Horton | Cromer Pier | 11th |

What to Look and Listen For in September

The underlined links in this section are to some very helpful BTO Video ID Guides for the species concerned.

There is a noticeable upturn in migration during the month of September and it can be an excellent month for scarce and rarer migrants. Any location along the coast can hold migrating birds so why not see what you can find. The usual suspect locations that get reported every month are down, largely, to observer numbers. Find yourself an under-recorded part of the coast and let's see what we can add to the map. Bacton and Walcott have both featured in previous years with some excellent reports, but they rarely get many of our members visiting.

But it isn't all about scarce migrants. When you put the bin out this month at night keep half an ear out for our returning Redwing. Along with the sound of the Pink-footed Goose, they are the two sounds that say autumn is here.

Historical September Records

by Russ Malin

Records taken from "Rare and Scarce Birds in North-east Norfolk" by kind permission of the author Moss Taylor

Historically, September was a bumper month for rare and scarce species. A juvenile Squacco Heron was found at the Bacton Gas Terminal on August 27th 2001, where it remained until the 29th.

In 1861 a Kentish Plover was found on Sheringham beach on September 1st and our first Temminck's Stint for the region was observed flying south-east off Bacton on September 7th 1967 by the late, great D.I.M. Wallace. There are three September records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper in modern times. Cromer Golf Course, September 14th 1985, a juvenile at Happisburgh September 25th to 30th 2007 and Happisburgh again on September 29th 2012. September was also the month that saw the first two records of Pectoral Sandpiper with a juvenile at a pool on Weybourne beach car park on September 5th 1989 and a first-winter bird flew west at Sheringham on September 23rd 2003. Great Snipe have had a real September bias in records and although five birds were killed in a single day in the 1840s there was no 'actual' date so the first accurate record we have was of a bird shot on September 30th in 1922. In 1989 a Spotted Sandpiper was killed at Runton (near Cromer) on September 26th. The first Norfolk record. D.I.M. Wallace features again in September by finding a second-year Bonaparte's Gull on September 2nd 1967. The first Norfolk record. The first record of Caspian Tern was an adult seen off Weybourne on September 11th 1969. In 1968 there was a Nutcracker invasion. Although the first report involved a bird in August there were eight reports for September from locations such as Weybourne, Mundesley and Overstrand. Rare and scarce warblers feature in September with Western Bonelli's Warbler ringed on September 3rd 1994 at Dead Mans Wood, Sheringham. It was subsequently trapped again on September 6th. The same location, the year previous, also gave us the first Norfolk record of Paddyfield Warbler September 24th 1993. A Blyth's Reed Warbler was found at West Runton on September 26th 2008 and a Booted Warbler was found at Cromer on September 4th 1994. This was the second Norfolk record. Dead Man's Wood features, yet again, with the first Norfolk record of Lanceolated Warbler on September 29th 1993. Weybourne Camp was the location of the second Norfolk record of Sardinian Warbler where a first-winter male was found on September 1st. It was a long stayer, last being seen on October 5th. A Thrush Nightingale was caught and ringed at Denmark House, Weymouth on September 12th 2002 and was subsequently re-trapped the following morning. A first-winter male Red-flanked Bluetail was ringed at Weybourne Camp on September 29th 2007 and, finally, a female/immature Rustic Bunting was found on September 16th 1993 at, you guessed it, Dead Man's Wood, Sheringham.

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 any suggestions for what you'd like to see covered in this spot and we'll get researching!

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 pf 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.

Speaker Suggestions .....

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

Thank you!

Restocking our 2nd hand bookstall

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

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

What's On?

Events this month and beyond

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 19th September | 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 12th October | midday onwards |

Blakeney Harbour and Friary Hills Walk

with Janice Darch

Booking required via Janice by 5pm on the Thursday before janicedarch@gmail.com (15 places)

Our later than usual start time will allow us to walk around Blakeney Harbour towards Cley as the incoming tide brings waders and wildfowl towards us. High tide a Blakeney is at 13:36. Expect to see the first winter geese (a few Pinks and Brents), wildfowl such as Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall plus a selection of waders such as Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Greenshank and Dunlin. Our return will take just past Wiveton Hall café and onto Friary Hills where we will scan for passerines, raptors and more wildfowl.

MEET: In the Hall car park | **PARKING:** Blakeney Parish Council Hall & Scout Hut free car park, Langham Road, Blakeney NR25 7PG | **DISTANCE:** 3 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Walking is partially along uneven footpaths and as such this event probably isn't suitable for wheelchair users. | **FACILITIES**: Loos at the start point and in the village | **BADGES:** Outside the club area so unfortunately records can't count for Star Badges or Green Eco-badges this time.

Monthly Evening Club Talk

Thursday 26th September | 7.30pm-9.30pm |
Gresham Village Hall and via Zoom

Members' Night! … *4 short evening talks by club members*

THE SPEAKERs AND THEIR TALKS:

TALK 1 Mark Boyd: 150 Norfolk Birds in 2023

The title says it all! This talk covers Mark's interesting year of recording birds. Mark first visited Cley from his childhood home in Dorset in 1972. He saw 126 species, including 20 lifers, on that visit in the October half term, and he has been back regularly ever since. After a working life spent in nature conservation communications, he escaped to Holt permanently just before lockdown and has hardly left the county since. He is still Features Editor for the member magazine of the Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust and teaches wildlife art workshops with Art Safari Ltd. He is a bird ringer, and at time of writing had seen 399 bird species in Britain, but still no storm petrel!

TALK 2 Val & Mick Walker: Bird Behaviour

Val & Mick's talk covers changes in bird plumage, displaying and courtship, all illustrated by their photographs on which they will be able give us a little bit of non-technical background on. They hope their presentation will remind people why we all find birds both interesting and beautiful!

TALK 3 Kirsty Turner: Delaware Bay - a shorebird paradise?

Kirsty's talk will summarise the ongoing study of the western Atlantic flyway focussing on Delaware Bay. She has made two annual visits with a UK team who work alongside US teams to help monitor and catch waders in the bay. Horseshoe crab spawning in the bay provides the birds with a refuelling stop as they head for the Arctic breeding grounds. Kirsty is a past RSPB staff member, wader ringer, and local science teacher.

TALK 4 John Hurst: Short or Tall Stories? – You Decide!

As a professional watercolourist and author, John is well known for his exhibitions along the Norfolk coast depicting the atmospheric landscape and interesting maritime heritage. As an observer of birds, he will sometimes include them in his studies. He has written and illustrated six books, the journeys of John Wesley, founder of Methodism, Norfolk coastal walks, a sketchbook, local social history and fifty-year celebration memoir all of which had a charitable element attached to them. Most of these publications include first hand stories, sometimes irreverent, tragic, or simply funny. As his contribution to the members' presentation evening, John will attempt to recall a dozen of the somewhat 'interesting' birding stories supported by watercolour images and photographs. As the title implies, some defy belief!

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

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS: It is always nice to know if you are coming to the hall but by no means essential so if it takes your fancy on the evening, please just turn up as we would love to see you! If you are intending to join via Zoom though, you definitely need to let us know in advance so we can get the link out to you in good time. You can get in touch via nenbc@aol.co.uk.

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

DIRECTIONS: Gresham Village Hall, East Beckham Road off Church Lane, Gresham, Norfolk, NR11 8RT but note the published postcode might not take you to exactly the right spot! If you are coming through Aylmerton and Lower Gresham, turn right by the church (just after the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are coming through Gresham, turn left at the church (just before the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are dropping down from East Beckham, the hall is on your right opposite the church.

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

NENBC Coordinated Seawatch

Saturday 21st September | 7.30am-10.30am | several locations along the coast

What's a coordinated seawatch? Well, it's our fun annual event where we set up camp at a few spots along the coast for 3 hours and record all the birds we see flying by. You can learn about seawatching from folk who do it regularly and afterwards we can analyse the combined data to give us a better picture of what is happening. **And the best thing? Everyone is welcome!** Here's where we know we'll be so far:

- TEAM HAPPISBURGH | with Andy Clarke and friends
- TEAM MUNDESLEY | with Julian Thomas and friends
- TEAM CROMER NORTH LODGE PARK | with Trevor Williams and friends
- TEAM SHERINGHAM TANK | with Phil Borley and friends

Full info will be posted on the website in the next week or so as and when we confirm exact details. In previous years we have had additional assistance from our friends at Cley too a little further west and we hope they will be joining us again this year.

This will be the 10th Coordinated Seawatch organised by NENBC. We set ourselves up at a number of sites with good views out to sea, each team with an experienced seawatcher as lead, to record the number of each bird species we see along the coastline plus the direction they are flying, for each 10-minute period throughout a 3-hour time frame. It is both a social and informative event plus a great way to get started seawatching as a beginner or also to pass on your knowledge as a regular to those new to the activity. The beauty of a coordinated event is that we can communicate with our other sites along the coast by mobile, text or our WhatsApp Seawatching Group, to give advance warning of identifiable flocks flying through. Then of course there is the friendly rivalry between the sites. All the previous events have been well supported, produced some great data and most importantly been enjoyed by all the participants (except one member once who decided seawatching wasn't for him but he gave it a go!). To get the most out of the event, we'd advise coming along for the whole 3 hours but 'part timers' will always be welcome at any point! Whatever your level of seawatching, or birding experience generally, please come and join us!

NO BOOKING REQUIRED BUT …. Booking is by no means essential, so if it takes your fancy on the day, please just turn up as we would love to see you. However, **it would really help us with our resource management to ascertain minimum numbers for each site so we know that each leader has at least a couple of folk to help them** with the spotting and recording as it isn't a job that can be done as effectively alone. Also, one year we had to cancel a site at the last minute due to illness and we were able to let those who had notified us that were coming know so they didn't have a wasted journey and could re-direct to another site so as not to miss out. Please let us know in advance if you can via nenbc@aol.co.uk. Thank you!

ACCESSIBILITY: This is a static event so some sites may be suitable for those with mobility issues. We'll flag up access on the individual Team Sites as we put more details up on the website. Please do contact us on nenbc@aol.co.uk to see which of our other events can currently accommodate wheelchair users or could be adapted to do so.

