



**December 2025 – Issue 126**

**The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter**

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**Through a Lens**



By Nigel Redman



As the Club's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year draws to a close, so does my term as its President. It has been an honour to serve as President for the past four years. The Club has grown from strength to strength in its first decade, with well-attended meetings, walks and events,

amazing monthly newsletters and a lot of camaraderie. The pinnacle of the year's anniversary celebrations was of course the successful one-day conference in June, where we enjoyed a range of fascinating talks and a full-to-capacity village hall.

The role of President is not particularly onerous. Apart from presenting badges, perhaps the most important task is to write a President's Piece every two months for the Newsletter. This has not always been easy, given my work schedule, but I have very much enjoyed putting pen to paper (metaphorically) and airing my thoughts and views, and even grievances from time to time.

Looking back over my two dozen pieces, I have covered a surprisingly wide range of subjects in my four years. I don't know whether anyone reads them, of course, as I have only ever had two pieces of feedback from the short articles, one verbal and one email. Fortunately, both were very positive!

My President's Pieces have covered topics such as listing, twitcher behaviour, climate change, eponyms, taxonomy, ethics of collecting, reintroduced birds, birds on stamps, English names, punctuation ('lower case

lunacy'), changes in populations and diversity, and the exploitation of birds, in addition to a few about individual species or classic birding destinations. There was no plan, and sometimes I didn't even know what I was going to write about before I sat down to do it. But the ideas came, and I hope that members appreciated the results. I never did get round to writing about grouse shooting and raptor persecution, but Mark Avery and others have probably said all that needs to be said about that subject – primarily that it needs to stop! And also the indiscriminate release of millions of pheasants into our countryside, for that matter.

For my final President's Piece, I have turned to the tragic subject of extinction and, at Trevor's suggestion, specifically to the plight of the Slender-billed Curlew – a species that has become extinct in our lifetimes, and which is probably on the lists of several club members. It's a subject that I have had some involvement with, and it turned out that there was quite a lot to say about this enigmatic bird. So much so that my article is now appearing as a stand-alone piece in this Newsletter – please check it out on [page 21](#). Although extinction is final, occasionally there are good news stories, and I was heartened to hear that in August this year the near-mythical Jerdon's Courser of southern India had been rediscovered by a determined group of Indian birders, having not been seen anywhere by anyone since 2004.

In conclusion, thank you for putting up with my frequent absences from meetings and occasional rants in print, and I would like to wish my successor a fruitful and rewarding presidency in the coming years. For the record, I will not be seeking re-election for a second (or third) term!

# Don't forget the Christmas Social & AGM |

11<sup>th</sup> December

See [page 12](#) for details





# A Note from the Editor

By Carol Thornton



## Welcome to our December newsletter!

A great turn out in person and on Zoom for our November talk with the ever-popular Aldina Franco of UEA returning to talk more about stork migration with a fair bit of audience participation. If you didn't make it along, still a few more events this year – Holkham Walk, Felbrigg Park Walk and of course the AGM & Christmas Social (details on [page 12](#)) – before the New Year's Day Birding Challenge. Where does the time go?!

'Through a Lens' for the front cover last month was 'Robins' but it turns out there aren't many photographers about in November as of the 193 records from 29 folk, only 6 included photos! The top two pics were from Francis Farrow, the bottom two from Ken Thornton and the central one from Mark Clements. For December, our theme will be 'Birds on or over water' so get clicking!

Here on the left are my favourite member photos from November, selected from the ones that didn't make it on to our monthly NENBC Bird Highlights section of the more unusual species. Blackcap [David Griffiths], Starling [Andrew Crossley], Kestrel [Dave Billham], Green Woodpecker [Steve Hale], Mute Swan [Val Stubbs].

If I don't catch up with you at the Social / AGM, on one of the December club walks or out and about in the festive rush, I wish you the very best for Christmas and the New Year and don't forget to get those records of your New Year's Day birding on our website.

## Welcome to our new members – we look forward to seeing you soon!

\* Jonathon Zelos \* David Peet \* Sue Bradshaw \*  
\* Zoe Crighton & Catriona Holden \*  
\* Steve Barford \* Aldina Franco \*

If you have any queries, just drop us an email

## Membership Renewal - Subscriptions for 2026

We hope you will continue to support the club in 2026 by renewing your membership with us. The subs, which are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January, remain the same as last year:

2026 calendar year membership of **£15 per household to include a copy of the club's printed 2025 Annual Bird Report** which we hope will be ready for publication in the summer, or **£12 without the report**. Our preferred method of payment is by standing order, but one-off payments can be made electronically to the club account (Account Number: 20842968 / Sort Code: 30- 94-34; TSB) or by posting a cheque to the membership secretary Colin Blaxill at Caitlins, Bernard Close, High Kelling, Holt NR25 6QY. Cheques need to be made payable to "North East Norfolk Bird Club" and not NENBC. If you want to pay by cash then catch Colin or one of the other Committee Members at one of our events.

Many thanks for your continuing support and engagement

Sadly we have recently been notified of the deaths of Neil Churcher (club member 2017-2025) and Gordon Webster (2015-2022). Our thoughts are with their families.



By Paul Laurie

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

≈ 6,160 individual records covering 165 bird species were added in November

**November 2025:** Pallid Swift, Dusky Warbler and Pallas's Warbler were the three nationally scarce species recorded this month. However, Bittern and Water Pipit were the rarest sightings this month; that is in the context of the NENBC recording area. New birds for the year included the Pallid Swift, Bittern, Water Pipit and Slavonian Grebe.

**Barnacle Goose:** On the 5<sup>th</sup> a flock of forty birds flew north over Saxlingham, the next day two flew west over Beeston Common. On the 17<sup>th</sup> a bird was seen with Pink-Feet just north of Holt and the next day five flew north over Felbrigg Park.

**Bean Goose:** A single over Weybourne on the 18<sup>th</sup> was the only record for the month.

**Russian White-fronted Goose:** On the 8<sup>th</sup> two flew east past Weybourne Camp and on the 24<sup>th</sup> a bird was found with Pink-Feet at Happisburgh. *Photo 1 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Velvet Scoter:** One to two birds were present off Weybourne between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 27<sup>th</sup> birds at Weybourne had increased to five birds. On the 19<sup>th</sup> two birds were seen off Sheringham and Mundesley and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> a bird flew east past Sheringham and then Cromer East Cliffs.

**Long-tailed Duck:** Only one record of a bird east at Sheringham on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**Goosander:** Regular sightings of one or two birds off the north coast during the month with highest count being three west at Mundesley on the 9<sup>th</sup> and three west off Sheringham on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Inland a bird was on Selbrigg Pond on the 12<sup>th</sup> and a drake frequented Felbrigg Lake between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. *Photo 2 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Swift:** A single was seen over Sheringham on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Pallid Swift:** On the 7<sup>th</sup> a bird was present at Sheringham and then on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Cromer. On the 10<sup>th</sup> two were seen at West Runton with one there the next day and again on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the final record was a bird over East Runton on the 12<sup>th</sup>. A good series of records giving many members a chance to connect with this southern species. Always a difficult species with which to accurately determine the numbers involved, due to speed of flight and area they cover to feed as well as being able to disappear for a day or two. Since 2018 there have been birds recorded in only four years, with 2022 being the best when several birds were present and reported from coastal sites between Overstrand and Cromer over an eight-day period. *Photo 3 courtesy of Trevor Williams, photos 4 and 5 Richard Farrow*





**Slavonian Grebe:** One – two birds present off Sheringham from the 6<sup>th</sup> until the 15<sup>th</sup> at least.

**Ruff:** One – two birds recorded on pig fields at Saxlingham from the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the 24<sup>th</sup> these were the only records this month.

