



February 2025 - Issue 116

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

Contents - if something is underlined, you can Ctrl-click / press on it etc to jump to an external website link or that point in the newsletter

President's Piece	Page 2
A Note from the Editor	Page 2
Membership News and Statistics	Page 4
NENBC Bird Highlights	Page 5
January 2025	Page 5
NENBC Ringed Bird Records	Page 11
February: What To Look & Listen For	Page 12
Club Notices	Page 13
Cromer Peregrine Watchpoint	Page 14
Call for Members' Night 2025 Speakers	Page 14
What's On?	Page 15
Walks: Felbrigg Park / Horsey Gap	Page 15
Talk: Norfolk Rivers Trust with Jonah Tosney	Page 16
National Nest Box Week	Page 17
January's Felbrigg Walk	Page 18
February's Sculthorpe Moor Walk	Page 19
The NENBC 10th Anniversary Launch Event	Page 21
A Delayed Purple Badge Presentation	Page 22

International Young Birder Bursary: Naffie Sarr ..	Page 22
Talk: Kartong Bird Observatory [Roger Walsh]	Page 24
NENBC 10th Anniversary Conference	Page 27
10th Anniversary Commemorative Book	Page 28
10 Year Badge	Page 29
NENBC 10th Anniversary Print by John Hurst	Page 29
RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch	Page 31
Birding through the year in Norfolk	Page 32
Memorable Experiences & Favourite Birds	Page 34
Ask the Audience: Blackbirds	Page 35
Contemplating Conservation: Cats & Wildlife	Page 35
Member Highs, Lows & Ponderings	Page 38
Check This Out	Page 39
Ficedula Fun	Page 41
Data, Records & Posts	Page 42
Cultural Birds: The Nest Builders	Page 44
Ficedula Fun Solutions	Page 45
Back Page Club Info	Page 46



Through a Lens



By Nigel Redman

When I was first asked to contribute a short introduction to the newsletter every other month, I was told that I could write about anything I wanted to. Looking back over my contributions over the past three years, I see that they have ranged over a wide variety of topics and places, from Antarctica to Svalbard, and from Thailand to Mongolia. I have touched on listing, twitching, collecting and even climate change. I have tried to bring Norfolk into the picture too, to make it more relevant to the club, but the global nature of my job has meant that my Norfolk birding has been rather limited in the past few years. But I have also taken the liberty to air some of my grievances and pet hates in the ornithological world. Last year (February 2024), I expressed my disgust at the all-too-frequent taxonomic changes that were affecting the sequence of bird families in books, meaning that I now have to use the index to find anything. And I'm still also annoyed that the Americans are proposing to get rid of all bird eponyms. I won't repeat my arguments against this (check out the December 2023 newsletter if you are interested), but the proposal does have some supporters over here. Fortunately, not too many British birds are named after people.

I was, however, dismayed to read a suggestion that we should consider getting rid of boring bird names. I'm still not sure if it was entirely serious, but David Campbell in Birdwatch magazine suggested that we should aspire to 'Good Names for European Birds'. According to his calculation, 42 European birds are prefixed with 'Common' and 45 with 'Eurasian' or 'European'. Then there are excessively long compound names that have arisen after a species has been split (for example, Eastern and Western Black-eared Wheatears). It would, of course, be convenient to have one simple vernacular name for every species that is understood by everyone, but English names will always be a hotchpotch. The origins of many go back a long way, while others have simply evolved over time. If you want an unambiguous system that reflects taxonomic affinities, then just use the scientific names. That is

precisely what the Linnean binomial system was designed to do. And it works perfectly (except when a bird's evolutionary history dictates a change in genus).

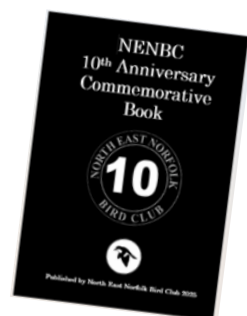
When it comes to English (or vernacular, to be more precise) names, I prefer stability, as well as unambiguity. Changing a name causes confusion, and older birders in particular will find it harder to change. English names are not there to reflect taxonomy, nor do they have to describe accurate morphological features or distribution. Just because a Red-rumped Wheatear doesn't actually have a red rump (it's rufous, or reddish-buff) does not mean that it has to have its name changed. Likewise, a Green Sandpiper is definitely not green. There are many birds whose English names are not colour-accurate, and many others whose names describe one of its least prominent features (e.g. Short-toed Treecreeper). This could be minefield. Hen Harriers don't eat hens (usually), Iceland Gull does not breed in Iceland (though some do winter there), and the Kentish trio of Kentish Plover, Sandwich Tern and Dartford Warbler are hardly very relevant nowadays, if they ever were. Where will it end?

Going back to boring prefixes, I agree that 'Common' and 'Eurasian' are not ideal. Inevitably, any bird with the prefix 'Common' is not going to be common everywhere, and, if a resident species, is very likely to be rare outside its core range. Eurasian is not always accurate either. Both Eurasian Bittern and Eurasian Hoopoe breed in sub-Saharan Africa (extensively in the case of the hoopoe). In many instances, changing prefixes is not going help. Most birds will still need some kind of prefix. You can't have simple unique names such as Dunlin, Ruff or Brambling for every bird. Here in Britain, whatever prefix you give to birds such as Curlew, Kingfisher, Swift or Starling, British birders will never use them use in everyday use. And why should they? Usually, there is no ambiguity. But prefixes are essential in an international context. In our ever-changing taxonomic world, I vote for stability in our English names.

A Note from the Editor

By Carol Thornton

Hi folks. Welcome to our February issue. Let's start with our very enjoyable 10th Anniversary Year launch event at Gresham Village Hall at the end of last month. Thank to everyone who turned out on the night or who tuned in via Zoom. We certainly noticed an uptick in numbers and it was great to chat with some members we hadn't seen for a while from both near and far. Hope we can continue like this all year! If you didn't make it on the night you can read all about it and our excellent speaker from [page 24](#). Hopefully you should all now have received your copies of our 10th Anniversary Commemorative Book having collected it in person, had it delivered by a willing local volunteer (thank you so much all of you who took away with



you from the event over 200 books) or received it by post. If you haven't got it yet, please get in touch. There are some images of the content on [page 28](#) to whet your appetite. Additional copies are available at £7.

As always, the fullest details of our schedule of events that we can currently manage are on our website and this is where we will always update the information first. Please note that we have had to do some jiggling with our February speaker and at the 3rd attempt we now have **Jonah Tosney talking on the work of the Norfolk Rivers Trust**, including beaver releases (see [page 16](#)). Martin Tickler will now be talking about House Martin Conservation in October, after our **2025 Members' Night in September** (see call for speakers on [page 14](#)). Plenty of other regular and special events coming up, including our **migration conference** in June '**Whose birds are these? - exploring Anglo-African bird migration**' (see [page 27](#) for how to reserve a free space as tickets are now available – first-come-first served) and if you are looking forward to the Peregrines breeding again this year, now is the time to sign up for some volunteering duties at the Cromer Peregrine Project watchpoint (see [page 14](#)) – there have been some new webcams installed over the winter there too so expect even better images!

A quick note of thanks from me to Paul Laurie for volunteering to do the monthly bird write-up in this e-newsletter going forwards – it has made a huge difference for me. Any other volunteers for articles in other parts of the newsletter will always be very welcome, sharing the Conservation Corner slot for example with Tracy, and this year we are particularly looking for individual stories of your best birding experiences and favourite birds (see [page 34](#) for details).

So moving on, last month's **Through a Lens** subject for the front page was **GEESE** and our cover images this time are Pink-footed Goose (Mark Clements, main), White-fronted Goose (Richard Farrow), Barnacle Goose (Mark Clements), Egyptian Goose (Mark Clements), Tundra Bean Goose (Steve Stansfield). Thanks all! The **theme for February is Gulls**.

Below is my pick from January of some great photos from our website of the more common birds that don't make it to the Monthly Bird

Highlights section: Kingfisher (Mark Clements), Blackbird (Philip Cartlidge), Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Black-headed Gull (Richard Farrow), Bullfinch (Ken Thornton), Starling (Andrew Gorton)



Felbeck Trust

@FelbeckTrust

Hope you can join us for a fascinating evening talk.
Nature and Climate, the Bishop of Norwich in conversation with Nick Acheson.
Starts at 6:30pm on 13th March
St Andrew's Church, Holt
Tickets are £11.50, available on link below



Nature and Climate: The Bishop of Norwich in Conversation with Nick Acheson

From eventbrite.co.uk

**Nature and Climate: The Bishop of
Norwich in Conversation with Nick
Acheson Tickets, Thu, Mar 13, 2025 at
6:30 PM | Eventbrite**





Welcome to our new member – look forward to catching up with you again soon!

* Roger Walsh *

338 individual members
across 223 households

13,728
bird records logged

147 bird species
reported

Please keep adding all your sightings to our website at www.nenbc.co.uk. Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting or need assistance on how to upload your records. More information from our website records, Twitterings and social media presence in **Data, Records & Posts** from [page 42](#).

Many thanks to the 223 households who have already renewed for 2025 but we are still a little down on the 291 of last year. Next month we will be 'switching off' those of you not wishing to renew so you'll no longer have access to the website or have the newsletter emailed direct. Please see membership renewal information for 2025 on [page 13](#) if do want to renew – we'd love to keep you through our 10th Anniversary year.

Club Achievement Awards

Star Badges

Congratulations to David Griffiths on achievement of his Bronze this month. The Peer Review Panel are reviewing at a few soon so we are looking forward to a few more coming through!

Currently, **4** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **21** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **84** members now hold the **BRONZE STAR** status.

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

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



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

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

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

Eco-Badges

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

We currently have **26** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 10] and 7 who have achieved **SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 6 | 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.



By Paul Laurie

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

≈ 11,000 individual records covering 147 bird species were added in January

January 2025 produced 11,032 NENBC bird records of 146 species by 84 recorders. In comparison January 2024 produced 11,435 bird records with 144 species by 90 recorders. December 2024 had 5,517 bird records, 141 species by 64 recorders.

Geese were centre of attention during the first half of January with a “Greenland” White-fronted Goose, a small group of Tundra Bean Geese and a flock of “Russian” White-fronted Geese all showing well. Bewick’s & Whooper Swans were fly-bys, and some tenacious sea-watching produced single Black Guillemot and Puffin. A brief Glossy Ibis was found and a small number of Cattle Egrets cheered up the winter blues. Passerines were harder to find with no records of Snow Bunting, Rock Pipit or Waxwing, but a Ring-necked Parakeet, a Black Redstart and a Hooded Crow in the east rewarded some with a good start to the year.

Brent Goose Recorded on twenty dates during the month with small movements of 2 – 17 birds at coastal sites between Weybourne and Mundesley during the first two weeks. An increase in birds moving along the coast in the second half of the month included a peak count of 50 east at Weybourne on the 26th. Greater numbers present inland with the largest flock 410 feeding on spring Barley just north of Saxlingham on the 24th. *Photo 1: Mark Clements*

Canada Gosse Six on Blickling Lake on the 2nd was the peak count during the month. *Photo 2: Mark Clements*

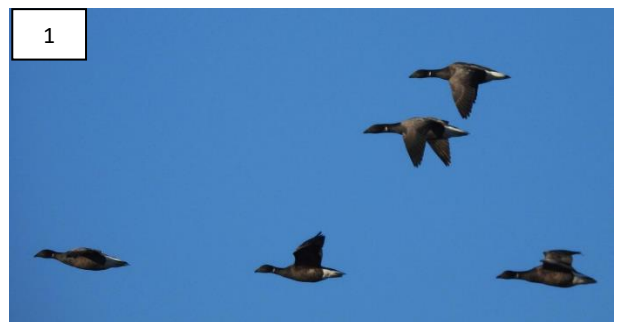
Barnacle Goose Seven east at West Runton was the first record for the year before a single bird was present with Pink-feet on Weybourne Cliffs 19th – 22nd, then increasing to 3 birds on the 23rd and 5 birds 24th – 28th. Other records included one bird at Sheringham found on the beach near the Lifeboat Station on the 24th. This may then account for a single bird seen on Sheringham Park Lake 26th – 29th. *Photo 3: Geoff Snelson*

Greylag Goose Thornage held 300 on the 1st, 113 were reported at the southern end of Bayfield Park on the 3rd and there were 50 at Barningham Hall Lake on the 11th.

Pink-footed Goose Always a joy to see in the winter months and the harvested sugar-beet fields around Sandy Hills, Saxlingham held 2,200 birds on the 4th before increasing to 8,000 on the 7th then reducing to 5,000 the next day. Harvested sugar-beet fields at Weybourne Cliffs in the second half of the month attracted 650 on the 19th steadily increasing to 2,200 by the 23rd feeding there until the months end. Inland 1,200 flew west at Brinton on the 3rd and sixty flew over Southrepps on the 17th.

Tundra Bean Goose Associating with the large gathering of Pink-footed Geese there were three – four seen at Sandy Hills, Saxlingham between the 7th and 10th. One flew over Beeston Common on the 17th. Then birds were present with the Weybourne Cliffs Pink-feet, with 2 – 4 birds between the 22nd and 29th and five recorded on the 30th. *Photo 4: Mark Clements*

White-fronted Goose A single “Greenland” race was present with Pink-feet on sandy Hills, Saxlingham on the 7th & 8th. The first



"Russian" birds of the year were two west at Weybourne on the 9th. The clifftop harvested sugar-beet fields at Weybourne attracted birds from the 19th with 1 - 3 birds present until the 23rd when numbers increased to 12 birds, 13 on the 24th, 15 on the 26th, 16 on the 28th, 19 on the 29th and finally 17 on the 31st. Two to three birds were seen at West Runton between the 21st – 25th. Two birds were seen at Gunton Park on the 21st, and on the 26th White-fronts were seen at Cromer with six east while two fed in a cereal field at Northrepps and a single found also on the 26th in Sheringham Park that was last reported on the 29th. *Photo 5: Trevor Warren*

Mute Swan Thirty-four birds seen on Antingham Lake on the 12th. *Photo 6: Philip Cartlidge*

Bewick's Swan An observer at Weybourne saw a group of five fly west at 9.27 on the 23rd, and two flew south-west over Weybourne village on the 30th.

Whooper Swan A single bird flew west over Felbrigg Park on the 14th.

Egyptian Goose A familiar site in the club area but two drifting east on the sea at Sheringham on the 23rd was more unusual. *Photo 7: Mark Clements*

Mandarin Two records this month with a male on Felbrigg Park Lake on the 1st and a female at Gimingham, photographed, on the 2nd and 7th. *Photo 8: Andrew Crossley*

Shoveler Highest count was of 38 on Antingham Lake on the 1st and a cold weather movement involved eight west at Cromer on the 10th. *Photo 9: Ken Thornton*

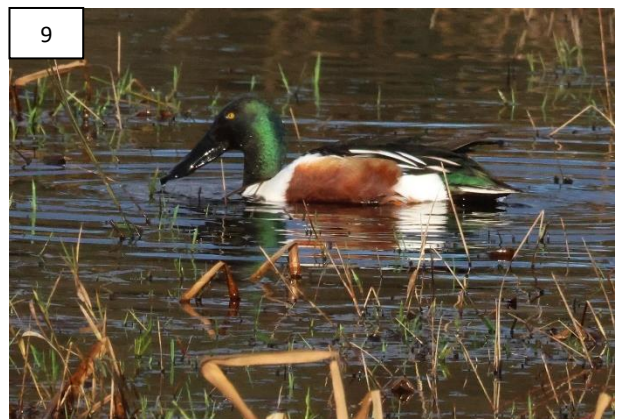
Pochard Not recorded in January 2024 therefore a series of records this month is notable. On the 2nd a bird was on Thornage Reservoir, a pair were on the lake at Antingham on the 7th and then two birds reported on Felbrigg Park Lake on the 20th with a single drake remaining until the 25th. Two reports from the coast, a bird photographed in flight at West Runton on the 18th and a drake flew east past Weybourne on the 24th.