STAR STATUS: Any bird species you see or hear on the seawatch can count towards your own NENBC Star Badges (Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum awards based on the number of species you have personally seen or heard in the club area and recorded on our website since becoming a member).

GOING GREEN!: If you are able to walk or cycle from home to the Team Sites, all the birds you see or hear on the seawatch can contribute to your personal NENBC Eco-badges (Green or Super-Green) for birding without the use of motorised transport if they are in the NENBC recording area.

WHAT TO BRING:

- A folding chair if there are no benches at a site
- A telescope and tripod as well as your bins if you have them
- A flask of hot drink and a snack
- Waterproof and warm clothing if the weather looks inclement plus some extra - in fact even if the weather doesn't look inclement, waterproofs and warm clothing recommended!
- An ID book
- Enthusiasm!

SEAWATCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce NENBC members to the joys of seawatching
2. To help NENBC members improve their skill at identifying birds in flight at sea
3. To map the likely route of wildfowl, seabirds and waders as they fly around the coast
4. To estimate the speed of flight of some of the species recorded to add to our growing database
5. To assess the effect of weather conditions and tide on the rate and timing of passage.

A few non-NENBC plugs this month:

Firstly there is a new exhibition at Cley by Alison Wilson. Many of you know club member and local artist John Hurst – indeed he is one of our speakers at Members' Night later this month. John has been mentoring Alison for a couple of years and this is her 1st solo exhibition. If you are up at Cley, pop in a say hi from NENBC!

Also on is a bit of a sing-song at Tuttington. We had Saffron Summerfield lined up at one of our evening talks a couple of years back but a bout of COVID meant she wasn't able to perform for us. If you fancy catching up with her performance, then give the organiser Jan a call.

Dear NENBC

You may have been contacted last winter regarding the relaunch of the Winter Gull Survey (WinGS) for the winters of 2024 and 2025. A novel aspect of this WinGS is the introduction of an **Autumn Survey** period. Information on the distribution of gulls during the passage period has not been previously collated, and we aim to identify areas of importance for post-breeding aggregations. Monitoring roosts in autumn will also aid in capturing seasonal peaks in some species that are scarcer during the winter months.

By taking part in the autumn WinGS survey period, you will be directly contributing to our understanding of places important to passage gulls. Find out more about WinGS on our website and sign up to take part this Autumn, or check back later in the year to help with the final winter surveys, when we hope the weather will be kinder than last year! WeBS Counters are also strongly encouraged to add their optional counts of gulls throughout the coming winter during their WeBS counts!

Go to app.bto.org/wings to browse vacant sites and find roosts in your area and visit www.bto.org/wings for more information.

Key date for autumn: September 29th 2024 (with a week before and after where key counts can be conducted)

If you are unable to count for the Autumn but wish to take part next winter, the key date is **January 19th 2025** (again with a week before and after where key counts can be conducted).

I would be grateful if share this message with members of North East Norfolk Bird Club and any other contacts that might find the survey interesting.

Kind regards, Emma Caulfield (WinGS Organiser)

The August Walks Week

We started this Walks Week programme in 2020 when we were limited by the 'Rule of 6' in terms of size of walk groups due to the Covid restrictions and we had a few members step up as novice walk leaders to show a small group of other members around their local patch. It was excellent for well-being at the time and following really positive feedback on how group size allowed more interaction with the leader and others and allowed us to visit varied and smaller locations, we are continuing with this initiative.

In August we planned 7 short walks over 7 days to 7 local hotspots with 7 leaders. Here's how we got on …

#1 Walk: Muckleburgh and Kelling Quags *with Dave Bilham*

Sunday 4th August | 35 species

For the first of the club's Walks Week events we had three participants, myself, Trevor and Brian, all of us, we soon discovered, from the Sheringham area. Cloudy and cool conditions greeted us as we met in Kelling village at 9.30am where parking was, thankfully, not an issue, though the overcast weather probably helped there. It also meant that the many **House Martins** whizzing around feeding were very low, right down amongst the rooftops, giving us great views, though their speed and sudden changes of direction defeated any attempts to get a half-decent photo. **Woodpigeon** and **Jackdaw** were the only other species noted before we set off.

The plan was to tackle Muckleburgh Hill first to get the uphill bits out of the way whilst we were fresh, so having successfully crossed the road we headed up the field margin towards the hill. **Carrion Crow** were seen and a **Chaffinch** heard on the climb, during which we entered the club recording area as we approached the summit. Most of this walk was situated just outside of the NENBC boundary, with the top of the hill being one of the few bits inside it. So it was very pleasing that a flock of fourteen **Curlew** heading west were seen whilst we were at the top, flying fairly close to where we were standing. The following were also all noted inside the club area: a pair of **Linnet**, numerous **Herring Gull** and **Black-headed Gull** heading inland, a calling **Green Woodpecker**, three **Swift** heading west, **Cormorant** on the sea, **Pheasant** and **Rook** and finally a **Sparrowhawk**, hunting far below us towards the Weybourne beach car-park. (On the hill top I took some photos of Cley in the distance to see if any birds there could be picked out when the photos were displayed on my laptop; on one there is a flying Marsh Harrier visible, though I have not included this in the total). The Siskin just offshore, despite being in the club area, was definitely not recordable!

Having spent a bit of time admiring the marvellous views and the heather in full flower, we set off downhill towards the western edge of Weybourne airfield. Model aircraft were being flown there, one of which caused a few "what's that's?" as it circled below us, disappearing then catching the light as it turned. There were Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown butterflies aplenty in the mown bracken, and right by the side of the track we found a large female Adder, trying to gain a bit of warmth from the cloudy sky. A **Swallow** noted over the airfield was the first of many we saw, including some sat on the aerials of the weather station.

Leaving the airfield perimeter and heading down towards the beach we noted a pair of **Goldfinch** over us west; it now also started gently raining, which had not been forecast! Nearing the shingle bank the calls of **Sandwich Tern** were heard as they passed along the coast. We decided we would climb the shingle to have a look at the sea, though this excursion added nothing new to the list. A short walk brought us to the seaward end of the quags where three sleeping **Oystercatcher** were seen, along with single examples of **Grey Heron** and **Little Egret**. On the shingle bank were many Linnet and Goldfinch, along with **Skylark**. A chorus of alarm calls from the assembled birds made us look up; a gorgeous **Peregrine** was above us, drifting lower and lower to give us very close views. It also disturbed a flock of **Starling** on the far end of the marsh, previously invisible in the grass. One bird which appeared not to have been too worried by the Peregrine was a lone **Lapwing** we had not noticed, which gave a single call and lifted into flight to the west after the hawk had departed.

Walking to the main pool we found it half-covered in red algae; this had not put off the few **Mallard** and two **Shoveller** on the water. We also saw a pair of **Coot** with three juveniles, and a single **Mute Swan** which was hidden in the bankside vegetation. **Sand Martin** were flitting about feeding over the water. Following the path in the direction of the village we were intrigued by the sight and sound of the barbed wire fence to our side creaking as it visibly stretched, then relaxed back, numerous times and apparently of its own volition. The mystery was solved when we spotted a cow, hidden out of sight in the bushes further along the fence, which was leaning on the fence every now and again as it fed.

It was now time to return to Kelling and our cars, and I was hopeful of picking up some thrushes, tits and finches along the bridleway, all of which had been conspicuously absent so far. However, the general quietness we had been experiencing continued, and we added only single examples of **Blackbird**, **Chiffchaff** and **Robin** to the list, though we did hear a **Red-legged Partridge** 'chucking' in an adjacent field. A toad was the only other animal seen! The grand total was **35 species** seen or heard in the two hours we were out and about. More importantly, we had enjoyed a good walk, and had plenty of opportunity to chat, so all round it was a most worthwhile morning.

#2 Walk: The Runtons *with Trevor Warren*
Monday 5th August | 18 species

The second of this year's walks started at West Runton, and once the group had assembled we headed along the cliffs towards East Runton. There was some bird activity along the cliffs with **House Sparrows** near the café, corvids in the fields and **Sand Martins** and **Swallows** overhead. We then headed inland to pass through the caravan park and cross the main road in order to make our way along Thain's Lane. The caravan park had little bird activity, with a **Magpie** the only sighting, although there was some entertainment provided by a man laying on top of the roof box on his car to try and close it. Once on the main road we passed a field containing several **Black-headed Gulls** and a few **Herring Gulls.** There had been little bird activity so far but we were hoping the shade along Thain's Lane would give us more to look at. Unfortunately this was not the case, with just **Woodpigeons** and a **Carrion Crow** being seen and **Blue and Great Tits** and a **Green Woodpecker** heard. It remained quiet as we headed across the golf course, although we did see a **Kestrel** as we turned towards West Runton and there were also House Sparrows calling from the gardens along Station Close. We turned into Sandy Lane and headed back towards the coast, checking the pond on the common which was, inevitably, birdless. We walked along Cromer Road to pick up the footpath back to Water Lane, hearing more House Sparrows and seeing a **Swift** flying overhead. Walking along the footpath we again saw **corvids** in the fields, there were House Sparrows along the edge of the path and in the bushes on Water Lane and a small flock of **Starlings** overhead. The walk ended in the beach car park, with a rather disappointing 18 species recorded, 3 of which were only heard.

#3 Walk: The Beckhams *with Colin Blaxill*
Tuesday 6th August | 32 species

With just three of us, we delayed the start in the hope that we could watch some the Felbeck Trust ringing group give us a ringing demonstration at their West Beckham Old Allotment site but unfortunately nothing had been caught in the mist nets. With light rain earlier, all looked good for the walk. The Old Allotment site and the adjoining lane gave us good numbers of **Goldfinch**, **Swallow** and **House Sparrow**. We slowly added species as we walked east, nothing surprising but a good range of birds around the solar farm as we approach East Beckham.

Dropping into the valley the habitat improved with grassland, woods and a stream but little was added before we found our first raptor, a distant **Kestrel** quickly followed by a pair of **Buzzard** and **Red Kite**. As we entered the village we opted to do the extension around it, rather than head straight back. The highlight here was a **Hobby** causing chaos among the local Swallows.

The route back added nothing until we reached The Wheatsheaf with a good group of **House Martin**. The final bird was a pair of **Long-tailed Tits** as we entered Allotment Lane. Giving a total of 32 species over a very pleasant walk.

