



The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



May 2025 – Issue 119

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

Abridged edition this month – back to usual next month!

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

Chair's Corner	Page 2	NENBC 10th Anniversary Conference	Page 9
A Note from the Editor	Page 2	April's Felbrigg Walk	Page 10
NENBC Bird Highlights	Page 3	May's Snettisham Country Park Walk	Page 11
April 2025	Page 3	Last Month's Talk: Swifts [Laurinda Luffman]	Page 11
May: What To Look Forward To	Page 5	Birding through the year in Norfolk	Page 15
Membership News and Statistics	Page 6	Cromer Peregrine Project	Page 17
Club Notices	Page 7	Finder Report: Booted Eagle	Page 19
What's On?	Page 8	Data, Records & Posts	Page 21
Walks: Felbrigg Park / Lakenheath & Weeting	Page 8		



Booted Eagle – Richard Farrow

Through a Lens – bird of the month



By Trevor Williams

I've spent the last four weeks doing a birding trip of Texas and South-East Arizona with my oldest friend Neil, in honour of his 70th birthday. I've been before, several times, so had high expectations of the awe of migration, as millions of birds make their way north through the Gulf of Mexico (America). Unfortunately for us - lucky for the birds I guess - the weather over the entire period was hot with a gentle breeze from the south-east. With no bad weather in the Gulf to ground the birds they just kept flying. This is not unlike what happens in Norfolk, when the weather patterns during spring and autumn can significantly affect the birds we see on migration.

Of course weather is just one factor impacting on our migrant population of birds as they journey along the East Atlantic Flyway - moving between Africa and Northern Europe. Hunting, habitat loss and global warming are all having an impact. These are the central themes of our **10th Anniversary bird migration conference on Saturday 14th June**. With an 'A list' of

speakers and delegates from National, Regional and local bird conservation organisations it should be an interesting and enjoyable day. There may still be a couple of spare places if you are interested - just email nenbc-events@outlook.com.

Meanwhile, in other news, the Club's annual Big Sit - which happened a few days after I arrived back was a 'curates egg' of a day! With up to a dozen Club members watching from The Warren, Felbrigg Park, for 13 hours straight, we managed our lowest total ever - just 48 species. Should we be worried? However in amongst the meagre total we did manage some excellent birds: Spoonbill - only the second record for the park, Black-tailed Godwit - only a hand-full of previous of records and a 'ring-tailed harrier which unfortunately we couldn't identify to species level (probably Montagu's). A full account from both sites will appear in the next Newsletter. But that's the joy of birding...

A Note from the Editor



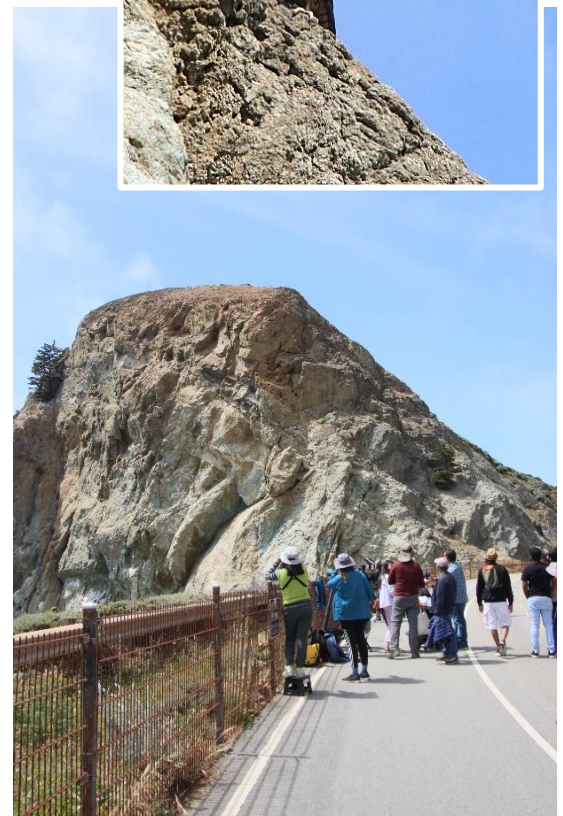
By Carol Thornton

Hi folks. Welcome to our short but obviously sweet and somewhat delayed May issue.

Like Trevor & Jane, we have been away on hols too, birding in the south western US states - in fact we were within 10 miles of each other at one point - and have just made it home after our flight back was cancelled and we found ourselves with an unexpected extension. The upshot of this for NENBC stuff is twofold: Firstly, a brief newsletter this time with just the write-ups of things that happened in April to get them to you before they disappear into distant memories. The June issue will be out in a couple of weeks with the usual sections so do get your articles rolling in! Secondly, we **have reluctantly taken the decision to postpone the Club Social originally scheduled for Friday 13th June** until a bit later in the year as we have run out of time to do it justice at this point. Watch this space and we will be back in due course with a date.

Quite a bit of Peregrine activity in Cromer since the last newsletter so make sure you look at the article on [page 17](#). Whilst away, we had the privilege of watching some peregrine activity of our own. Nesting on the cliffs at Devil's Slide near San Francisco, the local birders were out in force with their equivalent of a watchpoint for the fledging of their 3 chicks. As excited as our watchers, generous with their information and views through their rather large scopes and you should have seen the size of the cameras! They obviously don't have any webcam facilities at their location so I was pleased to be able to tell them about ours and pass on the Cromer Peregrine Project live webcam details.

We'll pick up your photos of birds exhibiting breeding behaviour for the Through a Lens front page pics next month.





By Paul Laurie

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

≈ 10,800 individual records covering 171 bird species were added in April

April 2025: The fine weather with above average temperatures ensured it was very pleasant to be out birding on many days this month though the settled weather with little cloud no significant rain produced the wrong conditions for falls of spring migrants and very little visible migration along the coast. It did however produce some exciting birds.

The **Booted Eagle** sighting (see [page 19](#)) was clearly the stand-out highlight of April which was a good month for scarce birds with single records of **American Wigeon & Red-rumped Swallow**. Other notable birds in the NENBC area were **Garganey, Stone Curlew, Glossy Ibis** and **White-tailed Sea Eagle**.