Velvet Scoter A good showing this month associating with the 400 - 500 Common Scoters offshore at Weybourne. One – four birds present from the 1st until the 10th, increasing on the 11th when eight were counted then a further increase to 13 on the 16th, these birds then dispersed, and the last record was a five on the 20th. The only record away from Weybourne was a single west at Sheringham on the 17th. Interestingly the pattern of occurrence this January is remarkably similar that in January 2024.

Long-tailed Duck Only recorded at Weybourne this month and unsurprisingly associating with the Scoter flock. A drake was seen on the 3rd, 4th and 7th and a male & female on the 8th, on the 11th two drakes were reported then with one to two birds seen on several dates until the last record, a drake on the 27th.

Goldeneye The only records were three off Weybourne on the 3rd and one on the 4th.

Goosander A poor showing this January with only a private lake at Letheringsett attracting settled birds; a pair from the 21st until the



end of the month. Coastal sites had few sightings with a red-heads seen heading west at Sheringham on the 2nd and 6th and a drake seen at Weybourne on the 7th.

Red-breasted Merganser A single record of two birds west at Sheringham on the 6th.

Grey Partridge Reported from only four sites in the club area with a covey of six -seven on Weybourne Cliffs, seen between the 12th – 25th, being the highest count. *Photo 10: Mark Clements*

Water Rail Up to three in Hope Reedbed, Weybourne all month and 1 – 2 seen at Felbrigg Park Lake the only reliable sites. Singles recorded on one date only at Beeston Common, East Runton, Pigneys Wood and Saxlingham. *Photo 11: Andrew Crossley*

Red-necked Grebe A bird off Weybourne on the 23rd and Weybourne Camp on the 25th then Cromer on the 29th and 30th as well as Sheringham and Weybourne also the 30th all records likely to be a single wintering bird.

Great Crested Grebe Count of twenty offshore at Weybourne on the 26th increasing to twenty-five off Weybourne Camp on the 28th. Inland, Blickling Park Lake held three birds on the 25th and two on the 30th. *Photo 12: Andrew Crossley*

Lapwing The only significant counts were at Saxlingham with a peak of 450 birds on the 21st. *Photo 13: Jane Crossen*

Golden Plover Widespread in varying numbers with reports from fourteen sites and the largest concentrations as follows: 188 Saxlingham on the 7th, 400 Weybourne Cliffs on the 22nd, 150 Aylmerton on the 28th. *Photo 14: Richard Farrow*

Grey Plover A small group reported from West Runton beach from the 1st until the 16th peaked at 12 on the 13th. The only record away from West Runton, as well as the last of the month, was a flock of 17 at East Runton beach on the 18th.



Knot Seventy west in two groups at Weybourne on the 30th was the only significant record.

Ruff Five feeding with the Lapwing flock on Sandy Hills, Saxlingham on the 17th were the first of the year. The next day a single was on pig fields at Thornage and finally a bird was seen flying with Ringed Plover over Sheringham Golf Course on the 30th.

Purple Sandpiper One to two birds seen on most dates between the 10th and 16th at West Runton and then presumably the same

birds seen on the sea-front at Sheringham from the 19th until the 30th before returning to West Runton on the 31st. *Photo 15: Trevor Williams*

Woodcock Reported from nineteen sites in the club area, with 1 – 4 birds seen throughout the month at many of them. Higher counts were made at Bale on the 10th with eight birds, seven at Aylmerton on the 9th and five at Ingworth on the 23rd.

Jack Snipe Two birds seen at Felbrigg Park Lake on the 1st and then single birds there until the last report on the 22nd. Only two other singles reported with birds at Holt Country Park on the 13th and Beeston Common on the 15th.

Green Sandpiper Single birds found at five sites in January: Swanton Novers on the 4th, Letheringsett on the 10th, Felbrigg Park on the 15th, Saxlingham on the 17th and Thornage on the 19th. The last third of the month produced records from Saxlingham pig fields on three dates including two birds on the 29th. *Photo 16: Mark Clements*

Redshank An inland sighting of a single bird at Saxlingham on the 24th in the company of a Green Sandpiper. This was presumably the bird seen around the same area in December. On the coast 1 – 3 birds were present during the month between Weybourne and East Runton. *Photo 17: Mark Clements*

Kittiwake The sole record was a bird off Mundesley on the New Year's Day.

Little Gull A 2nd year bird at Weybourne Camp on the 4th and an adult in winter plumage at Felbrigg Park on the 29th. *Photo 18: Stu Buck*

Glaucous Gull On the 1st a juvenile flew west past Sheringham before alighting on Weybourne Beach and settling down to roost with a group of Great Black-backed Gulls. On the 10th a juvenile was seen to pass out to sea at Cromer moving east. *Photo 19: Trevor Williams*

Caspian Gull One bird frequented the pig fields at Edgefield between the 8th – 10th of January. *Photo 20: Mark Clements*

Black Guillemot Seen by two fortunate observers a 1st winter flew west past Cromer Lighthouse on the 7th at 0900. The first January record in the NENBC area since records began in 2015.

Puffin At 09.30 on the 23rd a single bird flew west.

Great Northern Diver A summer plumaged adult was seen off Cromer on the 1st. These adult birds generally moult in mid to late winter. Then a juvenile bird off Weybourne 12th – 17th and again on the 31st. A rare inland occurrence of a bird recorded calling from Antingham Lake on the 15th.

Glossy Ibis A bird seen and photographed over Antingham Lake on the 12th was the sixth record for the club area and the first recorded in January. Our first was in November 2015 with the famous Felbrigg Park bird. Then between 2021 & 2024 there have been a further four records including the flock of fourteen flying west on the 24th May 2023.

Cattle Egret Never having been record in January within the club area five or six birds were found this month. The first on the 16th



when a bird flew over the A148 near Sharrington. Then on the 19th two were found feeding together at Walcott joined by a third the next day before two left and one remained, last seen on the 24th. On the 26th a bird feeding with corvids in a small paddock was found at Bale - this may have been the same as the Sharrington bird. At the end of the month the observer of the bird on the 16th photographed a Cattle Egret flying north along Cley Road, Holt on the 30th. *Photo 21: Trevor Williams*

Great White Egret Single birds recorded at six sites, each on one date only, which involved three individuals. One Glaven Valley and Saxlingham 2nd, 25th and 29th, one Aylsham 24th and one Gresham and Felbrigg Park on the 20th and 21st. *Photo 22: Andrew Crossley*

Goshawk Swanton Novers, the most reliable site for this raptor, produced birds on the 2nd and a displaying bird on the 25th. Other singles reported during the month at Sharrington, Hempstead, Edgefield and Saxlingham.

Hen Harrier The first was a ringtail at Brinton on the 8th. A superb male was photographed on the club walk at Felbrigg Park on the 15th as it hunted low over the ground. At least ten club members saw the bird at close quarters as it flushed Snipe from off the water meadows.

Red Kite Only significant count was the roost of twenty-two birds witnessed at Little Barningham on the 24th.

Little Owl Only reported from Weybourne Camp on the 4th and Felbrigg Park with a maximum of three birds during the month. *Photo 23: Andrew Crossley*

Merlin At least one bird present at Weybourne Camp and Weybourne Cliffs seen by nine club members from the 11th until the 30th. *Photo 24: David Griffiths*

Peregrine Falcon The Cromer Church pair were present during the month with one or both birds seen on nineteen dates. Records of singles reported from Letheringsett, Beeston Common, Gunthorpe, Sheringham and two birds around Field Dalling & Saxlingham. *Photo 25: Richard Farrow*



Ring-necked Parakeet A single visited a Club member's garden for a few minutes on the 8th. Only the second inland record for the NENBC area, the first being seen at Southrepps Common, April 24th 2020. A scarce bird in the club area with only six individuals recorded and a species seen by just eight club members.

Hooded Crow A bird flew in off the sea at Mundesley on the 2nd and settled in the area though not seen again at the same site until the 6th. A further sighting by the original finder on the 27th was thought to be the same individual. *Photo 26: John Hurst*

Raven One of the Bayfield Breck birds was seen over Letheringsett village on the 3rd. The only other sighting this month was a bird at Southrepps Common on the 30th as it flew north "croaking".

Skylark The largest count was 87 at West Runton on the 31st. Inland 63 were seen on stubble at Swanton Novers on the 19th and 55 at Bale on the 12th. *Photo 27: Richard Farrow*

Chiffchaff Reported from five sites with the most dependable being a bird at Holt Sewage Works between the 3rd and 29th.

Blackcap Seen at ten sites during the month, all singles except for two males in a garden at Beeston Regis on the 17th.

Firecrest Records from four regular sites on single dates during the month and one seen on the 20th at Weybourne where this species is scarce.

Black Redstart A bird was present in private gardens from the 3rd until at least the 7th of January. *Photo 28: Trevor Williams*

Tree Sparrow Presumably the long staying bird from last autumn, last seen on the 26th November 2024, returned and was seen around the café at West Runton from the 10th until the 16th. *Photo29: David Griffiths*



Brambling Only significant counts were 30 on the 1st, 150 on the 11th and then 25 on the 26th, attracted to a mixed seed field at Barningham Hall. *Photo 30: Ken Thornton*

Hawfinch The only January record was a male seen at Letheringsett on the 24th and presumably the same bird seen at Thornage later that day.

Redpoll Two birds feeding in Alders at Southrepps Common from the 12th remained until the month's end. A garden in High Kelling had the following sightings: one – 22nd, two – 25th, five – 26th and one – 30th. Three birds on feeders at Edgefield on the 23rd. A poor showing this winter. *Photo 31: Steve Hale*

Siskin Widespread and encountered by 23 NENBC recorders during the month, the best counts were as follows; 30 Southrepps Common 2nd, 50 Swanton Novers 4th, 62 Saxlingham 17th, 51 Letheringsett and 45 Selbrigg Pond both on the 21st with the highest counts of 100 at Selbrigg Pond on the 1st and 100 at Brinton on the 23rd.

Yellowhammer Only a few birds reported this month with the best counts being 25 at Hempstead on the 14th and 14 at Thornage on the 25th.

Reed Bunting One double figure count of 25 at Hempstead on the 12th of January.



NENBC Ringed Bird Records in January



Just a reminder to folk logging ringed birds on our website. Although we send our data off en masse to the county recorder through BirdTrack uploads, we don't directly contact ringing coordinators of individual projects – that needs to be down to you if you have a sighting. Project coordinators love to get data on their birds – after all, that is the reason for ringing them - so here is a reminder on how to do it from Chris Lamsdell: **Please report your colour ring birds to the relevant project coordinator which can be found through the EU Colour Ring website <https://cr-birding.org/>. Locally ringed Turnstones stones (red flag three letters starting JAA), Black-headed Gulls (red rings starting 2C00) and Marsh Tit (white rings 00-99) can be reported through <https://iceni.shinyapps.io/sightings/>. Metal only rings can be reported to the BTO <https://app.bto.org/euring/lang/pages/rings.jsp>.**

Mute Swan

- “34x including 2 orange ringed birds (4GES) and other unreadable 4GES was rung at Salthouse pond on 11/10/24 1 of 4 young ringed there.” | Mark Clements | Antingham & Bradfield | 12th

Turnstone

- “33x Tank area, with JAA-JAE and metal ringed bird(right tarsus)” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 2nd
- “26x Tank area, with flagged JAE” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 3rd
- “43x East beach slipway area, JAC flagged bird.” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 8th
- “44x Tank area, with JAC and metal ringed (right tarsus) birds” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 9th
- “26x including JAA” | Mark Clements | West Runton | 16th
- “c40, JAA-JAC, and metal ringed (right tarsus) birds” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 16th
- “40x About this number near the Tank including 2 red flagged birds (JAC & JAA) and a metal ringed one.” | David Fell | Sheringham | 18th
- “39x Museum area with JAC flagged bird2 | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 20th
- “44x Includes leg flagged birds JAA and JAC plus one metal ringed on left Tarsus” | Roger Emmens | Sheringham | 21st
- “40x Tank area with JAA, and metal ringed (right tarsus) birds” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 23rd
- “Approx 35 on the front. Including ringed JAE.” | Di & Richard Farrow | Sheringham | 23rd
- “c30 with JAA and metal ringed (right tarsus) birds” | Peter Geary | Sheringham | 24th

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!

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.

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

Contributions to the Newsletter

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

Looking forward to hearing from you!

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

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

Telephone 01263 710203
salesbirdventures@aol.com

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



Speaker Suggestions

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

Thank you!

Membership Renewal - Subscriptions for 2025

We hope you will continue to support the club in 2025, our **10th Anniversary Year**, by renewing your membership with us. The subs, which were due on 1st January, remain the same as last year:

2025 calendar year membership of £15 per household to include a copy of the club's printed 2024 Annual Bird Report which we hope will be ready for publication in the summer, or **£12 without the report.**

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

Many thanks for your continuing support and engagement!

Cromer Peregrine Project

A call for watchpoint volunteers 2025



Cromer Peregrine Project has now been running for five years and the birds are still there and getting ready for breeding again this year. As many of you know we have a Watchpoint outside the Museum in Cromer during the breeding season so that we can talk to the passing public and show them the birds through the telescopes that Viking Optics loan us. We always need more volunteers as we try to be there every day, with two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon - or all day if a volunteer wishes to do that. Ideally, we need three volunteers there at a time - it can get very busy in the summer. If you would like to join our friendly team, even if you can only offer the occasional commitment, then please contact me for further information.

We will be holding a short AGM and training session at the Community Centre in Garden Street in Cromer on Thursday 20th February at 7.00 pm if you would like to join us and hear about our plans for this season. We plan to start the Watchpoint at the end of March.

Ann Cleall | Secretary of Cromer Peregrine Project | 07876 889660 |

A Members' Night of 4 Mini Talks!

25th September 2025

Members-
Night

We are once more looking for volunteers to take to the floor at our 2025 Members' Night to give us a 20 minute talk of their choice about birds or any other related subject. This has been a popular event previously – some would say the night of the year - with an eclectic range of subjects embraced by members.

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












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

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

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

Take a look at the note on [page 34](#) after the first of a new series by Moss reflecting on birds he has seen in Norfolk over the years. We would really like your contributions for forthcoming newsletters on your **memorable experiences or favourite birds**. Thank you!

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

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

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

INFO FOR ALL WALKS:

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

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

DOGS: We regret no dogs.

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

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

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

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

Wednesday 19th February | 9.00am-11.00am | Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk with Dave Billham



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 8th March | 9.00am-1.00pm | Horsey Gap and Brograve Farm Walk with Janice Darch & friends



One of our series of NENBC 10th ANNIVERSARY WALKS, revisiting some the old haunts we haven't been to for a while.

No advance booking needed but it would be useful to know if you are coming.