#4 Walk: The Cromer Ridge [Overstrand / Northrepps] *with Stella Baylis*
Wednesday 7th August – the walk that wasn't!

Sadly we had to cancel Stella's maiden walk as leader as we didn't get any takers which was a real shame. We don't often do walks 'out east' and this would have been a great opportunity to be shown around by someone who loves the area and knows it well. It wasn't just on this walk that we struggled – we had less interest than usual on most of our walks this time. So, what is the cause of the low numbers on our Walks Week programme and **what can we do to increase participation on this annual event which is usually so well liked by some?** We have had some feedback already, including this one:

Walks Week: what can we do differently to increase participation?

> "Thank you again for organising this unique event. I hope you were not too disappointed in the lower numbers of participants this time. But it is August and holiday time, and amongst the others who are around, lots of people do not expect to see much this late in the year. There is a rumour going around that perhaps this event won't be repeated because of the low numbers of people. I fervently hope this is not true – but may I make a suggestion? In June we didn't really have a proper regular walk apart from Trevor's, as the Nightjar evening is not actually a walk, but an observation event. How about scheduling the walks week in June – before everyone goes on holiday and at a time when we see the peak of our birds? Anyway, that's all I wanted to write – may the Walks Week live on for a long time!"

Please do get in touch with your thoughts about Walks Week going forward (or indeed any of our other events) and we would really love to hear from you.

Meanwhile, we are remaining optimistic so would any of you be interested in taking part and joining our walk leader pool? We are always on the lookout for members who have an enthusiasm for their local patch, especially if it is in a 'less-visited' spot from our Locations list. Please don't worry if you haven't led a walk before or are nervous about being able to ID individual birds – it can be a supportive joint effort by all those attending. What we really want is someone who knows and enjoys the local patch. If this could be you, give us a shout on **nenbc@aol.co.uk**!

#5 Walk: Blickling Park *with Alan Stevens*
Thursday 8th August | 29 species

Meeting at 9.00am we were greeted by a warm, sunny morning for another 'Walks Week' stroll around Blickling Park. Previous walks have tended to be a little extended time wise (this one was by the time we returned!) and the intention was to make it a little shorter and perhaps give us an opportunity to take a closer look.

We set off from the car park towards the 'Bucks Arms' walking past the front of the hall towards the bookshop/café area. We were soon underway with a few of the usual suspects, **Wood Pigeon**, **House Sparrow**, a singing **Robin**, **Blackbird**, a couple of **Greenfinches** 'wheezing' away and **Jackdaws** flying over.

Passing through the small wood towards the pasture overlooked by the Orangery we added **Goldfinch**, **Blue Tit**, noisy **Carrion Crows** and a lone **Chaffinch** on one of the magnificent old Yew trees before turning to set off towards the lake. The long straight walk here has to the left-hand side a deep overgrown ditch providing ideal cover for smaller birds but nor today alas as the temperature rose indicating that things may be a little on the quiet side. What wasn't quiet was the cacophonous chain saw working nearby which for a while drowned out any hope of hearing any birds at all! We did however manage to add a **Kestrel**, a **Stock Dove** and a **Buzzard** soaring on the warming air.

Down by the lake just two **Canada Geese** remained from the greater numbers that had been present recently. There were, of course, several **Black-headed Gulls** and a pair of the **Common Terns**, which are seemingly always present here during the summer, patrolling up and down the length of the lake. A couple of silent **Herring Gull** cruised around overhead and this year's successful family of **Mute Swans** were all accounted for.

Elsewhere on the lake we counted 16 **Mallard**, a calling **Moorhen**, two **Great Crested Grebe**, which are it seems increasingly difficult to find anywhere, and four **Coot**, again now scarcer it seems on our inland waters. The reed beds along the east side of the lake gave us calls from both **Reed and Sedge Warblers**.

As we reached the dam wall end of the lake a solo **Cormorant** flew south, we were to find two more in a tree to the west of the lake later. A long stare into the wood south of the lake gave us nothing to add where we would usually look to find a **Nuthatch** and **Treecreeper**. Walking back towards our start point we added only a **Cettis Warbler**, undoubtedly the best bird of the morning, making a fuss from the dense reed bed.

So, not too many birds but made up for in part by a fair abundance of insect life with a selection of dragonflies, damselflies, chasers, darters and a few butterflies which are in short supply everywhere this year and of course the good company of John, Stephanie and Tracy. As usual conversations flowed as we walked along and it was especially interesting to hear from Tracy about her efforts with the Aylsham Swift Group.

#6 Walk: Swanton Novers *with Nick Kimber*

Friday 9th August | 30 species

Meeting at the Swanton Novers Village Hall, our group set off through the village towards the Nature Reserve, picking up several of the local resident birds on the way, including Greenfinch, Collared Dove and House Martins. The weather was sunny, with a quite strong breeze, but this did not deter the numerous butterflies we encountered on route as well as birds. We made our way along the footpath skirting the nature reserve, which runs alongside fields, where we found Swallows, Goldfinch and a distant Cormorant, as well as a Silver-wash Fritillary spotted by the eagle eyed Steve. Entering the ancient Swanton Novers Woodland, we followed the well sign-posted footpath, adding Coal Tit, Nuthatch and found hanging in the branches of a tree Southern Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies. Ann located for us probably what was the highlight of the walk, which was a lovely Spotted Flycatcher hunting in the canopy of the trees, which Doug successfully photographed for us all; I just managed a picture of him taking the picture. The track leads to open fields adjacent to the church, which is a reliable location for Yellowhammer, which we duly found, along with a Kestrel, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Linnet and Swifts. After a slight detour, where a Comma was spotted on blackberries and a calling Chiffchaff located, we made our way back between fields alongside a sheltered high hedge, where a Wall Brown was seen, and a Blackcap was heard singing. As we approached the car park Steve drew our attention to a Sparrowhawk overhead, bringing the total of bird species seen to 30, with 11 butterfly species seen. We all agreed that for the time of the year, it was a good walk, and I am grateful to everyone who made the walk so pleasurable, with special thanks to Steve for his local knowledge and experience which he enthusiastically shared with us all.

#7 Walk: Sustead Lanes & Footpaths *with Trevor Williams*
Saturday 10th August

The Saturday morning walk around the footpaths and lanes of Sustead and Felbeck Trust reserve of Sustead Common was the last in the recent series of NENBC Walks Week walks. We had a full house of attendees and good weather for the occasion. Unfortunately the farmers had been busy in the run up to the walk, harvesting the wheat and immediately ploughing the fields - in the process temporarily obliterating the footpaths! A quick re-routing took us to the north east of the village passed some unmanaged hedgerows which harboured a nice variety of butterflies and dragonflies - the best of which were Purple Hairstreak and Migrant & Southern Hawker, at rest in the nearby vegetation. The Gur Beck chalk stream provided a continuous thread through our walk and helped achieve a bird list of over thirty species - representative of the surrounding countryside - if a little lacking in stand-out species. Close views of Goldcrest, Yellowhammer, a late summer Swift and the local thriving colony of breeding House Sparrow were the probable highlights. All agreed that it was a rewarding walk in an area not well-watched by Club members and a welcome introduction to the wildlife and management of Sustead Common nature reserve. *Photo: Migrant Hawker*

NENBC Bird Report 2023

In this month's big news - we are delighted to announce that our **NENBC Bird Report 2023** is back from the printers and most of you will already have received your copy. It is predominantly going out by hand delivery from volunteers so please bear with us if yours hasn't quite made it yet! This report is a collaborative effort, making use of the records, comments and photos uploaded to our website by you, our members, supplemented by records from our area reported elsewhere by non-members and backed up with a selection of artwork from members and local artists. **Thank you so much to all of you who collectively made this possible by uploading your records and to the team of volunteers who made the actual production of the report a reality**. Keep up the good work of sharing your sightings on our website during 2024! For those of you who didn't sign up for a copy with your membership subscription this year, or indeed if you want a second book, we have a few spares so do get in touch on **nenbc@aol.co.uk** if you would like to buy one for £3.

The Year at Weybourne Camp

August 2024

WC 2024

Male Banded Demoiselle, the first record for the Camp

By Moss Taylor

This is the 8th in a monthly series this year of the wildlife at Weybourne Camp during 2024 …

To say that August was disappointing is an understatement, although at the end of the month there were signs that things were looking up with the first north-easterly winds of the autumn.

Perhaps the most interesting wildfowl record was of a group of 4 Egyptian Geese flying west close inshore on 29th, including one juvenile. Maximum counts of the commoner ducks included 325 Teal and 170 Common Scoter all west on 13th, 13 Shoveler east on 16th and 23 Gadwall west on 23rd. A female Grey Partridge teamed up with a covey of Red-legs from 14th and a male Water Rail was 'chipping' at Weybourne Hope on 20th, the first since April 1st. An early Red-necked Grebe flew west offshore on 13th. Peak wader counts included 9 Black-tailed Godwits west on 8th, 12 Whimbrel west on 24th and 38 Oystercatchers (Norwegian birds arriving to winter on The Wash) west on 29th, while 3 Avocets flew east on 1st and a Green Sandpiper west on 4th.

August is the prime month to see juveniles of two of the scarcer species of gull and so 2 Yellow-legged Gulls on 4th and one on 8th, followed by a Caspian Gull on 11th fitted the pattern nicely. The easterly passage of Sandwich and Common Terns both peaked on 4th with 279 of the former species and 43 of the latter, while 15 Arctic Terns in a typically tight flock flew east on 22nd and 56 the following day. Arctic Skuas peaked with 9 east on 23rd, and the first Pomarine Skuas (2 subadults) flew east on 28th and a Bonxie east on 31st. An unseasonal Great Northern Diver flew west close inshore on 11th.

The unprecedented run of Cattle Egrets continued with 3 west on 8th and singles on 9th and 26th. A flock of 10 Little Egrets flying west offshore on 10th was the largest party this year. An Osprey flying west over the Camp and Kelling Water Meadows on 25th was the first of the year.