During the month the NENBC recorded 171 species, the highest recorded in any April since the club began in 2015 and beating the 169 reported in 2021. In April 2024 161 species in were seen with 9,250 records. In April 2025 ninety-one recorders logged 10,793 records during the month.

Mandarin Duck A pair were seen on a large private pond at Sustead on the 1st. Two pairs frequented the Gunthorpe/Saxlingham area between the 10th & 25th and may well be breeding in the area. A drake was on Weybourne Camp scrape on the 16th of the month.

Garganey A pair were found on the pool at Weybourne Hope on the 15th.

AMERICAN WIGEON On the 17th at 0846 a drake flew west past Weybourne Camp in the company of a female Pintail. A new species for the club area.

Velvet Scoter One – two birds were present on the sea off Weybourne from the 22nd until the 30th.

Goosander One record of a single bird flying west off Weybourne on the 1st of the month.

Quail A bird was found on the morning of the 30th at Saxlingham, calling/singing from a winter barley field. The first April record of this species in the NENBC area.

Swift The first report was a bird at West Runton on the 22nd flying west.

Cuckoo On the 21st a bird was seen at Beeston Regis heading north. The only other records were of single birds at West Runton on the 27th & 29th both were seen to come in off the sea.

Turtle Dove The first was seen at their traditional site on the 17th , and from the 24th , until the months end, two birds were present at the same site.

Common Crane Two birds flew north-west over Plumstead on the 6th and three did the same on the 18th over Dilham Canal.

Stone Curlew On the night of the 12th a bird was recorded calling over Sheringham via Noc-Mig.

Little Ringed Plover On the 17th one was present on Weybourne Camp. At the same site on the 29th a bird was seen to fly west.

Whimbrel The first of the year was on the 8th when a bird flew west past Weybourne Camp.

Black-tailed Godwit Two records from Weybourne with nine east on the 17th and nine, once again east, on the 28th.

Ruff On the 5th two birds flew east past Weybourne. Inland on the 6th a bird flew high east over Saxlingham then on the 13th a male, which was the third record for Felbrigg Park, was seen flying south.

Purple Sandpiper Between the 3rd and 18th the 1 – 2 wintering birds were still present at Sheringham.

Jack Snipe On the 22nd a bird was on the edge of the pool at Weybourne Hope.

Common Sandpiper The first for the year was found on the 16th feeding along the edge of Thornage Farm Reservoir.

Green Sandpiper One - two birds remained in the Sharrington/Saxlingham area until the 16th. Singles were seen in Briton's Old Quarry and at Felbrigg Park on the 13th and two were seen at Stody on the 16th. Birds were recorded via Noc-Mig on the 11th at Sheringham and the 29th at Beeston Common.

Wood Sandpiper On the 13th a bird was recorded over Sheringham via Noc-Mig, on the 17th one was seen and heard in the Glaven Valley and on the 25th a bird was heard at 10.30 pm over Sheringham.

Greenshank The only record was a bird recorded via Noc-Mig on the 21st over Sheringham.

Sandwich Tern The first of the year off Sheringham Cliffs on the 1st of the month.

Common Tern Blickling Lake attracted a bird on the 14th with first coastal record being a bird east on the 21st off Weybourne.

Glossy Ibis One flew east past West Runton the 27th.

Osprey On the 16th a bird was seen over Weybourne camp before continuing east to Sheringham. On the 18th a bird was seen over Sheringham and on the 20th a bird was seen having caught a fish from the private lake at Edgefield. The last record for the month was on the 25th with a bird moving north-west out to sea from Weybourne Camp.

White-tailed Sea Eagle On the 14th at 1105 a sub-adult was seen by four observers over Beeston Bump as it drifted west.

BOOTED EAGLE A bird was photographed over Beeston Bump on the 14th of April – see [page 19](#).

Hen Harrier A “ring-tail” was seen at Felmingham on the 20th of the month.

Long-eared Owl The bird present during March on Thwaite Common was last reported on the 14th of April.

Short-eared Owl On the afternoon of the 15th a bird flew east inland from Weybourne Cliffs. On the 29th a bird was seen flying west past Beeston Bump and was later seen passing Skelding Hill, Sheringham. Also, on the 29th a bird was seen being mobbed by Carrion Crows as it flew west over Field Dalling.

Hobby The first was reported on the 20th the next on the 26th at Weybourne.

Hooded Crow On the 8th one flew west with Carrion Crows past Weybourne Camp.

Woodlark Away from this species main breeding site birds were seen at Cawston on the 15th, flying south at Saxlingham on the 16th and at Southrepps Common on the 26th of the month.

Shorelark Two birds reported feeding on a cultivated field on Weybourne Cliffs north of Deadman's Wood on the 8th of the month.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW A bird was found on the evening of the 14th feeding over Beeston Bump. The first April record of this species in the NENBC area and only the second twitch-able bird.

Willow Warbler The first of the year was a bird singing on Kelling Heath on the 3rd and then by the 12th – 14th records were widespread. *Photo 3 courtesy of Francis Farrow.*

Sedge Warbler First record from the Dilham Canal area on the 8th of the month.

Garden Warbler The first was reported on the early date of the 8th of April from Bacton Woods.

Lesser Whitethroat The first was on Sprout hills, Holt on the 13th after which records were widespread including a total of seven singing males around Saxlingham on the 25th of the month.

Whitethroat On the 3rd a bird was found on Thwaite Common but it was a week later until the next record, which was on the 12th and birds were then widespread from the 14th of the month.

Ring Ouzel On the 7th a male was seen at Bale and a bird was found on Weybourne Camp and still present on the 9th. During the month some 34 individuals were recorded at fourteen sites with the period between the 12th & 14th of the month particularly productive. Some inland sites held birds and these included regular sighting at Saxlingham, including three together on an old sheep field, three males at Cawston and singles at Gunthorpe, High Kelling, Kelling Heath & Letheringsett. On the 29th a bird was present on a bird club member's lawn at West Runton. *Photo 4 courtesy of Geoff Snelson*

Nightingale A bird was reported by the A149 between the Runtons on the 13th of the month.