**Purple Sandpiper:** Only one record this month was of a single at Sheringham on the 15<sup>th</sup> when was seen to fly east.

**Sabine's Gull:** On the 17<sup>th</sup> a juvenile flew east past Weybourne.

**Little Gull:** A small movement of this species during the middle of the month resulted in the following records: All Sheringham; 50 east on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 139 east on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 40 east on the 17<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 6 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

**Sandwich Tern:** On the 1<sup>st</sup> a bird was offshore from Cromer East Cliffs and on the 16<sup>th</sup> a bird was seen off Sheringham.

**Arctic Tern:** Three reports of singles from Weybourne on the 1<sup>st</sup> and from Sheringham on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Auk:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, a bird was reported off Weybourne. On the 17<sup>th</sup> a bird was seen from Cromer East Cliffs which may relate to the same individual. On the 19<sup>th</sup> a bird was found inland at Brampton & Oxnead. It was cared for overnight and then released on the coast at Sheringham the next day.

**Black Guillemot:** One record of a 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird on the 5<sup>th</sup> seen from Cromer East Cliffs.

**Glossy Ibis:** Continuing a very good year for this species in the club area a bird was seen flying east off Mundesley on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. A bird was then found feeding at Saxlingham on the 5<sup>th</sup> and later seen to fly north. Finally, a bird flew west over Weybourne on the 7<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 7 courtesy of David Griffiths*

**Bittern:** A migrant was seen offshore from Sheringham on 24<sup>th</sup> and then was subsequently reported continuing west past Weybourne. This represents only the fourth record for the NENBC since 2015 and the second coastal record; the first being a bird over Weybourne Camp on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The other club records are a bird at Gresham in March 2015 and a wintering bird at Field Dalling in 2022.

**Cattle Egret:** Up to 2 birds present at Felbrigg Park 1<sup>st</sup> until the 5<sup>th</sup> and then one west over West Beckham on the 20<sup>th</sup> and a bird present at Mundesley 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 8 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Little Egret:** Singles reported from Thornage, Blickling Park, Southrepps Common, Saxlingham and Hempstead. *Photo 9 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Hen Harrier:** On the 8<sup>th</sup> a “ring-tail” flew south over Saxlingham. A male was seen hunting at Happisburgh on the 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. *Photo 10 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Short-eared Owl:** Only two reports with a bird at Weybourne Cliffs on the 7<sup>th</sup> and Cromer East Cliffs on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month.

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7



8



9



10





**Merlin:** A bird was resident around Weybourne from the 3<sup>rd</sup> until at least the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Hooded Crow:** One report from Mundesley this month with the bird seen there on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Swallow:** A bird was seen at Weybourne on the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**House Martin:** A single was present on the 10<sup>th</sup> at West Runton, a late record but some way off the club's latest record of the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 when two were seen over Beeston Bump.

**Yellow-browed Warbler:** Weybourne Camp recorded singles on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, then again on the 8<sup>th</sup> until the 11<sup>th</sup> when two birds were seen. On the 6<sup>th</sup> a bird was heard calling on the north-east side of Holt. West Runton held a bird on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Beeston Bump attracted 1 to 2 birds between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> and a single bird was reported from Cromer on the 10<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 11 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

**PALLAS'S WARBLER:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> of November a bird was found at the Treatment Works in Cromer and was present until the 17<sup>th</sup> over the three days six club members saw the bird. *Photo 12 courtesy of Julian Thomas*

**Dusky Warbler:** On the 8<sup>th</sup> two birds were present on Weybourne Camp and a single was on Beeston Common. At least one bird remained on Weybourne Camp until the last report on the 13<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 13 courtesy of Moss Taylor*

**Ring Ouzel:** One or two birds were present on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> around Beeston Bump.

**Black Redstart:** On the 7<sup>th</sup> a single bird was seen in Cromer where on the 8<sup>th</sup> five birds were seen feeding in close proximity, one was still present the next day. Also, on the 9<sup>th</sup> a bird was found at Felbrigg Hall. *Photo 14 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

**Water Pipit:** On the 16<sup>th</sup> a bird was seen along the Dilham Canal. This represents only the 7<sup>th</sup> record for the NENBC since 2015. All have been single day and single observer records.

**Common Crossbill:** Fewer reports this month with only two records from Aylmerton of two birds on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and one on the 9<sup>th</sup>. On the 13<sup>th</sup> three birds were seen on Buxton Heath and on the 16<sup>th</sup> two reported from Dilham Canal.

**Snow Bunting** On November 1<sup>st</sup> five birds remained from October at West Runton. On the 15<sup>th</sup> a single was seen at Weybourne. Six birds were recorded at Happisburgh on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> up to fourteen birds were seen on Weybourne Cliffs/Sheringham Golf Course. On the 30<sup>th</sup> two birds flew west at Sheringham.

11



12



13



14



## December: What to look forward to .....



**December:** Cold weather movements of wildfowl and waders may provide some interest this month if the warm, wet, westerly airflow comes to an end. Often birds move ahead of the weather so having an interest in cold weather forecast on the near continent may warn us of the birds appearing here. Stormy weather can offer Storm Petrel sightings as well as out of season skuas and shearwaters. Any large flocks of wintering birds are worthy of scrutiny as a scarcer visitor may be hidden among them; particularly duck, geese & waders as well as finches and buntings. Wintering Black Redstarts may be found and suitable spots along any water course may provide a wintering Black-bellied Dipper adding to the sole NENBC record of a wintering bird in 2014/15 on the River Bure.

## 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 stones (red flag three letters starting JAA), Black-headed Gulls (red rings starting 2C00) and Marsh Tit (white rings 00-99) can be reported through <https://iceni.shinyapps.io/sightings/> Metal only rings can be report to the BTO <https://app.bto.org/euring/landing/pages/rings.jsp>"



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We are grateful to you for your report of a ringed bird. You will find the ringing and finding details below. If you notice any errors please let us know.

red PHEE colour legging (numbered) ring already present

### Ringing data

Species: Mediterranean Gull (Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus) []  
Sex, age: male, after 3rd calendar year  
Status: nesting  
Condition: [8] alive and probably healthy - observed or released by ringer  
Date, time, accur.: 08/05/2020, 0:0, date accurate  
Place: [PL KP] J.PAKOSKIE, JANKOWO, PAKOŚĆ, KUJAWSKO-POMORSKIE, POLAND  
Coordinates: 52°46'58.0"; 18°05'04.6" (52.78277600; 18.08460500)  
Accuracy of coord.: accurate to the given coordinates

PLG|A0|FS...35275|0|1|B0|05750|05750|N|D|H|N|M|N|8|8|N|---|08052020|0|---|PLKP|+524658+0180505|0|8|20|0|4

### Recovery data

Verification of ring: [0] ring not verified  
Date, time, accur.: 11/11/2025, 15:40, date accurate  
Place: [GB NK] Runton, NORFOLK, UNITED KINGDOM  
Coordinates: 52°56'14.9"; 1°16'29.5" (52.93746000; 1.27487000)  
Accuracy of coord.: accurate to the given coordinates  
Species: Mediterranean Gull (Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus) []  
Sex, age: ,  
Status: ,  
Condition: [7] alive and probably healthy - observed or released  
Circumstances: [81] colour ring read  
Finder: M. H.  
Remarks:

PLG|A0|FS...35275|0|0|B0|05750|05750|U|9|Z|U|U|U|0|0|U|---|11112025|0|1540|GBNK|+525615+0011630|0|7|81|0|4

Distance: 1125 km, Direction: 277°, Elapsed time: 2013 days

Well 'yes' Martin! Photo 1 is from club member Chris Lamsdell, taken 9<sup>th</sup> January Cromer 2023 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> from Trevor Williams there on 13<sup>th</sup>.