The first Whinchat of the autumn appeared on 24th and the first Pied Flycatcher and Redstart on 28th, when the wind at last moved into the east. Nowadays, House Sparrows are rarities on the Camp and so a flock of 9 west on 26th was a surprise, but the species was clearly on the move as 4 flew east on 27th and 11 on 28th. Finally a male White Wagtail was present briefly on 31st before flying west.

Juvenile Willow Warbler enjoying the sun

If birds were rather disappointing in August, dragonflies certainly made up for it with five more species bringing the year's total to 15. Southern Hawker, Ruddy Darter and Willow Emerald were to be expected but 2-3 male Banded Demoiselles over the scrape were a bonus, and a new species for the Camp. However, a true rarity appeared in the form of a pair of egg-laying Southern Migrant Hawkers on the western edge of Weybourne Hope, a new species for the Camp list. While my personal highlight was watching a male Emperor Dragonfly catch and start to eat a Migrant Hawker, an act of cannibalism that I had not previously witnessed.

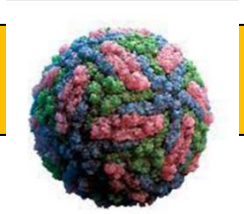
Male Southern Migrant Hawker, otherwise known as the Blue-eyed Hawker

Male Emperor eating the head of a Migrant Hawker

As a postscript I should also add a rather frustrating record, which had it been seen would have constituted a new species in the area since the formation of the NENBC. A radio-tagged Caspian Tern ringed as a nestling in the Swedish Baltic on 23rd June 2022 that wintered in Senegal, and spent several weeks at Hickling this summer, was tracked flying west along the north Norfolk coast past Weybourne Camp, not once but twice on June 23rd. On the first occasion in the afternoon it continued west until c.10 miles north of Wells before turning south and flying overland back to the Broads. It then headed back north around the coast, passing the Camp in the evening and roosted on the sands at Stiffkey!

Caspian Tern at Hickling Broad

Look out for signs of Usutu virus



By Andy Clarke

One of the consequences of climate change is the spread of disease, usually because the vector is changing its distribution as the climate warms. In 2020 the first case of Usutu virus (USUV) was detected in a Blackbird in London. Since then, a small number of wild and captive birds have tested positive, predominantly in the Greater London area. As of November 2023, no human cases of USUV have been reported in the UK (details from the UK Health Security Agency).

USUV is a flavivirus, related to those that cause West Nile fever, dengue fever, tick-borne encephalitis, yellow fever and Zika. It was first detected in South Africa in the 1950s, and is believed to reached Europe though infected migratory birds. The primary hosts for USUV are birds, with songbirds and owls being especially susceptible, and the vectors are mosquitoes. In Europe the main vector is the mosquito Culex pipiens, which is also a vector for West Nile virus and avian malaria. USUV has been detected in humans, but the risk to health is currently believed to be low.

On the rare occasions that Blackbirds infected with USUV have been observed, the typical symptoms are lethargy, weakness, loss of coordination and seizures. It is highly unusual to see sick birds like this, as birds that are ill usually keep a low profile. However Francis Farrow reports that a sickly looking Blackbird was recently seen on Beeston Common.

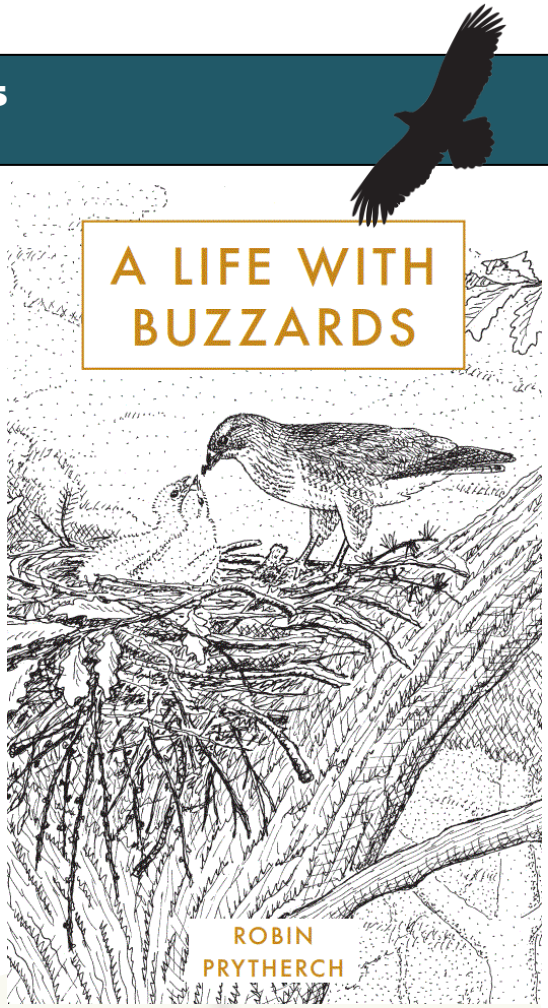
Although USUV is not currently a notifiable disease, government organisations and the BTO are keen to track the spread of this disease. So if you see a sickly looking Blackbird, please either report this directly to:

https://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org/

Or let Carol or myself know, with any details, and we will report it for you. Let's hope we do not get many (or even any) reports.

Robin Prytherch - A Life with Buzzards

By Steve and Karin Hale

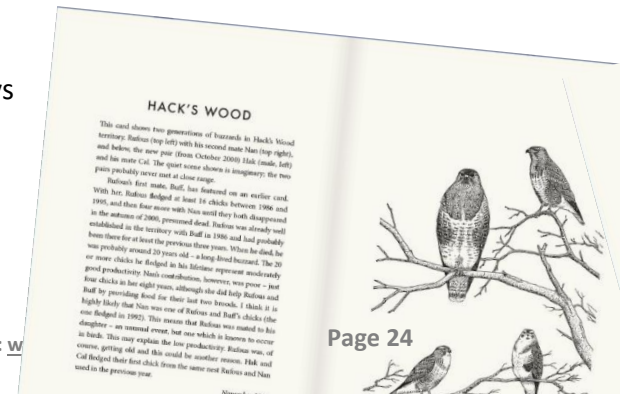


Like so many, we were privileged to know Robin, who died aged 81 in 2021. It is a fitting tribute by his friends and those who appreciated his work that this book has been published to mark his fascinating work and contribution to our understanding of Common Buzzard.

Robin studied the habits of Buzzard in the Gordano Valley, North Somerset, identifying 120 territories and building up a detailed life history of all the birds he monitored. Buzzard life was full of surprises. Over forty dedicated years, rain or shine, armed with a cheese sandwich, a flask of coffee, a pair of binoculars, and a telescope, Robin would head out to watch his beloved birds, making sketches and observations.

The bulk of this beautiful book is made up of the sketches and descriptions of the birds he observed so meticulously, many drawn in the field. He would choose a sketch to send to his friends in homemade Christmas cards each year. In his pen-and-ink drawing of the individual Buzzard and in his notes, he named them and commented on their life stories. Many of you may know Robin through the BTO, or through his ringing training work, or through CVRS and the BOC, as we did over the decades. This will be a treasured memento of a dedicated naturalist, who was always keen to share his knowledge and enthusiasm.

Available online at www.bristolbooks.org



Last Month's Ask the Audience …

If anyone has a question they have been puzzling over, do please drop us a line and we will try and find out the answer for you. **We'd really appreciate any club members writing in with their responses to the questions asked too.**

White birds: a question from David North

Having recently had the delight of watching three species of egret and spoonbills here in North Norfolk it got me thinking about white birds. In the distance whether perched in trees, wading in water or feeding on mud it's usually the white birds that stand out from a distance. They're the first ones you notice. But we don't have any all-white land birds. Why?

There are quite a few species of water or wetland birds that are all or mainly white: mute swans, our terns and black-headed gulls as well as the aforementioned egrets and spoonbills. Beyond our shores this also holds pretty much true. Think of pelicans and white storks – mainly white wetland birds.

So this raises two questions. Why so few all-white land birds? Yes, I know there are a few global exceptions – white cockatoos and white doves spring to mind. But I still think these are exceptions that prove the rule. Or if not a rule at least a trend. The other question that springs to mind is what advantage is there for water birds in being white? And, why so few small white water birds? It's usually the big wetland birds that are white.

We have had a couple of responses to David's Ask the Audience Question of last month ….

Why are some birds white? *Moss Taylor*

White plumage serves two main and entirely different functions: to appear either less or more obvious, depending on the habitat in which the bird lives.

In Europe there are two predominantly white land birds: Snowy Owl and Ptarmigan, both of which use their white plumage as camouflage, at least during the snowy, winter months. The same is true of the two species of sheathbill that inhabit the south polar regions. The vast majority of land birds live in open areas or woodland, where being white would carry a significantly higher risk of being predated, as they would be unable to hide and blend in with their background. This has been clearly demonstrated by the higher mortality rate in albino birds. For example a Sparrowhawk is able to focus on and target more easily a white Starling amongst a weaving flock of otherwise normally plumaged birds.

Many seabirds are white on the underparts and dark above, known as counter shading. Both colours are in fact used as camouflage. A seabird, for example a Guillemot or penguin, is less easily seen by a potential predator approaching from below under the surface of the sea, as the white plumage blends in with the light sky. Whereas from above they are less easily spotted from the air, as the dark upperparts merge in with the darker sea.

So why are so many of the large freshwater wetland birds white? In fact they want their presence to be known by others of their species, their large size makes them far less wary of predation. Even comparatively small birds, such as gulls, are attracted to good fishing areas by the presence of a gathering of other gulls, a situation easily observed off the Norfolk coast at the time that the mackerel come inshore to gorge on the whitebait. But perhaps the best example of this is in the pelicans, which feed more efficiently when working in tandem with other members of their species, as they swim in line abreast driving their fish prey into shallow water.

White egrets clearly are obtaining an advantage by being in flocks. Firstly there is safety in numbers, but also the presence of a localised gathering by day indicates a good food source. Cattle Egrets, in particular, hone in on fields where livestock are feeding, which disturb insects as they walk around the grass.

