

# The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



**June 2026 - Issue 132**

**The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter**

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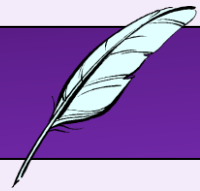
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**Through a Lens**



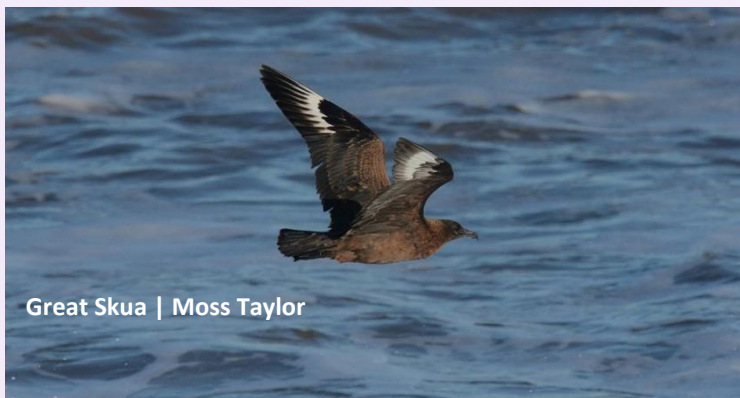


By Francis Farrow

While visiting [RSPB Strumpshaw](#) last month I witnessed an incidence of aerial piracy. I was in the Fen Hide watching Marsh Harriers and Hobbys hunting over the marshes when a female Sparrowhawk came past the hide. She was carrying an item of prey in her talons and flew in a straight line along the edge of the marsh. As she passed I returned to look at the nearest Hobby, which as I got on to it turned and made a direct shallow glide straight towards the Sparrowhawk. Within seconds it had hit the Sparrowhawk resulting in both birds tumbling down towards the ground. The Hobby was soon up again but I could not determine whether the attack had been successful and had relieved the Sparrowhawk of its prey.

This is an incident of **kleptoparasitism** – a feeding strategy that involves stealing food that another bird has already obtained through hunting or gathering. The parasitism can be opportunistic such as with the Hobby incident or be specialised behaviour such as seen in skuas and frigatebirds. Such birds are highly specialised and chase other seabirds in flight to force them to give up their food. Frigatebirds are so adapted that they are almost 100% ‘pirates’ and of course, are not a species expected to be seen in the UK, however, the [Magnificent Frigatebird](#) and the [Ascension Frigatebird](#) have occurred in 2005 and 1953 respectively so with a warming climate who knows.

We are much more familiar with the Arctic and Great Skuas off Norfolk, particularly between August and October as post-breeding birds and juveniles head south to their wintering grounds in the southern Atlantic and off West Africa respectively. These birds can be seen harassing other seabirds such as Gannets for the larger Great Skua and typically terns for the Arctic Skua.



A chase involving an Arctic Skua and a tern can be an exhilarating experience. When the skua spots a tern with a fish they lock onto the target and with speed and acrobatic dexterity they pursue the hapless victim with

relentless determination. They physically dive-bomb and generally harry the target bird to induce panic and force it to regurgitate or drop its meal, then with equal precision the skua executes amazing agility to catch the falling fish in mid-air before it reaches the sea. I have watched such encounters off the Norfolk coast and become totally immersed in this aerial battle. It is something that is totally exciting and can make any sea-watching session truly memorable.



Opportunistic kleptoparasitism is found in many birds but particularly raptors. There are many incidences where Kestrels have been observed attacking Barn Owls and stealing their prey. Generally as both species hunt in similar areas and for common prey the Kestrel, usually perched on some vantage point, will launch into the air and ambush the Barn Owl forcing it to drop its freshly caught rodent. The ambush can happen in the air or on the ground and the Kestrel will mob the owl repeatedly using its greater speed and agility to harass it until the food is given up.



In the recent BBC ‘Springwatch’ series a video clip [[here](#)] was shown where a Grey Heron was attempting to swallow an Eel when it was ambushed by a Buzzard which succeeded in obtaining the meal.

The greatest opportunists, as anyone who has eaten chips on the beach knows, are the gulls. These avian pirates will literally steal from the hand that feeds them. Normally gulls will harass each other or smaller species to gain food as the energy saved on hunting outweighs the time and energy spent fighting for the stolen meal.



Lastly there is an interesting strategy that is employed by a passerine. The Fork-tailed Drongo is an African bird

that is an exceptionally good mimic. These birds can copy the alarm calls of meerkats or babblers, which then causes these species to disperse quickly and abandon their food.

Short term kleptoparasitism may also occur with many species, such as in hard weather when food is in short supply or when population density is high.

Some recent research has shown that kleptoparasites, particularly seabirds, are at a higher risk of being infected by disease such as avian ‘flu. If a Great Skua causes an infected Gannet to regurgitate its food then the saliva coated meal will infect the skua. Since skuas and the frigatebirds mentioned above are great ocean wanderers the potential spread and transmission of disease to new populations is a very real danger. Such seabirds suffered catastrophic declines in the 2022 outbreak of avian influenza.

## A Note from the Editor



By Carol Thornton

### Welcome to our June newsletter!

Phew - what a busy few weeks it has been! We traditionally have a bit of down time from club activities over the summer but May is normally a really busy month and this year was no different. Read all the write-ups within the newsletter from [page 15](#) – 3 club walks, an evening Nightjar hunt, the Annual Big Sit, the 2026 Birding for Beginners Programme and a day out at the Wild About Mannington event. We finished up our projects with our UEA Environmental Consultancy students and we’ll be showcasing them in this newsletter over the next few months, it has been all go at the Cromer Peregrine Project Watchpoint (see [page 34](#)) and we are still beavering away behind the scenes on our 2025 Bird Report which we hope to have published late summer. Talking of which, my usual call – **if anyone has any of their bird-related artwork they would like me to include in the report**, then please send me the images across.

The ‘**Through a Lens**’ topic for the front cover of birds seen last month was ‘**juveniles**’. From the top left –Robin (Andrew Crossley), Moorhen (David Griffiths) and Pheasant (Carol Thornton). For June we will stick with the current theme of ‘**juveniles**’ and see if we can get a few more pics so get clicking!

Right is my **favourite member photo** from May, selected from the ones that didn’t make it on to our monthly NENBC Bird Highlights section of the more unusual species ... this lovely Wren is from Stu Buck.

Welcome to our new members

We look forward to seeing you soon!

\* Helen Stibbons \*Henrietta Robinson \* Teresa Keane \*

If you have any queries, just drop us an email





By Carol Thornton

All records are from the NENBC website and submitted by members unless otherwise stated. No use of AI to help collate this report this month!

≈ 9,530 individual records covering 164 bird species were added in May

**May 2026** | There were a lot of comments this month identifying juveniles being fed or nest box activity so that was great to see – keep it up as the more info we get from yourselves the richer our Annual Bird Reports are. In terms of highlights, the most interesting records were a Third Party Report of a **Red-footed Falcon** off Sheringham, a single (probably) **Hoopoe** lingering for a few days in the area, **Glossy Ibis**, **Honey-buzzard** at Swanton Novers, **Golden Oriole** passing through, a fly-by **Bee-eater** was a great garden tick seen by one lucky member and a female **Red-backed Shrike** at Felbrigg Park. See fuller details below.

**Brent Goose** | Records on 11 dates between 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> along the coast, mostly of double figure counts, with a maximum of 85 east during a Sheringham seawatch on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Barnacle Goose** | Up to 4 birds past Weybourne on the 1<sup>st</sup>, with two speed-checked as part of our ongoing project between Cromer, Overstrand and Happisburgh. Six birds west during a seawatch at Weybourne on 12<sup>th</sup>, 5 high east from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 west offshore at Weybourne on 20<sup>th</sup> and 2 again there on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Mandarin Duck** | A male and female on the River Bure at Brampton & Oxnead on 1<sup>st</sup> and a single there on 6<sup>th</sup> with a male on the Dilham Canal near Spa Common Bridge on 8<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 1 courtesy of Stu Buck.*

**Garganey** | A pair west at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-breasted Merganser** | A pair west from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 6<sup>th</sup>, speed-checked shortly thereafter at Weybourne.

**Grey Partridge** | Eleven records of 1-2 birds throughout the month from Weybourne, Heydon and East Runton & Thains Lane.

**Quail** | A nocturnal recording of a single bird over a Sheringham garden on 21<sup>st</sup>.

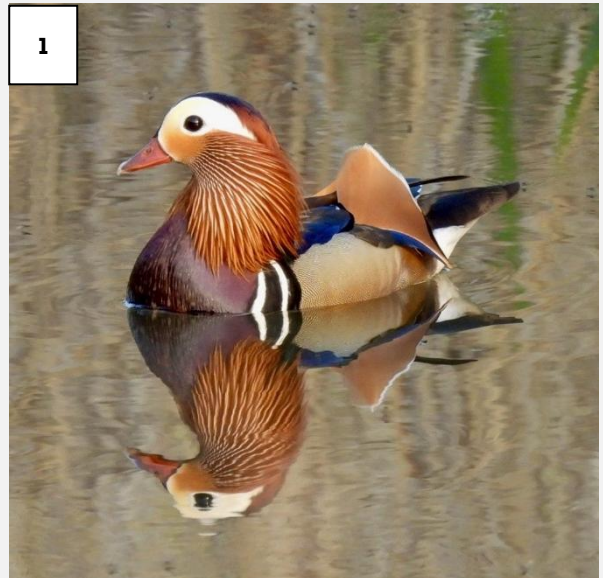
**Nightjar** | Thirty records with birds recorded from 9 locations last month including Kelling Heath (max 6 on 10<sup>th</sup>), Muckleburgh Hill (max 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>), Weybourne Heath (2 on several dates) and Holt Country Park & Lowes (max 9 on 31<sup>st</sup> on the club pop-up evening walk). Birds also reported from Buxton Heath, Beeston Common and Holt. Churring, flight calls and wing claps all reported. Two lucky members reported observations from home.

**Cuckoo** | A fantastic 41 records this month, with a whole bunch coming from Felbrigg Park on the 20<sup>th</sup> where everyone on both of the club walks heard a bird calling and some observed the bird by the lake. Other records of singles predominantly calling but some seen from Antingham & Bradfield, Bessingham, Brampton & Oxnead, Buxton Heath, Melton Constable, Northrepps, Pigneys Wood, Southrepps Common, Swafield, West Runton and Weybourne. At Swanton Novers, two males were reported calling with one female responding.

**Turtle Dove** | The UK population of Turtle Doves has drastically declined and we need to give this species as much space as possible. Therefore, we will no longer be publishing sightings of Turtle Dove in the Club Area during the breeding season (April to August). Please send records directly to the Club Recorder Andy Clarke ([ac1967@cantab.net](mailto:ac1967@cantab.net)), who will ensure they are passed to RSPB and BTO. Thank you!

**Crane** | Nine birds east over Weybourne Station on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Avocet** | A single east close to the shore at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 1<sup>st</sup> and west at Weybourne on 25<sup>th</sup>. Three birds west over Muckleburgh Hill and 2 west offshore at Weybourne, both records from 31<sup>st</sup>.





**Whimbrel** | There were 26 records throughout the month from 6 locations Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs (1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> with max 3 on 1<sup>st</sup>), Weybourne (1-5 on seawatches with max 8 on 9<sup>th</sup>), Sheringham (1 on 13<sup>th</sup>), Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course (4 on 5<sup>th</sup>), Muckleburgh Hill (2 on 29<sup>th</sup>) and West Runton (max 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> then singles 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>). *Photo 2 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Bar-tailed Godwit** | On the 1<sup>st</sup>, up to 18 reported from Weybourne (11 east, 6 west and 1 on beach) and 13 east off Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs, including a speed-check of a group of 8 from Weybourne. Singles reported west at West Runton on 2<sup>nd</sup>, east at Cromer on 3<sup>rd</sup> and also Weybourne on same date. A nocturnal flight call was recorded over Sheringham on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Knot** | Two east with a Bar-tailed Godwit at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 1<sup>st</sup> and a single west at Sheringham on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Wood Sandpiper** | A single heard calling and then seen high over Weybourne Camp on 3<sup>rd</sup> before heading west.

**Kittiwake** | Twenty seven records from throughout the month from several coastal locations. Mostly singles but with maximum counts on seawatches of 13 at Weybourne on 16<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 9 at Sheringham on 19<sup>th</sup> and 7 at Weybourne on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Mediterranean Gull** | Records throughout the month of mostly 1-4 birds, with 5 at Sheringham on 7<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and up to 7 at Weybourne on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, all during seawatches. *Photo 3 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Caspian Gull** | A single following a fishing boat and then perched on bow showing a blue darvic ring, which unfortunately was too distant to read.

**Sandwich Tern** | Over 80 records throughout the month with triple figure counts all at Weybourne of 161 on 3<sup>rd</sup> (144 east, 17 west), 121 on 4<sup>th</sup> (109 east, 12 west), 169 east on 10<sup>th</sup> and 161 west on 17<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 4 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Little Tern** | Nearly 70 records on 29 days during May. There was a count of 113 at Sheringham on 13<sup>th</sup> with all other triple figure counts from Weybourne, 140 on 7<sup>th</sup>, up to 108 on 9<sup>th</sup>, 251 on 10<sup>th</sup> and 110 on 20<sup>th</sup>, all from seawatches. Several observations of fishing and one of courtship feeding. *Photo 5 courtesy of Mark Clements*

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**Arctic Tern** | One at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 east at Weybourne Camp on 8<sup>th</sup>, 4 at Weybourne on 9<sup>th</sup> and 8 east there on 10<sup>th</sup>. Other records of 'commic' terne were reported, but not close enough for observers to rule out Common Tern.

**Arctic Skua** | Singles reported at Sheringham, West Runton and Weybourne on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-throated Diver** | Mostly singles reported on 14 dates but with 5 at Sheringham on 7<sup>th</sup> during a seawatch and 2 east at Weybourne on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Northern Diver** | One west at Weybourne on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Fulmar** | Records of mostly 1-3 birds along the coast between Weybourne Camp and Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. There were 5 at Weybourne on 28<sup>th</sup> and 7 there on 29<sup>th</sup> but the maximum reported were of 18 local birds on the cliffs below Cromer's Carnival Field on 1<sup>st</sup>. There was also a record of a single circling over Kelling Heath seen from Muckleburgh Hill.

**Glossy Ibis** | A single east at Weybourne on 20<sup>th</sup> and 2 in off the sea over Weybourne Camp and Muckleburgh Hill on 31<sup>st</sup> after being spooked by a model aircraft.

**Spoonbill** | Singles were reported at Weybourne (7<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>), West Runton (20<sup>th</sup>) and Muckleburgh Hill (31<sup>st</sup>). Three east at Weybourne on 9<sup>th</sup> were tracked as far as Trimingham, with 3 again there on 26<sup>th</sup> and Muckleburgh Hill on 29<sup>th</sup> plus 5 east at West Runton on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Great White Egret** | Two birds flew east over Weybourne village on 5<sup>th</sup>, one with a dangling leg, also reported on a bird flying over Felbrigg Park later that morning. Three west at West Runton on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 east over Muckleburgh on 12<sup>th</sup>, 2 over Weybourne / Weybourne Cliffs on 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, a single west at West Runton on 25<sup>th</sup> and finally another east over Swanton Novers on 26<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 6 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

**Osprey** | Just one record of a single thermalling high over Mundesley on 29<sup>th</sup> being mobbed by a gull.

**Honey-buzzard** | A record of one, possibly two, single birds seen a long time apart over Swanton Novers on 21<sup>st</sup>. The first headed north, the second came in from the east but could have circled round.

**Goshawk** | A highlight of the Felbrigg Park Big Sit on 9<sup>th</sup> was a Goshawk being pursued by a Buzzard. Records from Swanton Novers on 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> (male) and 27<sup>th</sup> (male) were all of singles. Similarly, singles at Thornage and Roughton on 27<sup>th</sup> and Swanton Novers on 31<sup>st</sup> with 2 there on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Short-eared Owl** | One was quartering rough pasture and winter barley at Paston on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Hoopoe** | Reports of singles (or more likely a single) in 3 locations during May. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> a Hoopoe was in gardens west of Beeston Bump; on 4<sup>th</sup>, reports were from a Sheringham rooftop in the Nelson Road area; and on 5<sup>th</sup> a bird was reported singing in Station road and 2 days later in Pine Walk, Weybourne. *Photo 7 courtesy of Richard Farrow*



**Kingfisher** | Singles at 5 locations during May –  
Gimingham on 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>; Antingham & Bradfield, around  
the bridge, on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>; Blickling Park on 12<sup>th</sup>, Wolsey’s  
Farm (private) on 23<sup>rd</sup> and Felbrigg Park on 27<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 8  
courtesy of Ken Thornton*

**Bee-eater** | One west over a Sheringham garden on 8<sup>th</sup>.  
Flight path suggested it was heading somewhat inland  
rather than along the coast.