"I spotted a ringed **med gull** near East Runton slipway on Tuesday 11th November.

After a bit of Internet research I tracked it to a Polish ringing outfit. I've attached their report in case anyone is interested. Looks like it was around Cromer/West Runton in 2023. Perhaps it was reported by another NENBC member?"

*Martin Hammond*



## 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** | "Odd sight heading West only one !!!" | Anne Sims | Gresham | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Mute Swan** | "A dead adult bird floating in the canal and what appeared to be another dead adult in the field to the north about half way between Anchor Road and Ebridge. Also two flew down the canal settling on Ebridge mill pond." | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 26<sup>th</sup>

**Moorhen** | "Near stream, been surprisingly scarce this year." | Paulione Walton | Briston | 5<sup>th</sup>

**Crane** | "Flying north of A149. Seen from car! Same bird seen later over Weybourne Camp, Salhouse

and Cley by other observers!" | David Griffiths | Sheringham | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Curlew** | "110x Feeding in field east of Mill Lane - biggest flock I've ever seen there" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne Cliffs | 28<sup>th</sup>

**Black-headed Gull** | "3,600x Broad band on sea 100m offshore high tide roost - think almost all BHG but in the gathering twilight..." | Sheringham | Roger Emmens | 5<sup>th</sup>

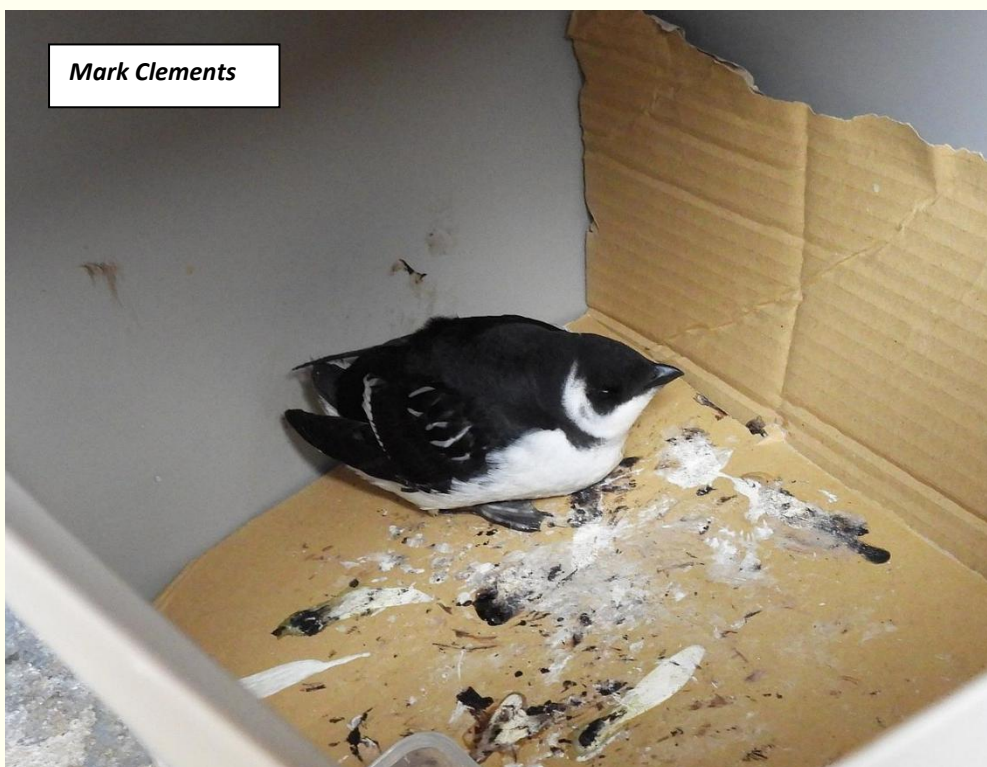
**Great Skua** | "East, a very recognisable, previously seen individual with very pale tail." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 4<sup>th</sup>



**Little Auk** | “Found last night in my step-sisters garden near the river. It was checked out this morning and given a clean bill of health so I released it at Sheringham about 9.20 last seen swimming out to sea and just possibly the bird Ian P had go west at the Lees at 9.45” | Mark Clements | Brampton & Oxnead | 20<sup>th</sup>

**Little Auk** | “on sea. Not every day you know there is going to be a little auk, guaranteed at some time in the morning, even if it is a windblown waif rescued from inland.” | Phil Borley | Sheringham | 20<sup>th</sup>

**Little Auk** | “An individual rescued from inland and released in sea by Mark C.” | Francis Farrow | Sheringham | 20<sup>th</sup>



**Great Northern Diver** | “on the sea in front of sea-watch shelter with Red-throated - went missing under water for long periods - during 11/2 hour sea-watch” | Trevor Williams | Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs | 5<sup>th</sup>

**Glossy Ibis** | “East. One hour seawatch. Passing close in at 09.45. Rather unexpected!” | John Hurst | Mundesley | 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Tawny Owl** | “roosting in sycamore tree, being mobbed by jays, magpies, chaffinches and goldfinches. The only stressed birds were the ones mobbing, the owl couldn’t care less.” | Phil Borley | Beeston Bump | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Kingfisher** | “Saw it fly across the pond, catch a fish and perch the other side of the pond. Best view of Kingfisher” | David Barrass | Selbrigg Pond | 7<sup>th</sup>

**Magpie** | “2x On meadow lucky me always a great start to a day !!!” | Anne Sims | Gresham | 1<sup>st</sup>

**Hooded Crow** | “Neighbouring trees and house roof, having been absent for the few weeks. In profile showing clean lines of a pure specimen rather than a hybrid.” | John Hurst | Mundesley | 16<sup>th</sup>

**Long-tailed Tit** | “13x Chasing each other through the trees by the car park - what a delight” | Val Stubbs | Sheringham Park | 8<sup>th</sup>

**Dusky Warbler** | “Feeding together all morning (one for second day), the first multiple record for the camp” | Moss Taylor | Weybourne Camp | 8<sup>th</sup>

*Snow Bunting, Richard Farrow*

**Blackbird** | “12x In the garden and adjacent one. To think that they could be the twelve that left us in February.” | John Hurst | Mundesley | 7<sup>th</sup>

**Blackbird** | “17x 14 in off, ( + 3 caught and eaten by great black backed gulls not counted ).” | Phil Borley | Weybourne | 7<sup>th</sup>

**Robin** | “Leucistic Robin - has been visiting the garden for a few months but very elusive.” | Ken Thornton | Gresham | 21<sup>st</sup>

**Snow Bunting** | “Initially feeding at western end of roped off area by car park, flushed by a Kestrel and they flew over the cliff, returning back 30 minutes later to resume de-seeding the field.” | Stella Baylis | West Runton | 1<sup>st</sup>

**Snow Bunting** | “I was on a Sheringham to West Runton beach walk, turning inland from the beach to return via Beeston Bump I remembered the reported Snow Bunting. While passing the area with newly seeded grass I said "I hear a snow bunting" at which point Daphne said "are these snow bunting"? The 5 were unseen by me but less than 10m away!” | John Swallow | West Runton | 1<sup>st</sup>

**Snow Bunting** | “From the boating lake I saw them moving west just offshore of the promenade; I am pretty sure that they initially had been on the cliff face” | Dave Billham | Sheringham | 30<sup>th</sup>





## Conservation Corner - can you help??

Would you be interested in joining or team of article writers for the Conservation Corner slot? We really want to continue with this thought-provoking and varied theme but we do need folk to have a go at putting 'pen to paper'. Can you help? If you don't fancy writing an occasional article, please let us know any suggestions for what you'd like to see covered in this spot and we'll get researching!