During the breeding season Mute Swans are strongly territorial and their white plumage advertises their presence and indicates that their particular stretch of water is already occupied. Woe betide any other swans that dare to enter their territory, whereas in winter, along with both Whooper and Bewick's Swans, they her into herds and feed peacefully together. This antagonism towards other apparently adult Mute Swans during the summer, explains why the all-white Polish variety of juvenile Mute Swans are chased off, even if they are the male's own offspring. Interestingly, the Black Swans of Australia nest in colonies, and thus have no need to display an all white plumage.

Photos: 1) Little & Great White Egret; 2) Great White Pelican; 3) Herring & Black-headed Gull; 4) Whooper Swan; 5) Guillemot; 6) Ptarmigan (in case).

More on white birds *Andy Clarke*

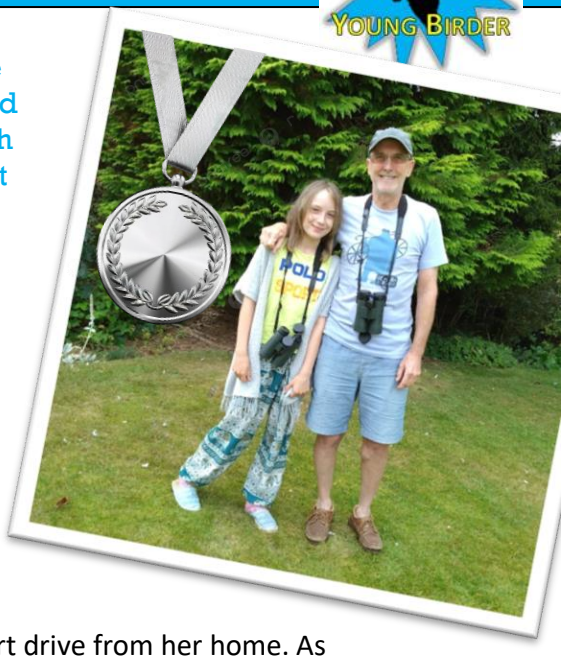
David asks why so few landbirds are white. Quite a few passerines are pale beneath (for example wagtails and shrikes) but very few are actually white: I can think only of a few species of Monjita from South America and maybe Monarchs from Australasia as being predominantly white. So David poses a really interesting question.

As Moss says in his reply, a key reason is undoubtedly camouflage, as white birds show up very well. Indeed a wintering Great Grey Shrike can be seen at considerable distance because of its white underparts, as can the White Monjita in Argentina; interestingly, both of these species perch prominently in the open. One might think that such a bird would be very exposed to predation when incubating its eggs, which is presumably why the White Monjita breeds in cavities (or old nests of Rufous Hornero, which are enclosed). A detailed 1979 study of over 500 species of Western Palaearctic birds concluded that by far the most potent selective pressures to have shaped bird coloration are those related to predation risk.

There are, however, other factors that influence bird colouration. One is feather strength, as the addition of melanin (the black pigment) makes feathers stronger. This may be why gulls have black wing-tips and many raptors have dark ends to the primaries. Most passerines live in vegetation, and their feathers wear through contact with leaves, and so white plumage would damage more quickly. The second factor is the need to obtain the pigments needed for colour, and in most cases this means suitable food. An interesting link here is:

https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/how-birds-make-colorful-feathers/

A Fledgling Birder



Club member Ian Anderson wrote in to tell us about the fab day out he had over the summer with his enthusiastic young niece Josie. We would love to hear from other members who have had great experiences with their young relatives or have some other top tips for engaging the next generation with nature – do let us know!

On 26 July, I had to look after Josie, my 9 year old niece for the day. Grandchild age for me but family sibling age differences have led to me having two young nieces which is lovely! Anyway, what a great opportunity to indulge my (and her) interest in birds and wildlife in general. I hope I haven't brainwashed her too much! She showed 'early promise' when I found a Yellowhammer for her on a holiday in Austria when she was only 4 years old and seeing it through my binoculars seemed to ignite something. She's done the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch a couple of times (just about lasting the hour!) and has lots of birds visiting her family garden in Cambridge along with dragonflies, frogs & toads thanks to their pond, and a hedgehog has shown up too.

So our first big day together: We headed to Anglesey Abbey which is only a short drive from her home. As we all know, the bird count starts at the beginning of the day, so on the drive there we ticked off wood pigeon and crow to get us started. Josie is very sporty and as the Olympics were about to start, I suggested that if we got 10 birds we'd get a Bronze Medal, Silver for 15 and Gold for 20 birds. Josie upped the ante and suggested we should also try and find as many other animals e.g. insects and mammals as we could, too. Excellent plan. On arrival at Anglesey Abbey, Josie studied the map of the grounds (maps aren't my strong suit) and plotted a route for us through the woodland paths and down to the stream and mill. So off we set, both with some nifty Hawke Endurance binoculars - my wife had lent hers to Josie - much better than the RSPB kids ones she soon outgrew and now she's sensible enough to look after them! The other key tool we had was the Merlin app on my phone. I love it and I think Josie does too. The bird identification feature is brilliant (most of the time) and perfect to show a 9 year old a picture of what she is hearing when the little critters remain hidden. We saw swifts above us, and soon had blackbird, robin, great tit, blue tit and magpie ticked off. Bronze medal looked like it was nearly in the bag already! Later on we saw a seagull (herring gull for the aficionados out there) and a green woodpecker. Bronze in the bag!

As we reached Lode Mill by the river I'd hoped for ducks, moorhen and maybe a wagtail etc. but all we got was a small party of mallards skulking on Quarry Pool. Never mind. But later on Merlin identified the calls of several chiffchaffs and a party of long-tailed tits. Near the small cafe and toilets we heard (but didn't see) a treecreeper and goldcrests. (Coffee/milkshake and we shared a Danish pastry in case you're wondering.) And Yay - Silver Medal! We were on a roll now. Not sure who of us was most excited, me, Josie, or me for seeing Josie having fun. Then we saw and heard a nuthatch. On the return route we heard but didn't see coal tits, and on a tall conifer surrounding some grassy areas Josie got her bins on a goldfinch. But oh no, that was it! Two short of the Gold Medal!! No pressure then... By the way Josie's 'other species' count was pretty impressive too - fifteen: field mouse, grey squirrel, three species of butterfly (meadow brown, cabbage white and red admiral I think), cricket, blue bottle fly, 'a red bug', dragonfly, damselfly, money spider, bumble bee, ant, hoverfly and wasp!! Josie thought the goldfinch was her best spot as all the colours were in full view.

But the drive back to Cambridge was a bit subdued, and despite looking hard we couldn't spot the two further species we needed for a Gold Medal! But... getting tea ready in the garden I heard a wren singing - nineteen! And that really was it for the day. Doesn't do any harm to sometimes not get a Gold Medal does it? Incidentally, the next morning I heard a collared dove in the garden - 20. But too late...

And no dear reader, not a single raptor at any point. You'd think an obliging kestrel or buzzard might have shown up! But incidentally Josie did spot a sparrowhawk on a hedge in Denmark during a trip with her Mum the week before. Well done!

But hey, 34 species of wildlife on the day, one very pleased 9 year old and one very tired uncle. Josie (and her elder sister Hannah) are coming to stay with us in Norfolk soon so I'm hoping to keep the fire burning!

Ian Alderson | Aged 65, reviewed by Josie aged 9 |

Well done Josie! We are looking forward to you coming up to stay with Uncle Ian so you can get started on your Bronze NENBC Badge – you don't have to do that all in one day!

We were delighted to be back working with the University of East Anglia's Environmental Science department again this year. This is where, along with other organisations, we pitch real-life environmental consultancy projects to a group of 3rd year students in the capacity of 'client' and we get selected by 'consultant' students in line with their areas of interest. Working on the briefs provided by us, they research and document their topic, feedback regularly via Zoom or in-person, and at the end of the process present us with an individual consultancy report. This time we worked with three students and jointly alongside Felbeck Trust with a fourth. Below is part of the brief for the third of these along with the Executive Summary from the student consultant and we'll have the remaining projects in the coming months. If you would like to be emailed the full consultancy reports for any of these projects then just let us know.

Migration Flight Speed in Birds

Migration is a common feature of birds, and many species have to cross large bodies of water on the their way south or north. Although ringing (banding) has told us where birds winter, we know relatively little of the details of the routes they use, or how fast they travel. The development of geolocators has given us information of both of these unknowns, but they can be expensive and may require the bird to be recaptured to download the information. Recently the NENBC has been using coordinated seawatches to record the time when distinctive individuals or groups of birds pass a series of locations, from which we can estimate flight speeds. We now have sufficient of these measurements (about 400) to start looking for patterns. For example do ducks and waders move at similar speeds, or do larger and smaller species travel at different speeds? This project will provide a valuable first look at these questions by providing a report summarising the flight speed of different species and groups, with results summarised in simple but informative tables and graphs and compared with the data already in the literature.

Migration Flight Speed in Birds *by Lucas White*

Disclaimer: *This material is based upon work supported by* ***Lucas White*** *for ENV-6031B Environmental Consultancy module in the School of Environmental Sciences, UEA. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations are those of the author and do not reflect the views of the School of Environmental Sciences, UEA its employees or its administration.*

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report analyses the similarities and differences between migration speeds of various bird species. These speeds were calculated using distance and timing data provided by North East Norfolk Bird Club (NENBC). The calculated migration speeds were compared on a species-by-species basis and across bird types, for example the speed of ducks against that of waders. Secondary data was sourced to also compare the wingspans and weights of these species against one another, aiming to highlight any potential relationship between these characteristics and migration speeds.

Problem Overview

This report aims to address the gap within existing literature surrounding migration speeds of various bird species, especially regarding sea-dwelling birds. Calculating migration speeds of birds is extremely difficult due to the volume of factors affecting a bird's flight speed, alongside the difficulty of obtaining accurate flying distances and timings. This gap within existing literature has led to contention surrounding migration speeds of birds, and whether they are increasing or decreasing (Lehikoinen, et al., 2008) (Rahbek & Gauthreaux, 2015), something which this report aims to address whilst also producing results relevant to the county of Norfolk.