**Red-footed Falcon** | Third Party Report of an adult female  
drifting north east over the sea at Sheringham on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Hobby** | Forty six records throughout May from over 11  
coastal and inland locations. Most records were of single  
birds. A minimum of 2, possibly up to 5, during 14 hours of  
our NENBC Big Sit at Felbrigg Park on 9<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 9 courtesy  
of Mark Clements*

**Peregrine** | Plenty of records around Cromer of the church  
pair and their 3 chicks which hatched earlier in the month.  
See [page 34](#) for much more info on their progress. There  
have been reports of some intruding Peregrine encounters  
there in the past few weeks but the only records logged  
away from Cromer during May were a single at Weybourne,  
east, on both 4<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-backed Shrike** | Felbrigg Park was the place to be on  
26<sup>th</sup> when a single female was present for much of the day  
around the lake area. The following morning a call was  
picked up by Merlin but there were no further sightings.  
Photos 10a and 10b from *Trevor Williams and David  
Griffiths*

**Golden Oriole** | Singles reported west over Inceborough  
and West Runton on 22<sup>nd</sup>, and again on 23<sup>rd</sup>, with a Third  
Party Report over Sheringham on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Hooded Crow** | One on Weybourne Camp on 7<sup>th</sup> and east  
around Muckleburgh Hill on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Raven** | Both records were reported from Swanton Novers  
on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Tit** | Just one record of 2 birds at Mannington Hall  
Park on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodlark** | [We are not including detailed information in  
the newsletter of the locations of this species during the  
breeding season.](#) | Twenty nine records from 3 locations of  
between 1-3 birds.

**Willow Warbler** | Nearly 70 records during May from 15  
locations including Kelling Heath, Felbrigg Park, Beaston  
Common and Sheringham Cemetery, with most records  
being singing-only records. *Photo 11 courtesy of Mark  
Clements*

**Grasshopper Warbler** | A single bird was present on 2<sup>nd</sup> at  
Dilham Canal and also one at Antingham & Bradfield on  
7<sup>th</sup>. A bird was heard singing at Weybourne from 23<sup>rd</sup>  
through to 31<sup>st</sup>.



**Lesser Whitethroat** | Fifty four records from 17 locations all month. All records were of singles, mostly singing, with 2 at Antingham & Bradfield on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Dartford Warbler** | We are not including detailed information in the newsletter of the locations of this species during the breeding season. | Records of 1-2 birds from one location.

**Firecrest** | Eight records of singles reported on 6 dates at Sheringham Park, High Kelling, East Runton & Thains Lane, Pretty Corner Wood and Selbrigg Pond.

**3Ring Ouzel** | A female in cattle fields at West Runton on 1<sup>st</sup> was the only report.

**Spotted Flycatcher** | Records of singles from Antingham & Bradfield, West Runton, Weybourne, Swanton Novers, Selbrigg Pond, Beeston Regis and Muckleburgh Hill with most likely to be migrating birds. A handful of records from undisclosed locations of more than one bird. *Photo 12 courtesy of David Griffiths*

**Pied Flycatcher** | A male was widely recorded at Sheringham Cemetery from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>. It was variously described as very mobile with several reports of its characteristic 'fly catching' feeding. *Photo13 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Black Redstart** | One record of a single at Hempstead on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Redstart** | One at Cromer on 9<sup>th</sup>, one heard at Beeston Common on 10<sup>th</sup> and a further record from Swanton Novers on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Whinchat** | One at Weybourne Cliffs on 2<sup>nd</sup> and an elusive male reported at West Runton on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Wheatear** | Twenty six records on 14 dates between 1<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Mostly 1-3 birds but 7 at West Runton and up to 6 Weybourne area on 1<sup>st</sup>, and again there on 5<sup>th</sup>. *Photo14 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*



**Yellow Wagtail** | Most records were of birds passing on migration on 10 dates from the coast between Weybourne and West Runton, with a couple of outliers at Beeston Bump and Walcott. Higher numbers were reported at the beginning of the month with high counts on 1<sup>st</sup> of 15 mainly west at West Runton, on 2<sup>nd</sup> 38 west there, on 3<sup>rd</sup> 14 west at Weybourne with 12 again at West Runton on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Wagtail** | Most of the 28 records were of singles but a pair were reported carrying food at Selbrigg Pond on several dates and there were p to 5 at Mannington Hall Park. A recently fledged juvenile was observed at Southrepps sewage works on 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Photo 15 courtesy of Mick Rebane*

**Tree Pipit** | One west at West Runton on 20<sup>th</sup> with a recorded nocturnal flight call over a Sheringham garden on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Hawfinch** | A male on conifers at Weybourne Camp on 3<sup>rd</sup> and one west over Inceborough Hill on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Redpoll** | A Lesser Redpoll east over Muckleburgh Hill on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crossbill** | Six at Aylmerton on 10<sup>th</sup>, up to 6 along the coast on the 25<sup>th</sup> and one (possibly 2) at Selbrigg Pond on 27<sup>th</sup>.

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## June: What to look forward to .....



June can be seen as a more relaxed month after the excitement of spring migration, but it can still be an excellent one and this month we have already had reports of Black Kite and Stone-curlew.

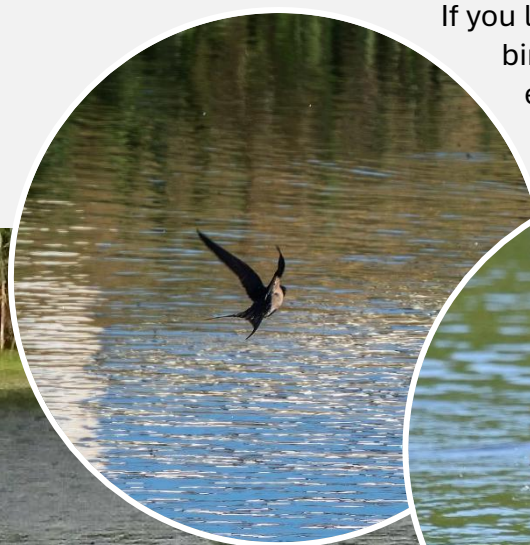
After a wet few weeks, the success, or otherwise, of our breeding birds should begin to become apparent and it is always worth noting such observations in the records section of our website as this helps to build a fuller picture of the bird life in our area. It should be remembered that the location of rare breeding birds should not be disclosed as per [Schedule 1](#) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. If in doubt, please contact a committee member before posting.

If you are near suitable habitat (farmland with grassland or cereal crop), then try to see if you can track down a Quail. They are the only migrant species in the Phasianidae family, and although Quails are on the Amber List they are now in partial recovery. The chances of actually 'seeing' one are pretty slim but familiarise yourself with their distinctive "wet-my-lips" call. An example can be heard [here](#). Hirundines are still about so over any of the club's lakes and ponds you will hopefully be able to watch Swifts, Swallows and martins hawking for insects and maybe even a Hobby.

Seawatching should begin to pick up this month, so if you have an hour or two to spare early one morning, it may be worth a trip to the coast to scan the waves for passing seabirds such as terns, scoters and shearwaters and wader passage can also be rewarding, particularly during the latter half of the month. Take a look at the BTO's [Bird Identification Videos](#) to hone your ID skills.

If you look at the Wordsearch on [page 39](#), you'll see what a great collection of birds we had turn up last June, so you never know what you might be lucky enough to catch up with!

*Photos courtesy of Richard Farrow (Swallow), Sand Martin (Moss Taylor), House Martin (Mark Clements)*



**Ringed Bird Highlights**



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 co-ordinator which can be found through the EU Colour Ring website <https://cr-birding.org/>. Locally ringed Turnstones (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 report to the BTO <https://app.bto.org/euring/lang/pages/rings.jsp>”

24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Oystercatcher</b>	2	Mannington Hall Park	Trevor Williams	pair on the Hall lawn (one wearing metal BTO-type ring) - during Wild About Mannington event
19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Caspian Gull</b>	1	Sheringham	Phil Borley	following fishing boat. perched on bow of boat showing a blue darvic ring, unfortunately too distant to read.

**Noc-Mig Highlights**



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

All records this month were from Andy Clarke at Sheringham.

21st	<b>Quail</b>	Nocturnal flight call over garden, 0042 (4 triplet calls); new species for the garden recording list!
24th	<b>Little Grebe</b>	Nocturnal flight call over garden, 0005 (four calls)
21st	<b>Bar-tailed Godwit</b>	Nocturnal flight call over garden, 0401 (single double call)
21st	<b>Tree Pipit</b>	Nocturnal flight call over garden, 0312 (single call)

**Member Highs, Lows and Ponderings**



All member comments are taken from the notes section of the website. We are getting a lot more detail on the birds and their activities these days which makes these summaries longer, but much richer, so please keep it up everyone!

**Greylag Goose** | 8 on camp. 2 adult with six gosling on camp, walking west, last seen on beach leaving club recording area. | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Nightjar** | This bird flew west to east as I was having a beer! The sun had already set. I was looking west watching the sky change from orange to darker hues of blue and was amazed to see this bird rise over my 2.5m high brick wall, then fly low over me, flapping and gliding with raised wings. A perfect end to the day :-). The following day during a nearby BTO Woodcock survey I noticed that Nightjars started churring at 21.08 with most churring ending by 21.50, perhaps as they started hawking more rather than displaying and around the same time this bird crossed my garden. | John Swallo | Holt | 25<sup>th</sup>

**Pheasant** | On A148. 1 seemed determined to get itself killed; I came to a dead stop and still it dithered, changing

its mind about which direction to go 3 times before it finally made it to safety. | Val Stubbs | Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course | 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Pheasant** | Female Pheasant in the garden with 9 chicks, 2 much paler than the others. Magpies spent a good while eyeing them. UPDATE They were gradually depleted over 3 days to zero, at which point the mother became furious and whenever we went outside she rushed at us spitting, hissing, wings up like a territorial swan and trying to kick us. This went on for several days. Obviously thought it was our fault but she is calm again now. | Carol Thornton | Gresham | 16<sup>th</sup>

**Swift** | 5x Screaming over last year's nesting location, they are back! | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 5<sup>th</sup>

**Swift** | 9x A screaming squadron swept round as I walked along Fairview Road but then disappeared | Bob Farndon | North Walsham | 21<sup>st</sup>

**Moorhen** | 1 adult and 1 chick in the garden. They've bred in the border hedge between Glen Rosa and Glen Haven or just on the Glen Haven side. Both adults were seen earlier in the year. | John Cole | Happisburgh | 18<sup>th</sup>

**Crane** | 9x East over Weybourne but inland having been tracked from further west. Their transit had been along the ridgeline and I only just managed to see them. Who would have thought tracking 9 large birds would be so difficult? | David Griffiths | Weybourne | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Sandwich Tern** | 21 east, 18 west - presumably local birds commuting between breeding and feeding grounds - during 2 hour sea-watch | Trevor Williams | Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Sandwich Tern** | Fishing enthusiastically. | Stephanie Witham | East Runton (Coastwatch Station) | 21<sup>st</sup>

**Little Tern** | 1 sitting on sea while the other courtship fed it. | Tony Pope | Weybourne Cliffs | 30<sup>th</sup>

**Little Tern** | Up to 20 birds diving and feeding very close to shore opposite SALT café | David Barrass | Sheringham | 31<sup>st</sup>

**Sparrowhawk** | Female eating one of our Collared Doves, the remaining singleton looking around for their friend! | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 4<sup>th</sup>

**Bee-eater** | 1 west, over garden. Flight path suggested it was heading somewhat inland rather than along the coast. So often migrant Bee-eaters are heard but not seen; this was the opposite and a nice surprise. | Andy Clarke | Sheringham | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Hobby** | Present when we arrived. We watched until it left at 12:01. It repeatedly dived down from a dead tree, caught an insect low over the lake and returned to its perch to eat its prey. Best views ever. | Peter & Sue Morrison | Selbrigg Pond | 27<sup>th</sup>

**Red-baked Shrike** | Glad I picked up the alert. A really good view and a lifer for me | David Barras | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 26<sup>th</sup>

**Magpie** | Trying to get onto suet feeder, but foiled by the cage! | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 16<sup>th</sup>

**Carrion Crow** | 2 eating a rabbit carcass, then drove off a Great black-backed Gull which tried to get the meal. | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 28<sup>th</sup>

**Carrion Crow** | flew at and struck a wood pigeon, which was on the ground, causing the pigeon to lose several feathers | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 30<sup>th</sup>

**Blue Tit** | 3x Juvenile just left the nest without being able to fly is being fed by parents on the ground. | Doug & Jenny Cullern | Holt | 29<sup>th</sup>

**Great Tit** | Heard at 5 am; 1 somehow managed to get into the conservatory through a window that was scarcely open, but flew out readily when I opened the door, and 1 on our roof | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Sand Martin** | Lots of birds but highly scattered. There are approximately 500 holes but no idea of occupancy rate. | John Cole | Happisburgh | 22<sup>nd</sup>

**House Martin** | 25x around water main leak, plenty of building mud, thanks to Anglia water | Brian Shaw | Weybourne | 25<sup>th</sup>

**Cetti's Warbler** | A new bird for our Big Sit list - during 14 hours of Big Sit in support of Global Big (birding) Day | Trevor Williams | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 9<sup>th</sup>

**Willow Warbler** | A mixed singer with significant chiffchaff portions in the west garden | Andrew Kershaw | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 13<sup>th</sup>

**Sedge Warbler** | Reeds railway side of Bramble lane, had been occasional calls during day but continuous at night interspersed with Cetti's! Singing for at least a couple of hours. | Sue Parsons | Southrepps Common | 24<sup>th</sup>

**Reed Warbler** | Heard first. Then found with thermal moving low in reeds very near water then seen briefly with bins. | Stu Buck | Dilham Canal | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Reed Warbler** | In the conifer right opposite my house. Very nice listening to it with my first cup of coffee!! Never had one there before. I presume there's been a bit of a fall today as I'm about 3 minutes from the sea and very near the golf course. | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 18<sup>th</sup>

**Blackcap** | 10x There are a lot of Blackcap this year, I stopped on the Jubilee Boardwalk and could hear 3 Blackcaps and 3 Chiffchaff at that one location! | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 5<sup>th</sup>

**Whitethroat** | 9x Must have been a fall overnight - one east perimeter of golf course, five on path up to Skelding. Two at Skelding Hill and one just west of it. | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course | 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Whitethroat** | Showy but rarely settled. Moving from one song perch to another. | Stu Buck | Antingham & Bradfield | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Goldcrest** | Firs north side of playing field bordering the new-ish housing. Really nice to see one. Don't see them often there and then it is usually winter. | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 13<sup>th</sup>

**Wren** | Just seen bathing in water bowl in my garden. | Anne Sims | Gresham | 15<sup>th</sup>

**Wheatear** | Richly marked female in paddocks (possibly Greenland?); visible migration watch 0600-0800 | Andy Clarke | West Runton | 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Bullfinch** | pair at garden pond, now a regular visitor, though not even annual previously. But seemingly much scarcer now in NENBC area. | Chris Mason | Beeston Regis | 24<sup>th</sup>

**Greenfinch** | M & F on seed feeder in back garden, and juv trying to work out how to use the feeder | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 4<sup>th</sup>

**Pied Wagtail** | Always seems to appear with the spotted flycatcher and not at this location at any other time of year. | Chris & Kathrin Turner | At Home | 17<sup>th</sup>

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](http://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](mailto:salesbirdventures@aol.com)

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



### 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!

### NENBC WhatsApp groups

We have 3! We need your mobile number to sign you up for any of them and you will need to activate WhatsApp on your phone if you are not already using it. There are a few rules on the 1<sup>st</sup> two groups which you will need to agree to on sign up that ensures they run as smoothly as possible for our volunteer administrators and the instant info you get is of use. Please be aware that like all WhatsApp groups, your number will be visible to all those on the group. There isn't a way to hide them.