Our walk will take eastwards through the dunes to the sea, south along the coast and back inland past the Nelson's Head pub, along permissive paths to Horsey Drainage Mill, northwards along the river to Brograve Drainage Mill, Horsey Corner and to the cars. This area is a breeding area and home to Common Crane. Other birds we are likely to see include Marsh Harrier, Kestrel, Buzzard, Rook, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Mute Swan, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Kingfisher, passerines including tits and finches and perhaps some early migrants such a Wheatear. On the sea we will be looking for scoter, grebes and passing gulls and along the shore, Sandling, Redshank and maybe a few Dunlin yet to migrate..

MEET: In the car park | **PARKING:** NT Horsey Windpump car park NR29 4EE, TG456223. | **DISTANCE:** 4 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** The walk is along footpaths which aren't suitable for wheelchair users. | **FACILITIES:** Toilets at car park but café closed | **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 27th February | 7.30pm-9.30pm |

Gresham Village Hall and via Zoom

zoom



"Twelve Years of River Restoration in Norfolk" *A talk with NRT's Jonah Tosney*

A BIT ABOUT THE SPEAKER AND THEIR TALK: The Norfolk Rivers Trust (NRT) was established in 2011 with a mission to restore, protect and enhance the water environments of Norfolk for people and wildlife through aquatic habitat creation, conservation & restoration, education & engagement and land management & farm advice. The scale of the challenge working across Norfolk's catchment areas necessitates partnership working with a wide range of organisations including farmers, landowners, water companies, government bodies and the third sector, as well as the general public. Jonah Tosney will give us an update on how Norfolk Rivers Trust has grown, how the scale and ambition of river restoration has changed since he spoke to us in 2017, what they have left to do and what it means for wildlife and we are in particular looking forward to hearing a bit more about their beaver introduction scheme. Jonah is the Technical Director at NRT and has worked there since 2012. He previously worked at other similar conservation organisations. He has a PhD in aquatic ecology and an enthusiasm for anything that lives in the water. His job is to help the team deliver river restoration and wetland creation projects and make sure that are moving in the right direction for Norfolk's wildlife.

Website: [Norfolk Rivers Trust](https://www.norfolk-rivers-trust.org.uk/) | Restoring, protecting and enhancing the water environments of Norfolk for people and wildlife

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.

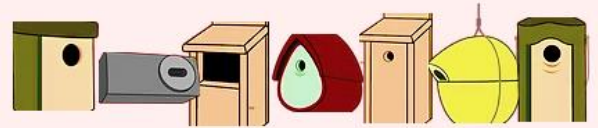
DIRECTIONS: Gresham Village Hall, East Beckham Road off Church Lane, Gresham, Norfolk, NR11 8RT but note the published postcode might not take you to exactly the right spot! If you are coming through Aylmerton and Lower Gresham, turn right by the church (just after the school) and the hall is on your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



National Nest Box Week

14th to 21st February 2025



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

Here's some info from Suffolk Wildlife Trust:

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



How to build a bird box | Norfolk Wildlife Trust

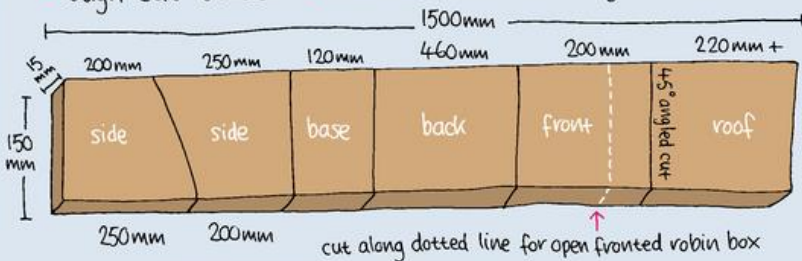


How to make a nest box



What you need:

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



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

always get an adult to help with tools!

1 Mark out and saw panels

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

2 Choose your box type



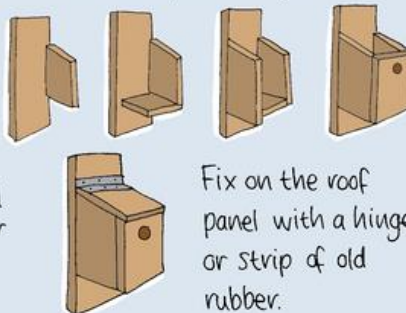
hole fronted box:
blue tits (25mm)
great tits (28mm)
sparrows (38mm)
starlings (45mm)



open fronted box for robins

3 Assemble the box

Nail the panels together:



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

Where to put it:

2-5 metres above the ground, somewhere sheltered.

2-5m above ground



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

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

January's Club Mid-Week Walk

Felbrigg Park | 15th January



By Dave Billham

One of the great things about having an interest in birds (though this applies equally to any aspect of the natural world) is that it allows any day to be elevated from the mundane to the marvellous; usually when least expected. Many a time I have walked with non-birding friends, and they have had said that they had a 'nice walk', whereas the appearance of a good bird meant that I had a brilliant walk, and an exciting day to boot. Having that interest, and paying attention to what is around you, definitely adds something extra to every day. So what, you may ask, does this have to do with the club's January Felbrigg walk? Read on, and you will find out....

The morning did not get off to the best of starts, with low, grey skies, and drizzle; especially disappointing as the previous days had been bright and dry and the forecast for the following week was dry again! Not deterred by this blip in the weather though were the seventeen members who gathered in the car park for the first walk of 2025, with a couple of first timers joining us, including Andrew K. Birds noted in, around and over the car-park as we all gathered were **Rook**, **Jackdaw**, **Carrion Crow**, **Jay**, **Goldfinch**, **Blackbird**, **Herring Gull**, **Black-headed Gull**, **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit**, a

few small groups of **Redwing** and a drumming **Great Spotted Woodpecker**- this last was a sound we would hear throughout the walk. Trevor's brief included the apparent lack of small winter birds in the area, something we noticed for ourselves. Carol was AWOL for this walk, so Alan was persuaded to take over her role of 'sweeper-upper', ensuring no-one was left behind.

We started by walking round to the rear of the house, where we found a **Coal Tit** busily feeding in the trees. Having seen no sign of **Woodpigeon** in the car-park (possibly a first for a walk morning) we finally found a pair here. Moving into the woods we also found their close counterparts in the form of a pair of **Stock Dove**, high in a tree. Deeper in the woods we came across a flock of **Long-tailed Tit**, which, as they do, came confidently close. A calling **Wren** alerted us to its presence from deep within the undergrowth, though it remained firmly hidden. Emerging into one of the clearings in the woods we spied a **Grey Heron** sat high in a tree; not the usual place we find this species in the park. Accompanied by the drumming of more Great Spotted Woodpecker we headed for the ice pond, where a few **Teal** were observed on the water. Also

found here was a lone **Common Buzzard**, gliding along below the tree-tops. A **Robin**, and a calling **Pheasant** were the final species put in the notebook before we left the woods.

Arriving at the houses on the park's edge we found a pair of **Chaffinch** in one of the gardens, and got a brief view of a lone **Bullfinch**. A **Nuthatch** could be heard calling nearby, and Phil H. called **Treecreeper** from the back of the group, meaning that most of us missed it as it did what Treecreepers so often do, disappearing around the back of the trunk they were climbing, and not re-appearing. The sound of drumming woodpeckers was particularly prevalent in this area, and lovely to hear. Walking on we were surprised by a flock of 34 **Common Snipe** flying fast and low above us, followed by a smaller group; over forty in total. We wondered if they were passing through, but the general feeling was that they were local birds and something must have put them up. But what?



We now had a view down a slope to the water meadows, and into sight below us came a vision of light grey with black wing-tips, quartering the ground. Male **Hen Harrier**! Totally unexpected, and boy, had the day just got a whole lot more exciting, a feeling shared by the whole group! As this fabulous bird floated across our view more Snipe and Teal shot into the air; then, like a dream, it melted into the jumble of bushes, blocking our view. Wow! As we discussed this unexpected event it reappeared, drifting back the other way, prompting many shouts of "It's back"! Trevor managed to grab a few shots of it before it

vanished. It repeated this once more before finally drifting out of sight, no doubt much to the relief of the local waders and wildfowl. Trevor put out the alert on the club's Whatsapp. The only downside to the moment was that because of the damp, grey and uninspiring conditions at the start of the walk, most folk had left their cameras in their cars, now much to their regret! But hey, what a moment, and what a fantastic bird – and a club 'tick' for a good number of the group!

We walked down the slope to the lake, where we found **Mallard**, **Moorhen**, **Gadwall**, **Tufted Duck** (including a hybrid **Ferruginous/Tufted**) and **Mute Swan**, along with a number of **Common Gull**, plus a few more Black-headed and Herring gulls. As we neared the dam wall another Treecreeper was seen; unlike the first, this one decided it would put on a show for us, posing and giving everyone great and extended views. From the dam wall we spied a **Cormorant** in a tree, this example having a particularly extensive white front. A distant Hawthorn had a pair of **Meadow Pipit** perched on top, and three **Starling** were feeding in the grass. The water meadow to the right of the dam contained a perched **Kestrel**, a very pale Common Buzzard, a **Fieldfare** in a tree and, in the distance, a flying **Green Woodpecker**.

Reaching the channel that flows from the lake we found a **Water Rail**, for a change out in the open and easily seen. Like the earlier treecreeper, it was a showy bird, posing for everyone and even calling as it poked around in the mud. The morning was just getting better! Moving on we checked out the meadows for new species, but to no avail. A call from Phil at the back alerted us to a **Shoveler** on a small pool; Phil chided Trevor for having walked right past it without seeing it! A second Bullfinch was seen, but a calling **Dunnock** proved to be the final new species noted before we completed the walk back at the house, giving us a grand total for the morning of **44 species**.

A quick run through of upcoming events was followed by coffee in the café for those who wished to; all in all a wonderful start to 2025. See you at the next one, and who knows what might turn up!

February's Weekend Club Walk

Hawk and Owl Trust's Sculthorpe Moor Reserve | 1st February



By Janice Darch

It is hard to beat the close up views you get of passerines at Sculthorpe Moor as 8 of us found right from the start of our walk. The reserve is wet woodland and meadows in the Wensum Valley close to Fakenham. Right from the first hide we had brilliant views of male and female Bullfinches, Green Finches and Goldfinches, Nuthatches together

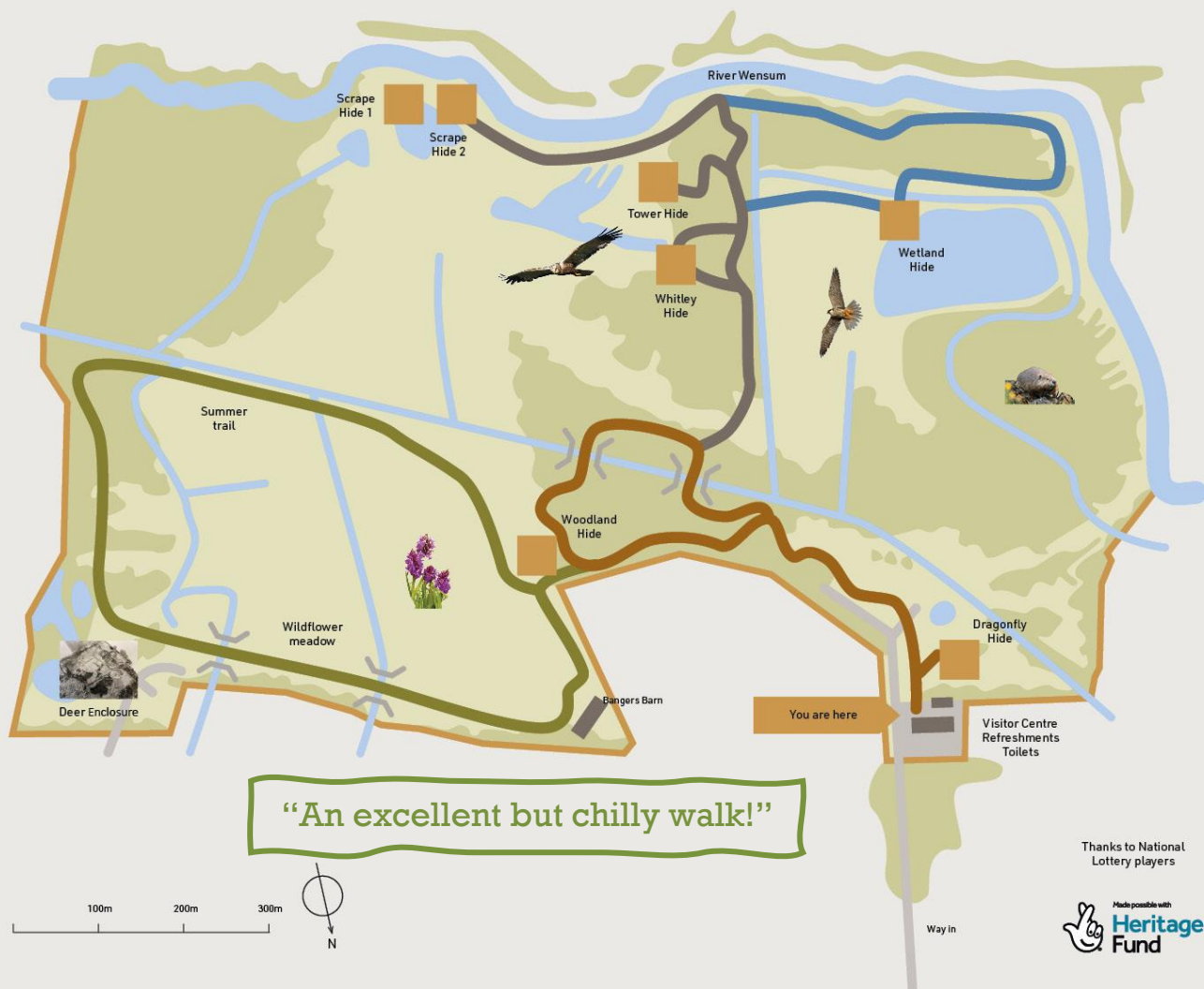
with Great, Blue, Long-tailed and Coal Tits coming to feeders. We soon added the harder to see Marsh Tit at another hide. Chaffinch, Robin, Dunnock and House Sparrow were showing well and were providing a clean-up service under the feeders. In the woodland we found a Song Thrush and several Blackbirds. Two Stock Doves posed nicely and many of the trees surrounding the reserve had hunkered-down Wood Pigeons on them all trying to keep warm. Eventually we set eyes on a Great Spotted Woodpecker which was tantalizing us. Someone saw a Wren and after a lot of searching we found a small flock of Siskin. Magpies were in the car park and viewable from within the reserve too. Some of us were lucky enough to see a Tawny Owl at its box but it didn't stay out for long and despite a return visit at the end of the walk it never came out again with the web cam in the Visitor Centre showing it asleep. From the hide overlooking the main scrape we saw one Whooper Swan, a Great White Egret, Little Egrets and flight views of a Cormorant. Wildfowl included Mallard, Wigeon, Teal, Gadwall, Shoveler, Little Grebe and Greylag Geese. We also saw a Grey Heron, Common Buzzard, Red Kite and Jackdaws flying over; some had a Sparrowhawk while most of us were in a hide. In all we saw 43 species of birds during our visit. *Photos Val Stubbs*



Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve is home to 200 acres of diverse habitat that runs alongside the beautiful River Wensum. Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Conservation Area, a wide variety of species of plants and animals are abundant.