Summary of Key Findings

Overall Results

Grebes were found to migrate the fastest (**73.53kph**) and gulls were calculated to migrate the slowest (**20.94kph**), the migration results for each bird type are presented in ascending order in **figure 1.1** below. Cranes were the fastest flying species when concerning each species individually, although when categorised into wider groups, cormorants were found to be the fastest flyers when flying individually, and divers were the fastest flying flocks. Gannets were calculated to have the largest difference between flocks and single speeds, with flocks flying **20.76kph** on average faster than birds migrating individually. These results are displayed below in **figures 1.1&1.2**.

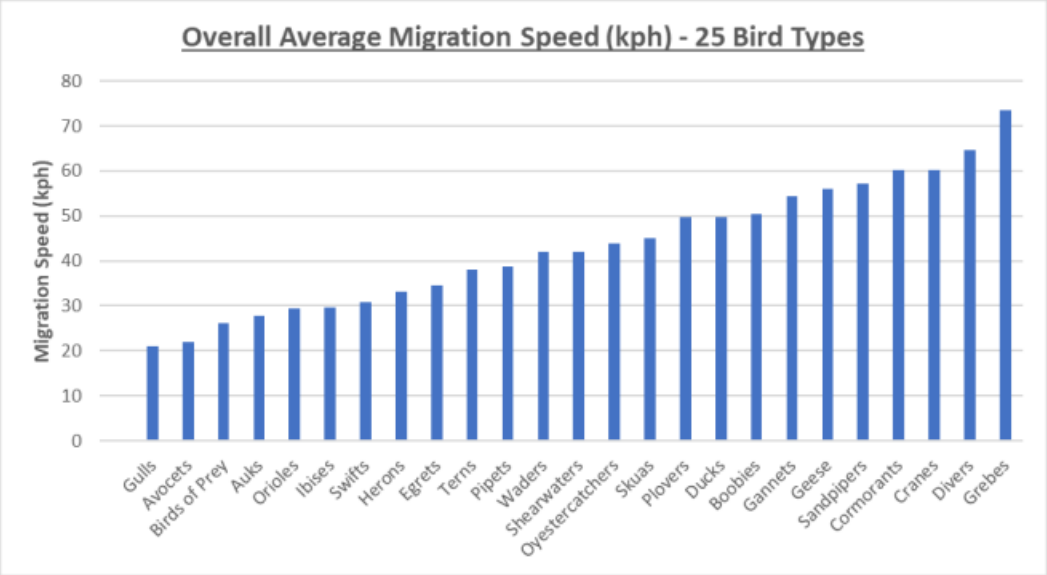


Figure 1.1 *- Average Migration Speed by Bird Type*

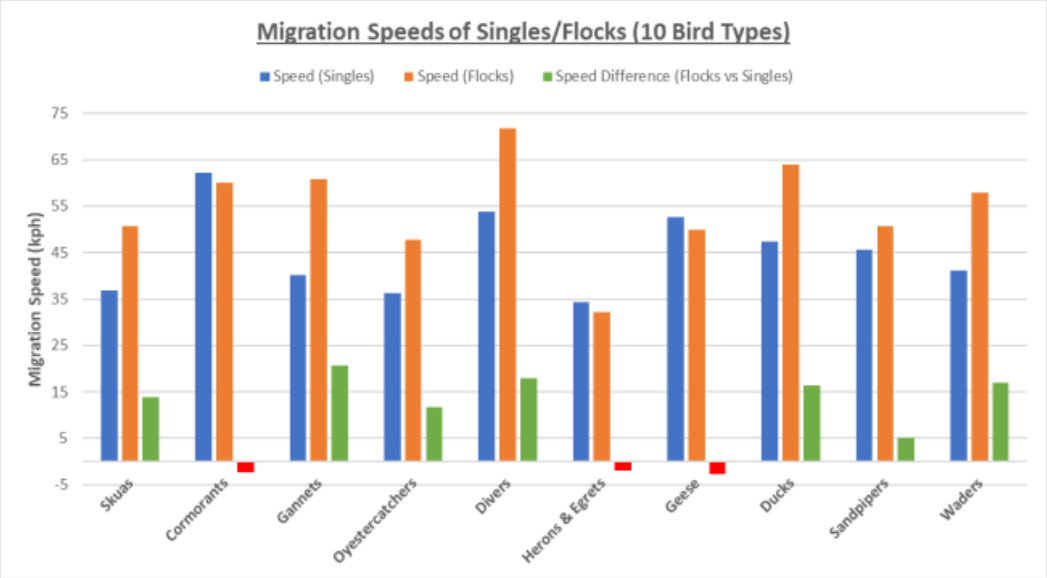


Figure 1.2*- Migration Speeds of Singles Vs Flocks*

Flock Size and Migration Speed

This positive relationship between migration speed and mean flock size was only achieved when geese were removed from the selection, as the flock size of brent geese was an anomaly within this dataset. The relationship between flock size and migration speed achieved the strongest R2 value when a trendline was plotted (**R2=0.7857**), meaning the two variables had the strongest relationship of any data plotted across this entre report. When assessing the dataset as a whole, the relationship between flock size and migration speed is extremely weak and almost non-existent.

Weight and Migration Speeds

A positive relationship was calculated between weight and migration speeds across all five scenarios of this data. Although different weight ranges achieved a stronger relationship than others, this positive relationship was still present across all five scenarios.

Proposed Recommendations

To improve this project I would increase the total number of sightings within the dataset, but more importantly I would greatly increase the sample size of species with under five sightings. This concerns **71.43%** of species within the dataset and would significantly improve the reliability of the obtained results. Additionally, more multi point sightings should be included within the dataset, again this would further include the precision of the obtained results as migration speeds varied wildly across sightings with multiple points, allowing for a more accurate speed to be recorded.

The implementation of a more accurate timing instrument is essential for increasing the reliability of these results. Something such as a shared timer across two devices would be ideal. Recording sightings to the nearest few seconds would greatly increase accuracy of the results. Currently sightings are recorded to the nearest minute, but this greatly reduces the accuracy of results regarding the smaller distances as all the birds complete the journey within the same 1–2-minute interval.

Additional metrics such as windspeed and direction should be recorded using existing technology like an anemometer. Allowing for future projects to analyse the impact of windspeed and direction on different bird species migrating speeds.

Conclusion

This report aimed to evidence relationships and trends concerning the migration times of different bird groups across Norfolk. Contention surrounds the true migration speeds of bird species due to the multitude of factors affecting flight speed, alongside the gaps within existing literature.

Across all assessed weight categories and when concerning the dataset as a whole, heavier birds were found to migrate at higher speeds. Grebes were calculated to be the fastest species within the sample, and gulls were identified as the slowest. Divers were the fastest group when migrating in flocks, and cormorants were the fastest group when travelling alone. Herons & egrets were the slowest group in both single and flock sightings.

The strongest relationship identified within the dataset was between weight and migration speed. The R2 value of 0.2678 for this graph is the highest of any linear trendline within this dataset. Despite this, most of the relationships assessed within this report were found to have a weak positive relationship. It is possible that the small sample sizes of rarer species within this dataset, such as Ospreys, reduced the accuracy and precision of these results.

To improve the obtainable results from this data I suggest increasing both the number of multi point sightings and number of sightings for each species, specifically regarding the **71.43%** of species within the dataset that contain less than 5 sightings. Finally, I recommend the additional inclusion of wind direction and windspeed measurements with future bird sightings, allowing analysis surrounding the impact of these two variables on migration speeds. As although it is known these two variables impact flight speed, it would be a useful metric in comparing to what extent different species and bird types are affected

Contemplating Conservation
The Status of the UK's Breeding Seabirds

By Carol Thornton

At the beginning of this month, a report was published on the status of the UK's breeding seabirds. Every few years a number of conservation organisations come together to 'stocktake species population status' to enable conservation actions aimed at halting and reversing biodiversity loss to be prioritised, measured and assessed. Two procedures are used to evaluate the status of birds in the UK.

1. **UK Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) reviews to denote levels of bird species conservation concern.** This uses a traffic-light system - those on the Green List are of least conservation concern and those on the Red List are of greatest conservation concern with Amber in between.
2. **International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List) methodology (IUCN 2012) to assess species extinction risk in Great Britain**. This enables bird species to be evaluated on a level playing field with other taxonomic groups and can therefore added to multi-taxa status assessments.

Due to COVID, the data to assess the status of the UK's breeding seabirds wasn't available in 2021 when the last BoCC review was undertaken but results from a 2023 study (Burnell et al) are now available and provide the first comprehensive information on national trends and population size of breeding seabird species since Seabird 2000 (Mitchell et al. 2004). This has allowed the production of an addendum to update both the 5th BoCC report and also the 2nd IUCN Regional Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain.

The full report is available (The status of the UK's breeding seabirds) but here are the headlines on the BoCC element as per the RSPB website:

> "Evidence has been reviewed for 28 seabird species. More of the UK's seabird species have shown alarming recent declines, leading to five new species being added to the Red List, which details the birds most in need of conservation help. Ten of the UK's breeding seabird species are now Red-listed. The **Arctic Tern**, **Leach's Storm-petrel**, **Common Gull**, **Great Black-backed Gull** and **Great Skua** are now on the Red List because of severe population declines. The newly added seabird species join the **Kittiwake**, **Herring Gull**, **Roseate Tern**, **Arctic Skua** and **Puffin** that were already on the Red List and require urgent conservation action."

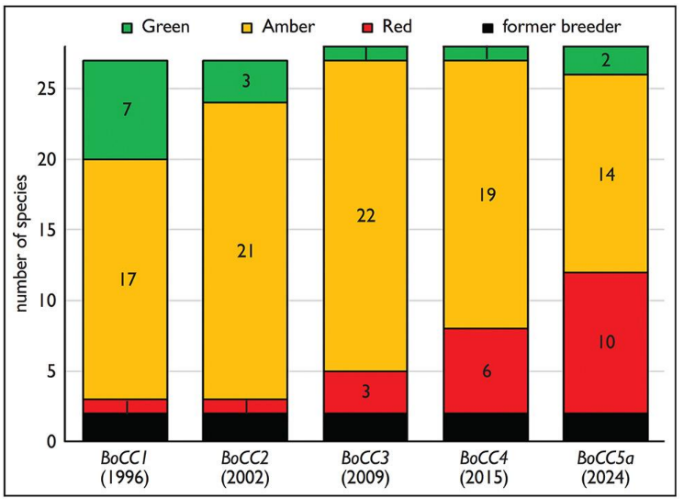


Fig. 1. Length of the Red, Amber and Green lists across the five *BoCC* reviews for the 28 UK breeding seabird species. Note that the assessment process has developed over time and this figure does not take account of changes to criteria. Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* was added to the species list in *BoCC3*.