## WhatsApp Groups.....



The club runs two WhatsApp groups:

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

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

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

## WhatsApp group for general NENBC communications

### Mobile numbers required to sign up!

This new group 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, this one will be set up so that 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.

If you are interested in signing up, then **please let Carol have your mobile number**. 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.

## Contributions to the Newsletter .....

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

*Looking forward to hearing from you!*

Club Sponsor **Bird Ventures** offer a 5% discount on own-branded wild bird food to NENBC members all year. Have a look at the Bird Ventures website [www.birdventures.co.uk](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

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



## 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.

**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. Some of our walks are deliberately quite short to accommodate those who find the longer walks a little too daunting.

**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:** Unless otherwise stated, no booking is required for our walks so just turn up on the day if you fancy it, although it is always nice to know to expect you so feel free to let us know!

## General Talks Info

**LOCATION:** Our indoor events are benenerally held at Gresham Village Hall and unless otherwise stated they start at 7:30pm. Most are also available live via Zoom. The postal address is East Beckham Road, Gresham, Norfolk, NR11 8RT but note the published postcode might not take you to exactly the right spot! If you are coming through Aylmerton and Lower Gresham, turn right by the church (just after the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are coming through Gresham, turn left at the church (just before the school) and the hall is on your left. If you are dropping down from East Beckham, the hall is on your right opposite the church.

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

**NO BOOKING REQUIRED BUT...:** It is always nice to know if you are coming to an evening talk but by no means essential so if it takes your fancy on the evening, please just turn up as we would love to see you! If you want the Zoom link though, you will need to let us know in advance!

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

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



# Upcoming Events

In the coming weeks we have our regular **Felbrigg Park Walks**, a monthly mid-week favourite and an early December trip out of area to the popular **Holkham Estate**. Don't forget about our **Christmas Social and AGM** which this year is on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December- please let us know you are coming for catering purposes. We have two additional special events coming up too – the **New Year's Day Birding Challenge** and, for the last of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events, a **Strumpshaw Fen & New Buckenham Day Out guided by Drew Lyness**. Look forward to seeing you at these events soon. **Full details on website.**

## Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk 9:00am to 11:00am with Trevor Williams

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

**17<sup>th</sup> December**

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

**NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET:** Main Felbrigg Hall car park – free for National Trust members | **DISTANCE:** 2 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Not suitable for wheelchair users but could be for those with limited mobility – please get on touch. | **FACILITIES:** Café and loos at the Hall | **BADGES:** In area so all appropriate individual records count towards club badges.

## Holkham Estate 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Walk with Janice Darch and other Com members Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December | 9:00am to 1:00pm

We'll be checking out the beach, doing a bit of seawatching from the dunes, scanning the fields around Lady Anne's Drive and observing from the hides. We hope to see Shore Larks and Snow Buntings, seabirds, ducks and geese.

**NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET:** Lady Anne's Drive and meet at the café The Lookout at the far end of the drive. Parking fee £7-£13.50 | **DISTANCE:** approx 3 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Some of the walk is on paths and boardwalks but some will be on sand and uneven terrain so not suitable for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility. | **FACILITIES:** Toilets are available and there is a café. | **BADGES:** Not in the club area so species can't count toward club badges this time – sorry!



## New Year's Day Birding Challenge



Don't forget our 1st of January Birding Challenge ...  
**How many species of bird can you record in the NENBC area on the first day of the new year?** Will you get more than you got last year? Or something unusual or in an unusual spot? Perhaps you could consider taking on the challenge without using your car this year – all your club-area records would count towards your Green Eco-Badges - or car-sharing and driving to just one site and walking out from there? Don't fancy going out in the cold at all? Then just record all the birds you see from your home from the comfort and warmth of your living room – every one of them is important! Not in the club area this year? Then drop us an email telling us where you were and what you saw or heard. Log your club area sightings on the our website at the end of the day and we'll write up the results in the next newsletter.

## Strumpshaw Fen and Buckenham Marshes

### A Grand Day Out with Trevor and Drew

\*\*\*\*\* 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Walk \*\*\*\*\*

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January | 10:00am to 4:00pm**

This 'Broadland Winter Wonderland' event is the stunning finale to the club's 10th anniversary celebrations. Alongside Trevor Williams, we are thrilled to be joined by Drew Lyness, who is a local expert and has birded these sites for more than a decade as his local patch. Starting at [RSPB Strumpshaw Fen](#), we hope to see resident species like Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Kingfisher, Bearded Tit and Marsh Tit, with the potential for some scarcer winter visitors like Hen Harrier and Water Pipit. This part of the day will include an informative talk about the reserve, its management and the wildlife. We will then travel the short distance to Buckenham Marshes, with a walk along the north bank of the River Yare with views over the marshland and reedbeds. There is potential to see Russian White-fronted Geese, Crane, Peregrine, plus a good selection of wildfowl and waders. Culminating with the famous Corvid roost later in the day, this surely will be a fabulous start to your 2026 birding year.

**PARK & MEET:** By Reception, Strumpshaw Fen Car Park, Low Road, Norwich, NR13 4HS | **DISTANCE:** Strumpshaw c2.5 miles; Buckenham c3 miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Broadland in mid-winter is beautiful and evocative, whatever the weather. However, inclement conditions can be encountered, so please come dressed for winter weather on exposed sites. Paths are generally level, but uneven and bumpy in places. Depending on our route, there are two short steep slopes at Strumpshaw Fen and also steps up to a hide. The riverbank footpath at Buckenham Marshes will be muddy and could be wet or very wet. Wellington boots advisable. | **FACILITIES:** Toilets at Strumpshaw but not Buckenham. Bring a packed lunch and refreshments. | **BADGES:** Not in the club area so species can't count toward club badges this time – sorry!  
**BOOKING REQ'D FOR THIS SPECIAL EVENT – limit of 20**

# **Christmas Social and AGM**



**Come and join us  
for a lovely  
sociable evening  
in the lead up to Christmas!**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December  
7:30pm to 10:00pm  
Gresham Village Hall**

**If you haven't already, get the date in your diaries!**

**The Annual General Meeting element will additionally be available online via Zoom but the rest of the evening will be hall-based.**

**We'll get the business side of things sorted first as we start the evening off with our AGM, a chance to vote on various aspects of the club and to listen to a Review of 2025 with outgoing Chair Trevor Williams.**

**THOSE WHO ATTEND AT THE HALL IN PERSON can later enjoy the fun of our CHRISTAMS SOCIAL EVENT which will consist of a light-hearted QUIZ from last year's winning team Kirsty, Tim, Stu and John along with a HOT AND COLD BUFFET AND DRINKS. We will have team tables spread out in the large hall, there will be prizes available and party hats are very much encouraged throughout.**

**We will need ADVANCE BOOKING for both the hall and the Zoom by Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December if possible.**



## A new look at walks for 2026 .....



We'll be doing things a bit differently in the new year with a revamp of our walks programme. The general rule will be no bookings required, a range of leaders throughout the year, some old favourite haunts and some new ones, a mix of in the area and out plus some shorter walks within the programme too . Here's a flavour of what we provisionally plan to offer. Full details, including exact dates and times etc, will be on the website shortly .....