-  Bridge Loop
-  Fen Path
-  Gunpowder
-  Wildflower Walk (Extended summer trail)

- Timings to hides (estimate):
- Dragonfly hide 5 mins
 - Woodland hide 15 mins
 - Whitley hide 25 mins
 - Tower hide 35 mins
 - Scrape hides 45 mins
 - Wetland hide 30 mins
 - Wildflower hide 30 mins



100m 200m 300m



Thanks to National Lottery players





The NENBC 10th Anniversary Launch Event

Celebrating a decade of people and birds

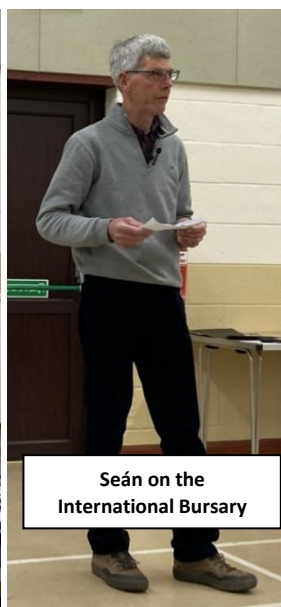


What a fantastic evening we had at the end of January for our **10th Anniversary Launch Event** – where did the time go?! Great to see so many of you there and online.

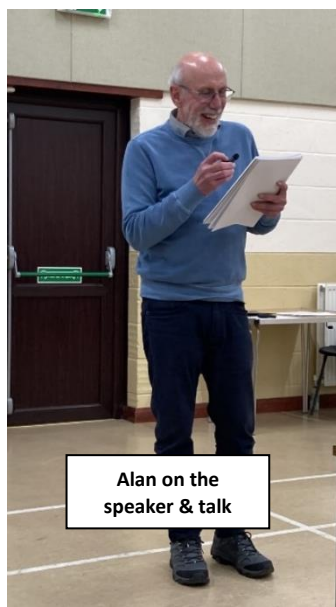
We began with a long overdue badge award and a rundown of the birds of the month for January, before moving on to the start of our 10th Anniversary celebrations. As well as this year being a reflection on what we have achieved and observed over the past decade, it is also a chance for us to look forward to new challenges, partnerships and activities. From the reflective perspective, we launched our **10th Anniversary Commemorative Book**, thanked our long-term members with a **10 Year Badge**, invited all our members to a **Summer Evening Social**, outlined how a number of our monthly walks this year will be flagged as **Anniversary Walks** to revisit some of the sites we went to in the early years of the club and welcomed John Hurst with a stall selling prints and cards of the wonderful **anniversary watercolour montage** he produced of a selection of NENBC special birds from the past decade. Looking forward, we have a bit of a theme going this year, encapsulated in our June conference “**Whose birds are these? - exploring Anglo-African bird migration**”. We announced the introduction of our new **International Young Birder Bursary** for a young African birder, gave a heads up on our migration-themed **UEA Environmental Consultancy Projects** for this year and we even managed to squeeze in the first of our 2025 talks about the work of the **Kartong Bird Observatory** with Roger Walsh. Here's a bit of a run down on the evening from a few of the folk in attendance



Trevor on the
Conference



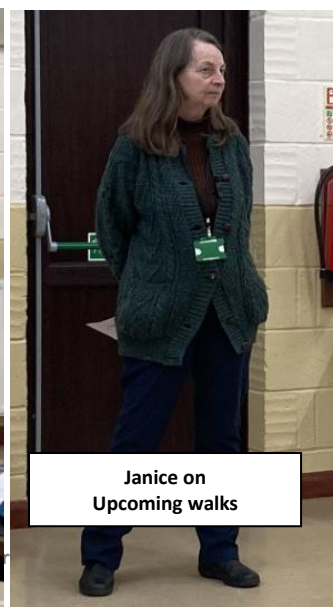
Seán on the
International Bursary



Alan on the
speaker & talk



Andy on
January's birds



Janice on
Upcoming walks

A Delayed Purple Badge Presentation – Moss Taylor



By Trevor Williams

“An action packed evening ahead - but first we must put right a heinous wrong.

When Moss Taylor stood down as our second President it was at the height of Covid. The Committee met (on Zoom) and agreed unanimously to award Moss a purple badge. As time went on we developed a collective memory that, in common with others at the time, we'd posted his badge through the door. Turns out that wasn't the case. As a happy coincidence Moss is here tonight so I'm delighted we can put that right...

As you know purple badges are awarded for something or to someone really special: They are a merit award in recognition of significant activities to encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching, including promoting the conservation of birds and wildlife, championing inclusion or making an exceptional contribution to club life.

Moss pretty much ticks all those boxes. He has been a loyal member of the Club since the beginning. He gave the very first evening talk at Aylmerton, almost exactly ten years ago tonight. I introduced him at the time as the 'father of North Norfolk birding' and he is still very much that today.

[There was an interjection here from Moss himself claiming grandfather status these days!]

He has made numerous contributions to Club life since that day - writing regular articles for the Newsletter, leading walks, hosting events like Big Sit and Sky Watch, initiating citizen science projects for us all to participate in, he's been a prodigious contributor of records and, of course, finder of rare birds. Understandably he features large in our 10th Anniversary Commemorative Book. But his stand-out achievement has been his guardianship of Weybourne Camp for over fifty years - the premier Anglo-African migration hot-spot in our area. As Richard Richardson was to East Bank so Moss is to Weybourne Camp.

To Moss Taylor - ornithologist, author, conservationist and Club personality - please come forward and receive your purple badge....

As is entirely fitting, Moss is also our first member to receive his 10 year badge & Commemorative Book.

By the way, if anyone does see a postie around Sheringham, wearing a Club purple badge - can you let us know please! Now on with this evening's gala event....”



Moss presented with his badges, certificate and book by former President Phil Hall and current Vice President Francis Farrow

International Young Birder Bursary

Naffie Sarr



By Seán Dempster

“About two years ago we launched a Bursary in order to support younger members of the club setting out on their birding careers. To date we have used some of our surplus funds to make

one award of £250. This year, to mark the 10th year of the club, and to tie in with the anniversary theme of Anglo-African migration,

we have decided to spread our wings and support a young international ornithologist. You are about to hear all about Kartong Bird Observatory in The Gambia. KBO supports several Research Assistants who carry out surveys, education and conservation activities. One of these Research Assistants is **Naffie Sarr**.

Naffie currently holds a BTO-T ringing permit and hopes to have her C-permit soon. In addition to her work with KBO, Naffie works as a bird guide in The Gambia, and is a member of the Gambia Youths Bird Club. She has completed an internship at the National Environment Agency as a Coastal Observer, as well as a leadership program with the Osprey Leadership Foundation. Ospreys are her favourite bird, as they were the first species she could identify.

This summer, assisted by a Bursary of £1,000 from NENBC, Naffie is coming to the UK for 4 months. During her visit, she will benefit from work experience with a variety of organisations

including Skokholm Bird Observatory, Rutland Ospreys, Glaslyn Ospreys, the White-tailed Eagle reintroduction project on the Isle of Wight and the BTO in Thetford. Naffie will be at the Global Bird Fair at Rutland and we very much hope that we can find an opportunity for members to meet her in Norfolk at some point during her stay in the UK."



"The Kartong Bird Observatory, The Gambia"

A talk with Roger Walsh

zoom

NENBC
Talk

By Alan Stevens

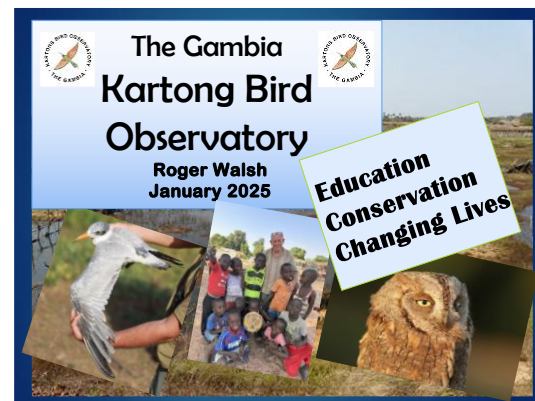
Our first indoor meeting saw the start of the NENBC10th Anniversary year and the launch of our theme for 2025, Birds we share with West Africa, their migration, conservation and what the future holds for them. Our summer migrants spend but only a short part of the year with us, the remainder spent either on migration or in their other 'home' in West Africa, so 'Whose Birds are They'? When considering their conservation, it is very clear that efforts must be made wherever the birds spend their time throughout the year.

Our invited speaker, Roger Walsh, is almost uniquely qualified to speak about these birds both in the UK, where he has an impressive birding CV, and perhaps more importantly, when they are in The Gambia to where he has regularly travelled since 2011. For his presentation he took us on a journey through his time spent there talking about birds but also offered a surprising insight into the country and his efforts to improve the lives of the people of the village of Kartong where he is based during his trips.

Roger started with a brief overview of the country explaining something of the geography, climate, economy (touching on the prevalence of corruption) and the lives of the population. Life for the many is a struggle with scarce opportunities of employment, low wages, poor transport, a high birth rate, short life expectancy and a median age of just over 18 years. Life in Kartong is basic and hard, a subject he returned to towards the end of the evening.

Roger's involvement with birding in The Gambia is based at the **Kartong Bird Observatory (KBO)** located in the southwest corner of the country, on part of its short coastline, and overlooking a former sand mine. Since mining stopped, these areas have filled with water during each rainy season and created one of the best birding sites along the coast with its rich tapestry of habitats. These offer migratory, inter-African and resident birds a broad range of contrasting environments. Bird ringing began at Kartong in 1996 and continues today with a team of ringers from the UK establishing a permanent station in 2010. An impressive range of species have been caught in large numbers allowing them to develop new ageing and sexing criteria for an avifauna that is understudied. They have caught many migrants from the Palearctic and aim to increase knowledge of their migration patterns through West Africa and beyond. They run regular ringing expeditions for bird ringers from the UK and each expedition sponsors a few Gambian students to gain valuable work experience learning the skills of ornithological research. To date 396 species of bird have been recorded at the observatory.

If you were at the meeting, or have already read elsewhere in this newsletter, you will be aware the NENBC is sponsoring one of the students at the observatory to continue her studies in the UK this year, and Roger introduced us to several of the young people undergoing training and gaining experience there. Their background and advancement were detailed and their enthusiasm relayed to us. The support given to them, not only through employment, is importantly helping to bring through a new generation of young, qualified



conservationists one of whom is now furthering his education in South Africa and working towards a PhD. We were introduced to Naffie Sarr who is the beneficiary of our grant.

Moving on to the work of the observatory, Roger added some numbers to their efforts with over 52,00 birds of 312 species ringed of the 396 recorded there. Focus then turned the 'Wintering Nightingale Project' and detailed the 'Call-back' surveys carried out on the wintering population where daylight logging devices have added valuable information on migration timing and routes. This is now enhanced by GPS logging. A 'Sandwich Tern Migration Project' led to surprisingly detailed results with one bird ringed in December 2011 returned to The Netherlands 11 times a distance of 68,500 miles.

Next up was a look at the KBO Vulture Project when we were shown the species their work covers including the White-Backed Vulture, now critically endangered, with a population decline of 90% in 50 years with only 270,000 surviving in 1991, and many fewer now we suspect. The Hooded Vulture has seen numbers decline by 62%, again in 50 years with a population of just 197,00 now. Roger explained the threats to their survival, poisoning by anti-inflammatory drugs, pesticides, lead poisoning for bullets, poaching, slaughter for traditional medicines and power lines they are unable to avoid.

Following on came details of two further projects, the first on Ospreys revealing migration patterns to the UK with Llyn Brenig in Wales focussed on as an example location where birds have been tracked to, and secondly a study of the Long-tailed Nightjar.

This wide-ranging talk then led on through blood sampling of birds for DNA and parasites, Eco-surveillance for zoonotic diseases and colour ringing with records of 5936 sightings of 1728 individual birds of 35 species and an illustration drawn from a Whimbrel ringed at the KBO in 2017 and resighted on the Nene Washes in Norfolk. A reminder to us all to keep looking for ringed birds.

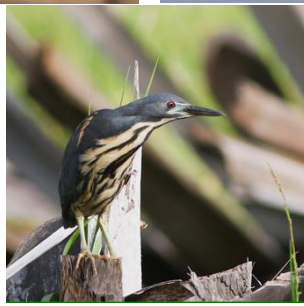
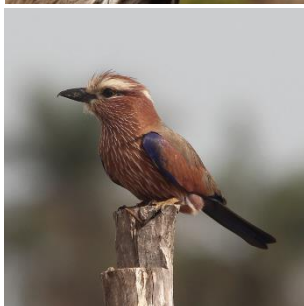
Roger concluded his talk with a gallery of Gambian birds (and a few reptiles) with some excellent photography of a broad selection of the amazing species to be seen there and a reminder of the many birds we share. But before that he returned to the village and the differences, many of which are driven by Roger, that the KBO tries to make in the lives of the local people. They arrange clothes donations, they have organised a Children's Dental Hygiene Project, made differences to lives of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, supported free healthcare with their First-Aid Station treating over 8000 people in 3 years, undertaken Environmental Education, support Nursery, Primary and High School education and sponsor a local football team, an astonishing achievement.

During his talk Roger quietly said that he wanted to try and make a bit of a difference, and he has, not only to the study of the birds at the KBO but also to lives of people who live with our birds when they are not with us, something we hope we can do with what we hope will be a lasting association with Naffie this year and with the KBO in the future.

If you want to find out more about the KBO and their work visit <https://kartongbirdobservatory.com/>

Or follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/p/Kartong-Bird-Observatory>





During the Q&A section at the end of the talk, Moss Taylor suggested that a collection was taken to assist the observatory and many members followed Moss's lead. Further donations have been received since from those on Zoom so if you would also like to donate, please let us know and we will let you have the bank details of the observatory. We received this from Roger:

"I am still feeling very elated thinking back to how well the KBO talk was received by your members. Please pass on how grateful I, Naffie and all at KBO are for the kind and positive responses we received. I remain overwhelmed by the generosity of club members which raised £157 on the night."

Here's what some of you had to say about the evening:

"Excellent talk last evening, was so heartening to hear, especially about bringing the local community on board, so important. [We] had a birding holiday in The Gambia around a decade ago and we visited Kartong, great place."

"Great evening!"

"I enjoyed last night's talk. Makes you realise what amazing things people do that you don't normally hear about."

"That was a brilliant meeting I so enjoyed it."

"Excellent meeting last night-a good start to the year."

"The evening presentation was most enjoyable and informative, reiterating the positive manner in which an overseas recipient can enhance not only our knowledge of migration and bird protection but also offer a hand of friendship to fellow man (woman)."

"I thought the talk was different but really good. I knew nothing of the KBO beforehand, and was most impressed by the dedication to science (as against having fun ringing loads of birds), training and local engagement."

"Thanks for a great talk."

"Excellent talk, great work for both birds and people!"

"Great session, thank you!"



NENBC 10th Anniversary Conference

'Whose birds are these? - exploring Anglo-African bird migration'

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



By Stella Baylis | NENBC conference organising group

To mark a decade of birdwatching, recording and conservation, a series of events to celebrate NENBC's 10th Anniversary will be held through 2025, including a conference on the theme of bird migration - *'Whose birds are these? - exploring Anglo-African bird migration'*.