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

**NENBC Alerts** is administered by Tony Forster and is solely for club members to share news on the location of interesting birds within the club area.

**NENBC Communications** has been set up so we have a means of contacting members quickly and easily without going through the email / website route. We plan to use it for things like ....

- 📧 sending out reminders a day or two before scheduled club events
- 📧 letting folk know where we are running a short-notice 'Pop-Up' event outside of our published schedule
- 📧 advising to any last-minute changes to scheduled events

Unlike the other WhatsApp groups only the Admins can send messages out; **members won't be able to respond** via it so there shouldn't be a lot of traffic on it. It **won't be used as a bird alert** so won't duplicate the purposes of our other two.

### Restocking our 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk)

### Speaker Suggestions .....

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

Thank you!

# What's On?



General Event Information – please see our **website** or ‘upcoming events’ in this newsletter for **fuller details** of what we have on offer

## Overview

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

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

## General Walks Information

Please wear clothing suitable to conditions - footpaths can be muddy at any time of the year.

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

**DOGS:** We regret no dogs except assistance dogs.

**EQUIPMENT:** Binoculars are always recommended to gain full enjoyment from your birding and for some of our walks, a scope is definitely useful but don't forget you'll have to carry it!

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

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

**BOOKING:** In a change from previous years - you generally won't need to book for any of our walks so just turn up on the day if you fancy it. We advise joining the WhatsApp Comms group which we will always use if we have to make any last minute changes. There may be the occasional time we do need advance numbers and bookings and if this is the case it will say so on our publicity

## Non-Club Local Events ....

### Felbeck Trust Annual Bioblitz

Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup> | 10.00-16.00

West Beckham Old Allotments

“An opportunity to join our species experts in identifying as many species as possible. This year we are including the option of a guided walk from WBOA to our site at West Beckham Green and, for those who want, onward to our site at East Beckham Common, before returning to WBOA”

Free | [enquiry@felbecktrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@felbecktrust.org.uk)

Do come along – always a great day out!

The North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust will be celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the canal on the **weekend of the 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> August** and NENBC plan to be there to support them on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**FREE ENTRY**

# WILDLIFE DISCOVERY DAY

In association with the Sheringham Town Council's Wildlife Garden Awards, we will be holding our first Wildlife Discovery Day on

## Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Venue: Sheringham Community Centre  
10am to 12pm - Children's activities  
1.45pm to 5pm - Guest speakers

**WILDLIFE GARDEN AWARD**

- Nick Acheson**  
Author, Naturalist, presenter & ambassador for the Wildlife Trust
- Simon Harrap**  
Author, Botanist & owner of Natural Surroundings
- Trevor Williams**  
Birder & Chair of UBGC Triangle Project & Felbeck Trust
- Jo Haywood**  
Wildlife gardener

Face painting, crafting & more!

Visit the Sheringham Town Council Website for more information  
[www.sheringhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.sheringhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

# Upcoming Events

We are easing down over the coming weeks but we still have two more double **Felbrigg Park Walks** this season offering a short or a standard stroll, a walk at **Dilham Canal and Pigneys Wood** this month and hopefully a visit to the **Sea Palling Tern Colony** for our July walk. Sorry, no more evening talks until the autumn and we don't generally do an August walk. Do keep an eye out for our pop-up events which are our short-notice activities – we may have a 'come join me on a walk' or a seawatch session. Look forward to seeing you at these events soon.

## Felbrigg Park Walks 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Following the success of our March double event, we will offering two walks on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month for the next few months at least.

In addition to our usual romp with we will also be leading a second shorter and slower walk for those who find our normal offer more than they are willing / able to do. We really hope that many of you will come and join us. The plan is a staggered start with us all meeting up in the café afterwards at 11am.

Our Felbrigg Park walks are sociable events and cater for all levels of birding ability so come and give us a try. Our route is dependent on the local bird and other wildlife recently reported or likely to be present on the day. We normally see between 30 and 50 species.

Walk 1 | 9:00am to 11:00am | ≈ 2+ m  
*A bit of a romp with Trevor Williams*

Walk 2 | 9:30am to 11:00am | ≈ 1 m  
*Slow and steady with Nick Kimber*

### NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET:

Main Felbrigg Hall car park – free for National Trust members |

**ACCESSIBILITY:** footbaths, grassland, a bit of mud usually and can be uneven in places | **FACILITIES:** Café and loos at the Hall | **CLUB BADGES:** In area so all appropriate individual records count.

| 17<sup>th</sup> Jun | 15<sup>th</sup> Jul |

| 16<sup>th</sup> Sep | 21<sup>st</sup> Oct |

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

## Pigneys Wood and Dilham Canal Walk

\*\*\* summer days \*\*\*

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June

9.30 am 1.00 pm

Walk Leader: *Julian Thomas*

The long early summer days of June are an ideal time to enjoy the varied range of habitats and species on part of Pigneys Wood reserve as well as the adjacent Dilham Canal. Pigneys Wood has been managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust since 2017 and conservation works on the grassland, ponds, fen and woodland is underway. Adjacent to the reserve is the linear waterway that is the 'North Walsham and Dilham Canal'. The full extent is 9 miles long (we won't walk it all!) and historically wherries could sail the entire length transporting cargo between the bone mills at Antingham Ponds and Wayford Bridge. In recent years, thanks largely to volunteer effort, restoration has seen water return to some sections and the birds have followed. Both these locations together host impressive numbers of warblers along with other resident and migrant species. Back in June 2020, a Blyth's Reed Warbler was found here and delighted many people during the Covid pandemic. No promises of such a sighting on this walk but June is a key month for the more unusual warblers! Other wildlife is worth looking out for – depending on the weather we may see a variety of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies and other interesting invertebrates..

**PARK & MEET:** Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Pigneys Wood car park. This is a small car park so please arrange car sharing where possible. Free entry and parking | Grid reference TG 29679 32152 | What3Words: [socialite.oldest.interest](#) | GIS: Easting 629679, Northing 332152

**DISTANCE:** approx 4 miles but flexible

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Paths are all level and are gravel tracks and some grassy areas. Some may be uneven and bumpy in places. Depending on previous rainfall, there may be some damper areas in the wood, although overall it is likely to be dry underfoot. There is some shade in the wood but the canal side track is largely open and may be warm, please bring sunscreen and wear a sunhat. There may be ticks so please use insect repellent, wear long trousers and covered walking shoes or boots. We will not be walking through very tall vegetation.

**FACILITIES:** There are no toilets or cafes available during the walk. The nearest public toilets and other facilities (pubs, cafes) can be found in nearby North Walsham. Bring plenty of water for a summer walk and any snacks you might need.

**CLUB BADGES:** The walk is mostly within the club area so some records can count towards club star badges and the green eco ones if you walk or biked there.

## Sea Palling to Eccles on Sea – Little Tern Walk with Stella Baylis

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July | 9:30am to 1:00pm

Details on website

Prior booking is required for this walk, maximum 10 participants, to minimise disturbance. Email [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk)

# Last Month's Double Mid-Week Walk

Felbrigg Park | Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May



On a roll with our new double-walk event again last month at Felbrigg Park- read all about them both below ...

**“The merry cuckoo, messenger of Spring, His trumpet shrill hath thrice already sounded.” — Edmund Spenser | by Dave Billham**

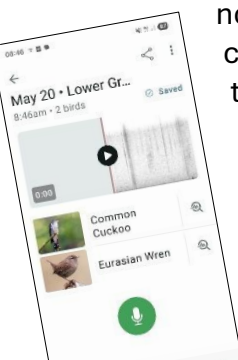
The morning of the May club walk was one of those where it was hard to decide what to wear; overcast, might rain, might be sunny. So, suncream and anorak it was. With Trevor being elsewhere, I had the honour of leading the walk, which meant deciding on a route to take. With the two previous walks both racking up species totals of 50 plus, it would be great to do it for a third time, so some thought was required. However, I was still undecided as we gathered in the car park awaiting the start time. We did have the bonus of Nick leading the second walk, starting half an hour later, to help with this species collecting; that was good. I thought I would consult the oracle (Carol) when she arrived, to see what she might have found on her walk in.

Arriving early, I got out the car to hear a faint but distinctive call drifting across the park – **Cuckoo!** The first on a club walk this year, and my first of the year too in the club area, big bonus. As the fourteen members assembled, including John from Essex on his first Felbrigg walk, we could hear it calling every now and again. When Carol arrived I could tell she had some exciting news to impart; she was quite deflated when she found out we had already heard it! She had been looking for it on her way across the park, hence her slightly later arrival than usual. We decided

that we would spend the walk trying to find it, as many of those present, though familiar with the call, were much less so with actually seeing one. The great Cuckoo hunt was on!

We had found a number of other species as we waited to start; a trio of corvids in the shape of **Rook, Carrion Crow** and **Jackdaw**; in the fields **Woodpigeon, Pheasant** and **Red-legged Partridge**, and overhead lone examples of **Swallow** and **Red Kite**. Singers heard were **Blackcap, Chaffinch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Goldfinch** and **Dunnock**.

Following the Cuckoo calls, we set off on a curving route towards the lake. A brief burst of song alerted us to a **Pied Wagtail** on the roof of the house, and skirting the woods we also heard **Wren** and **Chiffchaff**.



The Cuckoo was on the move, now sounding to be nearer the lake, so we took the track above the water meadows to follow it.

A burst of song ahead of us was identified by John as **Lesser Whitethroat**, the first walk record this year. It proved to be an extremely obliging individual, singing from a bush on the track even as we were stood directly beneath it! Much less easy to see however, due to the thick foliage. Other vocalists along the track were **Greenfinch**, **Blue Tit** and **Willow Warbler**, this latter surprisingly being a new addition to the club walk species list since I started the list-keeping in 2021. On the water meadow we could see a pair of **Egyptian Goose**, **Moorhen**, and a **Grey Heron** sat in a tree.



The Cuckoo had gone silent on us, so we took some time to scan the reeds and tussocks for Snipe, unfortunately with no luck. We did, however, pick up a lone **Magpie**, and heard the song of a couple of reedbed specialists; **Reed Bunting** and **Reed Warbler**.



Reaching the lake, we found **Mute Swan**, **Coot**, **Cormorant** and an overflying **Herring Gull** (and of course, we all initially thought, Mallard – except there were none to be seen). Carol had noted some on her way in, but for now they had tucked themselves away

into the lakeside vegetation. And for the remaining time we had the lake in view, there they remained, and we did not find a single one! The Cuckoo now resumed calling, it had moved on again, and appeared to be at the far end of the lake, beyond the dam wall – we were off again. As we pursued it we spied a **Linnet** sat on a fence post, whilst flying over us were **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Common Buzzard** and **Great Tit**.

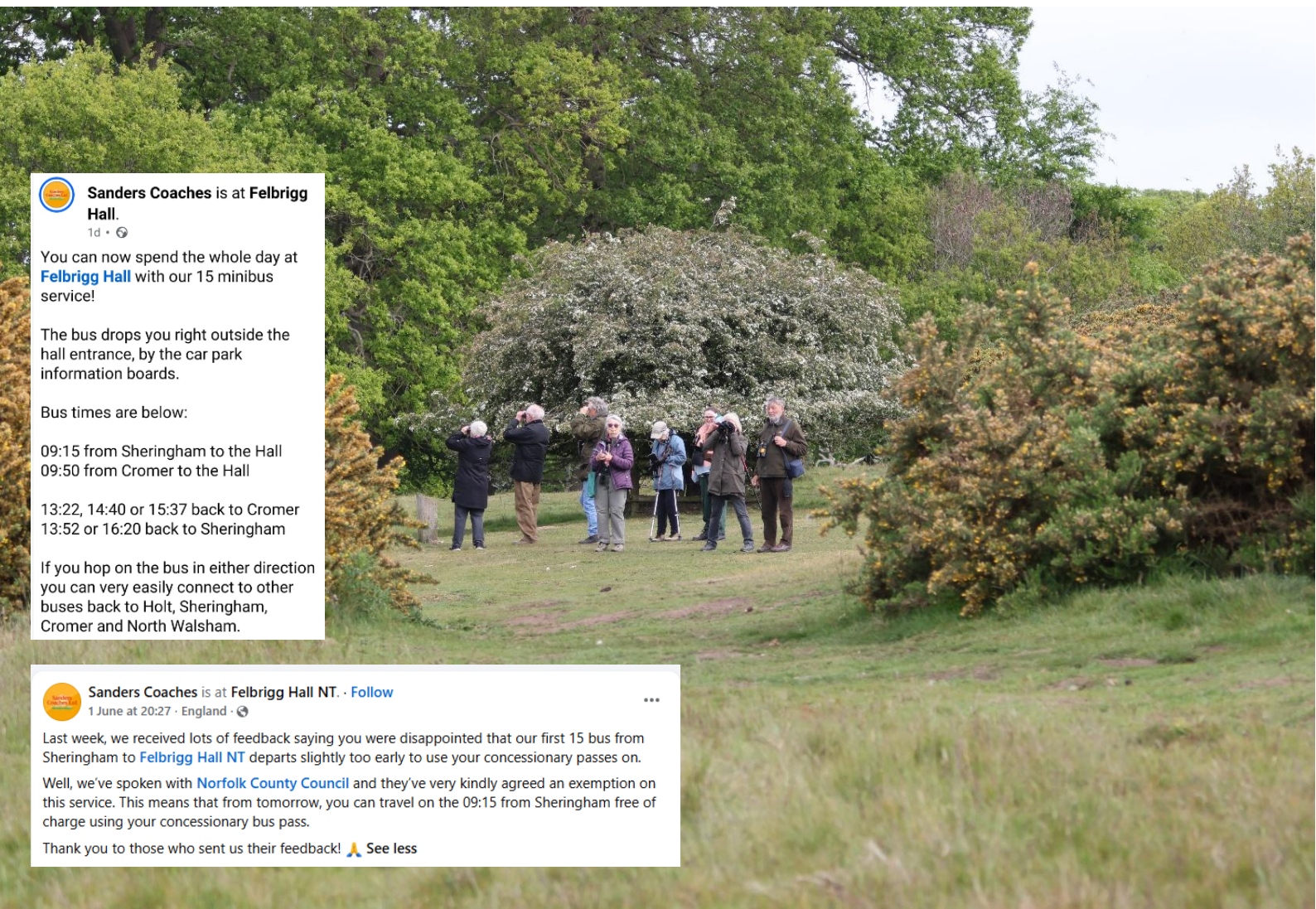
A sighting of **Swift** feeding high above us was a first for a club walk this year; these aerial artists are always a delight to see. We were now approaching the dam at the lake's end, and the group had got strung out along the path. Suddenly we heard the Cuckoo call again, but this time from behind us, right at the other end of the lake, where we had been earlier. Were there now two birds, or had it doubled back on us? Those of us at the front of the group had our view of the lake obscured by bushes, but those at the rear had a clear view, and Carol and a few others had seen the bird flying down the length of the lake. Well, no-one had said Cuckoo-chasing was easy, but at least some of us had got the desired view!

Completing our walk to the dam wall we noted singing **Robin**, **Skylark** and **Whitethroat**, calling **Stock Dove** and **Green Woodpecker** and a **Kestrel** sitting in a tree, along with a good sighting of a Roe Deer, its white bum giving it away in the reeds. After a brief discussion with Carol I decided to head along the lake's wooded path, then into the woods to take us behind the house, in the hope of picking up the woodland species we were missing, and maybe even re-connecting with the Cuckoo. This walk took around twenty-five minutes and was filled with birdsong, but all we managed to add to the list was a single **Jay**. Emerging from the trees behind the house we met the other group, comprised of Nick plus seven club members, also on their way back to the café. A **Feral Pigeon** by the house was the last species noted.

After a brief from Carol about upcoming club events, I took the opportunity to get together with Nick to consult his species list; they had found **Mallard**, giving us a total of **46 species**; very good indeed, even if not the hoped for fifty, and a combined total of twenty-two club members. Nick's group had also heard the Willow Warbler singing a number of times, an improvement on our brief and faint version for this now uncommon Felbrigg visitor. All in all it was, as ever, a smashing walk; the thrill of the hunt, plenty to see and hear and the chance to have a chat with various club members – and it did not rain!