Black Redstart Six individuals were reported. On the 4th to the 7th a bird was present on Weybourne Camp. Felbrigg Park held a bird between the 8th & 10th when one was also present in Sheringham Cemetery. On the 11th

birds were seen at West Runton and Sheringham Golf Course. The final bird of the month was present at Beeston Regis on the 18th & 19th. *Photo 2 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Redstart The first was a fine male present in Sheringham Cemetery on the 8th of April.

Whinchat A male in paddocks at Beeston Regis on the 18th & 19th and another male on Weybourne Camp on the 30th were the only records this month.

Wheatear Regular in small numbers along the coast during the month with birds also found inland at Thornage, Saxlingham & up to three birds at Southrepps Common. *Photo 1 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

Yellow Wagtail The first was on the 11th at Beeston Bump, the highest count being 24 west over Weybourne Camp on the 22nd. On the 28th several were present in the paddocks at West Runton in the company of two Blue-Headed Wagtails.

Hawfinch A bird was photographed on a garden feeder, close to Southrepps Common, on the 3rd until the 5th of the month.



May: What to look forward to



May is the month when bird migration is at its peak and overshoots from the near continent are very likely, encouraged by warm weather with southerly winds. Bee-eaters, Red-footed Falcons and Marsh Warblers are all possible. May is often a good month to spend time stationary watching from a vantage point on your local patch and scan the skies, the fields and the trees, (think of it as a mini Big Sit), with the potential of the birds coming to you. Someone will hear and see a sublime Golden Oriole and it might be you !



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

* James Somerville * Claire Alban * Neil Morris * Geoff Lenton * Min McDonald *
* Kate Mackenzie * * Laurinda Luffman * Alan Tanner * Mark Worsey *
* Sophie Atherton & Nick Claxton *

430 individual members
across 284 households

46,690
bird records logged

219 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 21](#).

Club Achievement Awards

Star Badges

No new achievers this month but 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.

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!

NENBC Summer Social - ***** POSTPONED *****

Just a quick note to let you know we have reluctantly taken the decision to postpone the club social scheduled for Friday 13th June due to time constraints for organising it well enough to do it justice. We will let you know when we have a new date later in the year.

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

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

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

INFO FOR ALL WALKS:

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

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

DOGS: We regret no dogs.

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

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

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

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

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



No advance booking needed

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

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

Saturday 7th June | 9.00am-3.30pm | NWT Weeting Heath for Stone Curlew and RSPB Lakenheath Fen Walk with Janice Darch



Booking required : janicedarch@gmail.com by previous Thursday

WALK DESCRIPTION: After seeing the Stone Curlews at Weeting we will spend the rest of the day taking a leisurely stroll around Lakenheath where we have chances of good views of Bittern, Common Crane, Hobby, Cuckoo and Marsh Harrier plus several species of warbler, tit, finch and duck

MEET & PARK: Initially park at NWT Weeting Heath car park, IP26 4NQ (OS Landranger 143, grid reference TL757 881). Following our visit to Weeting Heath we will drive the short distance to RSPB Lakenheath Fen reserve IP27 9AD (OS Landranger 143, grid reference TL 724 865). Allow one and a quarter hours to drive from North Norfolk to Weeting Heath. Please remember your NWT and RSPB membership cards to gain free entry. Non-member entrance fees are currently £4 at each site per person (some discounts available). | **DISTANCE:** 3 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** The footpaths are good at both sites so walking boots are ideal. There are only a few steps to walk at Weeting, from the car park to the hides, which are very close. Although some areas at Lakenheath are wheelchair accessible, we are also planning to cover some ground on footpaths which aren't.. | **FACILITIES:** Both reserves have toilets and sell a small range of refreshments | **BADGES:** Outside the club area so records can't count for Star Badges, or Green Eco-badges this time.

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

Following on from the announcement of this conference in February's newsletter, members have been steadily booking tickets – thanks to all who are coming along so far. It is sure to be a fun and fascinating day!

The event will showcase research around the threats our much-loved and familiar migrant birds face, such as habitat destruction, climate change and hunting. We will also hear 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 Prof. Juliet Vickery, Chief Executive Officer of the BTO. We will also hear from Prof. 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.

Thanks to our generous sponsor, the Leventis Foundation, the conference is a free event, with buffet lunch and refreshments. Members can book a maximum of 2 places per household, and we will operate on a 'first come first served' basis.

At the time of writing, there are still some tickets available for members. If you are planning to come along, please book as soon as you can via the email: nenbc-events@outlook.com

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

Our Mid-Week Club Walk

Felbrigg Park | 16th April



By Dave Billham

April, a month of migration, mating, movement; thoughts of re-awakening, greening, bird-song - a good time, then, to find birds aplenty. So hoped the twenty-two club members gathered in the car-park at Felbrigg, including Tam and Mary, new to the club and on their first walk. With Trevor away once more, I was leading the walk, so was hoping more than most for a good result. Fortunately Carol was there to keep things on the straight and narrow and ensure no-one got lost. Although sunny it was also very windy and surprisingly nippy, and the sighting of only **Woodpigeon** and **Jackdaw** as Trevor Warren and I had driven through the park on our way in reinforced the feeling that, in these conditions, the birds would be keeping their heads down and not moving anywhere. The number of species seen in and around the car-park whilst waiting to start has been a fairly accurate predictor of the size of the final total; a rather meagre **Blackbird**, with **Stock Dove**, **Herring Gull** and a lone **Swallow** over (it was lovely to see the swallow) with **Green Woodpecker** heard; well, we had fingers firmly crossed!

Setting off towards the church we added only a distant **Red Kite** to the list as we traversed the field. At the church we found singing **Blue Tit**, **Wren** and **Robin**, and the keen ears of one member picked up the call of a **Meadow Pipit** as it flew over us. Going through the churchyard onto the bridleway, we could hear the song of a **Skylark** as it circled overhead, and we also added to the list **Carrion Crow**, **Rook**, **Magpie** and an overflying **Common Buzzard**. Where the bridleway met the track that passes the barns, we could hear the call of a **Yellowhammer**; it was located atop a hedgerow some distance away. Pausing here, we also found **Goldfinch**, a few **Linnet** poking about on the track edges, a distant **Red-legged Partridge** doing its best not to be seen, and a singing **Chiffchaff**.