In BoCC5, the full Red list for UK bird species comprised 70 species, the Amber list 103 and the Green list 72 (Stanbury *et al* 2021). After applying the findings from this addendum, the UK BoCC Red list now stands at **73 species (30%)**, with **99 (40%) on the Amber list** and **73 (30%) on the Green list.**

In terms of the assessment of seabird extinction risk in Great Britain element, this is what the authors of the report had to say:

> "This addendum has also highlighted a notable deterioration in the IUCN Red List status of Great Britain's breeding seabird populations. The majority of our currently occurring seabirds – 18 out of 26 species (69%) – now have at least one population (breeding or non-breeding) that qualifies as being threatened with extinction from Great Britain, up from ten (38%) in 2017 (Stanbury et al. 2017). Four species have moved from Least Concern in GB IUCN1 to Critically Endangered: **Leach's Storm-petrel**, **Northern Fulmar**, **Great Black-backed Gull** and **Puffin**. There are many similarities between the results of GB IUCN2a and UK BoCC5a. However, two species assessed as Critically Endangered or Endangered at a Great Britain scale do not currently appear on the BoCC Red list; **Yellow-legged Gull** is on the edge of its European range here and **Northern Fulmar** showed a 36% decline in abundance between Seabird 2000 and Seabirds Count. BoCC is purely retrospective, with the decline qualifying Northern Fulmar as an Amber-listed species, whereas IUCN promotes assessments which project current trends into the future. The annual rate of Northern Fulmar decline since Seabird 2000 is equivalent to an 85% decrease over three generations (75.7 years), therefore qualifying it as Critically Endangered under criterion A4. The species is also predicted to be heavily impacted by climate change (Davies et al. 2023)."

This is what the RSPB say as to why are our seabirds in trouble:

> "Our seabirds face a growing list of threats. Pressures include changes in food availability due to climate change and overfishing, as well as threats from entanglement in fishing gear and the development of offshore renewable energy. Invasive predators, such as rodents, can also have a devastating impact on seabirds and their breeding success. Some seabird species have been hit hard by bird flu (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) too. The impact of this deadly disease has led to the Great Skua's inclusion on the Red List, and widespread losses in many other seabirds. These threats and subsequent declines are particularly worrying, as the UK is internationally important for breeding seabirds. Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands support the majority of the global populations of breeding Manx Shearwaters (96%), Gannets (70%) and Great Skuas (64-67%)."

If you want to read another discussion on the report, then RareBirdAlert: Five seabird species added to the UK Red List (03-Sep) has a summary but you will need to click through to it once on their website.

Info above based on: The status of the UK's breeding seabirds: an addendum to the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain (Andrew Stanbury, Fiona Burns, Nicholas Aebischer, Helen Baker, Dawn Balmer, Andy Brown, Tim Dunn, Patrick Lindley, Matthew Murphy, David Noble, Ronan Owens and Lucy Quinn)

Monthly 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!

Gadwall: "pair in eclipse - high-light of farm survey" | Trevor Williams | Ingworth | 18th |

Pheasant: "Black !!" | Anne Sims | Gresham | 29th |

Nightjar: "Heard churring, flight calls and wing-clapping. A bird circled me three or four times about ten feet above me; made a persistent, gentle clucking" | Tony Pope | Kelling Heath | 12th |

Swift: "4x Likely last date for the small colony in Lower Street, numbers through the 3 Swift months usually around 8-10 on most days, with a good amount of screaming. Sadly, our neighbour had a juvenile grounded swift that we couldn't save" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 5th |

Swift: "38 x Drifting to the south east at a very high altitude. Makes one realise that another season is upon us and question where did they breed, some Victorian terrace or highland croft." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 27th |

Oystercatcher: "Stunning bird on rocks end east prom. We shouldn't undervalue the more 'common' birds!" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 8th |

Turnstone: "On rocks in front of the Crown - lovely to see them back and still some lovely plumage." | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 8th |

Common Tern: "108x off shore then slowly west - during 11/2 hours sea-watch (coinciding with influx into the Thames estuary)" | Trevor Williams | Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs | 28th |

Cormorant: "Paddling around garden pond - first time for everything I guess." | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 10th |

Grey Heron: "Driving through here, the strange sight of a Grey Heron sat on a phone wire alongside two Woodpigeon in amongst the houses." | Dave Billham | Trimingham | 16th |

Great White Egret: "Flying westward. A new garden tick." | Mark Little | Brampton & Oxnead | 3rd |

Sparrowhawk: "circling above town, over church and moving east - first alerted by all the pigeons taking off (for once not the Peregrine, which they seem used to)" | Roger & Janet Fickling | Cromer Poer | 17th |

Sparrowhawk: "Sat on the feeding station. Suddenly dived into the side of the adjacent Beech hedge completely disappearing, as it did so half a dozen House Sparrows popped out the top, I never saw it emerge but minutes later it was on the feeding station again. After a drink it flew off." | Di & Richard Farrow | Sheringham | 31st |

Red Kite: "Patrolling fields, glorious with sun shining through its plumage" | Val Stubbs | Letheringsett & Ford | 23rd |

Buzzard: "Appeared to be being harassed by a House Martin, Station Rd" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 7th |

Buzzard: "Initially inspecting a dead rabbit on our lawn and then made a low, slow pass over our feeders," | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 30th |

Tawny Owl: "Heard twice with different calls at 3.30 and 4.30. Not sure if it was the same bird or different as I think I read somewhere that the male can make the Kwik call too." | Stephanie Witham | North Walsham | 19th |

Green Woodpecker: "Very vocal, he/she has been hanging around the Common and surrounding gardens for over a week now, remarkably difficult to see in the trees! Coming down occasionally to feed on ants nests on lawns" | Stella Bayliss | Southrepps Common | 10th |

Jackdaw: "on camp. symmetrical white area in trailing edge of wings" | Phil Borley | Weybourne Camp | 3rd |

Sand Martin: "along cliffs Runton Road car park and mobbing Kestrel" | Roger & Janet Fickling | Cromer Pier | 6th |

House Martin: "Rough count. Largish flock swooping about at rooftop level at top of Alfred Road chattering away. Nests in at least two of the houses on this road" | Andrew Gorton | Cromer | 10th |

Chiffchaff: "One noisy individual with variant 'sweeooo' call" | Andy Clarke | Weybourne Heath | 14th |

Chiffchaff: "at least 47 and i may have missed a few too as they passed by" | Mark Clements | Beeston Common | 20th |

Pied Flycatcher: "Two bursts of calling, very brief glimpse, north edge Deadman's Wood - unsatisfactory!" | Andy Clarke | Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course | 12th |

Wheatear: "Path cliff side of the boating lake. I was lucky to have the area to myself for a while as the carnival was in the process of descending upon the Leas" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 4th |

Wheatear: "On fence post on eastern perimeter of airfield - still feeding from the same post two and a half hours later!" | Dave Billham | Weybourne Camp | 26th |

Pied Wagtail: "Warren Barn area, breeding confirmed, owner reported seeing adults feeding fledged juvs" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps | 10th |

Greenfinch: "21x Probably more than number shown visiting bird feeders. Regular garden visitors. Seen from early morning to late afternoon" | Ken Thornton | Gresham | 22nd |

Goldfinch: "4 on seed feeder, 3 feeding on Knapweed seedheads in meadow - fabulous to see them using the meadow as nature intended" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 16th |

Check This Out!

A few bits and bobs in the news last month …

- **EU takes the Netherlands to court over failure to protect meadow birds - BirdGuides** [09-Aug]
- **Five species added to British list - BirdGuides** [14-Aug]
- **Record-low butterfly and moth numbers spark worry - BirdGuides** [15-Aug]
- **Cages installed to help nesting Ringed Plovers - BirdGuides** [16-Aug]
- **Norfolk Wildlife Trust's new pub proves popular - BirdGuides** [21-Aug]
- **Norfolk Corncrake reintroduction shows progress - BirdGuides** [28-Aug]
- **BTO appeals for sightings of unusual bird plumages - BirdGuides** [04-Sep]
- **Rare kelp gull seen at Grafham Water for third consecutive year - BBC News** [10-Aug]
- **No confirmed bird flu cases in Long Nanny Arctic terns this year - BBC News** [12-Aug]

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.

"Most common call is a raucous 'kaah'. Song begins after moult has been completed and consists of not very tuneful caws, croaks and squeaks.."

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

"Varied: around colony, deep, 'comfortable' caws and croaks; typical 'craa-craa-craa'. Frequent loud, far-carrying, high 'crroo-crroo-crroo', choked trumpeting notes, musical squeaks and squeals; deep, mechanical, wooden rattle in flight."

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

"Hoarse, nasal, noisy croaks without open rolling r-sound of ******* ****, more grinding and irascible 'geaah', 'geeeh', 'gra gra grah …' and the like. Noise from a ******* at nest-building and mating time can be deafening."

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

Wordsearch

This month, we have the 23 species or races recorded in September 2023 for which we have just one or two 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.

Coot
Cory's Shearwater
Crane
Eastern Yellow Wagtail
Garden Warbler
Glossy Ibis
Pied Flycatcher
Red-rumped Swallow
Sabine's Gull
Scaup
Short-eared Owl
Tree Pipit
Velvet Scoter
Yellow Wagtail
Black Tern
Common Crossbill
Egyptian Goose
Grey Phalarope
Lesser Redpoll
Purple Sandpiper
Raven
Snow Bunting
Spotted Redshank

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

Data, Records, Posts and Tweets .....

No new rare bird records have been 'Accepted' by the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since the last newsletter. You can view their current '**NRC work in progress**' file on their website [24th Nov 23]. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [11th Mar 24].

Here are some bits and bobs from our website and social media…

NENBC Website

A huge thanks to the **123** of you who have uploaded records to our new website this year to date covering **62,613** records. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports. Despite August being quiet, **58 of you logged records last month**. Fab!