## A slow and steady lake loop | by Nick Kimber

A group of eight of us met in the main car park at 9:30 for a slower, shorter walk around Felbrigg Park, where we were serenaded by a **Blackcap**, one of the many we heard on the walk. We set off along the drive, and noted the large number of sheep and lambs attracting the usual flocks **Rooks** and **Jackdaws**. We turned and walked down towards the lake and Denise spotted a **Cormorant** flying over to the lake, and she also picked up the call of a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, which we subsequently saw flying across the meadow. From our vantage point above the lake, we observed **Mute Swans**, **Coot** and the 9:00 o'clock group led by David. It was a great pleasure to hear a **Cuckoo** calling several times, and see several **Swifts** flying over the meadow. We were able to hear and see a number of **Reed Buntings**, a pair of **Egyptian Geese** on the meadow, and several **Linnets** on the gorse. We then walked down to the meadow bridge and heard a number of **Reed Warblers** and **Wrens**, and Stephanie spotted a **Kestrel** flying over the shelter belt. We retraced our steps and followed the path above the water meadow, where **Chaffinch**, **Moorhen**, **Mallard** and **Song Thrush** were added to our list. A **Buzzard** was seen casually ignoring the mobbing **Carrion Crows**. Several times we heard the melodious falling song of a **Willow Warbler**, a bird I have not heard for some time at Felbrigg Park. Hoping to add a few of the smaller birds that had evaded us in the breeze by the lake, we headed up into the wood behind the house, where Denise's keen hearing allowed us to finally add **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit** to our list. As we left the wood, we found a group of **Swallows** swooping down to collect soft mud by the water trough by the farm field gate. Making our way around to the house front, we met up with the earlier group, enabling us to join together for a sociable and well-earned coffee. In all we clocked up a total of **33 species**.



### Sanders Coaches is at Felbrigg Hall.

1d · 🌐

You can now spend the whole day at [Felbrigg Hall](#) with our 15 minibus service!

The bus drops you right outside the hall entrance, by the car park information boards.

Bus times are below:

09:15 from Sheringham to the Hall  
09:50 from Cromer to the Hall

13:22, 14:40 or 15:37 back to Cromer  
13:52 or 16:20 back to Sheringham

If you hop on the bus in either direction you can very easily connect to other buses back to Holt, Sheringham, Cromer and North Walsham.

### Sanders Coaches is at Felbrigg Hall NT. · Follow

1 June at 20:27 · England · 🌐

Last week, we received lots of feedback saying you were disappointed that our first 15 bus from Sheringham to [Felbrigg Hall NT](#) departs slightly too early to use your concessionary passes on.

Well, we've spoken with [Norfolk County Council](#) and they've very kindly agreed an exemption on this service. This means that from tomorrow, you can travel on the 09:15 from Sheringham free of charge using your concessionary bus pass.

Thank you to those who sent us their feedback! 🙏 See less

# Last Month's Weekend Walk

Burnham Overy Walk | Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May



By **Colin Blaxill**

On a day that threatened rain, ten members met to enjoy a virtually rain free walk. Starting from the quay which was full of dinghies, getting beached on the rapidly outgoing tide, we began the long, slow walk out along the sea wall, initially finding more garden birds, along with **Shelduck, gulls, Little Egret** along with lots of **House Martin** and a few **Swallows**. Several **warbler species** were found on the grazing marsh side with **Curlew, Egyptian Geese** and **Greylag Geese**.

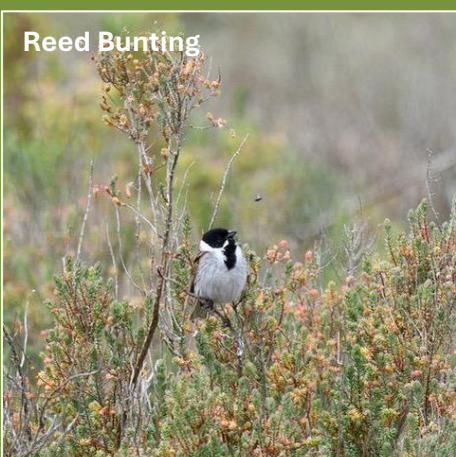
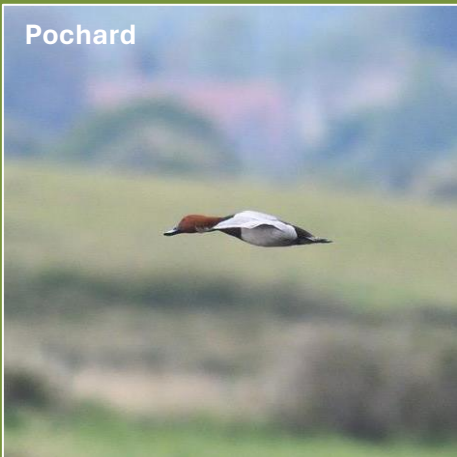
As more mud was revealed, waders moved in with the probable highlight of several summer plumage **Grey Plover**, along with **Little Tern** and **Common Tern**. The drain beside the wall surprisingly had **Tufted Duck** and the predictable **Little Grebe**. The big pool, on the grazing marsh side, added **Coot** and **Pochard** plus on the salt marsh groups of **Brent Geese** and **Canada Geese** with a lone **Pink-foot**. Raptors were regularly seen, mainly **harrier** and **kites**.

It wasn't until we approached the dunes that **all three egrets** were found, the **Cattle Egrets** initially with the Konic ponies. A lone **Whimbrel** and a very difficult **Yellow Wagtail** was found around the cattle along with a fly by **Spoonbill**.

Having taken two hours to reach the dunes we decided to head along towards Holkham, rather than check the beach. **Whitethroat, Stonechat, Wheatear** and **Meadow Pipit** were regularly seen but darker clouds heralded a light shower and it was at this point we decided to head back, due to lack of time. The return was far quicker but several more species were found, the highlight was **Bearded Tit**, seen by some. My final total was **66 species** but I had failed to record any gulls!!

A huge thanks to Jo King for the fantastic array of bird pics overleaf .....







The Big Sit mission - how many bird species can we see from the same location dawn to dusk? Basically at this annual event we hang about in the same spot watching, listening and taking note of what is about. It is always a fun day out regardless of the weather. This year we were rewarded with a beautiful day weatherwise but our bird counts were sadly well down on our historic high-record counts. Team NENBC were at two sites for 2026 – Felbrigg Park with Trevor and the gang and Beeston Common with Francis and friends. One of the great things about this event is that whatever your level of birding experience, you can get drawn in by the excitement of the dawn chorus, the afternoon malaise, the ‘one that might have got away’ and the last minute frantic search at dusk. We also try and coincide our event with other world-wide birding and conservation awareness-raising events.

#### The Big Sit Made Easy



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

### Global Big Day 2026 | Andy Clarke

Once again NENBC participated in [Global Big Day](#), and as this coincided with [World Migratory Bird Day](#) and the club Big Sit we were hopeful of a good total of species seen across the club area over the weekend. In the end we received 1,008 records from 34 club members, and the total species count was **108 from 28 locations**. While there were no stand-out rarities, the total did include a few species that are scarce in the club area, including a migrant **Turtle Dove**, **Spoonbill** off Weybourne and a **Sanderling** on the beach there, a **Goshawk** at Felbrigg Park, **Spotted Flycatcher** at Antingham, a **Redstart** in Cromer and a small flock of **Crossbill** overhead at Aylmerton. The club has again contributed to this big global event in terms of records submitted, and we will also be making a monetary donation in due course to a worthy local cause.



World Migratory Bird Day always has a theme to and this year's campaign is guided by a simple but powerful message “**Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!**” highlighting the importance of community science to help gather information about birds, their populations, and the factors that threaten to improve our ability to protect them and their habitats. Here's a nice little article from the [RSPB](#) looking at why recording makes a difference.

As of date of writing this update, the Global Big Day stats on eBird for England were .....

eBirding This Event Global Big Day—9 May 2026

**223**  
Species

**3178**  
Checklists

**1851**  
eBirders

## The Felbrigg Park Big Sit | 4:45am to 7:00pm

The Big Sit is now well established as an annual Club tradition - being held every year since our inception - including during Covid, when it was a 'stay at home' affair. In latter years it has coincided with Global Big (birding) Day - an international event to collect data, raise awareness and generate funds for global conservation.

I beat my alarm to it, got my stuff together and was unpacking the car at The Warren, overlooking Felbrigg Lake, by 4.45am! It was just before daybreak. I was quickly joined by other members of the core team and we started recording at the 'stroke of five'.

As always the first hour secures the most number of species - we had over thirty before we took a break to erect the events shelter and set up Big Sit HQ. There was a steady trickle of birds up to lunch, by which time we'd broken through the 50 barrier - and beaten last year's total (which was admittedly the worst on record!). We had a gap of four hours then until the final flurry around teatime. Our last species was added two hours before we finally called it a day at 7pm - 14 hours after we started!

The birding highlights included two species not previously recorded in over a decade of Felbrigg Big Sits - Cetti's Warbler and Goshawk. Other notable birds were Common Sandpiper, Lapwing, Shelduck and Hobby. As in any Big Sit - which the rules say must be conducted from within a seventeen foot circle and requires two or more observers for records to count - there were some outrageous omissions. Robin, Grey Heron and Goldfinch all evaded us - as did the Little Owl, which was a bit of a crowd-pleaser but alas not quite visible from the circle!

But, as I always say, it's not just about the birds - the public engagement is also important - raising awareness of the event, the Club and global bird conservation is an essential aspect. It is also a wonderful social meeting of 'the tribe', with shared moments, memories and refreshments.

I am very grateful that the Club has agreed to make a donation to conservation based on the total number of species recorded by all members (the collective Big Sit participants) over the Big Sit weekend. I'm hoping that will be at least a three figure sum - the Felbrigg total of **56 on the day** making a modest contribution in terms of species but a heroic effort on the part of participants! Well done Team Felbrigg, until the next time... **Trevor Williams**

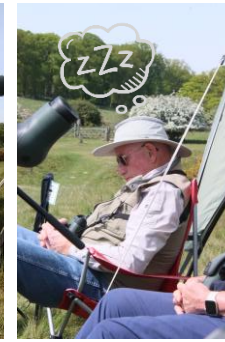


As Trevor said, it isn't just about the birds. A huge thanks to Team Felbrigg who joined us for all or part of the day, Ken T, Alan S, David B, Phil & Carolyn H, Val S, John S, John H1, John H2, Anne S, Peter & Sue M, Andrew C, Julian T.

Now, we can't promise full-on excitement throughout the 'sit' (as these pics on the right show!) but it does give us a chance for a proper catch up with friends (between their kips!) in a way that those of us 'on duty' don't always get a chance to do at many of our other events. We shared cake, biscuits and stories and we were extremely happy to be supplied with hot bacon baps from Carolyn H (thank you!). Due to a potential emergency necessitating a speedy return home (all sorted), Carolyn was only able to bring the baps as far as the bench on the far side of the lake so Phil was duly dispatched to collect the bulging picnic bag.

This year we decided to offer the chance of a birdie walk out from the base mid-morning and John S duly volunteered to lead. Unfortunately there were no huge crowds but undaunted John and Anne S headed off anyway for a stroll. They had a nice time but I am not sure how much of it was spent watching birds and how much in the Felbrigg Hall café!

Locating our Big Sit at such a prominent location at Felbrigg also gives us an excellent opportunity to engage with the public and tell them all about our club and birding in the area. In addition to the 16 club members who spent all or part of the day on site, we also had engagement from 25 members of the public who stopped by for a chat to find out what we were up to rather than just passing by nodding. Early on we were joined by a Texas-based birding tour group who were taking in North Norfolk before heading up to Scotland. Pictured below with their guide Willy Perez, they had been to all the usual hotspots along the coast in the previous few days and had added Felbrigg Park into their itinerary. Who knew it had international draw! We were also delighted to welcome new National Trust staff member Arthur who spent his lunch break with us and then came back for more after he finished his shift. Here he is below trying out one of our scopes for the first time. His sharp eyes and ears added a couple of new-for-the-day species to our list - thanks Arthur!





Not sure what this pair were up to but they were obviously enjoying themselves!

We almost had our youngest visitor ever but sadly (honest!) the toddler who loved tents and



wanted to come in to play was whisked off by their parents screaming when not allowed to stop. That makes our actual youngest visitor of the day Seb, Andrew C's grandson (above pic), who regaled us with stories of his use of Merlin when out with Grandad.

Talking of which, this year we decided to run Merlin through the early part of the day to see how it compared with our genuine non-AI traditional birding skills. During the dark and foggy 'first light', it was quite reasonable, picking up most of the species we could hear but it couldn't ID Reed Warbler or Whitethroat which was strange as they were quite vocal at that point. It did however pick up a few species that we didn't and it has to be said, we didn't believe it. A couple of them did turn up later in the day to be fair, others were possible on reflection but others were a definite aberration on the part of Merlin! - Oystercatcher, Cuckoo, Willow Warbler, Coal Tit, Robin, Hooded Crow, Short-toed Lark all 'missed'.



Anyhow, a great day out was had. Here's our full Felbrigg Park species list with the time-slot first recorded in:

- |           |   |           |  |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 0500-0510 | Cetti's Warbler, Reed Warbler, Pheasant, Woodpigeon, Wren, Song Thrush, Rook, Coot, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Mute Swan, Blackbird, Nuthatch | 0520-0530 | Pied Wagtail, Mallard, Egyptian Goose                          |
| 0510-0520 | Moorhen, Herring Gull, Linnet, Stock Dove, Shelduck, Feral Pigeon, Whitethroat  | 0530-0540 | Gadwall, Great Black-backed Gull                               |
|           |   | 0540-0550 | Meadow Pipit, Green Woodpecker, Chiffchaff, Blackcap           |
|           |   | 0550-0600 | Chaffinch, Dunnock, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Common Sandpiper |
|           |   | 0620-0630 | Skylark, Reed Bunting, Magpie                                  |

- 0650-0700 Great Tit
- 0700-0710 Buzzard, Blue Tit
- 0710-0720 Swallow
- 0730-0740 Lesser Black-backed Gull
- 0740-0750 Swift
- 0750-0800 Collared Dove
- 0800-0810 Goshawk, Red Kite
- 0830-0840 Lapwing
- 0840-0850 Kestrel
- 0900-0910 Greenfinch
- 1000-1010 Starling
- 1030-1040 Sparrowhawk
- 1200-1210 House Martin
- 1240-1250 Tawny Owl
- 1640-1650 Sand Martin, Hobby
- 1700-1710 Long-tailed Tit
- 1830-1840 Mistle Thrush



Carol Thornton

**The Beeston Common Big Sit | 5:00am to 1:00pm**



The mist lay heavily in the central valley of the Common as I trudged up the hill at 0445. On reaching the pill-box I set up the 'scope and arranged the paperwork in readiness for the kick-off of the 2026 'Big Sit' at 0500. As the sun began its ascent the misty sky turned a pale pastel pink and the dawn chorus, dominated by Song Thrushes, but with a consistent background from Woodpigeons and a nearby Rookery, reached a peak.

In the first 10 minutes a pair of Shelduck flew in from the north and passed overhead before turning and heading east. These ducks are rare visitors to the Common with this being only the third sighting since 1995.

I manned the post for a couple of hours before I was joined by Kala, however an hour in I had seen the bird of the day – a Turtle Dove. It flew in low from the north and settled briefly in an Oak south of the pill-box before exiting and flying off west. Turtle Doves formally bred on the Common but are now rare passage migrants with the last reported sighting in 2017.

Around 0800 Stephanie arrived just as the Carrion Crows, which had gathered in a dead tree and numbered 17, began to disperse. Kala left for some late breakfast after four Greylag Geese did a flypast and then Stephanie and I scanned the skies for Swifts, which were seen distantly at first. Dave turned up just as the raptors put in an appearance. First there were two Sparrowhawks spiralling above us, which were quickly joined by a couple of Buzzards. Stephanie left to visit Sheringham Park having at last managed some close views of Swifts overhead. Around 1100 Dave and I were joined by Jane and we steadily added some small birds to our list with single sightings of Linnet, Goldfinch and a lovely male Bullfinch. A couple of Willow Warblers were singing which was both Dave's and mine first for the year. Jane was particularly interested in seeing Stock Dove and eventually three birds flew south past us. In the last two hours of the watch the Buzzards were drifting mainly eastwards in two's, three's and four's. In the final 10 minutes a 'kettle' of six Buzzards were seen to the south while overhead we had another three giving us nine Buzzards in sight at any one time.