On what is sure to be a fun and fascinating day, this once in a decade conference will showcase the latest research related to bird migration along the East Atlantic highway. The event will describe research around the threats our much-loved and familiar migrant birds face, such as habitat destruction, climate change and hunting. On a more positive note, we will see how the international conservation community is responding to protect our avian migrants and the part that we can play in their protection.



There will be a stellar line up of speakers from academia and environmental organisations, including **Juliet Vickery**, Chief Executive Officer of the BTO. We will also hear from **Will Cresswell** from St Andrew's University and **Wenceslas Gatarabirwa**, Head of Flyway Conservation at the RSPB. The day will conclude with what is sure to be a lively panel discussion. There will also be opportunity for questions from the audience, so get your thinking caps on!

Thanks to our generous sponsor, the **Leventis Foundation**, the conference is a free event, with buffet lunch and refreshments provided. We are expecting high demand so this is a ticketed event, meaning it will not be possible to turn up on the day. Members can book a maximum of 2 places per household, and we will operate on a 'first come first served' basis. There will be a reserve list, for if any confirmed attendees find themselves unable to attend.

To book your place don't delay! Please email: nenbc-events@outlook.com

Note that this is a specific email for this event and is not the same as the usual NENBC email address.

At the time of booking via this email, it would be useful if you could provide information about any dietary requirements or access needs, although I will be checking this later with confirmed attendees.

Your place(s) will be acknowledged via email from the above address, as will whether you are on the confirmed or reserve list. The final conference programme and joining instructions will be provided closer to the event.

We look forward to seeing you in June at what promises to be a highlight of the local birding year!

10th Anniversary Commemorative Book



NENBC
10th Anniversary
Commemorative
Book



Published by North East Norfolk Bird Club 2025

Hopefully by now you should all have received your household's copy of our 10th Anniversary Commemorative Book. We are all really pleased how it has turned out and is a lovely look back at some of the fantastic birds, habitats and people that have made our first decade so memorable. Hope you enjoy dipping in and out of it as time goes by. Additional copies available for £7 plus postage should you want them.



"Thank you for the 10th Anniversary book - it looks fantastic and I'm looking forward to reading and learning from all the tips! Well done, and thank you to the team for all your time and effort putting this together."

"Just to let you know, the book has just popped through our letter box and Val has been flicking through a little gobsmacked at how much is packed in to it. She is telling me about the pictures of birds in wonderful colour! She will be dipping in and out reading through it and then the book will go with the other bird books we have in the book case. So thanks to all who have contributed to it what a nice surprise."

"We received our copy of the club book today. I sat down with a cup of coffee to flick through it briefly, and looked up again an hour later - coffee cold. It's full of fascinating information and I just wanted to send congratulations to everyone involved. I'm looking forward to more cold cups of coffee as I read some more."

"I will enjoy starting to read that book."

"May I congratulate you all and fellow contributors for the splendid and professionally composed book."

"Your 10 year NENBC celebratory book is great. A real mix of really interesting and novel articles. Congratulations on your first ten years and it would be great if a future objective was drop the 'NE'. Every other county has one, so there is my challenge....."

"Many thanks for the 10th Anniversary Book. Could I buy another copy for a friend?"

"Congratulations to all responsible for the amazing 10th Anniversary Book."

"Thank you so much for the lovely Commemorative Book which is full of colourful birds, people and interest! It's such a great idea and very special to have."

"I'm dipping in and out with much more to go!"

"A fab 10 year book!" "Very much enjoying the 10th Anniversary publication!"

"What an excellent publication the 10th Anniversary Book is. I was bowled over by the depth of detail and the incredible achievements of a club formed only ten years ago. It's a mine of useful and anecdotal information & almost a reference work for birds in our area."

The 10 Year Badge



As a big thank you to all our long-term members, every 6 months we will be presenting an Anniversary Badge to households once they have been with us for 10 years. This is in recognition of your valued support as it is your participation that produces all the bird sightings, allows us to collate and analyse data, your engagement that makes the club a welcoming and inclusive group that helps folk grow into birding and your membership fees and donations that support all our activities. Here's the list of all of you have stuck with us from the first 6 months we were in existence

*Judith Anderson, Jonathan Anderson, James Appleton, Julian Bhalerao,
Colin & Val Blaxill, Greg & Val Bond, Phil Borley & Lin Pateman, Andy Clarke,
Greta & Mark Clements, Peter Colston, Norman & Joy Couchman, Jane Crossen, Doug &
Jenny Cullern, Mick Curran, Giles Dunmore, Bob & Violet Farndon,
Cherry & Francis Farrow, David Fell, Peter & Rita Fisher, Barbara Gardner,
Ian Gordon, Larry Graham, Stephen Green & Clare Wilson, Phil & Carolyn Hall,
Nick & Julia Harvey, John Hurst, Paul Laurie, Tony Leech, Roger & Lesley Lougher, Patricia &
Graham Maile, Anne Mansfield & Pam Tregunna, Peter & Sue Morrison, Steve & Anne Poole,
Rob & Judith Portch, Ian Prentice, John & Patsy Rampling,
Alex Randall, Nigel Redman, Walter & Sue Sadler, Anne Sims, Moss Taylor,
Carol & Ken Thornton, Sue & Bob Titman, Sarah & Eric Van Hoek, John Wagstaff, Adrienne &
John Walsh, Pauline Walton, Trevor & Jane Williams, Matthew Williams, Heather & David
Wilson, Stephanie Witham, Dawn & Tim Wright*

Your support for the past decade is much appreciated and we hope that we continue to enjoy your company for the next one!

NENBC 10th Anniversary Print by John Hurst



We were delighted when we were approached last year by club member John Hurst suggesting that he embarked upon a watercolour montage to celebrate our 10th Anniversary. Below he tells you all about the process involved and how you can get your hands on a copy of the full print or a pack of 10 greetings cards which include the 9 images from the print plus an additional Leach's Storm Petrel. For each sale made, John is generously making a contribution to club funds.



Birds and NENBC Locations - The Artist's Perspective

By John Hurst

I am almost always asked when presenting watercolours to patrons, how the composition came about, my inspirations and creative design concept. In the case of this watercolour, termed a composite or montage, the answers are simple. Recent years have seen an increase in commissions to paint montages, usually a series of studies found within the enclaves of great estates such as walled garden corners, potting sheds and the like. With this notion in mind and when considering the varied locations and birds enjoyed since the foundation of the NENBC, the stage was set for a challenge. So, what to paint?

The initial process was certainly initiated by the 'ten questions and ten best birds' put to me as part of the anniversary book section '10 Members'. From here, I found myself reminiscing about various sightings, with locations, field craft, anticipation, seasons, light and camaraderie all rolled into one. After a pleasant and informative conversation with our chairman, the locations and species emerged without the sole reliance on rarities. Here is a resume of how each vignette emerged in a clockwise rotation. The locations and birds were sketched from life or from my own resources without the use of any photographs taken by club members.



Weybourne Mill and Pink footed Geese We eagerly await the lifting of the sugar beet crops at Weybourne each winter and the arrival of the vast skeins of Pinkfeet that consume the beet chips left by the harvester. I chose the iconic windmill as a prominent feature.

Felbrigg Park Little Owl I discovered this viewpoint when on a club walk, realising that the wall leading to the lake creates a wonderful perspective. With yellow eyes, little owl always appears to me as rather fierce, hence the turned head and piercing stare.

West Runton Ring Ouzel It has become obvious over the years that the horse paddocks at this location have become as 'hot spot' for the spring arrival of this dashing, charismatic species. Often encountered as a glimpse in some remote moorland ravine or when wildly departing in the autumn, to be able to observe groups of ouzels offering good views while quietly feeding is a joy.

Weybourne Camp Wheatear Here's a classic case of 'why paint something rare?' I always eagerly anticipate the first arrival of this species and always gravitate to this location to find one.

Happisburgh Shore Larks Happisburgh is one of my favourite locations, a constant source of inspiration due to the ever-changing landscape brought about by rapid coastal erosion. The choice of species here was a tricky one when considering scarce migrants recorded here such as Richard's pipits and red breasted flycatcher in 2024. My observations of shore larks here were so enjoyable and being such a striking species, it easily finds itself on the list.

Sheringham Purple Sandpiper As suitable rocky habitat for this species is rather limited on the Norfolk coast, visiting birders from far and wide make their annual pilgrimage to find the wintering purple sandpipers below the Crown Inn. I enjoy the way in which they unobtrusively potter about among the turnstones whilst feeding on the rock algae.

Pigneys Wood Sedge Warbler Blythe's reed warbler could have been an appropriate vignette for this location as a well watched individual frequented the tallows by my chosen viewpoint in 2020. However, the rattling song and precocious 'show off' April sedge warbler simply couldn't be ignored!

Kelling Heath Turtle Dove Flocks of turtle doves arriving on the Lincolnshire coast and the constant summer 'purring song' emanating from many a blackthorn copse, are now but childhood memories. In honour of Operation Turtle Dove and the efforts of landowners and conservationists, I derived great pleasure in making this composition.

Trimingham Bee Eaters Although prominent position for this painting was hotly contested, with peregrine falcon perhaps warranting the 'top spot', the joyous occasion afforded to the club and wider public by two consecutive yearly visits by this species created an irresistible centrepiece. I sketched the quarry roadway and old nest site to complete the collection.



Birds and Locations: The NENBC anniversary print is £98.00 at club events (or £110.00 with UK p&p)

Ten favourites: The pack of 10 NENBC anniversary greetings cards are £20.00 at club events (or £25.00 with UK p&p)

To order: Email johnhurst303@btinternet.com (he'll need your delivery address) and payment is either by BACS (to Marshland Arts | Sort Code 40-41-38 | Account No 11389300), Paypal (via the www.marshlandarts.co.uk order form) or by cash or cheque at events. BACS and Paypal also OK at events if you have phone access

Postal orders dispatched on receipt of payment. Thank you.

RSPB Big Garden BirdWatch 2025

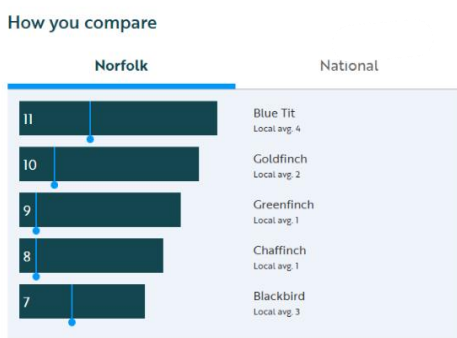
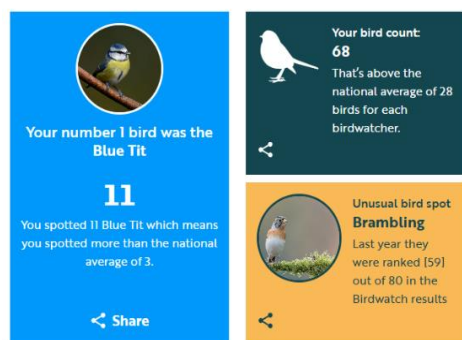
Friday 24th to Sunday 26th January



Many thanks to the 13 households who took part in the RSPB Garden BirdWatch at the end of last month and flagged their records on the website / emailed them across to me. We normally get a few more than that contributing to this bit of citizen science so not sure why we are low on participants this year. Our stats are shown on the right. Robin and Woodpigeon were recorded in all 13 gardens with Blue Tit and Dunnock in 12, Great Tit and Blackbird in 11 and Chaffinch in 10.

Species	# of Gdns	Species	# of Gdns	Species	# of Gdns
Robin	13	Great Spotted Woodpecker	5	Starling	2
Woodpigeon	13	Pheasant	5	Bullfinch	1
Blue Tit	12	Stock Dove	4	Buzzard	1
Dunnock	12	Blackcap	3	Carrion Crow	1
Blackbird	11	Brambling	3	Goldcrest	1
Great Tit	11	Magpie	3	Green Woodpecker	1
Chaffinch	10	Nuthatch	3	Grey Heron	1
Coal Tit	9	Wren	3	Grey Wagtail	1
Greenfinch	8	Black-headed Gull	2	Linnet	1
Goldfinch	7	Collared Dove	2	Pied Wagtail	1
House Sparrow	6	Moorhen	2	Siskin	1
Jackdaw	6	Rock Dove	2		
Long-tailed Tit	6	Rook	2		

Results from the RSPB aren't out until April but at point of writing, over 8 million birds had been counted over the weekend, an excellent partial result. Please feed your results into the RSPB website at [Every survey counts. Tell us what you saw by 23 February](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch). You'll get some nice comparative stats and graphics on your individual data like that below. Currently the most reported species in Norfolk is Blue it followed by Woodpigeon and Blackbird whereas nationally the top spot still belongs to the House Sparrow.



Birding through the year in Norfolk

Comments on some interesting observations

January 2025



By Moss Taylor

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

January 2nd | Long-tailed Duck - drake with the scoter flock offshore at Weybourne Camp.

The breeding range of the Long-tailed Duck covers the Arctic regions of North America and Europe, and it nests further north than any other species of duck. It is a winter visitor mainly to Scotland, where flocks of 2,000+ are regularly recorded. It spends up to a minute under water during a single dive, and reaches depths of up to 55 cms, deeper than any other British duck. In flight both species have all dark wings, and they fly low over the waves, with a whirring, auk-like flight, swaying from side-to-side on down-curved wings due to a small upstroke and deep down stroke, and land in the water with a splash. Both sexes have summer and winter plumages, and a variable juvenile plumage. Despite their name, females and young and moulting drakes do not have a long tail. Except for juveniles, all drakes have some pink in the middle section of their bills. Other differences from the females are the generally whiter sides on the head, a white forehead and grey fringes to the coverts. Females have entirely dark upperparts and a complete black crown.



January 7th | Tufted Duck x Ferruginous hybrid – presumed female at Felbrigg Lake.

Ducks belonging to the Aythya genus, comprising the majority of freshwater diving ducks, are the most frequent species to hybridise, whereas hybrids between different species of dabbling ducks are extremely rare. The commonest species to produce hybrids are Tufted Duck, Pochard, Ferruginous Duck and Scaup. The most likely hybrid combinations occur between species that come into close contact during the breeding season either in the wild or in wildfowl collections. In addition female Aythya ducks are notorious 'egg dumpers' and therefore the ducklings imprint on their surrogate mothers and, as adults, may try to mate with the same species that raised them. For example Pochards and Ferruginous Ducks both share the same Eastern European breeding habitat and so hybrids between these two species are not that uncommon, and hybrids tend to inherit the Pochards' westerly migration route in autumn. However, it is never easy to be certain about the exact parentage of a hybrid, nor even the bird's sex. Features to check include the size of the bird, shape of the crown and the position of a tuft if present, the extension of the black tip on the bill, the colour of the flanks and the wing bars in flight. The Aythya hybrid at Felbrigg has been present for a number of years and has been ascribed to a mating between a Tufted Duck and Ferruginous Duck, presumably in a local wildfowl collection. A fascinating bird and one that is too easily passed off as only a hybrid.



January 9th | Glaucous Gull - 2cy feeding on seal carcass on Cley beach.