Most recorded species for August was Woodpigeon, knocking Blackbird off the top spot with over twice as many records at 250. The rest of the top 5 were made up of Blue Tit, Goldfinch, Herring Gull and Robin.

At the other end of the spectrum, we had **single records** of the following species: Avocet, Common Crossbill, Dotterel, Eider, Firecrest, Guillemot, Lesser Redpoll, Little Gull, Pomarine Skua, Red-necked Grebe and Snipe.

The **location with the most records** overall was Weybourne (632) followed by Weybourne Camp, Sheringham, Bodham and Beeston Common.

The **location with the most species reported** was Weybourne Camp (97) followed by Weybourne, Sheringham, Felbrigg Park and Beeston Common.

We thought we would just take a look and see whether there are more birders reporting from the locations with the most records and most species reported. Turns out there aren't! The **location where the largest number of birders posted from** was Sheringham with 21 birders posting records from there last month followed by Felbrigg Lake (14), Cromer (13), Beeston Regis (10) with Kelling Heath and Sheringham Cemetery coming in.

The **member posting the highest number of records** was Phil Borley again last month (914), followed by Val Stubbs, Philip Cartlidge, Mark Clements and Tony Pope.

The **member posting the highest number of species** was also Phil Borley (104!), followed by Mark Clements, Val Stubbs, Tony Pope and Doug& Jenny Cullern.

We are a bit down on record numbers this year, so if you get the time we'd love to see you adding more of your sightings.

NENBC Twitterings from (*the platform formerly known as*) Twitter

We very much welcome users tagging us **@NENBC_info** to keep us posted and so we can Retweet them but please refrain from posting any discussion that could be construed as abusive, derogatory or inflammatory to or by other users – thank you!

Please continue to tag us **@NENBC_info** in your own Tweets as we don't have much being posted at the mo. If you fancy helping us out with our Twitter / X account then please do get in touch!

The Club Website

By Andy Clarke

This month we have a couple of notices for you about how to log some selected records on the website that will enable us to better analyse our data. Please take a look and if you are lucky enough to be out and about seawatching, observing wagtails or catching up with hybrids and redpolls, please log the records in the way described by our data officer Andy. Thank you!

Recording species groups, species pairs and subspecies

Even the very best birders cannot identify with certainty every bird they see. Sometimes, such as during a sea-watch, they are simply too far away. But it is still valuable to record some of these, even when we are not certain as to their identity, such as big movements of distant auks driven by an autumn gale, or terns passing in difficult light. In addition there are also a few clearly-defined subspecies which it is valuable to record, for example White Wagtail (the continental race of our Pied Wagtail) or the continental forms of Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed Wagtail from mainland Europe, and Grey-headed Wagtail from Scandinavia).

On the old web-site we were able to set up new 'species' to record these, but (at the moment) we cannot do so on the new web-site. So that we do not lose valuable records, the suggestion is that we record these under an existing species, but use the 'comment' option to specify what has been seen (as Phil Borley has been doing recently). I can then scan the comment sections and update the species name appropriately before the records are uploaded to the BTO BirdTrack database. For the most frequent records of this type, I suggest using the options shown in the table.

Observed as	Record as	Add this comment
Species groups		
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Brent Goose	Pale-bellied Brent Goose
Ringtail Harrier [1]	Hen Harrier	ringtail Harrier
Diver species	Red-throated Diver	diver species
Auk species	Guillemot	auk species
Skua species	Arctic Skua	skua species
Species pairs		
Common/Arctic Tern	Common Tern	Common/Arctic Tern
Guillemot/Razorbill	Guillemot	Guillemot/Razorbill
Subspecies		
White Wagtail	Pied Wagtail	White Wagtail
Blue-headed Wagtail	Yellow Wagtail	Blue-headed Wagtail
Grey-headed Wagtail	Yellow Wagtail	Grey-headed Wagtail
Siberian Chiffchaff	Chiffchaff	Siberian Chiffchaff
Eastern Lesser Whitethroat	Lesser Whitethroat	Eastern Lesser Whitethroat
Hybrids		
Carrion/Hooded Crow	Hooded Crow	Carrion/Hooded Crow
Ruddy Shelduck hybrid	Ruddy Shelduck	Ruddy Shelduck hybrid
Tufted/Ferruginous Duck	Ferruginous Duck	Ferruginous Duck hybrid

1. 'ringtail' is the shorthand name given to females or immatures of Hen, Montagu's and Pallid Harriers which can be difficult to separate unless seen well.

These are just the commoner examples from the NENBC recording area. It is always possible that new ones will be necessary. A good example here are redpolls, which have just been merged into a single species (see separate article). If you record a subspecies or species pair that is not listed above, please let me know, so I don't miss the record when preparing the data for upload to BirdTrack! Many thanks, Andy.

Redpolls have changed – again!

Redpolls have long been a taxonomic and identification challenge (some might say nightmare). Until very recently they were regarded as three distinct species, Common Redpoll, Lesser Redpoll and Arctic Redpoll. Variously regarded in the past as one, two or three species, they are currently viewed by IOC (the International Ornithological Congress which maintains the world bird list viewed by most authorities as definitive) as being a single species, Redpoll, *Acanthis flammea*, with five subspecies:

Subspecies	Previous name	Distribution
cabaret	Lesser Redpoll	UK, Europe
flammea	Common or Mealy Redpoll	Northern Europe
rostrata	Greenland Redpoll	Canada, Greenland, Iceland
exilipes	(Coue's) Arctic Redpoll	Low Arctic tundra regions
hornemanni	Hornemann's or Hoary Arctic Redpoll	High Arctic tundra regions

This is the taxonomy adopted in the latest version (14.2, August 2024) of the IOC world species list and this revision is based on some careful and detailed genetic work. (See: www.worldbirdnames.org).

Sadly for dedicated listers, this means you have lost two species from your world/UK/Norfolk life list!

The current NENBC website still has these listed as three separate species, but when this is updated we will only be able to record 'Redpoll'. However some birds that arrive here in winter are very distinctive in their plumage, and it would be good to continue to record these, as they indicate influxes of redpolls from specific areas. To do so, when you upload your record please use the 'comment' section of the web-site to say which particular form of redpoll you have seen.

Photos by Moss Taylor (Arctic Redpoll), Trevor Williams (Common Redpoll) and Mark Clements (Lesser Redpoll)

Magpies

By W H Davies (1871 to 1940)

I have an orchard near my house
Where poppies spread and corn has grown;
It is a holy place for weeds,
Where seeds stay on and flower, till blown.
Into this orchard, wild and quiet,
The Magpie comes, the Owl and Rook:
To see one Magpie is not well,
But seeing two brings all good luck.
If Magpies think the same, and say,
'Two humans bring good luck, not one' –
How they must cheer us, Love, together,
And tremble when I come alone!

Photos: right - Clive Turner, Doug Cullern (x2),Richard Farrow, Alan Stevens

Ficedula Fun Solutions

???

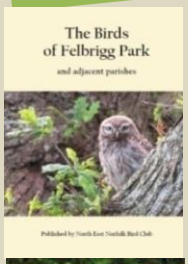
The bird voice variously described was that of a **Rook (Corvus frugilegus).** Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the **BTO BirdFacts: Rook** page. Taking a look at the BTO Bird ID Video series **Identifying Corvids** *Photos from Andrew Crossley, Francis Farrow, Andrew Gorton, Dave Billham*

This month's **Wordsearch Solution**:
BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN SEPTEMBER 2023

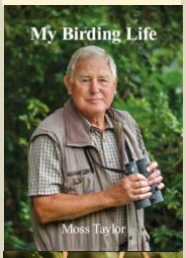
J	S	I	X	U	K	P	I	E	D	F	L	Y	C	A	T	C	H	E	R
T	N	K	Z	E	R	E	L	B	R	A	W	N	E	D	R	A	G	C	B
Q	O	N	Y	E	U	M	B	F	H	X	D	T	J	X	C	Q	E	Y	S
V	W	O	P	P	I	T	R	B	V	U	W	F	F	T	T	L	P	B	G
D	B	K	B	R	M	Y	E	Y	B	W	C	D	H	C	N	K	M	P	H
X	U	O	X	E	U	E	P	S	V	B	L	A	C	K	T	E	R	N	H
R	N	O	X	T	L	L	I	B	S	S	O	R	C	N	O	M	M	O	C
R	T	T	Z	O	W	G	P	T	J	A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

Back Page Club Info .....

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



The Birds of Felbrigg Park is a systematic review of the records of all 220 species seen in and around the park over the past 50 years, indicating their current status and highlighting, for the rarer species, every recorded sighting. The publication includes photographs and artwork from local artists. The book is now reduced to £5.00 (postage extra) and all profits from the sale of this book go to Felbeck Trust, our local wildlife conservation charity: **www.felbecktrust.org.uk**



My Birding Life by Club President Moss Taylor. Moss has been watching birds and keeping records of his sightings since 1953, as well as ringing and photographing birds for over 50 years. Although only a hobby, birding has really taken over his life, especially during the last 25 years since he retired from general practice. Since 1969 he has lived in Norfolk and much of the action in this book takes place there. All profits from the sale of this book will be going to his charity Love for Leo. See below for more details on this charity and contact details for Moss. £20 (or £18 if collected from Sheringham when restrictions permit).

Rare and Scarce Birds in North-east Norfolk This book by Moss Taylor presents all the records of rare and scarce birds that have been recorded in the NENBC area up to the formation of the Club in 2014. There is a Classified List and a chapter on the historic habitats and birding activities in the area plus all additional rarity records from 2015 to 2018. It is also illustrated with 78 colour photographs and runs to 104 pages. Now out of print, but there is an electronic version on our website.

For Annual Reports or The Birds of Felbrigg Park, contact Carol on **nenbc@aol.co.uk**. For My Birding Life, or emailable recent Annual Summaries of the Bird Life at Weybourne Camp, contact Moss Taylor, 4 Heath Road, Sheringham, NR26 8JH, phone 01263-823637 or email: **moss.taylor@btinternet.com**

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

Bird Ventures
THE WILDLIFE SHOP
Helping you to help our wildlife

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