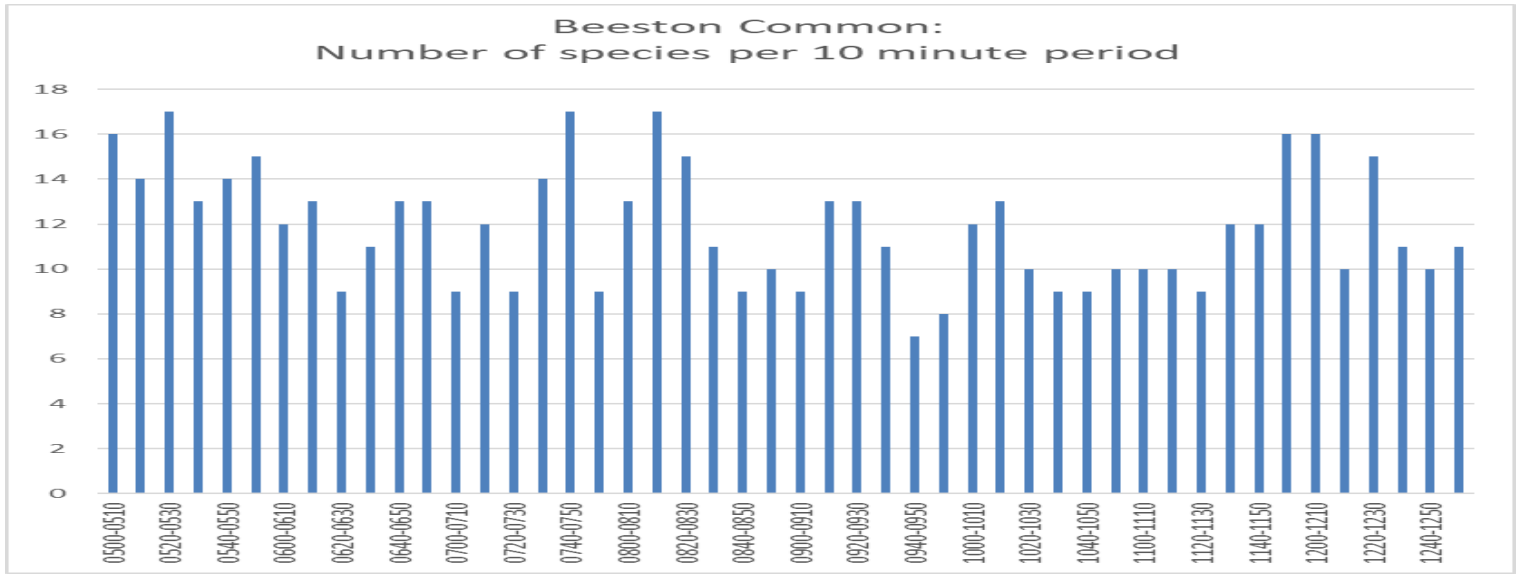
Our total number of species recorded during the event was 40 and for once it was sunny and reasonably warm. My thanks to Kala, Stephanie, Dave, and Jane for joining me during the morning of the Beeston Common 'Big Sit' and for contributing to the event.

Here's our full list of species from Beeston Common .....

0500-0510	Wood Pigeon, Rook, Carrion Crow, Pheasant, Magpie, Wren, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Dunnock, Mallard, Jackdaw, Black-headed Gull, Blackbird, Shelduck, Song Thrush, Herring Gull	0650-0700	Jay
0510-0520	Robin, Great Spotted Woodpecker	0700-0710	Starling, Stock Dove
0520-0530	Green Woodpecker, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Greenfinch	0730-0740	Swift, Collared Dove, Willow Warbler
0540-0550	Blue Tit, Turtle Dove	0740-0750	Greylag Goose
0610-0620	Great Tit	0800-0810	Swallow
0640-0650	Long-tailed Tit	1000-1010	Sparrowhawk
		1010-1020	Buzzard
		1110-1120	Chaffinch
		1130-1140	Linnet
		1200-1210	Feral Pigeon
		1220-1230	Goldfinch, Bullfinch



Now, not only did Francis keep a list of when they first spotted each species, he also kept a list of every species seen during each 10 minute slot. Against expectations (well mine anyway!) there wasn't a clear peak around the dawn hours followed by a dropping off. I guess it just shows some birds get up later than others!



Below is a **word cloud**. Essentially, the more time-slots the species was recorded in, the larger the name of the species appears. It is quite clear from this graphic that Rook, Wood Pigeon, Chiffchaff, Robin and Jackdaw were present throughout the morning but down the bottom, species like Goldfinch and Chaffinch were far less frequently observed.



**We'll be doing it all again in 2027 so if you missed it this time around, come and join in the fun then!**

# Birding for Beginners Programme 2026

3 evenings developing birding skills



By Carol Thornton

Well it has been a while – 3 years in fact – since we last ran our Birding for Beginners programme, but we were back this spring with a fantastic 16 folk signed up. As well as bird club members, we welcomed some of our volunteer friends from local nature conservation charity **Felbeck Trust**. Trevor and I really like doing these sessions and hope those attending get as much out of it as we do. We were very pleased to also be joined this year by alumni Val for the duration and who was invaluable in supporting us with the larger-than-previously number of participants. We were based out of Gresham Village Hall and had access to views across the playing field, the graveyard and farmland, including trees and hedgerows which was great for the practical elements of the course and the rain held off during the outdoorsy parts – always a bonus!

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

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

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

**Taking your interest to the next level:** birding specialisms (including a presentation on ringing from guest speaker John), taking flight (a reflection by B4B alumni Val on her birding journey), making the most of the club website and WhatsApp groups

We always start these workshops off by asking the attendees about their birding backgrounds and levels and sharing ours. As usual, a mix! We had folk who hadn't really birded before other than their garden and local birds and were keen to know more; others who had been interested all their adult life but hadn't really had time to dedicate to a hobby until now; others who had birded elsewhere, including living abroad, but coastal and Norfolk birdlife was a bit different to what they were used to; couples with one life-long birder and one more recent convert. The mix of backgrounds is always something that makes the programme work well. This year just about everyone mentioned using Merlin, a sea-change from the last time we ran this when we covered it briefly in passing as an additional new tool.

Armed with our revamped slides we were raring to go but just as we hit start time, the IT all went off. Frantic rearrangement ensued (under the surface – we thought we hid it quite well!) and folk were dispatched outside to see what they could see. Despite our best efforts of restarting everything numerous times, we couldn't make the presentation stay on for more than a few minutes on its own, but thanks to some audience support with Googling the issue and a constant wiggling of the mouse for the next 3 hours by Val and myself, we kept the show on the road!



Rather than trying to get folk to learn the ID features of a whole array of birds by rote, at the heart of our programme is getting our attendees to really look at the birds they are seeing and provide them with the tools to accurately describe what they see. A sound understanding of bird topography is key to this and from our first session onwards it was great to hear the paired-up 'former novices' animatedly describing a range of species using plumage and head markings, feather tracts and body parts with increasing confidence, considering what sex or age a bird could be and beginning to get more of an idea of taxonomy and family groupings. As always in these sessions, we emphasize how beneficial it can be to engage with other birders regardless of perceived birding level to improve your knowledge and this was evident within our group.

Through our workshops we delved into the development and use of field guides, covered off the rise of Apps, photography and social media, and how these can be further used to support skill development and birding opportunities. We discussed where and how to watch birds and took a look at the influence of weather, season and migration routes on what we might see. We also did a session on data collection and usage, focussing on getting the most out of our website. We finished up the third session with two guest speakers. Club chair John Swallow gave us the lowdown on a birding specialism that is one of his passions – ringing – and club vice president Val talked to us about her life-long love of nature and how attending our B4B programme set her off on a birding journey from which there is no return! Oh, we also ate lots of cake!

### Bird identification – the basics

- How big is it?
- What does it look like – shape & colour?
- What is it doing - behaviour?
- Where did I see it - habitat?
- When did I see it – season & time of day?
- How old is it - is it moulting?
- What did it sound like?

...the 'jizz' of the bird!



'For the easy identification of birds, a slight knowledge of the family characteristics is essential. To see a bird and know at once it is a finch is more than half way to knowing which finch it is.'

S.Vere Benson 1952  
Hon Sec Bird-lovers League



Graduates were presented with certificates of achievement by John as they left and we were happy to see them depart better equipped and with more confidence to make the most of the wonderful birdlife we have in this area. Keep up the birding all of you – really look at birds, describe them and their jizz to yourself and others and don't forget we and the other club members are here if you need some advice or backup any time!



If anyone is interested in coming on this workshop series in 2027, please do get in touch.

[nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk)



# 'Pop-up' Nightjar Walk

Holt Lowes | Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May



**By Jo King**

We met at the main Holt Country Park car park at 8.45pm. The plan was to walk into Holt Lowes via the pond area and along the top path of the Lowes which borders the country park during fairly good light so as to familiarise ourselves with the route, and enabling us to walk slowly back at dusk hoping to hear and see Nightjars along the way. This path also gives good views across the valley and big skies to the east, hopefully enabling us to see any Nightjars against the darkening sky. It is also a popular area with the Nightjars as there are 2-3 good clearings where they like to fly after dusk. Dusk was at around 9.45pm so the aim was to be at the north eastern end of the path just before then.

Before we left the car park, Stella pointed out a flock of 6 Siskin flying over. As we walked through the wooded path from the country park car park down to the pond, Stella kept a list of the birds we could hear singing as the sun set. These included: - Chaffinch, Song Thrush, Chiffchaff, Jay, Blackcap, Woodpigeon, Robin, Goldcrest and Great Tit. As we took a slow walk along the top path we noted Herring Gulls, Pheasant and a Stonechat calling from an area of gorse.

We reached the 'Hempstead Road' end of the path about 15 mins before dusk and luckily heard our first male Nightjar churring fairly quietly from one of the bigger trees to the east of the path at 9.28pm. We took a slow walk back up the path to the first reasonable sized clearing and lingered here until dusk. We heard 3 male Nightjars churring from the larger trees around us and as dusk descended, the churring got more continual with some 'koo-eek' contact calling between birds. Then a 'koo-eeking' Nightjar started wing clapping from the ground in the clearing and soon took off, flying quite low across the path in front of us and into the trees on the edge of the country park. The churring got louder around us with plenty of 'koo-eeking' and a couple of Tawny Owlets joined in with their squeaky hissing behind us in the tall trees on the edge of the country park. Soon some Nightjars started flying around and in front of us. We had a pair flying together 'koo-eeking' which we saw a few times at close quarters, pure magic! We continued walking back along the path to a chorus of Churring, 'koo-eeking' and wing clapping. A



*Library photo 2017  
from Richard Farrow*

few times a Nightjar would fly out around us, over the path and often quite close. In all we estimated hearing 9 males churring and around 7 birds in flight, although one pair we saw a few times flying around us, we assumed this was the same pair seen repeatedly.

At around 10.20pm it was getting quite dark so we started heading back to the country park, still hearing Nightjars churring along the way. With torches now in hand we returned via the pond area into the wooded path of the county park, we noted another Tawny Owllet squeaking in the trees

above us as we beat a hasty retreat back to the car park, arriving just after 10.30pm

I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did, Nightjarring always makes for a magical night and we certainly got our fill of them on our walk!



*Library photo 2021  
from Trevor Williams*

## Wild About Mannington

A family nature day | Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May

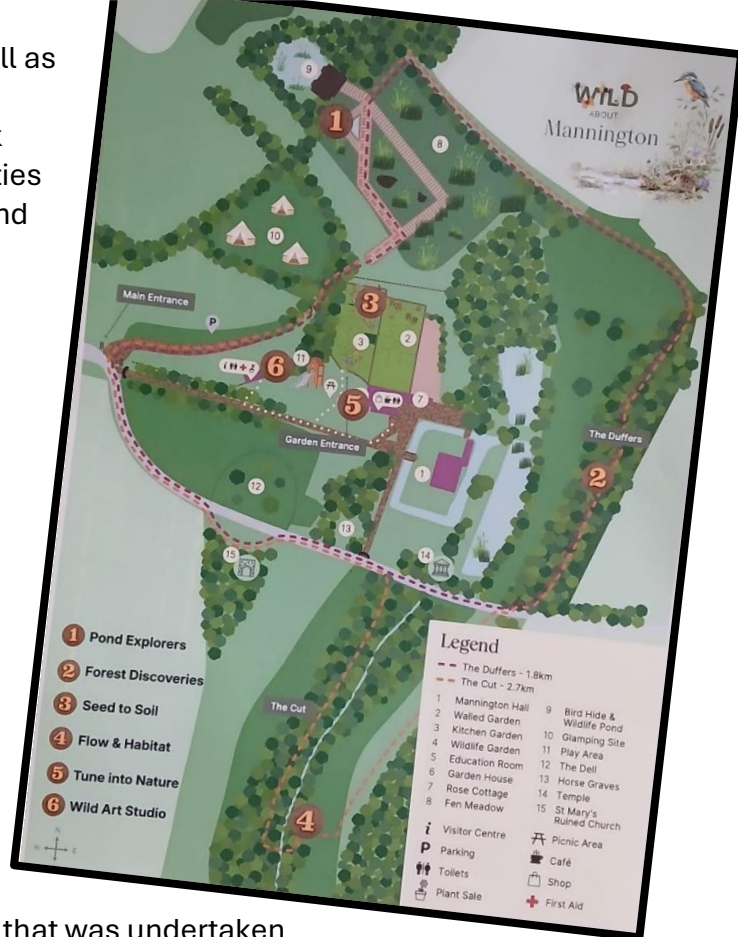


By Carol Thornton

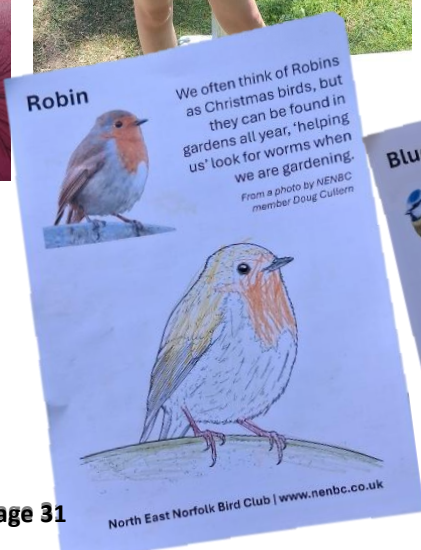
We were a little reticent in advance of this event, thinking back to the 2024 one when we discovered, the hard way, that our shelter was no longer rainproof when it absolutely poured all afternoon and an illegally off-lead dog ate our picnic supplies. However, we needn't have worried this year as when Trevor W, Alan S, Nigel S, John R and I rolled up first thing it was in glorious sunshine and to a pre-erected tent especially for our joint team representing NENBC, Felbeck Trust and the Upper Bure and Glaven Conservation Triangle. There was a nice shady tree nearby, we had good views of a range of habitats for our scope and 'species spotted today' board, and as a bonus we were right by the café!