The number of wintering Glaucous Gulls visiting Great Britain, mainly from Iceland, has fallen since 1990. Thicker necked with a shorter primary projection at rest than an Iceland Gull, the majority are in juvenile plumage (not first winter, as there is no post-juvenile moult). Juveniles are generally 'digestive biscuit' coloured with darker, wavy markings on the mantle, coverts & tertials, but may be almost pure white by late winter due to abrasion and bleaching. The bill is always pink with a clearly demarcated, 'dipped in ink', black tip, and has a less marked gonydal angle than a Great Black-backed Gull. The iris is dark. Second winters are variable, some being almost pure white, others a 'milky tea' colour with darker blotches on the head, neck & underparts. The wing tips are rounded. The bill is faded pink with a darker outer third and pale tip. The iris is pale.



January 11th | Pallid Harrier – adult female at Warham Green raptor roost.

On a cold, crisp, clear and cloudless afternoon I joined 40 other birders waiting expectantly at the northern end of Garden Drove overlooking the marshes at Warham Green. We were there to watch the comings and goings at the so-called 'raptor roost', but that is something of a misnomer. Compared with the Stubb Mill roost at Hickling, there was really only one species that most of us were there to see: the Pallid Harrier. While waiting for the star of the show to make her entrance, six species of raptor were recorded, including a couple of Marsh Harriers, two Red Kites and a Buzzard. However, the pace quickened when a magnificent adult male Hen Harrier flew around the marshes hoping for a late supper, followed by a Barn Owl as the afternoon wore on. Two immature Spoonbills flew high east, although they were surprisingly missed by several of the assembled company. Apparently no-one is really sure where the Pallid Harrier spends the day but she invariably flies into the roost from the east, and exactly on cue at 1545hrs she was picked up arriving over the salt marsh. At a distance of c.400yds she flew steadily west, stopping briefly to harry a Sparrowhawk that was carrying a small passerine, which was dropped, before landing on the metal bridge crossing one of the dykes in the middle of the marsh, where she remained and presumably roosts each night.



Since 1993 there has been a surge in the number of British records of Pallid Harrier and one actually bred with a Hen Harrier in Orkney in 1995 but the breeding attempt was unsuccessful. The species is now more common in NW Europe and breeds as close as Finland. It is thought that the westward spread in Europe is due to Pallid Harriers being displaced from their breeding range in Kazakhstan, Russia and NW China, where the steppe grasslands are now being used for agriculture. The species first overwintered in north Norfolk in 2002/03 and the female now roosting at Warham Green first appeared as a juvenile on 1st November 2022, since when it has been seen annually in the area during the winter months, leaving in early spring.

Fortunately, female Pallid Harriers are fairly easy to identify having a narrower 'hand' and longer tail than a Hen Harrier, with unmarked orange-buff underparts and underwing coverts, while the head and neck pattern are characteristic: the dark face contrasts with a pale collar behind the ear coverts, and a dark 'boa' at the sides of the neck. Finally only four primary tips are visible at the end of the wing.

January 12th | Long-billed Dowitcher – one by Lady Anne's Drive at Holkham.

Arriving at Lady Anne's Drive in mid-morning we were greeted by a line of parked cars almost reaching back to the A149. But fortunately we realised that those at the northern end were starting to drive back to the coast road. Our visit had clashed with the weekly Holkham Parkrun and many of the hundreds of runners had already finished. It was therefore not difficult to find a parking space near the entrance to the pines. After a very pleasant walk along the south side, in beautiful winter sunshine, we arrived back at the car, to find we had parked next to Steve Hack. It seems that whenever I go out birding away from Weybourne Camp, I invariably bump into Steve and he was able to tell us from where along the Drive both the Green-winged Teal and Long-billed Dowitcher could be seen. After excellent views of the drake Green-winged Teal, we were soon watching the Long-billed Dowitcher feeding along the bank of a dyke on the marsh, probing the soft mud in the manner of a snipe. Perhaps not surprisingly it was formerly known as the Red-breasted Snipe, when the Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers were considered to be races of the same species.



Long-billed Dowitchers tend to associate with Black-tailed Godwits, as was this one. In winter plumage they are grey overall with a fairly distinct pale supercilium and a long, straight bill. In flight a long white cigar-shaped rump extends onto the lower back. Watching this one at Holkham reminded me my first Long-billed Dowitcher seen at Cley on 2nd November 1969, only the third Norfolk record. At the time I was living at Great Yarmouth, having moved up to Norfolk in January that year to work at Northgate Hospital. Although I had been making regular birding trips to the county in the previous few years, it was the first time that I had actually lived in Norfolk, which was subsequently to become my adopted 'home county'. I was lucky enough to be befriended by Michael Seago and Peter Allard, who took me to Cantley to see a singing Great Reed Warbler in June, while a fine summer-plumaged adult Sabine's Gull on the beach at Hunstanton in August was another highlight. A trip to a partially-lifted beet field near Blakeney on October 23rd, provided me with another lifer, a Cream-coloured Courser that was sharing the field with a Hoopoe! Strangely enough, the Courser then turned up in another beet field at Caister-on-Sea, just a few miles from where I was living.

However, what really stood out from that year, was the visit to Cley on November 2nd. A dowitcher, of undetermined species, had earlier been reported from the pool at Weybourne Hope on October 30th, and was then re-located on the North Scrape by Owen Laugharne on November 2nd. So it was to the North Hide that I made my way from the beach car park as soon as I arrived. Only a handful of other birders were present in the hide, but we were probably considered a 'crowd' in those days! Amongst those present were Keith and Enid Allsopp (aka Natterjack). Unfortunately the dowitcher was on the far side of the pool on North Scrape, and even with the latest Hertel & Reuss telescopes its specific identification could not be ascertained. However, Enid Allsopp came to the rescue by playing first of all a tape recording of Short-billed Dowitcher, which elicited no response whatsoever and then the flight call of a Long-billed Dowitcher. The effect was amazing with the bird immediately taking off, calling in response and flying towards the North Hide – problem solved! From the NBR Record Card, I see that the bird was also seen by Ian (D.I.M.) Wallace on November 4th, the last date on which it was recorded, but it may well be that we are the only two observers still alive who were lucky enough to see this 'first' for the Cley Reserve.

January 19th | Eurasian White-fronted Geese – 2 adults and a juvenile on cliff-top fields at Weybourne.

The Eurasian, or Russian, White-fronted Goose is just one of several races of the Greater White-fronted Goose. As its name implies in nests in Siberia, and since the 1980s the main wintering sites in Norfolk have been in the mid-Yare Valley (Cantley and Strumpshaw), the Upper Thurne marshes (Heigham Holmes, Hickling and Horsey) and Holkham with about 300 at each site. In the 1930s and 1940s, up to 3,000 overwintered on the Halvergate Marshes but as marshland drainage became more efficient as windmills were replaced by a powerful pumping station, the once wet marshes dried out and by the mid-1970s they were abandoned by the White-fronted Geese. Although they favour the traditional wet meadows, smaller gaggles can turn up almost anywhere but they are likely to become even less numerous as more birds are remaining to winter on the near Continent, especially The Netherlands.



January 20th | First-winter Merlin - over Weybourne Camp.

The Merlin is the smallest European bird of prey, breeding in Northern Europe, Asia and North America, where they were formerly known as the Pigeon Hawk. Most of the European population are migrants, moving south into North Africa and the Middle East. However, those that nest in the British Isles are resident, simply moving from their upland and moorland breeding areas to lowland heaths and coastal marshes for the winter. Like the Peregrine, the numbers of Merlins fell dramatically in the 20th century due to the effects of the organochlorine pesticides, but began to recover once these chemicals were banned in the 1980s. Norfolk's wintering Merlins are believed to be from the British population, and the recovery of a nestling ringed in Northumberland and found at Feltwell in October would support this. In flight Merlins recall miniature Peregrines, although they rarely stoop. They hunt low over open country with a distinct flight consisting of periods of rapid wing beats followed by short glides on closed wings, making them almost thrush-like, perhaps to fool their potential prey. Their diet consists entirely of small birds with Skylarks accounting for 50% of their prey. In winter, they roost communally, often with Hen Harriers, on lowland heaths and coastal marshland.



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Memorable experiences or favourite birds? This new series from Moss links nicely with another couple we have in the pipeline. Two of the questions we asked of the 10 members who were interviewed for our 10th Anniversary Commemorative Book were ***"Tell us about a stand-out birding experience you've had and what made that particularly memorable for you"*** and ***"Everyone has a favourite bird or bird family don't they? What's yours and why?"***. Our respondents waxed lyrical about both these topics, so much so that for some we couldn't fit their full answers in, and they were so varied and interesting! That got us thinking. We are going to include some of the missed accounts in the newsletter going forwards from next month but what we would really like is to extend the questions out to the whole membership.

Memorable experiences or favourite birds? We'd love to hear from you! It doesn't have to be a Norfolk experience or bird, or even a UK one, but it could be. It doesn't have to be long (but we aren't going to say no if it is!). It doesn't have to include a photo if you don't have one – although pics are always lovely, some of the best experiences happen when there isn't time or need for a photo. Please do get in touch!



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.

Last month Val Stubbs had a question:

“Has anyone else noticed the preponderance of male Blackbirds over females? Any ideas why this might be? Or is it just that my eyesight is getting worse?!”

Moss Taylor sent in this response

“In reply to Val’s question in “Ask the audience...” in last month’s *The Pied Flyer* about the preponderance of male over female Blackbirds, I have been doing some ‘research’ in copies of *British Birds* from the 1960s. In fact the matter was first raised in 1952, in a paper in the BOU journal *The Ibis*, in which it was reported that there was a preponderance of wintering male Blackbirds from Shetland to Hampshire varying from 55% to 69%. This stimulated other observers to report their findings and a summary appeared in *British Birds* in 1961 covering many of the winters from 1948/49 to December 1960, from locations as far apart as Orkney, Ireland, Wales and London with the ratio of males to females lying between 54% and 67%. Similar proportions were found at two ringing sites in Cambridgeshire during the 1960/61 winter, and the difference in the sexes was even more marked in first-winter birds. However, no explanation for this was put forward, but of interest, on Heligoland, the ratio was reversed both for spring and

autumn migrants with the female to male ratio being 3:2, and it was proposed that females predominate in some places on the Continent in winter, presumably because the males have emigrated to the British Isles. This is exactly the opposite to at least two members of the finch family: Chaffinch and Goldfinch. The specific scientific name of the Chaffinch is *coelebs*, from the Latin meaning single or unmarried, a reference first made by Linnaeus in 1757, when he remarked that hen Chaffinches wintered south to Holland, leaving the cocks to lead a bachelor existence in Sweden. Similarly, up to the 1970s, when many Goldfinches flew south to winter in Iberia, the majority migrating were females, leaving the males to overwinter in their breeding areas. So I still have no idea why we are seeing more male Blackbirds than females in the winter, unless more males are indeed moving out from the Continent to overwinter in the British Isles.”

Contemplating Conservation

Cats Part 1: Impacts of cats on wildlife



By Tracy Brighten

Domestic cats are generalist and opportunistic predators that kill a significant number of birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. What is harder to define is the impact on species populations and biodiversity, as this depends on geography, cat density, and if hunting ranges include vulnerable species. In Australia, where there is clear impact on native species, cat management focuses on feral cat eradication and pet cat containment, which is generally well supported. In the UK, where domestic cats are mainly pets or strays, any suggestion of restricting cats’ movements ignites hot debate. A controversial and complex issue, cat management policies for wildlife conservation also need to consider cat welfare and the views of cat owners and wildlife enthusiasts, these two not being mutually exclusive.

The most widely researched impact of domestic cats is predation. Free-roaming cats have contributed to at least 63 wildlife extinctions: 40 birds, 21 mammals, and two reptiles. There is a high risk of extinctions on islands where native species have not evolved with introduced predators. Cats also affect local bird and mammal populations on the mainland, which includes continents and large islands such as the UK. One frequently cited study (Loss, Will and Marra, 2013) estimated that the deaths of 1.3 to 4 billion birds and 6.3 to 22.3 billion mammals annually in the U.S.

were caused by free-ranging domestic cats. Unowned cats (strays and feral) were found to be a greater problem than pets, possibly because many cat owners in the U.S. keep their cats indoors.

In Australia, cats kill 2.92 million mammals, 1.67 million reptiles, 1.09 million birds, 0.26 million frogs and 2.97 million invertebrates every *day*. Feral cats kill more animals, but pet cats may have more impact on native species locally. Research shows on average, each roaming pet cat kills 186 reptiles, birds and mammals per year, most of them native to Australia – that’s an eye opening 4,440 to 8,100 animals per square kilometre per year for the area inhabited by pet cats.



A report in the Netherlands estimated that 141 million animals are preyed on average per year, with pet cats responsible for almost two-thirds.

The Mammal Society estimates that cats catch up to 27 million birds each year in the UK, and 275 million prey items overall per year (when there were 9.5 million pet cats). According to Cats Protection (March 2024), there are now 10.6 million owned cats in the UK, or 12.5 million according to Statista (2024).

Studies using video cameras and scat analysis show pet cats only bring home between 10% and 23% of the animals they kill, so cat-related deaths may be even higher. What’s more, a study on animal welfare suggests many prey animals brought home alive and released by owners die later, either from injuries or diseases contracted from cat saliva.

When living in high densities in neighbourhoods, pet cats have an ecological impact greater than native predators but concentrated within 100 metres or so of their homes, according to a U.S. study that tracked cats from six countries. Cats living on urban fringes with access to natural habitats are a particular concern. Tracking pet cats using GPS collars, a UK study looked at predation in non-urban areas where vulnerable species are more likely to be found. Cats were found to use natural habitats when available to them and have larger home ranges and kill more prey than cats without access to natural habitats. While cats on urban fringes posed a greater predation threat to small mammals than birds, researchers said cat presence in conservation areas could be problematic for both predation and disturbance. Consequently, authors recommend restricting cat access to conservation areas, especially those with vulnerable species.

Research looking at cats’ home ranges found that cats with access to forest edges may be a particular threat to native species. A study in Washinton DC found that the probability of a cats preying upon native species increases closer to forest edges, and that predation is highest when supplemental food is abundant. Their findings can inform urban free-roaming cat management, and the supplementary feeding of stray cats near forest edges.

Even free-roaming cats at low density can have a critical impact in sensitive areas. A single stray cat was likely responsible for the breeding failure of an entire colony (111 nests) of threatened Fairy Terns on in Mandurah, Australia, killing adults and chicks and causing nest abandonment. Identified by video cameras and observations within the colony, the cat was later caught and found to be desexed but not microchipped.

Like Mandurah, urban environments may include natural habitats important for biodiversity conservation, providing shelter and food for wildlife, including rare seabirds already at risk from habitat destruction and overfishing by humans, and higher and more frequent spring tides due to climate change. But cats are also popular pets and strays are provided with supplementary food, creating a high concentration of free-roaming cats in these environments.

In addition to the direct impact of predation, free-roaming cats have indirect impacts on wildlife, which may also prove lethal, including fear effects that influence stress responses, defensive behaviour, foraging, body condition, nest attendance, and vulnerability to other predators. A UK study found that a blackbird’s behaviour changed in the brief presence of a domestic cat (a taxidermy cat) near their nest. Blackbirds fed their chicks less frequently and this fear effect lasted long after the threat had gone. Reduced provisioning affects nestling growth, condition and survival. In addition, defensive behaviour such as alarm calls alerted other predators, such as corvids. Researchers

warn of overestimating nest predation by a third party and underestimating the initiation by cats, leading to unjustified predator control programmes.