The hedges along the track towards the lake have produced many a warbler on previous walks, but today they were fairly empty, with only **Great Tit** and

Chaffinch sighted. At the track's end overlooking the scrapes we could see a **Grey Heron** and a pair of **Greylag Goose** down by the beck, and the song of a **Greenfinch** was carried to us by the wind. Walking on down to the lake we found four **Mute Swan** on the water with a fifth on a nest, four **Coot**, a couple of **Moorhen** and various **Mallard** and **Gadwall**. As we stood by the water's edge, enjoying the view and glad to be out of the chilling wind at last, an observant member called out a **Lapwing** high overhead.

To try and boost the list a bit we headed for the 'feeding log' where Carol put out some seed; unfortunately nothing was tempted down to feed. We could hear the calls of **Nuthatch**, which usually very quickly appear to feed, but not today! The walk through the lakeside woods gained us a smashing **Treecreeper**, **Long-tailed Tit** and a singing **Blackcap**; in a further attempt to boost the list we then took a longer route through the woods to return to the house. However, all we managed to add on our wander was a calling **Pheasant** and a drumming **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, the latter being the only one we heard all morning, a complete contrast to the constant drumming that had followed us all around the park on the March walk. What I had not realised was that the last part of our route would take us through a welly-chucking event being held near the house; fortunately they held back from chucking as we passed through!

About halfway round the walk John H had let me know that he had decided to return early to the house; however back at the house Carol informed me that a further ten people had gone missing en-route, fortunately intentional returns rather than 'got losts'. Our total for the morning was **39 species**, somewhat down on the previous few months, but with no sign of any migrants, and the cold wind, not entirely surprising. However, there's always next time! Hope to see you there.



Our Weekend Club Walk

Snettisham Country Park | 4th May



By Janice Darch

Eight of us meet in the RSPB car park at Snettisham on a blustery, cool May morning which was a contrast to the heatwave weather of 26°C we'd had a few days before. Nevertheless the forecast showers held off and during our 4 hours exploring the Country Park from the sea defences, coast and flatter drier areas we saw 55 species of birds. For some of the group this was a return visit as they had also been with me on the last club trip here in 2023. Today the car park hedges were mostly quiet due to the wind but from overhead we all claimed Swifts as year ticks! A Sandwich Tern showed briefly but Black-headed Gulls were common as were Greylag Geese on the fields along with Lapwing and Curlew. Jackdaws and Swallows zoomed overhead too. Our walk on the flood defence footpath gave us good elevation to look over the numerous scrapes. Our star birds here were Garganey, several Spotted Redshank, Wood Sandpipers and Spoonbills. They were accompanied by species such as Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Shoveler, Shelduck, more Greylag Geese, with Egyptian and Canada Geese, Mute Swan, Common Redshank, Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff and Avocet, more Black-headed Gulls and Common Gulls. Overhead we had Grey Heron, Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and Kestrel. The bushes seaward of the sea defence hosted Linnets, Stonechats, Chiffchaff, Common and Lesser White Throats, Reed Bunting and a Sedge Warbler. We eventually heard a purring Turtle Dove, seen by a few but they were not as showy as I've often seen them at this site probably due to the wind. The tide was in throughout our visit and the foreshore was empty of birds except for nesting Ringed Plover. Only Herring Gulls were spotted over the sea. It was a rewarding, enjoyable morning but we had to work hard for some of our birds.

Last Month's Evening Talk

"Swifts: Masters of the Sky"

A talk with RSPB's Laurinda Luffman

zoom



By Alan Stevens

The last indoor meeting of our winter/spring programme saw us continuing with the theme of our 10th Anniversary Year centred on migration from Africa and thinking about whose birds are these summer visitors? The answer is of course that they belong in both their homes but it's down to everyone to work towards understanding more about them, the reasons behind their all too often decline and come up with ideas and strategies to try and ensure their survival.

For our April meeting we were fortunate to have with us Laurinda Luffman to tell us something of that truly iconic summer migrant to us, the Swift. Laurinda is Head of Trusts & Foundations and the Swift species lead at the RSPB, helping to coordinate support and knowledge-sharing for this Red-listed bird across the charity. She is a founder member of Bedfordshire Swifts, one of the many dedicated Swift Local Network (SLN) groups. Her talk was titled as 'Swifts – Masters of the Sky.'

Laurinda started by asking who amongst those of us had house-nesting birds at their property, alas not too many hands were raised. She then showed us a slide of an ornate 'Bird Pavilion'. These were built onto palaces and homes by the Ottomans from the 15th to the 19th century. Some of these amazing homes for house-nesting birds even included water troughs or "runways" for take-offs and landings. This is because birds were welcomed to the buildings of the Ottoman Empire with avian-sized palaces projecting from the facades of



buildings reflecting their overall attitude to animals and the protection of creatures who live with us in our urban centres, which sadly many of us have lost in recent times.

A quick description of the Common Swift followed, and a comparison to our other visiting Hirundines, included notes that 'Devil's bird' is a folklore name for the Swift because of their darker colouring and shrill scream. The scream played at quarter speed reveals it has separate notes which if we could hear at higher frequencies may make it sound a less harsh. 'Designed' for flight the Swift's recurved, high ratio wings with a span of 45cm and its lightweight (44g) streamlined body make for energy-saving flap-gliding flight. Swifts are usually the last of the Hirundines to arrive on our shores in the spring.

Our speaker then moved on to migration matters and the phenomenal flying ability of the species. A Swift's 'round trip' each year is of around 15,000 miles and can cover 500 miles per day.

Since they are long-lived birds, with the oldest Swift recorded having attained 30 years, an average is probably more like 7 years, and during their lifetime they could fly in total around 2 million miles, equivalent to nearly 4 trips to the moon and back.