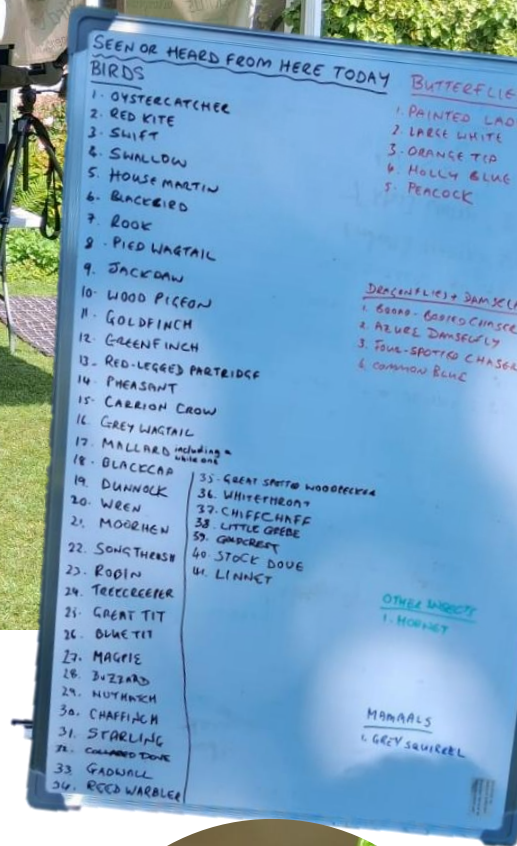
The purpose of the event was a family nature day and as well as those lucky enough to be staying on the estate, there were plenty of day visitors. There were 6 stations around the park each themed around different aspects of nature with activities for youngsters at each - **Pond Explorers** at the dipping pond with **NWT** looking for creatures in and on the water; **Forest Discoveries** in the Duffers looking for tiny creatures and plants in the shady woodland groves; **Seed to Soil** planting seeds in the wildlife garden; **Flow and Habitat** along the stream with the **Norfolk Rivers Trust**, learning about river health and the lives supported within; **Wild Art Studio** in the Education Centre making art inspired by nature; and **Tune into Nature** where we were based with **NWT** and **Homesounds**, who were using headphones and mics to listen to the sounds of nature.

On our stall we were entertaining the younger generation with some colouring activities. With a little help from AI, we were able to take member photos (appropriately accredited of course) and make them into line drawings suitable for colouring in. We paired them with an interesting fact about the species and made some species cards. We were quite pleased with the results and even more so when we saw some of the fantastic colouring that was undertaken from the many budding naturalists who visited our stall. Here's a Bee-eater from Iris, a Kingfisher from Stan, a Turnstone from Penelope and a Barn Owl from Darcy. Thanks all of you, you were fab!

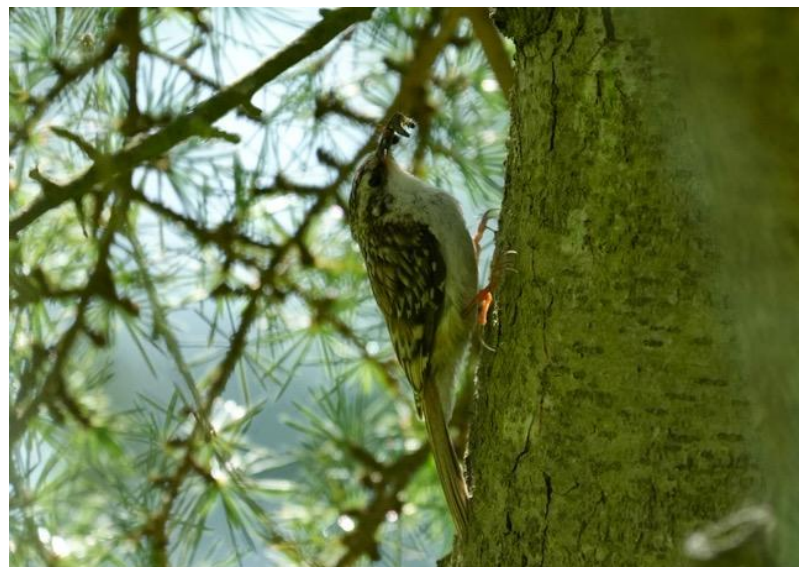


We also started up a feather collection which we hope to do a bit more with before our next family event so if anyone has any (hopefully identified) feathers of native birds they would like to donate we would be very grateful! One young visitor correctly identified a Tawny Owl feather we had – well done!





We were pleased to welcome some slightly older (but equally spritely) NENBC members and Felbeck Trust volunteers to our stand during the day – thanks for popping by, even if you couldn't be persuaded to do any colouring – and were joined on duty by Peter M in the afternoon. And what about the birds? Well we planned a couple of bird walks out from the stand but we didn't get any takers sadly – we blame Homesounds on the next stall across who had headphones for each child and a very large microphone to take out on their strolls and, to be fair, it looked a lot more interesting! Nevertheless, undaunted Trevor and I headed off round the estate. We took the opportunity to take a look at the other stations (all great) and tried our best but it was very quiet on the bird front despite the lovely mix of habitats and beautiful surroundings and even Merlin couldn't help! We had with us a list of species seen by NENBC members at Mannington Park over the past 12 Mays taken from our website records. Seventy eight species in total but we sadly fell well short with 41 species seen or heard during the day. We had three surprisingly new-for-May species – House Martin, Starling and Linnet. A couple of obliging Oystercatcher, one ringed, that were calling on and off all day were great to see and the Treecreeper froze as in the pic below for ages allowing some unusually static views. We didn't see the Kingfisher sadly and the reed beds were very quiet – we heard a Reed Warbler but no Sedge unfortunately. Nonetheless, a nice day out. Good to see and meet so many young people happily engaged with nature. We hope we can do some more events like this more often. *Photos from Trevor Williams*



# The Blue Badge Challenge | Episode 3

## Another Pop-up and a First at Weybourne



By Val Stubbs

**May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026** saw me join a pop-up sea-watch at Cromer's North Lodge Park, with partners in crime Trevor Williams, Carol & Ken Thornton and David Barrass. There were plenty of gulls flying about over the beach, which distracted me from the Bar-tailed Godwit that Trevor spotted – not an auspicious start! A Cormorant flew west and one of the local Fulmars meandered about in front of the shelter. A single Red-throated Diver skimmed low over the water heading east. Trevor picked up a Kittiwake, fairly distant, so I struggled to be sure of its ID, but I followed it across the horizon and suddenly it turned slightly and the sun came out, highlighting the inky tips of its wings – slam dunk! A group of three Oystercatchers sped across eastwards – a new species for my Sea-watching Badge. Whilst looking for the terns that various people were calling out, I saw an adult Gannet, with two more putting in an appearance later in the morning. I did finally manage to catch up with some Sandwich Terns, all of which were going east. A number of hirundines, including several Swallows, were swooping and diving in front of the shelter.

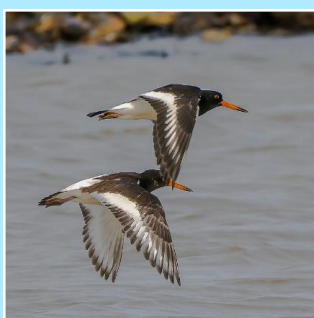
My Species List	Points	My Sightings				
		Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Black-headed Gull	10	1			4	1
Brent Goose	10	4				
Common Gull	15		1			
Common Scoter	10	9	32	59		7
Cormorant	10	1	2		1	3
Eider	15		1			
Fulmar	15	5	2	2	1	1
Gadwall	15		1			
Gannet	10	95	3		3	1
Great Black-backed Gull	10	3	15		1	
Great Crested Grebe	15	2				
Greylag	15		1			5
Guillemot	15	1	3			
Herring Gull	10	10	15	85	50	15
Kittiwake	15			2	1	
Little Egret	15					1
Little Tern	15					9
Mediterranean Gull	15	1		1		
Oystercatcher	10				3	1
Red-throated Diver	15	84	37	3	1	
Sandwich Tern	10			2	20	18
Shelduck	15	2	1			
Spoonbill	15					1
Tufted Duck	15					1

I headed down to my local beach at Weybourne for the first time this year on **May 26<sup>th</sup> 2026**, where I joined Phil Borley at 5.30. He'd already been there since 4.45 – now that's what I call dedication! Later we were joined by Ollie Anderson. Between them, they managed to point out several additions for my list. A **Little Egret** flew west fairly close in, while to my delight, a **Spoonbill** headed in the other direction – a first for me in the Club area. A group of seven Common Scoter were accompanied by a single **Tufted Duck**, quite clearly identifiable in the clear morning light. There were plenty of Sandwich Terns, mostly travelling west, with a few going the opposite way and one fishing with its characteristic splash. Some of their smaller cousins, **Little Terns**, flew daintily along in ones and twos. A single Greylag flew south onto Weybourne Camp, while another four made their way east in a line. Other seabirds that we spotted during the two hours of the sea-watch were Herring Gulls (mostly immature birds), an **Oystercatcher**, a Fulmar, an adult Gannet, three Cormorants and several Black-headed Gulls. But sea-watching isn't always just about seabirds: groups of Swift were flying in off the sea; Sand Martins were feeding over the cliffs, beach and reedbed; while a Swallow flew back and forth over the beach; and periodically – no doubt attracted by the hirundines – a Hobby scythed through the air, providing an added frisson of excitement.

**This month I added five species to my Blue Badge list: Oystercatcher, Little Tern, Spoonbill, Little Egret and Tufted Duck. I am now over half way to the 1,000 point target.**

My Current Points Tally .....	
Duration Points	160
Event Bonus Points	100
First Time Species Points	315
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>575</b>

Library photos: Little Tern (James Appleton); Oystercatcher, Little Egret (Richard Farrow); Spoonbill (Mark Clements); Tufted Duck (Moss Taylor)



### Welcome to the 2026 season of the Cromer Peregrine story!

The webcam, this year sponsored by The Cliftonville Hotel, went live on 1<sup>st</sup> March and you can watch it here [Cromer Peregrines 2026 Live Stream](#). There is also a Facebook page here [Facebook](#) and a website here [CPP | Home](#) so lots of choice if you are not local, or even if you are!

### Volunteers Needed!

The Cromer Peregrine Project is entering its eighth year! The survival rate from egg to successful fledging has been extremely good with only one completely unsuccessful year. We continue to monitor these wonderful birds and a hugely important part of that is the volunteer-run watchpoint. Situated outside the museum our visitor numbers have gradually increased over the years. BUT we desperately need more volunteers to set up the telescopes, table, leaflets etc. If you are interested, please can you contact our volunteer organiser Mick Hill via email: [mick.hill@btinternet.com](mailto:mick.hill@btinternet.com). He will go into more detail. It cannot be stressed enough that you do not need to be Peregrine experts. Most of our volunteers knew hardly anything about the breeding process at first, but they do now! You would never be on your own – we aim to have at least two volunteers per session and the person you will be on with will be more than happy to ease you in gently! It's a really informal, friendly group. So why not give it a go?


### By Jane Crossen


The three Cromer Church peregrines were ringed at age 25 days on 18<sup>th</sup> May. As usual, their sex is presumed according to weight and wing measurements. Phil Littler, who has now ringed all eighteen of the juveniles at the church, was quite astounded by the weight of all three birds as they are ALL above the average for Peregrines ringed at that age.

The average weight for a male at that age is: 595g. The average weight for a female is: 842g! So she is much heavier than average. Interestingly, it is thought that birds are generally getting heavier so the time period used to calculate the average age might need to be looked at. Phil Littler said that she's the heaviest female chick he's weighed at 25 days – and he's weighed A LOT of Peregrine chicks. He also said that all three are the "feistiest" he's ever ringed. This was clearly illustrated by his scratched hands (he doesn't wear gloves when ringing).


### Brief update (as at 1<sup>st</sup> June) is as follows ...

The two male fledgings have led us a bit of a merry-old-dance:

 VRN slipped over the front of the church tower onto the top ledge (luckily!) way too soon to fledge properly (approx 5/6 days too soon) BUT no less than five days after he slipped onto the ledge and then down and around the church. He's actually made it back to the top of the church now which is fabulous news. He did extremely well!

 VLN fledged 31<sup>st</sup> May- had a few adventures: including nearly flying into the same Herring Gull's nest his brother did last year! Luckily, we didn't need three fire engines and two police vehicles as he eventually made it back to the nave end of the church.

The female has been less problematic thus far:

 VSN – has not fledged as of 1<sup>st</sup> June - as she is much heavier than her brothers we are not concerned. Hopefully towards 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> June she will do so, although she's making no effort to even practise as yet!

GY79514- VRN   MALE	669g
GY79515 - VSN   FEMALE	1046g
GY79516 - VLN   MALE	726g





Here is VRN being mobbed relentlessly by Herring Gulls – he flew to the roof above Upstairs, Downstairs, west of the church where there are TWO Herring Gull nests and there was quite an audience! Looking good the next day though very low down on the church.



Here is part of VLN's first flight. Difficult to see but he's there. Slap bang under the Herring Gull's nest that caused the problems last year.

He made it to the nave end of the church and finally back to the top of the tower, attempting to fly into the clock and landing in an alcove (a first!) en route! He also got entangled with metal mesh over the outside of the church windows – that was pretty scary and he just about avoided the pigeon spikes. We have been very lucky over the years that no bird has been injured in that way.



The watchpoint is extremely popular/busy again this year. We featured on LookEast (well done NENBC member Bev Colman who did a brilliant job talking about the project/birds) and loads of people mentioned that they'd seen us on the programme. In fact: one couple came all the way from Lowestoft especially to see the birds having seen the watchpoint featured. Here's a link to the written article: [Peregrine falcons drawing crowds to church towers and buildings - BBC News](#). Good donations again with plenty of £5 and £10 notes going in the donation box and even the occasional £20!! So well done to the volunteers – there wouldn't be a project without the time they put in talking about the birds and the project and handing out the QR code leaflet so that visitors can continue to monitor the birds on the fantastic webcam on [YouTube](#).



The watchpoint and webcam have combined to monitor prey brought in - 54 species!! - but more on that next time.



*Photos: Jane Crossen  
Stills are from the official Cromer Peregrine Project webcam.*

*Other images are from the CPP Facebook page (accredited where appropriate) which is well worth joining as they have plenty of fab webcam images and vids uploaded.*

# Check This Out!

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



Note: You may now need to sign up on the BirdGuides website to read these articles – it is free but you need to put in your email address to sign up to their newsletter. Alternatively, going back and in again on the link may work.

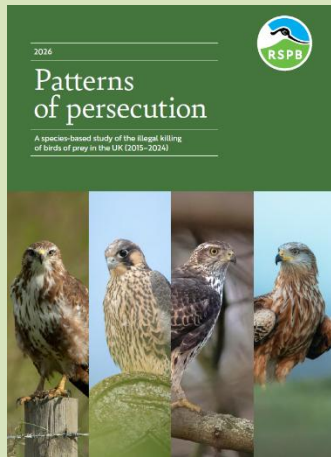
- [Norfolk RSPB project celebrates 'encouraging' rise in breeding of one of UK's most threatened birds | ITV News Anglia \[21-May\]](#)
- [The Dartford Warbler bounces back from the brink of UK extinction | RSPB \[29-May\]](#)
- [Big gains for little terns: how Lindisfarne reserve is helping a rare bird survive tourism | The Guardian \[01-Jun\]](#)
- [Raising young linked to faster ageing in birds - BirdGuides \[21-May\]](#)
- ['Outdoor joy' fades with age, Wildlife Trusts poll shows - BirdGuides \[31-May\]](#)
- [Gulls all at sea as UK populations take a dive | BTO \[18-May\]](#)
- [White-tailed Eagle set for Exmoor return after licence approval - BirdGuides \[15-May\]](#)
- [White Storks 'not native' and releases 'not a priority', says Natural England - BirdGuides \[12-May\]](#)
- [Young Gannet 'hunt' faces calls for ban as 2026 licence considered, | RareBirdAlertUK \[28-May\]](#)
- [New Study Eavesdrops on the Secret Lives of Birds | Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology \[06-May\]](#)
- [Scottish wrens may be evolving into new species through island gigantism | ScienceDaily \[University of Birmingham | 28-May\]](#)
- [Birdwatching is cool now - young people tell us why - BBC News \[23-May\] and Why Gen Z birdwatchers are flocking to RSPB reserves - BBC News \[09-May\]](#)
- [BTO Migblog – 22 May 2026 | BTO \[22-May\]](#)
- [Dawn Chorus depleted as songbirds crash | BTO \[28-Apr\]](#)
- [How does street lighting impact wildlife and when should we turn off the lights? | The Conversation \[20-May\]](#)
- [Which bird has the best song? These experts think they know | The Conversation \[30-Apr\]](#)
- [There's a reason we don't have birds the size of elephants: the mysterious story of how dinosaurs evolved | The Conversation \[28-Apr\]](#)

## Live webcams to watch ...

Here are a few links through to some live wildlife cams both at home and abroad you can tune into. I had hoped to provide some links to the Springwatch ones that are on TV at the mo but it is proving a bit tricky and you may have to sign up through BBC iPlayer to watch anything live.