Other indirect impacts of cats on wildlife include competition for the same food sources and shelter; hybridisation, which affects wild cat species conservation; and transmission of diseases. Cats carry a wide variety of pathogens, increasing the potential for zoonotic spillover from pets to wildlife, farmed animals, and even humans. Toxoplasma infection has been identified in marine mammals, at risk when feeding in estuaries and coastal waters contaminated by feral, stray, or pet cat faeces.

Looking at population level impacts of free-ranging domestic cats, Loss and Marra considered the available evidence of the negative effects of cats on mainland vertebrates. Cats have the potential to reduce population sizes below their carrying capacities, but authors note the difficulty of determining whether deaths caused by cats are compensatory (e.g., weak/sick animals that would have died anyway) or additive (would not have died). This would require knowledge of the survival rate in the absence of cats and the mortality rate caused by cats. Local-scale, species-specific research is needed to provide policymakers with specific proof of predation impacts in each context.

Rather than risk population impacts, Loss and Marra recommend a shift in policymaking to a “precautionary principle” approach to reduce further impacts from free-roaming cats. This approach would accept the evidence that cats affect mainland vertebrate populations and assume these outcomes are likely unless evidence is provided otherwise. Authors also suggests that the welfare of wild animals should be considered and not just the welfare of cats and that cat management discussions and decisions should be based on science not on public opinion.

To help improve this evidence, a global literature review on cat impacts on wildlife assessed research biases and gaps. There is a dearth of studies in Asia, Africa and South America and a prevalence in Europe, North America and Australia. Australia has received more research than any other continent, potentially due to the prevalence of feral cats and their impact on native species and the public open-mindedness to managing cat populations.

Most research has focused on unowned cats and rural areas and predation was the most-studied impact. The review recommends more research to fill the gaps on cat impacts of disease transmission, hybridisation, fear and competition effects, and management methods to reduce impacts, as well as understudied continents.

The review also highlighted the need to communicate the science about cat impacts to improve public understanding, minimise the influence of misinformation, and foster evidence-based discussion among cat owners, animal welfare activists, wildlife enthusiasts, conservation professionals, and policymakers.

In the UK, more research is needed to understand the negative effects of pet cats on local biodiversity to inform targeted conservation policy and provide evidence for more responsible pet ownership. Reducing the impact of free-roaming domestic cats is a cultural and conservation challenge, but this isn’t a reason to turn a blind eye.

“Cats Part 2: Reconciling cat welfare and wildlife conservation” will cover cultural considerations, cat management strategies and collaboration.

Image credits:

Loss & Marra (2017) Domestic Cat Impacts Figure 2
Loss & Marra (2017) Fear Effects Table
Cat eating house sparrow by Mark Marek on Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 3.0)

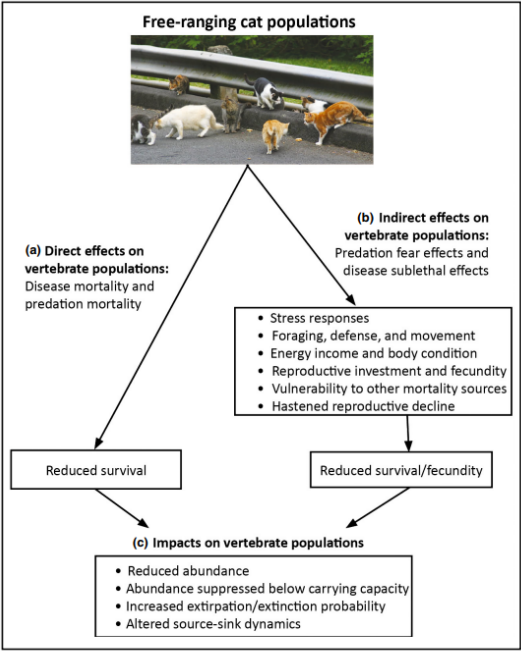


Figure 2. Mechanisms of free-ranging cat impacts on vertebrate populations include:

Table 1. Studies providing evidence for cat impacts on mainland vertebrate populations through “fear effects”*					
Species/group impacted	Cat type	Location	Evidence	Impact description	Reference
Common blackbird	Model	Sheffield (UK)	Experimental	Presentation of cat model increased alarm calling and direct aggression, reduced nestling provisioning, and increased nest predation by other species	Bonnington et al. (2013)
Barn swallow	Unspecified free-ranging	Kraghede (Denmark)	Cat presence observations	In medium-high density colonies, cat predation risk early in life elevated rate of reproductive decline during senescence late in life	Balbontin and Møller (2015)
Granivorous birds	Unspecified free-ranging	Poland	Cat presence observations	Use of new bird feeders slower with cats present	Tryjanowski et al. (2015)
Carolina chickadee	Model	Tennessee (US)	Experimental	Avoidance of bird feeders greater with cat model; avoidance greatest with cat model facing toward feeders	Freeberg et al. (2016)

Notes: *Indirect effects on survival or reproduction due to alteration of physiology and/or behaviors in response to predation pressure.



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!

Barnacle Goose "Stood looking a little confused on beach near the lifeboat station- presumably defeated by the strong winds." | Geoff Snelson | Sheringham | 24th

Shoveler "2x Water meadows. New eco - cycled to Felbrigg." | David Barrass | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 20th

Collared Dove "2x Exploring a potential nest site in the climbing rose. This is their usual nest site, but they might struggle this year as a lot of has fallen down over winter" | Stephanie Witham | North Walsham | 23rd

Water Rail "Good views at the outflow stream, below the dam, although a Robin took a dislike to its presence" | Stella Baylis | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 3rd

Water Rail "hope reed bed. calling. one observed with thermal imager chasing a vole / mouse, which climbed to top of a reed stem, upon jumping of to the ground the water rail attacked, not known if it was a successful kill." | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 11th

Golden Plover "50x Flock in flight by Deadman's- some on field later. Including one odd-looking individual showing a lot of white in the upper wings including white primaries." | Tony Pope | Weybourne Cliffs | 8th

Golden Plover "60x Field E of Mill Lane, very unsettled - maybe that Merlin was about?" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne Cliffs | 30th

Turnstone "One? Where are the rest? didn't this one get the memo?" | Roger Emmens | Sheringham | 16th

Redshank "Poking about in the mud around the pond at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary. Not the first time one has visited but the first time I've seen one there since becoming a NENBC member." | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 7th

Black-headed Gull "275x (To the tune of 'Mull of Kintyre') Sheringham Tank, The mist's rolling in so It's cold and it's dank, There's nothing to see here, oh Sheringham Tank..." | Roger Emmens | Sheringham | 16th

Black-headed Gull "Very dark plumage on head. Quite striking as it flew past the station." | Andrew Gorton | East Runton | 20th

Glaucous Gull "Immature resting on beach with other gulls - thanks to Trevor for the tip-off and description of the salient features" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne Camp | 1st

Great Northern Diver "A retrospective, added record of this species calling constantly from the lake. Verified by sonogram on Merlin and independently from the video sound recording by AC/MC/PB." | John Hurst | Antingham & Bradfield | 15th

Grey Heron "Flew rather gracefully into The reed beds. Wonderful sight !" | Andrew Gorton | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 21st

Grey Heron "Sustead Road. Garden pond after precarious approach in gale." | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 24th

Sparrowhawk "Female. Saw the silhouette swift on the studio window just in time to avoid catastrophe." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 28th

Buzzard "Just sitting in a oak tree watching the cars go by ..." | Anne Sims | Itteringham | 3rd

Barn Owl "Driving back from Itteringham and a barn owl on a roadside post for a few minutes. Less than 5 feet away" | David Barras | Itteringham | 16th

Kingfisher "The most bizarre record, as returning home saw a small bird flying over the house at least 30m up. I was astounded to see that it was a kingfisher actually carrying a small fish!" | John Hurst | Mundesley | 3rd

Green Woodpecker "On grass meadow 50m from home. First location record." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 1st

Kestrel "In tree by station. Perched and let us approach really close - best view I've ever had, stunning bird" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 26th

Merlin "flew a circuit of clifftop fields. geese not bothered, plovers, woodpigeons terrorised." | Phil Borley | Weybourne Cliffs | 21st

Merlin "Juvenile perched on ploughed field east of Mill Lane. Then off and grabbed a Meadow Pipit and plucked and fed on the field." | David Griffiths | Weybourne Cliffs | 26th

Magpie "Sustead Road. For the last couple of days carrying nest material to conifer in neighbours garden" | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 28th

Jackdaw "Attacking nut feeders!" | David Griffiths | At Home | 13th

Carrion Crow "Eating a seal pup carcass." | John Hurst | Weybourne Camp | 13th

Hooded Crow "Came in off the sea and now lurking around the house meadows. Clean lines, not a hybrid. Conservatory tick!" | John Hurst | Mundesley | 2nd | and "Again, coming for shelter in conifers north of the corner house by the salt bin on the high street. Seems to be feeding with three carrion crows to the west down Heath Lane and returning to the conifers and ash occasionally. Not seen here since Friday so very intermittent." | 6th |

Blue Tit "Including a rather smart leucistic bird with yellow body, white head and tail." | Paul Laurie | Field Dalling & Saxlingham | 14th

Starling "In garden feeding on feeder - went under next door roof tiles - nest" | Stuart Jones | At Home | 16th

Starling "One Hundred Thousand (not all in photo obviously)" | Mark Clements | Stody | 19th

Blackbirds "Tossing leaves by main carpark" | Jonathan Anderson | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 19th

Fieldfare "8x Flying South but I think Red Kite sent them North !!!" | Anne Sims | Gresham | 12th

Song Thrush "Not quite fully tuned up yet, but still lovely to hear the first notes!" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 14th

Song Thrush "Started singing in garden today. Subsequently every morning." | Sue Parsons | Southrepps Common | 22nd

Robin "Eating sunflower seeds I counted one bird ate fourteen !!!" | Anne Sims | Gresham | 17th

House Sparrow "Nice to see the house sparrow colony back at The Leas. 5 seen but many more calling from the bushes" | Janice Darch | Sheringham | 15th

Brambling "RSPB garden birdwatch, female. Delighted to see during the hour, the have been very thin on the ground around here this winter so far, year tick for us" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 26th



Check This Out!

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







NENBC Member Connie Flynn was delighted to have her photograph of a Four-spotted Chaser awarded runner up status in a recent RSPB photographic competition. Readers of their Notes on Nature email were invited to share their favourite nature photo celebrating the UK's Wild Isles. Narrated by Sir David Attenborough and co-produced by the RSPB, WWF-UK and the Open University, the BBC TV series Wild Isles celebrated the wonders of UK wildlife. This is what Connie had to say:

"The photograph was taken on a Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Broadland Local Group guided walk at Hickling Broad nature reserve. To be able to be so close to observe the detail of the Four-spotted



Chaser dragonfly was truly wonderful, an amazing creature, such joy! How lucky we are to live with these species and how important it is to look after them.”

You can see the other winning images here: [Your photos of our Wild Isles: the winners](#)

-  [Increased flooding puts winter swans in greater danger - BirdGuides \[15-Jan\]](#)
-  [BTO seeks volunteers for Heathland Birds Survey - BirdGuides \[10-Feb\]](#)
-  [RSPB celebrates Bearded Tit boom - BirdGuides \[08-Feb\]](#)
-  [Work commences on Suffolk rewilding project - BirdGuides \[04-Feb\]](#)
-  [Global Birdfair 2025 dates and conservation project announced - BirdGuides \[02-Feb\]](#)
-  [Conservation charities urge government to ban toxic lead ammunition - BirdGuides \[29-Jan\]](#)
-  [Appeal for help with ongoing Long-eared Owl survey - BirdGuides \[28-Jan\]](#)
-  [Ignoring female birds harms scientific understanding - RBA \[06-Feb\]](#)
-  [EU challenges British ban on sandeel fishing in North Sea - RBA \[30-Jan\]](#)
-  [Wildlife Groups Welcome Withdrawal of Norfolk Road Plans - RBA \[29-Jan\]](#)
-  [Understanding the plight of the much-loved English Nightingale - RBA \[29-Jan\]](#)
-  [Songbirds socialise on the wing during migration - RBA \[16-Jan\]](#)
-  [Tiny GPS trackers show rare Staffordshire bird's epic journey - BBC News \[17-Jan\]](#)

Club member James Emerson posted over on BlueSky: "I've just finished putting together my local patch bird report, covering species seen at **Whitlingham & Thorpe Marshes** (Norwich) during 2024. It can be [downloaded here](#). A big thank you to everyone who has reported sightings and allowed photos to be used in the report."



If a birding challenge is your cup of tea but you are concerned about your carbon footprint, this might just be for you. **The Patchwork Challenge** is a national event where you record the birdlife in your selected local area over the year gaining points along the way. The organisers say: “Your patch can be anywhere you like, but for the Patchwork Challenge, it must be a maximum of 9 sq km. It should be a single, continuous area – not a patchwork of multiple disconnected spaces.”

Take a look at their website for details [Patchwork Challenge](#)

At the RSPB, the safety and welfare of birds has and always will be our priority.

We know so many of you love feeding your garden birds and some bird species really do benefit from us putting out extra food for them, especially in winter. However, there is increasing evidence that for other birds there can also be negative effects such as the spread of disease, especially among finches.

We want to make bird feeding as safe as possible, so we’re reviewing the advice we give you and products we sell based on the latest science.

As a precautionary measure, whilst we await the findings of the review, we have suspended all our bird tables and related products, Table mix and Table mix extra, window feeders and feeder guardians with trays, from sale. This is because there is evidence to suggest that some birds, particularly finches, can be more exposed to disease when fed on flat surfaces like these.

As the country's largest nature conservation charity we want to be transparent with our supporters and customers. We believe suspending the products until we have a better understanding of how the disease spreads is our best option to ensure the safety of birds.

If you have any queries about the review, please contact us at wildlife@rspb.org.uk





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

"Strident whistles, buzzing 'cheer'. Alarm sharp, clicking 'plik'. Song (puffed-out throat, waving half-open wings) prolonged rattling, whistling, warbling, mimicry' also long, rambling subsong."

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

"Rich repertoire. On take-off and in flight, often a short buzzing 'chürr'. Alarm at nest a hoarse, drawn-out 'steeh' and on sight of hawk a sharp 'kyett!'. Young beg with rippling hoarse buzz, which from fledged young can at times become almost a metallic rattle. Song in vicinity of proposed nest site in spring, but also occasionally on warm summer days in autumn and winter, consists of loud glissando whistles and rather soft, knocking sounds, squeaks and fine imitations of other birds eg: often Lapwing, Curlew, Coot, House Sparrow, Magpie and Hooded / Carrion Crow."

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

"Has a 'tcheerr' call. Both sexes sing throughout the year, but especially before egg laying. Song consists of harsh and rattling notes, including wheezy warbling and musical whistles, and often incorporates calls of other birds such as chickens, curlews, ducks. Mimics noises such as telephones and car alarms. Song is often accompanied by a visual signal, when the throat feathers are ruffled and the wings waved energetically.."