A 2022 study followed the migration of 102 individual common swifts from 11 populations (21 sites) across the European breeding range using geolocators. The geolocators were attached with a full body harness of soft nylon string and at 0.7-1.3g never reaching above 3% of the birds' body mass and no negative effects were observed on the breeding performance, returns or timing of migration from the initial trial.

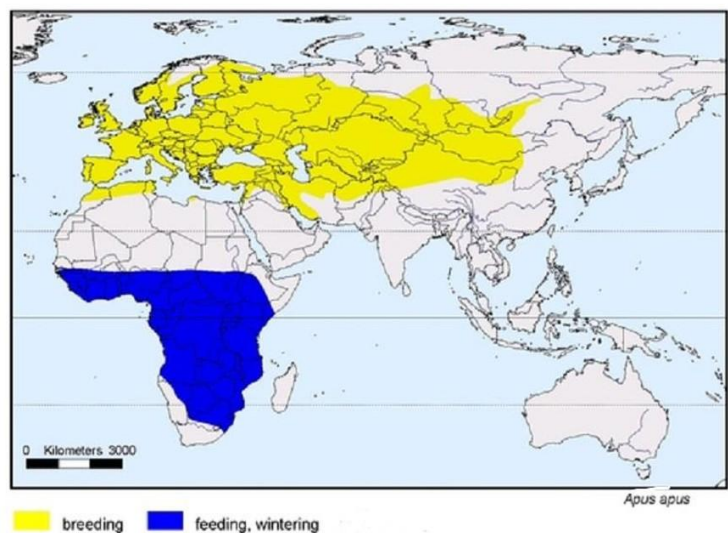
Swifts are the fastest bird in level flight at 68 mph, with 8 wingbeats per second. A study by Swedish scientists which tagged adult swifts showed that the birds stayed in the air more than 99% of the time over their 10-month non-breeding period, the birds just taking short rests (if any) of a few hours during the whole of their migration time e.g. when the weather is bad. They may be able to do this because of uni-hemispheric sleep, which allows birds and animals to switch off half their brain at a time or maybe just short bursts of sleep. But we don't really know for sure.

Tracked Swifts have been found to soar to heights of 1.5-2 miles (2,500 – 3,000 metres) and during daytime take advantage of thermals for periods of gliding.

At twilight, during 7-8am and 6-7pm, the Swedish birds were logged as climbing vertically for ascents lasting 1.5 hours. This may be for navigation purposes rather than foraging. Again, we don't really know.

Unlike many migratory species where northern populations 'leapfrog' more southerly breeding populations and winter in areas furthest to the south, Swifts exhibit a more rarely found chain migration pattern where northerly breeding populations from Scandinavia were found to winter further north.

As with many estimates of species populations those relating to the Swifts show wide variations with Europe holding perhaps around 32 – 57 million and with a world population in the region of 38 - 75 million. The current estimate of breeding pairs in the UK stands at around 59,000 (43-75,000 in 2016 for comparison). Swifts winter in Africa, the blue shade areas, and summer in the northern hemisphere spanning vast areas of the globe from Europe to Asia.. Laurinda touched on the other two species of swift, Alpine and Pallid, found in southern Europe for which we keep an eye out for the few that reach as far as the NENBC area.



Credit: Avibirds



Then came the bad news with Europe-wide data suggesting that Swift numbers declined by some 30% between 1997 and 2021 and that the species is now listed as 'Near Threatened' by the IUCN. While the UK has less than 1% and Italy 3% Spain has a whopping c58% at 10-14 million pairs where a drop of 26% has been reported.

At this point Laurinda showed a short video about the flight of Swifts and data loggers, always nice to have a video in a talk and there were more at the end!

Turning to Swifts in the UK they are well spread across our towns and villages normally breeding in cavities in buildings. However, we do still have some Swifts which choose natural breeding sites. A small number still nest in their ancestral homes in the holes of old Caledonian pines in Abernethy Forest in Scotland.

Illustrations followed of typical swift nesting locations in buildings, quarries, coastal cliffs and even road bridges where they squeeze between the gaps in the concrete.

Laurinda then gave us a run through of the current legislation protecting birds and their nesting sites with that pertaining to Swifts not as strong as it could (should) be. Nest sites are only protected when birds are actively breeding and not the sites to which birds return year after year. Hence the distressing sight of

migrants faithful to a location to find access has been blocked, which with Swifts, can mean a return to the same roof (or even tile) after their long migration. Echoes of the Sand Martins along our own coast at Bacton in 2019.

Diet came next with a pair of Swifts gathering as many as an amazing 20000 insects per day while feeding young. Their diets are clearly variable. One study by Lack and Owen (1995) using data from the UK showed that Hemiptera/true bugs represented approximately two thirds of prey items recovered from 24 meals collected in Oxfordshire in the 1940s and 1950s. Another study in Poland, analysed Swift nestling faecal sacs and revealed Weevils and Shield Bugs comprised almost three-quarters of insect biomass.

They also travel great distances to feed. A Swift tagged in Belfast travelled 40 miles (round trip) to Lough Neagh to feed over the water, where they would typically prey on insects between 2 and 10mm long. New findings from GPS tracking of 45 swifts based across the UK on foraging distance, duration and habitat use show that some colonies travel quite long distances, on average 27km (17 miles), and some as far as an average 61km (38 miles).

Laurinda then took a little sideways step to look at the evolution of the Swift of which there are 32 different species. The Common Swift (*Apus apus*) evolved to its current form between 35 and 50 million years ago and the birds haven't changed much since then. A fossilised Swift found in a German quarry and has been dated at 47 million years old and other well-preserved fossils of the bird species were found by an ancient sub-tropical lake.

Swifts' closest relatives are Hummingbirds and they still share some features, such as being able to go into a state of torpor to conserve energy. Hummingbirds do this at night and young Swiftlets can do this for 5/6 days when there's no food around because of cold spells. Hummingbirds and Swifts are thought to have separated from other related species such as Owlet Nightjars around 50 million years ago in the Eocene Epoch, around the time of the extinction of the Tyrannosaurus Rex. In perspective, *Homo sapiens* only evolved 300,000 years ago.