### February

Happisburgh and Cart Gap  
with Andy Clarke

### March

Swanton Novers  
with Seán Dempster

### April

The Runtons  
with Trevor Williams

### May

Gun Hill and Holkham  
with Colin Blaxill

### June

Around Mannington, Itteringham and Mossy  
Mere Woods

### July

Sea Palling  
with Stella Baylis

### September

Burgh and a Skeyton Corner RaptorWatch  
with Alan Stevens

### October

Winterton  
with Janice Darch

### November

Hickling and Stubb Mill  
with Trevor Williams and Andy Clarke

### December

Trinity Broad  
with Stella Baylis

## Pop-up Walks and More .....

During 2025 we introduced our pop-up seawatches, short-notice events when the weather conditions looked promising, offering the chance to join an experienced lead for a bit of coastal birding fun. These have proved very popular so hopefully you will be as excited as us to hear that next year we will be introducing some other **pop-up events**, starting with some walks. We'll be giving notice of a couple of days before when one of us says "**I am going for a walk – do you want to join me?**" We hope we will be able to include some specialist walks / watches, some walks that are special for the leaders, some that pick up on any seasonal visitors and also some shorter rambles. So watch this space throughout the year and definitely sign up for the new NENBC Comms WhatsApp alerts to get your reminders (see [page 9](#)). Additional leads and site suggestions welcome anytime!

## Felbrigg Park .....

Trevor Williams will be continuing with our 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday morning of the month walks around Felbrigg Park, central to our club area, so do come and join us. In response to requests for some shorter walks, we are also trialling a dual walk in March....

### March at Felbrigg Park

**Walk 1:** 9.00am to 11.00am

The usual monthly romp about the park

**Walk 2:** 10:00am to 11:00am

A leisurely stroll down to the lake and back

We'll all meet up for a drink and a chat in the café afterwards



"Just to say that yesterday evening's talk was brilliant, migration is such a fascinating subject especially when thinking about young birds."

By Alan Stevens

For the last talk of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, we welcomed back Prof. Aldina Franco. Last with us in 2017 Aldina is based at UEA School of Environmental Sciences and her own introduction provides an insight to her work there.



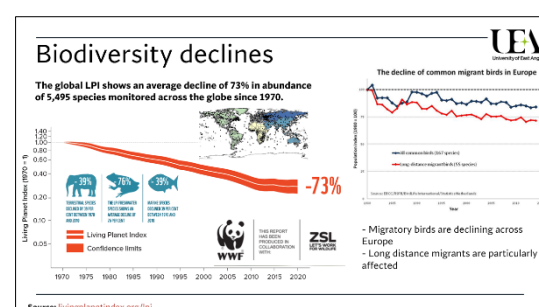
"I am an ecologist with a focus on movement ecology, biogeography and ecological responses to global change. My applied research examines the impacts of anthropogenic activities (e.g. land use change and energy infrastructure) on biodiversity and tries to identify measures to minimize detrimental effects. My fundamental research targets understanding the mechanisms and drivers behind individual variability in animal movement strategies, including dispersal and migration.

My group is involved in developing and testing new animal tracking technologies (GSM, LoRa devices with multiple sensors) aiming to investigate recent changes in animal movement strategies, for example, the establishment of non-migratory populations in previously wholly migratory species. Ultimately we are interested in understanding how and why these fundamental changes in migratory behaviour occur."

Much of Aldina's research group's work investigating changes in the migratory behaviour of birds has centred on White Storks in Portugal and the UK. In Portugal, most of the White Storks are no longer migratory, while only 40 years ago, the majority crossed the Sahara Desert and overwintered in the Sahel region from Senegal to Lake Chad. White Storks have been reintroduced in the UK, after being absent for more than 600 years since when new migratory routes and strategies have been established. This talk explored the drivers and mechanisms behind changes in this behaviour.

Our speaker started with a slide highlighting biodiversity decline across the globe since 1970 showing and loss of 73% and for illustration this meant that out of every 100 elephants in 1970 only 27 are present now. All migratory birds across Europe are affected, and in particular long-distance migrants, whereas partial and short distance migrants show more stable populations.

A noticeable change has been in partial migration which is now more common and is linked to both resource availability and climate change and resulting in some species no longer migrating with Lesser Kestrel and White Storks now resident in Spain while 25% of Blackbirds in Finland do not now migrate.





For the remainder of her talk Aldina turned to speciality, White Storks and the emergence of residency in migrant populations. Up until the 1980s a largely migratory species by 2015 new resident population across Europe amounted to around 14,00 birds. Since the 1960s since when so many birds have suffered massive declines, White Storks have bucked the trend and seen populations increase and alongside this wintering populations have also risen re-colonising areas where they had become absent.

The rapid change in migratory behaviour is linked to increasing food availability. In Portugal in the 30 years leading up to 2020 approximately 80% of White Storks stopped migrating which was largely due to the introduction of American Crayfish providing a ready and reliable food resource. Storks, with other species, have also taken to scavenging rubbish dumps, another year-round source of food. Numbers present at these locations can top 10,000 birds. This pattern of energy saving behaviour has benefits with short distances flown and earlier nest occupation leading to higher breeding success.

Our speaker then posed a question and asked how can a fully migratory species establish non-migratory populations, taking the Blackcap as a case study, and introducing thoughts around how birds learn to migrate. With crossbreeding experiments of south-east and south-west migrating Blackcaps, the hybrid young adopted an intermediate orientation which demonstrated a genetic inheritance.

We then turned to mechanisms underlying the loss of migratory behaviour in a long-lived bird. How can a fully migratory species establish non-migratory populations? Four possibilities were put forward.

**Demography** - Based on population trajectories over 26 years (1994 – 2020) differences in survival and reproduction rates between migratory and resident storks showed no evidence that demography alone explains rapid shifts in resident population being established and lower survival rates in migrant storks were not sufficient to explain it either. Migrant/resident individuals do not shift migratory strategy but 10% of migratory individuals shift to becoming resident.

**Genotypes** – there is no evidence of differing genotypes between migratory/resident birds to offer an explanation.

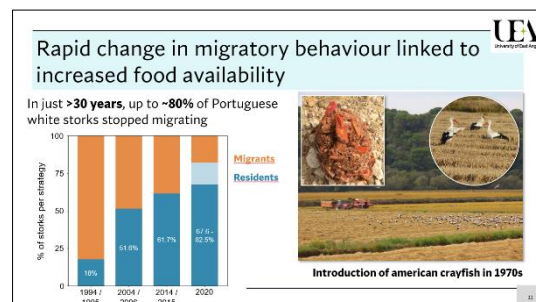
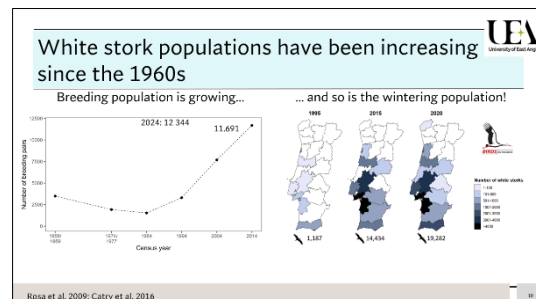
**Individual flexibility** – was illustrated by a slide showing birds movement over four years following differing migration routes and an example of male and female birds wintering in different areas. With 48 storks tracked over seven consecutive years no evidence emerged of individual flexibility with adults being either migratory or non-migratory.

**Developmental plasticity** – 24 juvenile storks tracked for up to 7 consecutive years showed plasticity, changing migratory behaviour because of conditions experienced during early development. A juvenile bird may migrate over an initial period only to subsequently become resident for adulthood. Developmental changes occur during a specific window with a study revealing that 98% of first-year juveniles migrate from Portugal to Africa falling in subsequent years to 67%, 33% and 19%.