- [Live Wildlife Webcams from RSPB Nature Reserves](#)
- [Webcams | The Wildlife Trusts](#)
- [Live Cam Feed | White Stork Project | Knepp Estate](#)
- [Farne Islands webcam for breeding season | National Trust](#)
- [Barn Owl Nest – LIVE from National Trust Arlington Court](#)
- [Pied Flycatcher & Blue Tit – Nestbox neighbours LIVE from National Trust Longshaw Estate](#)
- [All Cams | Cornell Lab Bird Cams - plus a nice article about them too Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Bird Cams Connect Nature to Viewers Worldwide - The Cornell Daily Sun \[06-Mar\]](#)

The collage features several wildlife webcam images and social media posts. At the top left, an osprey is perched on a branch, with text below: "NORFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST Ranworth Broad ospreys Watch live from Ranworth Broad and Marshes". To its right is a tweet from National Trust (@nationaltrust.org.uk) dated 1 Jun 2026, showing blue tit chicks in a nest. Below the osprey is a peregrine falcon in flight, with text: "HERTS & MIDDLESEX WILDLIFE TRUST St Albans Cathedral's peregrines Watch the live cam". To the right of the peregrine is a close-up of a blue tit in a nest box, with text: "Swift nest box camera 2 Live Swift nest camera". At the bottom right is a YouTube video thumbnail for "The WHITE STORK" with a play button icon.



Last month the RSPB released a new report entitled **Patterns of persecution: a species-based study of the illegal killing of birds of prey in the UK (2015-2024)**. It was significant enough a report to hit most of the mainstream news outlets. The [BBC report](#) by Justin Rowlett includes a clickable graphic showing the number of incidents per species and where they are distributed across the country. The full RSPB report is available via the RSPB website [here](#) and well worth a read but articles from [Rare Bird Alert](#) and [BirdGuides](#) provide the headlines.

Here's what the RSPB said on their [website](#):

### Bird of prey persecution in the UK

Every bird of prey in the UK is protected by law and killing them is a national wildlife crime priority. Yet, the killing of these birds is relentless. Between 2015 and 2024, 921 confirmed incidents were recorded. At least 55% of these occurred on or near land managed for

gamebird shooting. Many more incidents go unseen and unreported – what's been recorded is only a fraction of what's actually happening. Drawing on 10 years of data, this report gives an overview of how persecution is impacting birds of prey in the UK, and sets out the case for urgent legislative change and better protection for these threatened species. The RSPB believes that the introduction of licensing for all gamebird shooting across the UK is essential to addressing this catalogue of criminality against our birds of prey.

### Tip of the iceberg

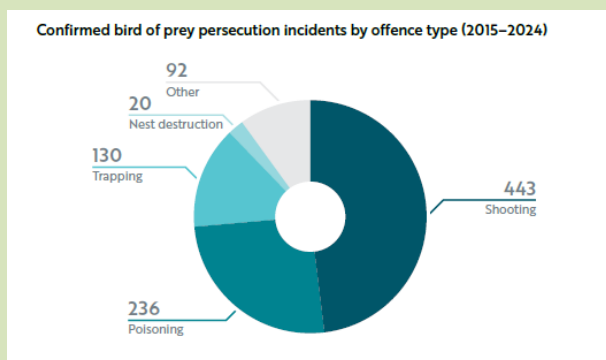
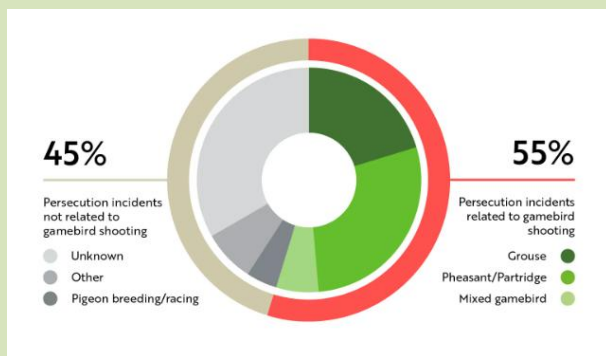
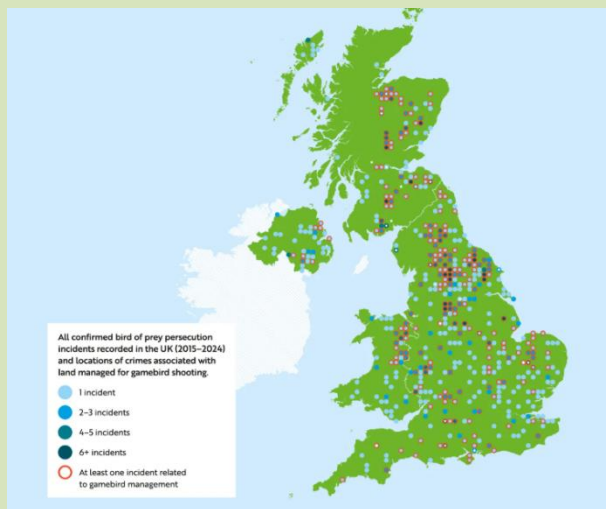
In this ten-year period, 18 protected bird of prey species, including many reintroduced and recovering species of conservation concern, fell victim to these crimes. Buzzards were the hardest hit with 319 confirmed incidents recorded, followed by Red Kites (157 confirmed incidents) and Peregrines (97 confirmed incidents). Concerningly, as these crimes take place predominantly in remote and often inaccessible areas of the countryside, not all are detected. These figures therefore represent only the tip of the iceberg.

### Links to gamebird shooting

Evidence, including police investigations, intelligence reports, eyewitness accounts and covert footage have shown that bird of prey persecution is significantly linked to the gamebird shooting industry. A total of 55% of confirmed incidents (2015-2024) were linked to land managed for gamebird shooting (21% grouse shooting, 28% pheasant and/or partridge shooting, and 6% mixed gamebird shooting). On some shooting estates birds of prey are being illegally shot, trapped or poisoned, nests and eggs destroyed, and chicks killed before they have fledged the nest. These often-brutal crimes are committed in an attempt to prevent any perceived threat to gamebird stocks, in an effort to maximise the number of gamebirds available to be shot.

### Poor conviction rates

Despite hundreds of confirmed incidents of bird of prey persecution being recorded in recent years, if there is no substantive evidence which links a person to the crime these incidents go unchallenged and unpunished. Between 2015 and 2024, despite hundreds of incidents being recorded, only 24 individuals were convicted of bird



of prey persecution-related offences. Two thirds were associated with the gamebird industry and more than half were working as gamekeepers at the time.

### Hen Harriers hit hard

This latest report shows that these crimes continue to detrimentally impact Hen Harrier recovery in England and Scotland. This iconic and threatened Red-listed species has been persecuted for decades, resulting in their population being suppressed to a fraction of their natural capacity. Between 2015 and 2024, 49 confirmed Hen Harrier persecution incidents were recorded in the UK. The majority of these incidents took place on or near land managed for grouse

shooting. In the same ten-years, 100 satellite tagged Hen Harriers disappeared in suspicious circumstances on or near grouse moors. They were suspected to have been illegally killed.



Total number of satellite-tagged Hen Harriers that have disappeared in suspicious circumstances (2015-2024)

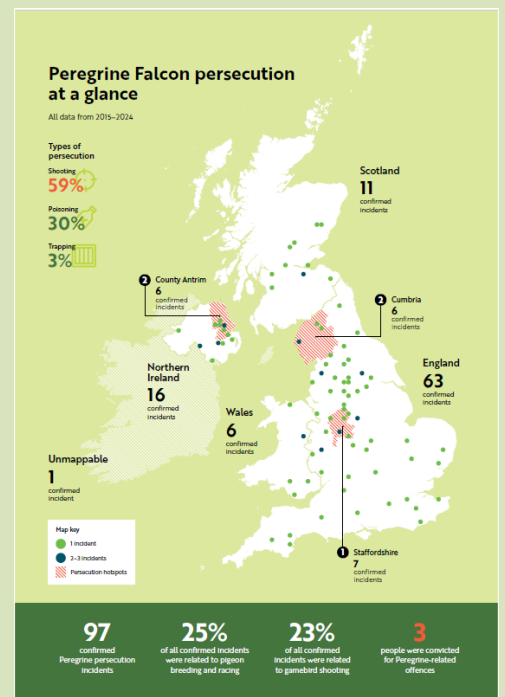
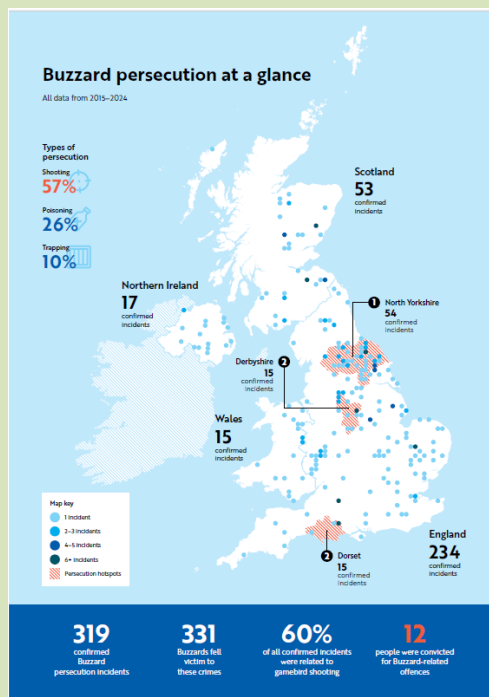
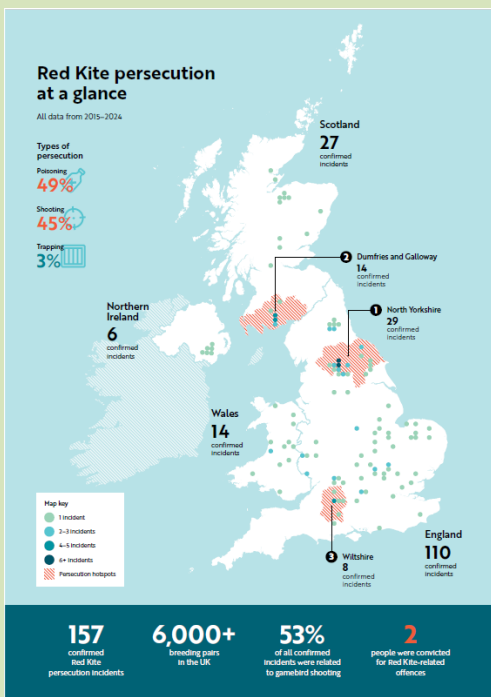
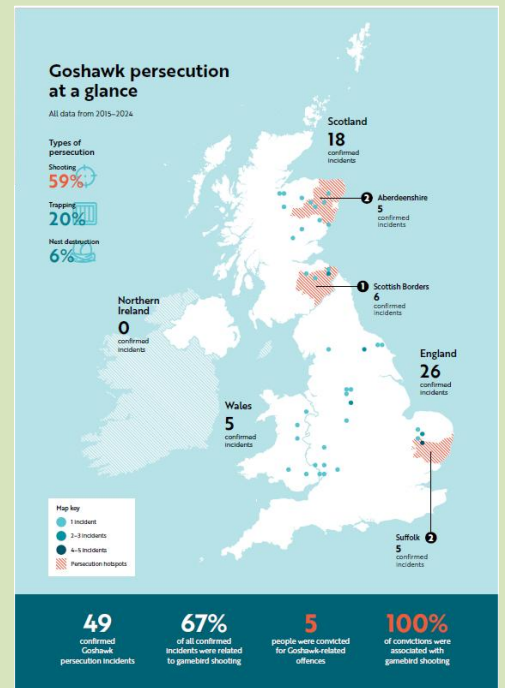
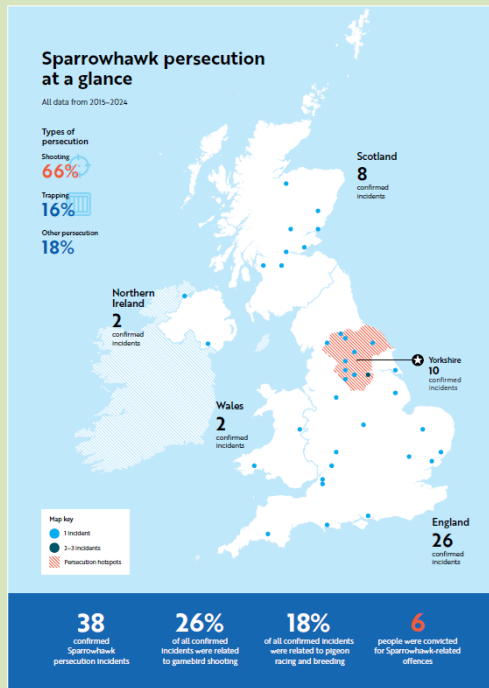
The chart shows the monthly totals of all 100 satellite-tagged Hen Harriers that have disappeared in suspicious circumstances in the UK between 2015 and 2024. The peaks in these suspected persecution incidents are during the breeding season and post breeding season as the birds disperse.

### Licensing needed for all gamebird shooting

To provide a meaningful deterrent and effectively challenge the illegal killing of birds of prey, the RSPB is supporting the introduction of a licensing scheme for all gamebird shooting in the UK. Under a civil burden of proof, licences could be suspended or revoked where evidence indicates bird of prey persecution has occurred on licensed land. The system would promote best practice, penalising only those who break the law while respecting the rights of responsible estates. Under this legislation, birds of prey would have the effective protection they desperately need. In 2024, Scotland took significant steps, introducing mandatory licensing of grouse shooting under the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024. Now it is time for these protections to be extended across the UK, for all gamebirds shooting.

### Without a meaningful deterrent, crime will continue

James Robinson, RSPB Chief Operating Officer: *“As this report shows, existing UK laws continue to fail to protect our magnificent birds of prey. Without a meaningful deterrent, these crimes will continue. Eagles will be poisoned, Hen Harriers shot and Buzzards beaten to death in traps. All of these crimes are utterly unacceptable. Frustratingly, under existing laws, those committing these crimes have been able to do so with little fear of retribution. This needs to change. Regulation in the form of a licensing system is the most appropriate and fair way to achieve this – providing an effective and meaningful deterrent to those willing to commit these crimes and finally give these incredible species the protection they urgently need.”*





# What's That Song?



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

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

[Solution: see end of the newsletter](#)

“Calls sharp ‘vit-vit’. Goldfinch-like chirrupy ‘shrip’ or ‘tritt-it’; song a rapid musical twitter with quick trill or rattle.”  
*from WILDGuides BRITAIN'S BIRDS 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - An identification guide to the birds of Britain and Ireland 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Hume, Still, Swash, Harrop and Tipling*

“Noisy, its loud calls enlivening farmsteads and marinas. In ‘itinerant flight’ gives cheerful sharp ‘vit!’, often repeated two or my times. Mates preen each other and entertain the barn livestock with cosy chatter almost like Budgerigars. Cats are announced with sharp ‘siflitt’ notes and birds of prey with similar ‘flitt-flitt!’. The rather loud song consists of a rapid twitter now and then interrupted by a croaking sound which turns into a dry rattle.”  
*from Collins BIRD GUIDE 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Mullarney, Svensson, Zetterström*

“The alarm call is a loud ‘tswit’, which is often given in flight. The song is a hurried dry twittering trill.”  
*from RSPB Handbook of British Birds 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves*

## Wordsearch



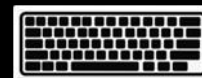
This month, we have the 22 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in June 2025 for which we have four records or less – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled as there were certainly quite a few exciting birds this time last year! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

- Arctic Skua
- Caspian Gull
- Common Crossbill
- Common Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Golden Plover
- Grey Partridge
- Little Gull
- Roseate Tern
- Stone-curlew
- Water Rail
- Firecrest
- Green Sandpiper
- Grey Plover
- Dartford Warbler
- Quail
- Redshank
- Whimbrel
- Puffin
- Rose-coloured Starling
- Spoonbill
- Woodlark

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

Ficedula Fun





No new 'Accepted' records from the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter and their current '[NRC work in progress](#)' file was last updated 24-Feb-26. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '[BBRC work in progress](#)' file available on their website [Dec-24].