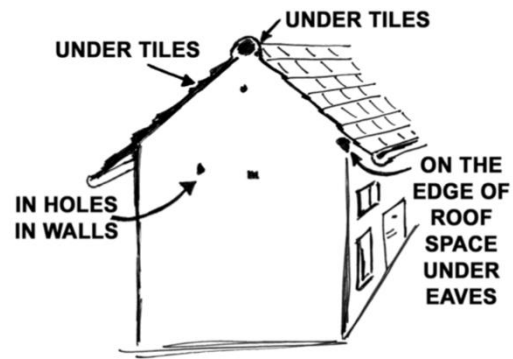
Back to today and we learnt that Swifts pair for life. Duetting, when they arrive side by side back at the nest site, they scream in duet (a little like Tawny Owls, only closer together), which we hear as a 'swee – ree' call. It takes a while for them to settle involving mutual preening on their return, especially the throat and nape

New research on nest site fidelity to be published by the RSPB this year shows that from colonies based in Devon & Dartmoor, studied over many years, 91% are faithful to the same nest (244 breeding events). And where it is known there are no fatalities, the 'divorce rate' is very low, with only 8.5% of pairings divorcing where both pair members were identified in two consecutive years. From one small colony which had 6 adults who were blocked out of their nests, 3 were found to be in alternative nest sites (one only 2 miles away in another village). Other Swifts may enter a taken box where after some screaming and posturing, the home-owner Swift may rise up and hold out its wings, turning sideways to expose its feet to grapple with the intruder. Fights can occur lasting from 20 mins to 5.5 hours. Swifts will also fight other intruders such as Starlings.

The establishment of new nesting sites was illustrated by reference to new box uptake in Fulbourn rising from 32 in 2012 to 78 in 2014 with follow up surveys in 2015 to 2017 peaking at 118. As anticipated, there were a number of variables in this set of data but it has proven that colonies can be established in new and mainly in internal boxes. There is an urgency to replicate this Fulbourn experiment.

Typical nest sites

Figure 3 – Where swifts nest © Concern for Swifts Scotland



Availability of food is often cited as a cause of declining numbers, but a recent research paper found no evidence for a link with declines in aphid biomass in the UK, though did find evidence that wet summer weather, which has increased over the last forty years, has a negative effect on productivity and first-year survival rates of swifts.

For the remainder of her presentation Laurinda moved on to what we and developers can do to provide nest sites for Swifts by providing nest boxes explaining the types recommended together with orientation and positioning. Getting big developers on board is an important way of installing a high number of boxes and Laurinda has had success with Barratts. The maths is easy -if they are building 100 houses and a brick is put in each one that 100 nest sites and that is easier than persuading the same number of individuals to put one up on their house. Our speaker gave details of several projects and the data becoming available and to find out more search for Oxford University Tower or the Big Duchy Bird Box Survey and of course on RSPB sources...and while doing that take a look at Hannah Bourne-Taylor and 'The Feather Campaign' to make swift bricks compulsory in new developments.

To round off the evening Laurinda showed another two videos including a delightful one from Germany of a pair of Swifts with geo-locators that had been tracked on their long and separate migration returning to the same nest site. We were sent home with a couple of bits of poetry that say a lot about Swifts:

*But when eve shines lowly
And the light is thinned,
And the moon slides slowly
Down the far-off wind,
Oh, then to be of all the birds the Swift!
To flit through ether, with elves winging,
Drawn up western fires, in frenzy singing,
Along the breeze to lean and poise and drift!*

from The Swift, Wilfred Owen

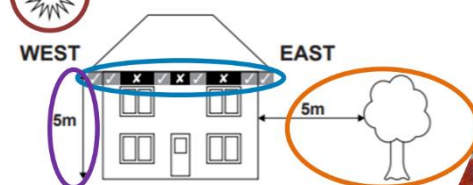
*They've made it again,
Which means the globe's still working, the Creation's
Still waking refreshed, our summer's
Still all to come –
And here they are, here they are again
Erupting across yard stones
Shrapnel-scatter terror. Frog-gapers,
Speedway goggles, international mobsters*

Stanza from Swifts, Ted Hughes

Laurinda was lively and engaging speaker with an obvious passion for her subject and her talk drew a good number of questions and comments which ran into a discussion on some points raised.

Why not find out if you have a Local Swift Network Group? We have a club member who has been instrumental in setting one up in Aylsham with some success so it can be done to help our Swifts.

Thanks Laurinda! Look out for Tracy Brighten's article on **Creating Bird-friendly urban places** in next month's newsletter.



Tree – clear flight line and distance for predators
Height – 4.5m high unobstructed space
Window – not above a window (disturbance)
Sunlight – NE/NW facing to avoid over-heating



Photo courtesy of Robin How

Birding through the year in Norfolk

Comments on some interesting observations

April 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, 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 offering for last month

March/April | Black Redstart

Nationally, this spring has been exceptional for the number of migrant Black Redstarts and the NENBC area has not missed out. Since the first one on The Leas at Sheringham on March 7th no fewer than 15 have been reported from a total of 12 localities in March and April. While the majority have been female-type birds, the occasional adult male has graced the area and an apparent female at Weybourne Camp confused the observer by commencing to sing! Even in the hand it may be impossible to sex 2cy males correctly: while females never have any white in the wing, most 2cy males also have none but a few have 1-2 moulted tertials, which are edged white, and so can be sexed as male.



The species was first recorded breeding in Britain in 1845 but not again until 1923 in Sussex and in London from 1926, where it nested regularly on the derelict bombsites after the Second World War. Small numbers continue to breed in Britain, mainly in the south-east, where their nest sites are often in derelict buildings in town centres, while power stations are also favoured, such as the former one at Great Yarmouth.

According to *The Migration Atlas* published by the BTO, some probably remain in their breeding areas throughout the year but they are mainly recorded in Britain as passage migrants, especially along the south and east coasts. Passage peaks in late March and early April, and again in late October and early November. In spring, larger numbers tend to occur during south-east winds, a feature of the weather in the last few weeks. Black Redstarts are widespread and common breeding birds on the Continent, the majority of European breeders wintering around the Mediterranean. It is thought that many of those recorded along the east coast in spring have drifted west on their return migration to their more northerly breeding areas.