There is no sufficient evidence in the first three of these to explain the rapid shift of Portuguese storks towards no longer migrating but traits that are plastic become fixed during adulthood (the importance of teenage years).

After a brief look at Cranes 'teenage years' as, unlike storks, part of family group, Aldina turned to whether migratory behaviour is influenced by social cues and explained that this has little or no influence.

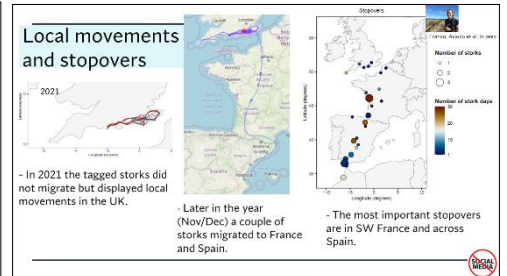
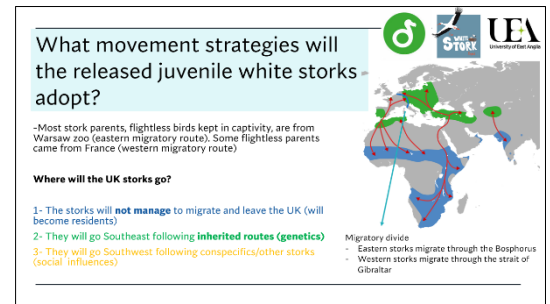
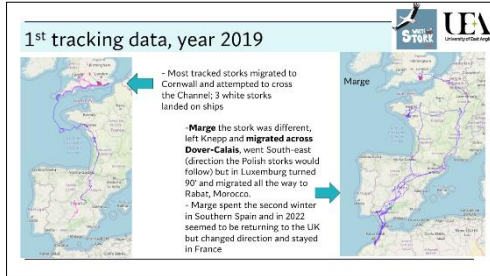
The evening then turned to the UK and the (re) introduction of White Storks, reintroduction being projects where a species is returned to where they have been lost and where the habitat is assessed as suitable. White Storks have been reintroduced to the UK by the 'White Stork Project' after an



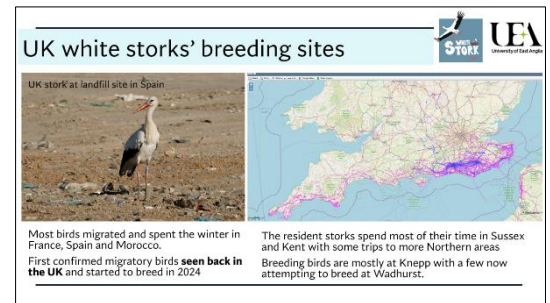
absence of more than 600 years and in 2020 the first young hatched at Knepp the well-known re-wilding project in Sussex.

The Cotswold Wildlife Park keeps both Polish and French flightless storks (birds which have been injured) and these birds breed on the ground with their offspring being released when fully fledged, but where will they go, will they fail to migrate and immediately become resident, will they travel Southeast following inherited routes (genetics), will they go Southwest following nonspecific/other storks under social influences?

The following slides show the results of their tracking.



From these we learn that most storks migrate to continental Europe via Dover /Calais crossing at several locations. The direction on the first day of migration was west to Cornwall but in recent years released storks have headed east and the main migratory direction is Southwest towards Iberia. Most birds spent the winter in France, Spain and Morocco with the first migratory birds were seen back in the UK and starting to breed in 2024. Resident storks spend most of their time in Sussex and Kent with only occasional trips to Northern areas. Most of the breeding birds are to be found at Knepp.



In conclusion our UK storks display a wide range of migratory strategies and phenotypes influenced by both social and inherited cues. They follow 'innate' genetically inherited Southeastern migration routes to central Europe followed by a 90° shift to a South-western route following the main route of storks from Central Europe. Some UK bred storks are now breeding in France and the Netherlands with partners found there and the UK population is growing with resident birds enjoying a higher survival rate.

Aldina closed with a few lessons for the conservation of White Storks reminding us that as a species they are both highly adaptable and successful but up to the mid-20th century had declined, and indeed disappeared, from several countries. They have since been reintroduced in several EU countries including Switzerland and Sweden. They are very tolerant of human activity thriving and breeding in urban areas. Human activity however as it changes could once again affect the fortunes of the species as we try to take better care of the environment by closing the landfill sites upon which they have become dependent.

Aldina concluded her evening with us by thanking the team behind this research and fielding good number of questions from members.

**A great evening with Aldina, a science-based talk all clearly explained in an engaging and entertaining way with far more detail than can be related here, and therefore a reminder that you cannot beat coming to our meetings for the full story!**





A few pics from the evening. Congratulations to all our award achievers who were presented with their badges and certificates on the night. To those of you who couldn't make it – your badges are winging their way to you if they haven't already arrived...







### By Dave Billham

For the November Felbrigg walk we had November weather; windy, grey, and right up to the meeting time it had been raining, sometimes mixed with hail. So it was surprising that twelve good folk turned out, willing to chance a soaking, though, as one female member pointed out, it was mainly females who were there! Obviously the hardy sort! One female we were missing was Carol, who was unable to make it, so we would have to look out for each other rather than rely on her excellent herding skills to keep us all together. Trevor was, as usual, leading the walk; his plan to head across open ground whilst it wasn't raining, followed by the woods to give some shelter should it start again, was well received by all.

We had been keeping a list as we waited for all to arrive, and given the conditions it was a pretty good one; **Herring Gull** and **Black-headed Gull** over, and **Common Gull** dotted about all over the fields; **Rook**, **Carrion Crow** and **Jackdaw**, **Chaffinch** and **Goldfinch** in the trees, **Pied Wagtail**, **Blue Tit** and **Starling** over, along with a trio of thrushes in the shape of **Redwing**, **Blackbird** and a lone **Fieldfare**. And, of course, **Woodpigeon**. Heading across the field towards the church,

the first bird we saw was a **Sparrowhawk**, crossing fast in front of us, our first sighting of this species on a monthly walk in 2025. Arriving at the church a **Common Buzzard** flew up from the ground, and a lone **Great Spotted Woodpecker** was seen high in a tree behind the churchyard. Alerted to a very distant **Red Kite**, we were scanning the horizon for it when a **Wren** began scolding us from the low wall around the gravestones. Next to appear was a **Grey Heron**, which flew in and dropped onto one of the small ponds in the water meadow. A lone **Magpie** was the final species we noted here.

The walk to the gate overlooking the beck revealed no new species; pausing to search the water meadows we saw our second, though equally distant, Red Kite. Even further away was a flock of fifty or so **Pink-footed Geese**. Searching through the Woodpigeon feeding in an adjacent field, a group of eight **Stock Dove** were found, just as a small flock of **Meadow Pipit** flew over. They were followed by a single **Great Tit**, the only one we saw all morning! Heading downhill to the lake, we found the usual suspects; **Moorhen**, ten **Mute Swan**, five **Gadwall** and numerous **Mallard**. Along with them were two singletons; a **Coot** on the water and a **Cormorant** in



a tree. We then walked along the path on the wooded side of the lake where we found a **Robin**, followed by the quickest glimpse of a **Water Rail** in the usual place, seen only by the two of us at the front of the group. We waited for some time for a re-appearance from this elusive rail, but it would not oblige. Incidentally, we had last seen this species in January.