## NENBC Website



Many thanks to everyone who has uploaded records to our website this year to date. For the newbies reading this, we would love to see your records too! It is easy to do and we can guide you through if you are unsure. Please don't think that your records aren't of interest – they are. We submit all our data on to the BTO's BirdTrack for inclusion in the county reports, which appear in published format annually. How common species are faring is just as important to keep track of as sightings of the less common species. If you need any assistance, or have forgotten your password and need it resetting, just drop Carol a line on [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk) or through the messaging element of the website. You can access our website at [www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club](http://www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club) (or by typing 'NENBC' into your search engine will get you there) and you will need your member password to get in. Not sure on your ID? Just ask – drop us an email, message or a WhatsApp or ask another birder when you are actually viewing the bird.

## Prolific Posters May 2026

By Val Stubbs

As predicted, Phil Borley has breached the 100,000 mark and has more than twice as many as the closest contender, Mark Clements on over 50,000 points. Tony Pope holds onto third place, followed by Philip Cartlidge and Val Stubbs. David Griffiths has now surpassed 20,000 points.

We now have 110 members who have logged birds so far this year, 53 birders have already scored over 1,000 points, with 44 of these on 2,000 points or more, 36 on 3,000 points or more and 22 exceeding 5,000 points.

It's good to see some of the participants of our recent Birding for Beginners course recording their sightings on the NENBC website, including Kala Nobbs and Mike McConnell, who are already ranked 40<sup>th</sup> with 2,360 points!

**POINTS:** This version of the prolific posters table is based purely on birds recorded. Points are allocated according to the likelihood of seeing a species. So the **common** birds, such as Wood Pigeon, Blue Tit and even Goldcrest and Curlew, will earn you 10 points. '**Mildly**' interesting birds, like Marsh Tit, Cuckoo and Grey Wagtail gain 20 points. **Interesting species** – the likes of Firecrest and Ring Ouzel – will garner you 30 points, while **very interesting** birds such as Glossy Ibis, Lapland Bunting or Richard's Pipit add 40 points to your score. And if you are lucky or persistent enough to spot a real **rarity** such as Lesser White-fronted Goose, Dusky Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler or Brünnich's Guillemot you are awarded 50 points.

1	Phil Borley	105,510
2	Mark Clements	50,660
3	Tony Pope	47,380
4	Philip Cartlidge	36,520
5	Valerie Stubbs	34,920
6	David Griffiths	20,960
7	Doug & Jenny Cullern	20,650
8	Ken Thornton	10,840
9	Stuart Jones	9,560
10	Ann Gladwin	9,390
11	Stephanie Witham	9,130
12	Trevor Williams	8,530
13	Carol Thornton	8,050
14	David Barrass	7,680
15	Russell Page	7,490

16	John Swallow	7,330
17	Stella Baylis	6,660
18	Steven & Barbara Lines	6,250
18	Andrew Clarke	6,140
20	Thomas Wright	6,070
21	Colin Blaxill	5,760
22	Alan Stevens	5,180
23	Peter & Sue Morrison	4,950
24	Gary Bunting	4,540
25	Julia & David Ivison	4,440
26	Philip Hall	4,330
27	Bob Farndon	4,180
28	Stuart Buck	4,120
29	Andrew Gorton	4,010
30	Mick Rebane	3,950



**2026  
Club  
Stats**

**432 individual members  
across 288 households**

**49,749  
bird records logged**

**211  
bird species reported**

# Social Media & WhatsApp – a few bits from social media and WhatsApp in the last few weeks.

This is something we really haven't got to grips with of late so if you can tag us in any of your BlueSky posts or indeed have an interest in social media and can help us out, please do get in touch!

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Took part in our local bird club @nenbc.bsky.social Felbrigg Park Big Sit, a static dawn (5am) till dusk birdwatch, the object to record all bird species from one spot. Species seen 56 - ice on lake to glorious sunshine.

20:47 · 9 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Male Great Spotted Woodpecker in the garden this evening. I believe there is a nest nearby, as a female drops in early each morning for a drink (video posted a couple of days ago), but I have not seen both in the garden together as yet.

Everybody can reply

**bridgetjanejones.bsky.social**  
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

No less than seven Whitethroats and one Lesser in the cemetery/field area this morning, plus a singing Goldcrest (briefly, I had to get a move on to avoid the incoming rain!). I normally only see/hear them there in the winter (and even then not that often) so that was nice!

11:07 · 13 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Russ Malin**  
@russmalin.bsky.social

Still a few Little Tern offshore at Happisburgh first thing. Two Grey Partridge were unexpected. Quite a scarce bird hereabouts. Strangely, a virtually identical spot to where I had them a couple of years ago...

09:45 · 25 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Russ Malin**  
@russmalin.bsky.social

Couple of Garden Warblers in the site at Happisburgh. Good to see decent Little Tern numbers offshore but still no Sandwich Tern! 9 Sanderling as well...

15:45 · 23 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Having spent the winter in Africa south of the Sahara Desert, the Reed Warblers have returned to the UK. This individual was seen in the reed bed at Felbrigg NT.

18:37 · 7 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Reed Warbler in the reeds at Felbrigg NT, whilst a Reed Bunting was singing from a nearby tree. A pair of Egyptian Geese paused awhile in the water meadow before flying off. Highlight was a Cuckoo calling from the woodland before dropping into the reedbed briefly.

18:57 · 20 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

The adult Mute Swan speeds across the lake, intent on chasing off the year's juvenile. And when all the chasing is over, all is calm — well, at least temporarily. Another Early Purple Orchid, not too far from the first seen a few days ago.

19:07 · 10 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**bridgetjanejones.bsky.social**  
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

Even better views of the Pied Flycatcher in Sheringham this afternoon! @nenbc.bsky.social

20:25 · 17 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**bridgetjanejones.bsky.social**  
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

One of the Cromer Peregrines, VRN, who dropped over the ledge a day or so ago, found his way onto the roof of the house last year - landed right next to TWO Herring Gull nests. Will update tomorrow @nenbc.bsky.social

20:54 · 31 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Russ Malin**  
@russmalin.bsky.social

Spent time watching a pair of Great Tits in the garden hedgerow. The same box was used last year to successfully raise a brood. The Great Tits, being larger, are more successful than the smaller birds.

20:35 · 7 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Stella Baylis**  
@silyab22.bsky.social

No Bee-eaters but 40 other spp at this underwater pond at Bradfield Bridge, nr North Walsham. Cuckoo, Sed Wren, Grasshopper Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Little Grebe, Sandpiper kept me entertained. Complete list for #norfolkbirding @nenbc.bsky.social

20:25 · 17 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

A pair of Blue Tits are using a nest box which is mounted on a wall just outside a downstairs window. It's fascinating watching the parents arrive and depart from dawn till dusk. No sign of the chicks as yet.

20:02 · 14 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Little Grebe feeding its chick and then the other adult joins in to help.

20:23 · 1 Jun 2026 · Everybody can reply

**Ken T**  
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Juvenile Blue Tit clinging on by one foot and waiting for an adult to return with food. Meanwhile the juvenile Blackbird just sits with its beak open waiting for the adult to push food in.

20:23 · 1 Jun 2026 · Everybody can reply





Over at Bird.Club central, the team are still busy working on some more updates which will be coming live on the club website soon. Just a quick reminder that if the 'megaphone' icon on the top right of your screen has a red dot on it like this image on the right, then there is a new update described there. Below (green boxes) are details of the messages that have been put up this month alongside an example of how you might use it. So, let's have a quick look at this month's updates .....

## 💡 Smarter "What you might see" on location pages [May 7<sup>th</sup>]

The list of species shown under "What you might see" on each location page has been redesigned. Instead of a taxonomic list, it now surfaces birds that are genuinely worth looking out for. Species are selected using three criteria, in priority order:

**Recent rarities:** Scarce or notable birds seen at this location in the last 30 days appear first, marked with a "Recent sighting" label.

**Signature species:** Birds that are recorded here more than most other locations in the club.

**Notable regulars:** Scarce or interesting species that have appeared here multiple times in recent years.

Each entry also shows a short insight to help you know what to expect, for example "Typically seen Apr–Sep", "43% of all club sightings recorded here", or "A regular visitor to this spot".

Click on the Locations tab and any of the location names (or pins on the map) and as well as the map and the location info, you will also get the revamped 'What you might see'. Here's a screendump of the location page for Felbrigg Park this week. I am loving that extra bit of info that comes alongside the species!

What you might see		Who you might bump into	
<b>Red-backed Shrike</b> • Recent sighting Last seen 8d ago	<b>Great White Egret</b> • Recent sighting Last seen 29d ago	<b>Ken Thornton</b> 95 visits Last there 7d ago	<b>Doug &amp; Jenny Cullern</b> 216 visits Last there 7d ago
<b>Mandarin Duck</b> The club's top location for this species Last seen 1 year ago	<b>Little Owl</b> 48% of all club sightings recorded here Last seen 9d ago	<b>Peter &amp; Sue Morrison</b> 204 visits Last there 7d ago	<b>Steven &amp; Barbara Lines</b> 11 visits Last there 7d ago
<b>Tufted Duck</b> 48% of all club sightings recorded here Last seen 7d ago	<b>Snipe</b> 42% of all club sightings recorded here Last seen 40d ago	<b>Kala and Mike Nobbs/ McConnell</b> 3 visits Last there 7d ago	
<b>Shoveler</b> 41% of all club sightings recorded here Last seen 32d ago	<b>Coot</b> 39% of all club sightings recorded here Last seen 7d ago		
<b>Firecrest</b> Seen here 12 times in the last 3 years Last seen 71d ago	<b>Cattle Egret</b> Seen here 9 times in the last 3 years Last seen 210d ago		

## 💬 Improvements to Comments functionality [May 13<sup>th</sup>]

We're rolling out our first set of changes to the comments functionality. Comments just got a whole lot easier to follow! You can now reply directly to any comment, and replies appear indented under the original — keeping conversations grouped and easy to read.

**Reply button** — Each comment now has a Reply button. Click it to open an inline reply.

**Threaded replies** — Replies appear nested under the comment they belong to, with a subtle indent to make the thread clear.

**Reply notifications** — When someone replies to your comment, you'll get a notification letting you know.

**Chronological ordering** — Comments now appear oldest-first throughout the website, so conversations read naturally from top to bottom.

We have more changes in mind for comments but please provide suggestions on how we can make the social side of the site as easy to use as possible.

Sheringham by Andrew Clarke  
May 8, 2026 at 1:20pm

1x Bee-eater • Interesting  
1 west, over garden. Flight path suggested it was heading somewhat inland rather than along the coast. So often migrant Bee-eaters are heard but not seen; this was the opposite and a nice surprise.  
0 likes

John Hurst  
Brilliant garden tick!  
25d ago · Edit · Remove · Reply

Carol Thornton  
Not Jealous, honest!  
1m ago · Edit · Remove

This one is quite self-explanatory – comments on member records are displayed in a more user-friendly way as per the example on the left here ....

There are a few other behind-the-scenes upgrades also going on that will affect Admins only for now and once we have worked our way through them, we'll let you know how we are applying them. Any queries, please just ask.

## Star Badges



**Congratulations to Andrew Gorton on achieving his BRONZE STAR this month.**

Currently, **6** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **25** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **90** 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](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk) when they are ready for their website records to be peer reviewed by the Peer Review Group.

**NOTE:** The Norfolk Birds Rarities Committee is a little behind at the mo in assessing submitted description species (rarities) for acceptance. This is having an impact on our ability to award badges as we only confirm a rarity for badges once accepted by NBRC so apologies if you are waiting and thank you for your patience.

## Eco-Badges

**No new eco-achievers this month.**

We currently have **27** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 11] and **11** who have achieved **SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 8 | Inland: 3].

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



**NOTE:** For these badges, electric bikes are considered motorised transport!

Number of bird species recorded in the NENBC area at or from home without the use of motorised transport since 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk) along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.

## Sea-watching Badge

**No new achievers this month.**

**We currently have 8 members who have achieved their BLUE BADGE.**

Those of you wanting to submit, please let us have a list of the dates and locations of your qualifying seawatching sessions and the species generating points on those occasions that reflect your website entries. Note that you will need to ensure that you have **added to the comments on the website duration of any of your qualifying seawatches and it might help to add ‘BLUE BADGE’** against any qualifying species too. Shout if not clear!



You must earn a total of one thousand points through a combination of time spent sea-watching and species recorded. Species list available on request

**Getting Points:** You get a once-only bonus of 100 points for attending a club seawatch, for all other watches 10 for every ½ hour spent watching, plus variable points for the first sighting of each of the species on our published list (also on website ‘News’) - 10 for the easy species, 15 for the more difficult or scarce and 20 for the rare ones.

Lists to be submitted by members from their club website records to [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk) along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.

**Why not get going on your own badge journey today!?**



Mary Howitt (1799–1888) was an English poet, translator, and writer, best known for her poem "The Spider and the Fly" and her contributions to children's literature and women's rights.

## **Birds in Summer by Mary Howitt**

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,  
Flitting about in each leafy tree;  
In the leafy trees so broad and tall,  
Like a green and beautiful palace hall,  
With its airy chambers light and boon,  
That open to sun and stars and moon;  
That open to the bright blue sky,  
And the frolicsome winds as they wander by.

They have left their nests on the forest bough;  
Those homes of delight they need not now;  
And the young and the old they wander out,  
And traverse their green world round about;  
And hark! at the top of this leafy hall,  
How one to the other in love they call!

"Come up! Come up!" they seem to say,  
"Where the topmost twigs in the breezes sway."

"Come up! come up! for the world is fair  
Where the merry leaves dance in the summer air."

And the birds below give back the cry,  
"We come, we come to the branches high."

How pleasant the lives of the birds must be,  
Living in love in a leafy tree!  
And away through the air what joy to go,  
And to look on the green, bright earth below!

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,  
Skimming about on the breezy sea,  
Cresting the billows like silvery foam,  
Then wheeling away to its cliff-built home!  
What joy it must be to sail, upborne,  
By a strong free wing, through the rosy morn,  
To meet the young sun, face to face,  
And pierce, like a shaft, the boundless space!

*Stonechat photo from Richard Farrow*

To pass through the bowers of the silver cloud;  
To sing in the thunder hall aloud;  
To spread out the wings for a wild, free flight  
With the upper cloud-wings, -oh, what delight!  
Oh, what would I give, like a bird, to go,  
Right on through the arch of the sun-lit bow,  
And see how the water-drops are kissed  
Into green and yellow and amethyst.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,  
Wherever it listeth, there to flee;  
To go, when a joyful fancy calls,  
Dashing down 'mong the waterfalls;  
Then wheeling about, with its mate at play,  
Above and below, and among the spray,  
Hither and thither, with screams as wild  
As the laughing mirth of a rosy child.

What joy it must be, like a living breeze,  
To flutter about 'mid the flowering trees;  
Lightly to soar, and to see beneath,  
The wastes of the blossoming purple heath,  
And the yellow furze, like fields of gold,  
That gladdened some fairy region old!  
On the mountain tops, on the billowy sea,  
On the leafy stems of a forest tree,  
How pleasant the life of a bird must be!



The bird voice variously described was that of a **Barn Swallow**. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the **BTO Bird**



**Facts Swallow** page and their **BTO ID Video: Hirundines and Swifts** and **BTO Garden BirdWatch - Telling apart Swift, Swallow and House Martin** too.



*Photos from Philip Cartlidge, Richard Farrow and Carol Thornton*



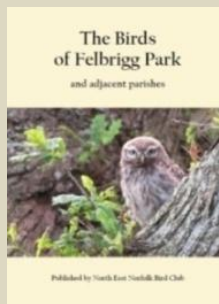
This month's **Wordsearch Solution:**  
 BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN  
 JUNE 2025

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

## Back Page Club Info .....



**NENBC Annual Bird Reports** are compiled from the records and photographs added to the club website by members, supplemented by other local records, and complemented by articles on club activities. The reports are £3 with discounts available on back-copies. Our **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Book** celebrating the first decade of the club is also available (low stock) for £5



**The Birds of Felbrigg Park** is a systematic review of the records of all 220 species seen in and around the park over the past 50 years, indicating their current status and highlighting, for the rarer species, every recorded sighting. The publication includes photographs and artwork from local artists. The book is now reduced to £3.00 (postage extra) and all profits from the sale of this book go to Felbeck Trust, our local wildlife conservation charity:

[www.felbecktrust.org.uk](http://www.felbecktrust.org.uk)

For Annual Reports or The Birds of Felbrigg Park, contact Carol on [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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