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

Wordsearch

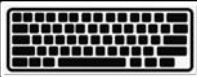


This month, we have the 18 species or races recorded in February 2024 for which we have less than four records of each – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

Caspian Gull
Greenshank
Red-necked Grebe
Shag
Tundra Bean Goose
Velvet Scoter
Great White Egret
Long-tailed Duck
Ruff
Black-throated Diver
Firecrest
Goosander
Goshawk
Hen Harrier
Raven
Razorbill
Rock Pipit
Shoveler

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





Five new rare bird record have been ‘Accepted’ by the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter update in January 2025. You can view their current ‘**NRC work in progress**’ file on their website [16th Dec 24]. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a ‘**BBRC work in progress**’ file available on their website [Dec 24].




Norfolk Bird Records
@NorfolkBirds

...

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Pendulune Tit x2 Sheringham 25th October 2024

5:54 AM · Feb 2, 2025 · 263 Views



Norfolk Bird Records
@NorfolkBirds

...

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Bee-eater Weybourne 13th May 2024

5:59 AM · Feb 2, 2025 · 228 Views



Norfolk Bird Records
@NorfolkBirds

...

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Rose-coloured Starling Erpingham 20th Nov 2024

5:58 AM · Feb 2, 2025 · 228 Views



Norfolk Bird Records
@NorfolkBirds

...

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Sabine’s Gull Sheringham 1st Oct 2024

6:02 AM · Feb 2, 2025 · 245 Views




Mick Saunt
@saunt_mick

...

Norfolk Bird Records reposted

1/2 Just had a quick peek at the Norfolk 2024 @BirdTrack and @Team_eBird records, all 1,286,627 of them. Despite both platforms having hundreds of selectable sites still huge numbers of invalid sites such ‘Allotment’, ‘My Garden’, ‘Hall’, ‘Home’, ‘Vicarage’ etc.

8:42 PM · Feb 1, 2025 · 4,732 Views



Mick Saunt
@saunt_mick

...

2/2 These records with invalid/unknown site details will be automatically discarded by the programs we now use when processing the data, if you are going to use individual bespoke local sites please, please add a tag indicating the place name, eg ‘My garden, Dereham’.

Thanks!

8:42 PM · Feb 1, 2025 · 587 Views



Norfolk Bird Records
@NorfolkBirds

...

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Black-throated Diver Sheringham 19th Nov 2024

6:03 AM · Feb 2, 2025 · 286 Views

Local Social Media



markclements27.bsky.social
@markclements27.bsky.social

...

Common Snipe at Felbrigg this morning 39 seen in all



rybody can reply



markclements27.bsky.social
@markclements27.bsky.social

...

marsh Harrier over the reed bed at Weybourne this morning




9 February 2025 at 19:54 · Everybody can reply




Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

...

Female Sparrowhawk is back in the garden, so all the birds have disappeared again. Some of the Primroses are starting to flower in the garden.



8 February 2025 at 19:56 · Everybody can reply

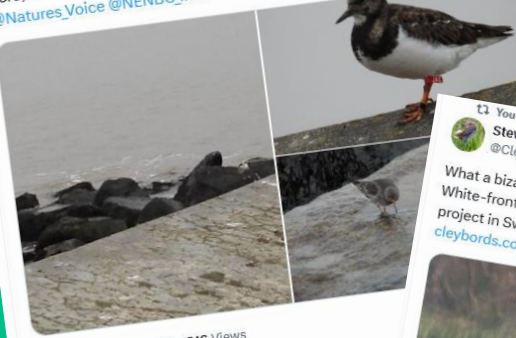


jane crossen
@bridgetjanejone

...

Turnstones JAA and JAC at the front here in Sheringham yesterday. A reminder JAA was ringed in Alert, Canada in 2017 and JAC was ringed here, February 2023. Nice to see two Purple Sandpipers too.

@NaturesVoice @NENBCInfo



11:35 am · 21 Jan 2025 · 316 Views

Ken T @Velociraptor500 · 27 Jan
Results of Big Garden Birdwatch at the Weekend

Big Garden Birdwatch 2025	
Brambling	3
Greenfinch	9
Goldfinch	10
Chaffinch	8
Blackbird	7
Pheasant	1
Robin	2
Great Tit	3
Blue Tit	11
Wood Pigeon	4
Moorhen	1
Duncock	1
Long-tailed Tit	6
Coal Tit	4



Adam
@Adski44

...

One of the two Purple Sandpipers on the rocks at Sheringham last week. Cracking birds. @NENBCInfo



10:28 am · 26 Jan 2025 · 402 Views



Steve Gantlett
@CleyBirds

...

What a bizarre sight in Norfolk: these are a few of the flock of 20+ Lesser White-fronted Geese at Titchwell this morning, from the reintroduction project in Sweden that has now been running for 50 years. (More pics at cleybirds.com.)



6:10 pm · 20 Jan 2025 · 11.4K Views

Total Records
13,862

Unique Species
147

Recorders
87

A huge thanks to the 87 of you who have uploaded records to our website so far this year. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports. Not started adding records yet? Make it your new year's resolution this year! If you need any assistance, just drop us a line on nenbc@aol.co.uk or through the messaging element of the website.

Now, regular users of our website – spotted any changes this week? If not, here are a few updates that have recently taken place ...

Comments on records

We know this has been frustrating for many of you so I hope you will be as delighted as us that if you now go to the Records page you can see the full comments written by other members and filter to your heart's desire! The example on the right for White-fronted Goose shows that you can easily see directions or notes from others for particular sightings, species, dates, locations, members or a combination. *Previously*, although you could access them on the Home page by endlessly scrolling back from today's date, it really was a bit of a faff if you wanted to get out and see something quickly.

Your full club species list

If you click on your name (or anyone else's) where it is listed on the Home or Records pages or by filtering on the Member page, you can now access a full list of species you have seen since you started logging records on the website. Just click on Club list at the top right of the screen you are directed to and you get a list like the one on the right. It shows the first date that you saw that species. Although you can't download it in this format, you can use Copy and Paste to get the text into a spreadsheet or Word document. *Previously*, you could only access lists like this for individual years.

Home

On the Home page, when we have an announcement at the top of the screen you will now additionally be able to see the first line of the announcement. *Previously* you had to click on Read to see some of the text.

Club Records

A list of all records submitted by members of North East Norfolk Bird Club.

2 Filters

Clear all

Add Records

Download

Reported After

dd/mm/yyyy

Reported Before

26/01/2025

Family

Species

White-fronted Goose

Location

Member

Total Records

249

Unique Species

1

Recorders

56

Date	Species	Location	Member
Jan 26, 2025	2 x White-fronted Goose cereal field	Northrepps	Phil Borley
Jan 26, 2025	2 x White-fronted Goose	Northrepps	Mark Clements
Jan 26, 2025	1 x White-fronted Goose By the lake in front of the house	Sheringham Park	Janice Darch
Jan 26, 2025	10 x White-fronted Goose On harvested beet field E of Windmill - Russian White-fronts with Pink-feet (9 30 to 11 30 am approx).	Weybourne Cliffs - Coastal Path (view only from public footpaths)	Dawn & Tim Wright
Jan 26, 2025	4 x White-fronted Goose In field to south east of coastguard cottages	Weybourne	Michael Harcup

Carol Thornton Club List

Has seen 201 birds

✓

Brambling seen at Gresham.

30th January 2015

✓

Bullfinch seen at Gresham.

30th January 2015

✓

Stock Dove seen at Gresham.

30th January 2015

✓

Yellowhammer seen at Gresham.

20th February 2015

✓

Bittern seen at Gresham.

11th March 2015

✓

Reed Bunting seen at Gresham.

16th March 2015

✓

Woodcock seen at Felbrigg Park & Lake.

22nd March 2015

✓

Sparrowhawk seen at Gresham.

25th March 2015

✓

Coal Tit seen at Gresham.

25th March 2015

Club List

201 total species seen

View list

2025 Year List

62 compared to this time last year: 74

↓ 16%

View year list

2024 Year List

83 compared to previous year: 107

↓ 22%

View year list

Home

The latest news and activity from North East Norfolk Bird Club.

1

Nick Acheson in Conversation | BTO Survey | Subs 2025 |

Read · Edit · Remove

DETAILS OF ALL OF THESE ARE ON OUR NEWS or EVENTS PAGES Nick Acheson...

@nenbc_info or @nenbc Website: www.nenbc.co.uk Page 43 Email Chair: info@nenbc.co.uk Email Secretary / Editor: nenbc@aol.co.uk

Cultural Birds – The Nest Builders



*From The Junior Laurel & Gold Anthology Volume 42
by John R Crossland. 1st impression February 1936,
10th impression June 1950*

The Nest Builders by R I G Goodchild

There was a time when birds were most unwise,
And slept at night beneath the starry skies.

At length the Eagle said to all the rest,
“We need some genius to design a nest.”

“Who shall be teacher we must first decide.”
“The Magpie! Magpie!” all in chorus cried.

The Magpie took some sticks and laid them flat;
“Observe, good nest-builders begin like that.”

At this the wood-pigeon impatient grew:
“Down and across. I see!” and off she flew.

Some others waited longer and they found
How nests are warmly lined and shaped quite round.

Then they too flew away; they thought it slow,
For they had learned all that they wished to know.

Till now but few remained to learn how best
To make a strong and warm and cosy nest.

The tits and wrens saw how to build a roof
To keep the nest both warm and waterproof;

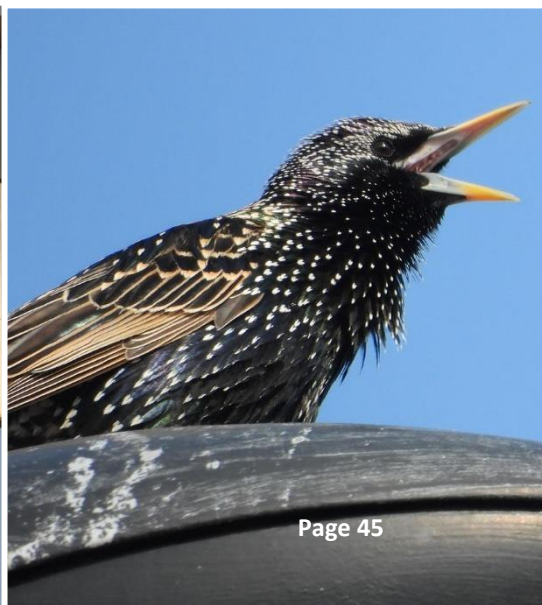
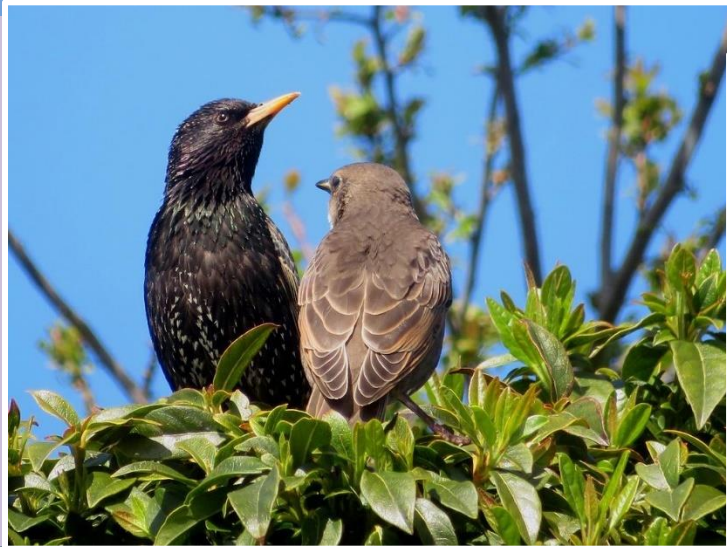
To build with leaves and moss and lichens green,
So wisely that their home is rarely seen.

When next you take a walk in building-time
Just prove the truth of what I’ve told in rhyme.

*Magpie (Richard Farrow), Woodpigeon (Tony Forster), Wren
(Carol Thornton), Great Tit (Mark Clements), Long-tailed Tit
(Moss Taylor)*

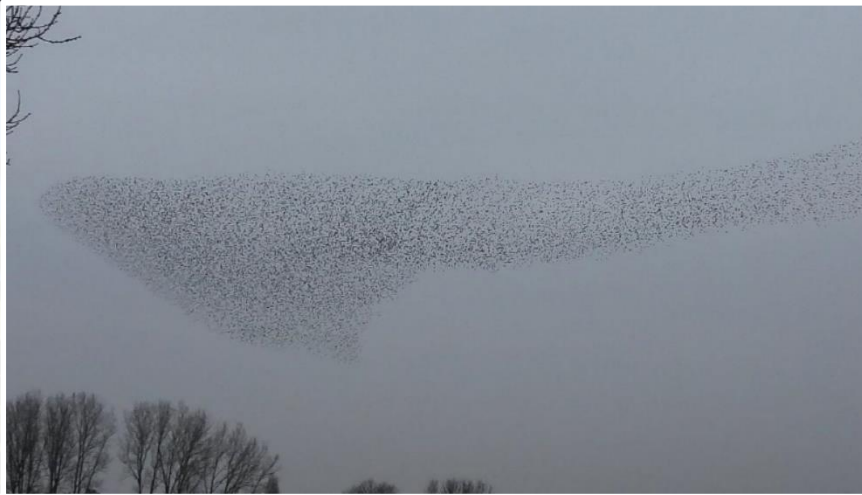


The bird voice variously described was that of a [Common Starling \(Sturnus vulgaris\)](#). Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the [Starling | BTO Bird Facts](#) page. *Photos anticlockwise from Jane Crossen, Philip Cartlidge, Richard Farrow, John Wheeler, tweet from Seve Gantlett, Mark Clements*



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

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



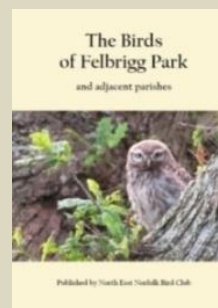
You reposted
Steve Gantlett
@CleyBirds

Just part of the spectacular murmuration of 400,000 Starlings at Thornage this evening (photos counted using Photoshop).



7:25 pm · 6 Feb 2025 · 9,697 Views

Back Page Club Info



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

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

www.felbecktrust.org.uk

For Annual Reports or The Birds of Felbrigg Park, contact Carol on nenbc@aol.co.uk.

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



The NENBC objectives:

- Encourage and share the enjoyment of birdwatching in North East Norfolk with people of all abilities and experience.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all its activities.
- Gather and collate data on birds in the recording area.
- Share information between members.
- Participate in regional and national surveys incorporating the recording area.
- Administer the Club in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Promote the conservation of birds and wildlife within Norfolk.
- Liaise with other conservation groups within the local area and more widely.
- Hold regular indoor and field meetings and social events throughout the year.
- Put the interests of birds first and respect other people, whether or not they are interested in birds, in line with the birdwatchers' code.

Monthly mid-week bird walks around Felbrigg Park on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from September to July / Varied **monthly weekend bird walks** to a range of local birding hotspots from September to July / **Occasional evening walks** in the spring and summer / **Monthly evening talks** on the last Thursday of the month from September to November and January to April - refreshments provided / An annual **Big Sit** birding event at a number of locations across the club area in May, recording the total number of species seen from one spot between dawn and dusk / Autumn **Global Big Day** birding challenge / Annual **Coordinated Seawatch** event along the coast in the autumn recording visible migration / A **Birding for Beginners** workshop series combining practical and theoretical elements of birdwatching / **New Year's Day Birding Challenge** / **Occasional master-classes, lectures, workshops and conferences** to develop better skills and understanding of the birding world / A combined **Christmas Social and AGM Evening** in December