Reaching the end of the lake, we moved onto the wooden bridge over the beck overlooking the reedbeds. A male **Shoveler** hove into view (our first since February), along with a number of **Teal**. Flitting through the reeds were a very mobile pair of **Stonechat**, and a **Pheasant** made itself known by calling loudly. A pair of **Song Thrush** were perched in a nearby bush along with a Redwing; this was only our second sighting of Song Thrush this year. Here we also found our second Water Rail for the morning, this one being less elusive and giving a few more of us some good views as it moved into cover. A double Water Rail day! Equally hard to find was

a **Snipe**, well hidden in the reeds, but at least it stayed still while everyone was 'got onto' it!

Thus far we had stayed dry, if somewhat cold and windswept, but on our way back towards the house we were treated to a burst of sunshine. As we were climbing the slope we heard a brief but loud burst of song – **Cettis Warbler**. The final species for the morning's list, and what a cracker. Fifteen Pink-footed Geese overhead gave closer views than the earlier flock, but as they had already been noted they could not add to the **41 species** we had on the list - not bad at all considering the weather conditions. And we had returned fifteen minutes early! However, it was a cold morning, and the thought of a hot coffee and a bite to eat was too much to resist, so no-one minded. All in all, a smashing morning with excellent company and some very nice birds. If you have not tried this walk before, why not give it a go – all are most welcome!

## Last Month's Weekend Walk

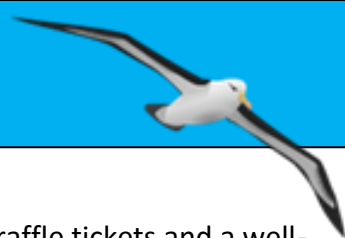
RSPB Titchwell Reserve Walk | Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November



By Janice Darch

Titchwell Reserve in north west Norfolk has a superb array of habitats ranging from woodland, carr, reedbed, fresh and brackish scapes, grazing marsh, sandy shore, sea and sand dunes. We saw over 70 species during our visit, far too many species to mention them all. We sampled each of the habitats starting with the woodland around the car park and visitor centre followed by the Fen Trail to Patsy's Scrape. Our star bird here was a Firecrest along with many other passerine species. Patsy's Scrape gave us our first wildfowl and in the distant trees a Marsh Harrier, a Buzzard and a Red Kite were perched in a line giving us a good size comparison. Overhead skeins of Pink Footed Geese were passing. Back on the main trail we watched swirling murmurations of Golden Plover, Lapwing and mixed flocks of Dunlin and Black-tailed Godwits over the Fresh Marsh. Bearded tits showed briefly to some of us. We opted to go to the beach next where, a) the tide was dropping and b) Snow Buntings had been reported, and to leave the hides until later. Sadly the Snow Buntings had fled as dog owners were letting their charges rampage over the beach and sand dunes. However scanning the sea from various points was productive our star birds being Slavonian and Red-necked Grebe with two Golden Eye, Red-throated Diver and Great-crested Grebe. We were enjoying ourselves immensely but we were also getting hungry so we decided to head back to the car park for our lunch. After eating there was still the American Golden Plover to try and find from the hides now that the waders had settled down and were not being harassed by overhead predators. Some of us took this option and successfully saw the American visitor. What a day! Everyone got some year ticks and some a lifer or two.





By John Hurst

One may be mistaken for considering this appeal in conjunction with collection buckets, raffle tickets and a well-deserved charity. Not so, the tribulations and joy derived from this activity results from pitting physical endurance against the elements, juggling unsteady optics, matching a fleeting, passing blur with memorised illustrations whilst hoping to catch a supportive 'shout' from adjacent sufferers.

As an island, we are well placed to observe passage species from numerous, well documented viewpoints in addition to regular pelagic trips offered to the more stalwart of landlubbers. My own early encounter as a 'fledgling birder' took place out of Bridlington in 1987 aboard the 1940s refurbished pleasure steamer, The Yorkshire Belle. For the princely sum of £3.50, the RSPB chartered *Migrant Seabird Cruise* included a healthy North Sea swell off Filey Brigg, lots of Long tailed and Pomarine Skuas accompanied by constant musical 'scrapings' by the 'Brid Fiddler', much to the annoyance of the hardcore birders!

Even more designed for the green faced, stomach churning disciple came trips on the boat, Sapphire, expertly captained by Joe Pender out of St Mary's, Scilly. Originally chartered as a shark fishing trip as part of the tagging, survey programme, it soon became apparent from local experts like Bob Flood that rather interesting petrels were appearing in British waters. My experience as we ventured beyond the Bishop rock, battered by open ocean currents with the senses assailed by rotten fish oil *chum* being splattered everywhere, quickly became both green and stomach churning. All this became irrelevant as the first Wilson's Petrel with tiny feet pattered into the wake, followed by a line of Cory's, Sooty and Great Shearwaters joining the frenzy.

On land, such promontories as Balranald (North Uist), Gwennap, Porthgwarra (Cornwall), Bempton, Spurn and Filey, (Yorkshire) hold fond memories when weather conditions have been conducive for the passage of Leach's Petrel, skuas, Sabine's Gull and of course the enigmatic Little Auks.

Closer to home and back to the Blue Badge *Appeal*. With most of my intermittent seawatching now taking place from Mundesley, noted by respected local elder statesman of birding, Bob Cobbold as 'a location from which you will see half as much as the Sheringham folks', the BB rules have proved intriguing. Pre 'BB', although trying to coincide high tide with a decent north easterly, I had often given up as the rickety, buffeted shelter threatened the head inland and the sum total had been two Gannets and a Carrion Crow! Not so these days as the full hour beckons, often with splendid results and I am sure that fellow members appreciate the spontaneity adding to the sense of anticipation. Recent highlights that would have been missed include a pristine drake Goldeneye and smart Snow Bunting passing by so delightfully close. On a recent occasion, as sea foam ran across the beach like white mice and I had ignored the advice to take a padded seat, hot drink and use the loo before venturing out, despair was setting in as suddenly a drunken, weary Woodcock popped over the cliff and into the village park.



What about dips? | 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019. Sheringham and dreamy dawn of passing terns. Kevin Shepherd called Andy and I. "A black tern". "Oh, OK". "No....a Black Tern!" Despite total panic in birding terms, the Sooty Tern, although at distance, passed unseen before my weary eyes. For a memorable encounter, the juvenile Pied Flycatcher that entered the seawatch shelter and flitted around for several minutes does stand out.

Finally and I am told that we are all capable of simple errors such as a Ringed Plover turned into a Grey Phalarope by excellent photographs and a Cory's Shearwater into a juvenile Gannet for me are a couple!

For those members contemplating the Blue Badge (appeal), give it a go. You only risk losing the feeling in your extremities, being baffled by the passing wraiths and humbled by the endurance of those distant travellers. For those members wearing one with pride and those who thought it up. Good for you. I'll keep looking.





## Extinction is forever:

### Reflections on the demise of the Slender-billed Curlew



By Nigel Redman

The extinction of any species is a tragic loss. It is a sobering thought to think that a bird, or any other creature, will never fly, walk or swim on our planet ever again. An estimated 187 species of birds have become extinct since 1500, most of them endemic island species which have been eradicated by invasive aliens and hunting. A few, such as the **Great Auk**, **Passenger Pigeon** or **Dodo**, are well known and well documented in the literature, but most are much more obscure – species with tiny ranges in distant lands or which have been in decline for decades. Most birders do not really expect to see a species which will become extinct in their lifetimes, yet I have the dubious distinction of having seen three birds which are very much on the brink: **Streaked Reed Warbler**, which is presumed to breed in China and winters in the Philippines, has not been seen by anyone since 2008, and **Cebu Flowerpecker**, endemic to the island of Cebu in the Philippines, has not been documented since 1997. The latter went missing once before; it had been considered extinct since 1906 before being rediscovered in 1992. It could still resurface once again, but there is so little suitable habitat left on Cebu that there is real cause for concern for its survival. I visited Cebu in December 1993 and, after an agonising wait of several hours at its only known site, a pair of these gorgeous little birds flew in and gave great views – sadly I wasn't taking photos in that pre-digital era, and it's probable that there are no photos of the species in the wild.