Bird Observatory records show two main spring peaks: the first in March, involving mainly adult males, and a second in April. In the NENBC area this spring, 50% of the four March records were of males, while of the 11 in April, again only two were males.

The accompanying photo of a male Black Redstart was taken in my garden in Sheringham in April 2011.

April 15th | Garganey - Weybourne Hope.

One of the most distinct and recognisable calls in the spring is the courtship call of a male Garganey, and that is exactly what I heard coming from the middle of Weybourne Hope reed bed in the early morning of April 15th. The low-pitched croaking has been likened to the chirp of a cricket, and in some localities, including Hampshire, it is known as the 'Cricket Teal'. But to my ear it recalls more the rasping call of a Corncrake.

The Garganey is the only British-breeding duck that is a summer visitor from its wintering areas south of the Sahara, in tropical Africa. Here, very large flocks are recorded during the winter months, whereas in Europe it is usually only seen in pairs or small flocks. During the summer it frequents shallow pools with thick vegetation in which its nest is well concealed. Only a handful of pairs breed or are suspected of nesting in Norfolk each year, and it has never been recorded as breeding in the NENBC area. It is not an annual visitor to Weybourne Camp, but apart from those that are recorded passing offshore, the majority have been found on the pool at Weybourne Hope, where a pair was present from March 18th to April 2nd in 2015.

Adult drake Garganey in summer plumage are unmistakable having a broad white stripe above the eye, extending from in front of the eye to the nape, which contrasts with the otherwise chocolate-brown head. They also have elegant, long, pointed sickle-shaped grey and white scapulars. Females and young drakes are similar to female Teal,

if a little larger, but may be recognised by a pale loreal spot and a hint of the adult drakes' pale supercilium. The bill is also a little longer. In flight the drakes show a pale blue forewing. Finally they rarely upend, as do Teal, but feed by dabbling or simply dipping their heads under the water.

The accompanying photos of a drake and female Garganey were taken at Cley in March 2022.



April 22nd | Jack Snipe - Weybourne Hope.

"You now have the premier Bluethroat, Jack Snipe, crake and Little Bittern site in North Norfolk! We have no excuses not to find at least two of the above." So said James McCallum in an email to me, after he had cut down a small area of reed and left it lying around in an area of shallow water on the west side of Weybourne Hope this spring. Well at least he was proved correct as far as Jack Snipe were concerned but we are still awaiting the other species! The south-east corner of Weybourne Hope reedbed has always been a favoured spot for Jack Snipe and this winter has been no exception with up to two in March and the final one on April 22nd.

Jack Snipe breed across Scandinavia into northern Russia, migrating in autumn to overwinter in western and southern Europe, and North Africa. The breeding areas are vacated in August and by November most are settled into their wintering areas, where they generally remain until late February. The species winters across much of lowland Britain and ringing has demonstrated winter-site fidelity in some individuals.

They have a very distinct feeding action, bobbing up and down like a sowing machine needle, as they probe soft mud for worms and snails, while also taking seeds and insects from the surface. As a result the pattern created by their bills is very distinct and quite unlike the random probe marks made by Common Snipe. In Jack Snipe the double holes made by the two mandibles are close together and are often arranged in a crescentic pattern (see attached photo). They are most active at dusk and during the night, spending much of the day roosting in damp areas with patches of dead grass and fallen reeds.

Jack Snipe are smaller than their commoner cousins with a shorter bill, and are masters of disguise with the gold, brown and black stripes on the back mimicking the fallen reeds amongst which they roost: thermal imaging often being the only way that individuals can be found on the ground. When flushed, they are silent and don't zig-zag like Common Snipe, and often land again only a short distance away.

The accompanying photos of a Jack Snipe and the bill marks were taken at Weybourne Hope in December 2014.



Volunteering - By John Swallow

After a call for volunteers I joined the Cromer Peregrine Watch this year. It has been lots of fun, the other volunteers are very knowledgeable and chatty and attend more often than I do which is a morning or afternoon shift a week.

One of the things that is helpful to do is identify the male and female Peregrine. When together the size difference is very easy to see, with males (Tiercel) only 2/3rd the size of the females (Falcon).

I discovered there is a plumage difference too, a small freckle on the female's left cheek (picture). It's not very easy to see but I took this picture (29th April) of the female from the live Webcam and I now "get it".

When flying around the tower the Falcon was noted to have a different wing shape. As a Bird Ringer I knew that this was caused by moult. The feathers of birds while tough do wear out and every bird has to decide the best time to moult its feathers. For many passerines (small, perching birds, chaffinch etc) the best time is after the demands of breeding are over and there is still lots of food around to fuel feather growth. This is called the "post-breeding moult".

So why is the female peregrine in moult? The Falcons are incubating for much longer than most passerines often supplied by food for the male. So during this "downtime" it makes "energetic" sense for the Falcon to start her moult, this often begins in March in the UK and takes 128 to 185 days to complete (Demongin 2016).

Meanwhile the Tiercel is actively supplying first the female and then both her and the chicks with small prey. Therefore he retains a complete set of his flight feathers while he is doing this. Once the chicks are well grown the female begins to help out as the chicks require more and bigger prey to keep them well fed. At this time she has an almost complete set of new flight feathers, she is an even more deadly hunter..... The Tiercel then begins his primary moult.

Looking at the female in the box on 29th April you can see a gap in the feather tips. Look at the space between the primary tips, marked by the blue and the orange lines on the picture. By the way, the moult starts between the primaries (outer wing) and secondaries (inner wing) so to the right of the blue line are the fully grown blue new feathers, and you can just see another shorter feather (white arrow) growing to fill the "gap". The browner feathers to the left of the orange line are the worn feathers, they have lost the blue tones due to bleaching and wear.

As the chicks develop both adults will be flying around the tower, when you are looking at a single bird it is worth looking at the shape of the primaries. Soon it will be the male that is moulting!



Cromer Peregrine Project Update – By Jane Crossen

It will be a longer piece (hopefully) next month as (hopefully) we will have three fledged juveniles by then! One word for that – eek!

Ringling has taken place and all went extremely well. Some volunteers were on hand to reassure all the people looking up and wondering what all the racket was about! Here is what Phil, the ringer concluded:

- Orange ring VBP weight 741g thought to be female
- Orange ring VDP weight 706g sex unknown
- Orange ring VFP weight 688g thought to be male

We've taken DNA and when the results come back they are conclusive – until then we use Phil's guide (which is based on weight – the female being much larger/heavier). So, he's pretty certain of VBP and VFP sex but VDP is clearly on the cusp.

This is our seventh year of monitoring the Peregrines on Cromer church and I've been on the watchpoint for six of those years (three juveniles were ringed and all fledged in 2020 but, of course, it was the year of the pandemic so no watchpoint). It's extremely busy already this year. Last year we had around 16,000 visitors!

At this stage (and beyond) it gets really nerve-wracking. All three were out of the front of the box bang on time and really moving around a lot on the church roof, flexing their wings.

I captured this shot of two of them peeking over the edge of the front of the church – eek! It is exactly the same date that VNN (our one remaining juvenile last year) put in an appearance (photo below). I find that amazing.



Last year VNN fledged on 2nd June (I was lucky enough to be at the watchpoint when it happened). This year we had thought around 4th June as they were a couple of days later hatching than last year. However, these three are definitely doing extremely well, so let's see what happens!

A reminder of the YouTube webcam link:

[CPP on YouTube](#)

Still on right from the CPP webcam and ringing photo also courtesy of them – cheers!



Finder Report: The Booted Eagle

14th of April 2025 – 14:15 – 14:21 hrs

By Richard Farrow



Walking on the coast path East of Beeston Bump I met up with MPM. We discussed the slow spring passage , the recent arrival of a few whitethroats and lamented missing the Sea Eagle that had been reported flying over the area we now stood in, earlier in the day.

As we talked we scanned the skies and a few buzzards in land could be seen. It was a cloudy sky , full of white and grey cumulus with good light.

Around 14.10hrs MPM managed to pick up a distant raptor circling high up out over the sea. It was away to the north east of us. Being over the sea it warranted attention. As it circled the light caught areas of pale on



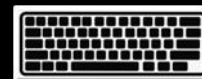
the upperparts and it showed primary "fingers". Although the pale was not black and white MPM suggested that it may have an Osprey but at this stage it was still distant from us (guessing I would say off West Runton at least) as it came closer I said I didn't think it was. After a few circles it turned towards us MPM switched to his camera as a photo looked possible. Now head on to us , heading south west it was gliding right towards us. I got on to it with my camera and amazingly it then glided head on directly toward our position. Head on in the camera it showed a cream brown head and a long squared tail. MPM explained to me he had got it wrong and was this a Marsh Harrier. As it came closer the Marsh Harrier theory went out of the window. All now at six and sevens regarding the identification! It circled right above us , literally and showed a pale un barred tail. Now we were really stumped. It then drifted away north west from us around 14.20 hrs. We lost behind the bump out over the sea. It didn't appear to be heading far out to sea.

MPM and I discussed what we had seen and neither of us could come to a firm conclusion. We talked pale Buzzards but never once did we call this as a Buzzard as the shape and structure was all wrong for the species. We left and MPM mentioned he would study the photos at home , seeing if he could I'D the bird. It troubled MPM all the way home and even a black redstart on the west side of the bump couldn't get his mind off that bird. MPM got in and dropped his kit on the floor and headed straight for the id books. Well

once he saw the upper wing pattern, "landing lights" to the shoulders , tail pattern it was surely a Booted Eagle. But MPM needed confirmation and a second opinion was required before he got too carried away. JMC was sent a couple of images of the uppers and underparts. MPM was worried was he stringing a buzzard he asked but said it looked awfully like a young Booted Eagle? JMC agreed and then helped to get the information out. MPM's only concern was getting hold of me as he had no phone number for me, but after a search he found my email and let me know of the outcome. I was busy that evening and when I opened my e mail from MPM (approx 11.00pm) I got a pleasant shock at the news. I immediately picked up the Collins Bird Guide to look up Booted Eagle and it left me in no doubt. In passing we can only wonder the last occasion that two Eagle species occurred with in Norfolk in one.

Photos above from Richard and those below courtesy of MPM.





A huge thanks to the 121 of you who have uploaded records to our website so far this year date. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports. Not started adding records yet? Make it your spring resolution this year! If you need any assistance, just drop us a line on nenbc@aol.co.uk or through the messaging element of the website.

NENBC Website



Over the coming months we are going to try and get a bit more in this section on the data side of things. Val has sorted out the current 'Prolific Poster' stats and we will be combining this going forward with some more varied info so if there is anything you would like to see, please shout and we will see what we can do.

Prolific Posters: January to April 2025 By Val Stubbs

Once again, Phil and Mark head the table for the first four months of this year. Six of our members have scored over 10,000 points – fantastic!

Rank	Birder	Points	Rank	Birder	Points
1	Phil Borley	78,940	16	Di & Richard Farrow	5,600
2	Mark Clements	41,550	17	Ann Gladwin	5,460
3	Valerie Stubbs	31,680	18	Roger Unite	5,410
4	Tony Pope	30,680	19	Alan Stevens	5,350
5	Philip Cartlidge	28,950	20	Russell Page	5,250
6	Paul Laurie	11,730	21	Andrew Kershaw	5,000
7	Trevor Williams	8,800	22	Moss Taylor	4,860
8	Doug & Jenny Cullern	7,960	23	Philip Hall	4,800
9	Peter Geary	7,790	24	Bob Farndon	4,800
10	John Hurst	7,410	25	Peter & Sue Morrison	4,750
11	Stephanie Witham	6,970	26	Michael Harcup	4,620
12	Dawn & Tim Wright	6,880	27	Andrew Clarke	4,620
13	Colin Blaxill	6,590	28	David Barrass	4,600
14	David Griffiths	6,390	29	Thomas Wright	4,080
15	Stella Baylis	6,330	30	Christopher Mason	3,870



A study of a Long-eared Owl by club member John Hurst seen at Thwaite earlier this year.