Much closer to home, the third species on my personal 'birds on the brink' list is **Slender-billed Curlew**, and I was particularly saddened to learn that it was officially declared extinct by IUCN in October this year. This enigmatic species should be much more familiar to British birders as it is featured in all the European field guides, despite not breeding in the region. Its breeding range is (or was) the steppes of northern Kazakhstan and western Siberia, but the precise breeding areas remain unknown, and very few nests were ever found. Like many waders, it undertook a long migration to its wintering grounds, and in the Slender-billed Curlew's case, it headed southwest to the Mediterranean region, and in particular NW Africa, passing through several eastern European countries en route. The reasons for its decline are unclear, but habitat loss and hunting are the most likely causes. It is known that thousands were shot in Italy (and elsewhere), and wetlands in Morocco were extensively drained in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, Krushchev's 'Virgin Lands Campaign' transformed huge areas of the Kazakh steppes into arable land in the 1950s, and so the Slender-billed Curlew was being hit on its breeding

*Slender-billed Curlew (adult), Merja Zerga, January 1988 (Arnoud van den Berg)*



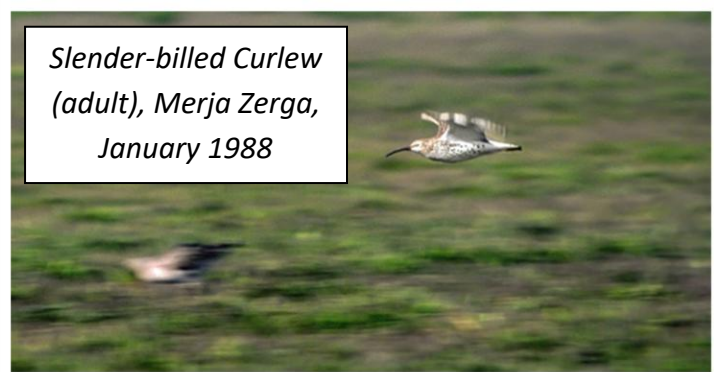
and wintering grounds and on migration. Although sizeable flocks were reported as recently as 1974 in Morocco, the bird had been in decline for decades. However, as a long-distance migrant, natural vagrancy was inevitable, and the species has been recorded as vagrant in most European countries – except Britain. In fact, it probably should be on the British List, as there are a number of ‘British’ specimens from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but none has adequate documentation to establish its provenance beyond doubt, and therefore they cannot be admitted to the British List. There was a promising claim of a bird in Northumberland in May 1998 which was accepted for a while but, although it was fairly well documented and seen by many observers, the accompanying photographs and video were not good enough to clinch the identification. This record was subsequently rejected as ‘Not Proven’, and thus Slender-billed Curlew will now never make it onto the British List.

The identification of Slender-billed Curlew has long been over-simplified. Although obviously a curlew and much smaller than a typical Eurasian Curlew, its features are more subtle. The size of a Whimbrel, it lacks the latter’s prominent head stripes and has a much finer bill. In adult plumage, the heart-shaped spots on the white flanks are a good feature, and adults are unlikely to be overlooked if seen well. But immature birds are much harder to identify, and are easily confusable with small immature Eurasian Curlews – which are not as uncommon as one might think. Only recently has it transpired that the pattern of the underside of the primaries is one of the best ID features.

As an avid Western Palearctic birder in the 1970s and 1980s, I was well aware of the existence and rarity of Slender-billed Curlew. I first visited Morocco in 1977, and although a spring trip was unlikely to reveal this species, the old winter reports of flocks of Slender-billed Curlews in the 1960s continued to pique my interest. By the early 1980s, I was leading annual spring bird tours to Morocco for Birdquest. Then, in November 1986, we offered something completely different. We advertised a tour to Morocco entitled “In Search of the Slender-billed Curlew”, and it filled up. The premise was to visit all the Atlantic coastal wetlands of Morocco to search for this species. At this time, I knew of just four records of the species in Morocco in the previous ten years, all from widely scattered sites. To give us full flexibility, we did the trip as a self-drive tour with four hire cars, starting in the north and working our way south. On Day 3, we found ourselves at the large coastal wetland of Merja Zerga in northern Morocco. As this was a huge area to cover, we decided to split our group in two. The plan was to walk around the edge and meet halfway. Mark Beaman’s group departed for the south, and I marched my group to the eastern shore. As I reached the edge of the lagoon, I set up my scope and immediately located a Slender-billed Curlew. I can still vividly remember the elation! Even better, there were up to five birds feeding in the wet grassland, together with Black-tailed Godwits. Naturally, we stayed with them for as long as we could, but eventually they flew off, presumably to roost. After a few hours, Mark’s group arrived, but we could not relocate the curlews. We returned the following morning, and all five birds were again present – to the great relief of the other half of the group. We continued our tour, surveying Morocco’s coastal wetlands as far south as Puerto Cansado – about 450 km south of Agadir – but we found no further curlews.

The following winter, in December 1987 and January 1988, Arnoud van den Berg (the editor of *Dutch Birding*) and his wife Cecilia Bosman undertook a more formal survey of Moroccan wetlands in search of Slender-billed Curlew. Like us, the only curlews they found were at Merja Zerga, but this time there were only three. However, these birds continued to return to Merja Zerga, and each winter 2–3 individuals were regularly recorded there until the last bird was seen in February 1995. There was another record of a single bird at Merja Zerga in February 1998, but this was not photographed and, together with several later claims in other countries up to 2001, these records are not accepted as fully documented. Thus, the last unequivocal sighting of Slender-billed Curlew was in February 1995 at Merja Zerga.

I returned to Morocco in December 1990 and again in January 1993. On both occasions we observed two Slender-billed Curlews at Merja Zerga. On my final visit in November 1995, we failed to find any. It was already too late. The last bird had not returned to its favoured wintering grounds and was presumed dead. It’s not likely that any had been overlooked, as by then many people were looking for them. When I arrived at Merja Zerga in December 1990 I was greeted by several enthusiastic self-styled Moroccan guides, all offering to show me Slender-billed Curlew! In the intervening four years from my first visit, an entire curlew industry had sprung up. The Café Milano in nearby Moulay Bousselham had become a place of pilgrimage for hundreds of birders who came for a last chance to see a





Slender-billed Curlew. There was even a log book at the café, for birders to record their sightings. Hassan was the chief bird guide and he knew exactly where to find the birds, but there were many other 'unofficial' guides, eager to get in on the act. It was such a contrast from the visit in 1986, when we did not see a single other birder, or local, at the curlew site. The Slender-billed Curlew twitch had started quickly, with the first birders from the UK visiting in January 1988, days after Arnoud and Cecilia had re-found three birds at Merja Zerga. Thereafter, these last Slender-billed Curlews proved to be a big attraction for visiting birders for the next seven winters, as well as providing a source of income for local guides and businesses.

There is never a good time for extinction but, in this case, it is a great sadness that digital technology came just too late for the Slender-billed Curlew. There are virtually no sound recordings of the species and very few photographs (all pre-digital). Its breeding grounds are effectively unknown, yet just a few years later scientists could have used stable isotope analysis to help determine the origin of the birds wintering in Morocco. Even better, one of the birds could have been caught and fitted with a satellite tag to track its movements. Where did those last three birds go to each summer? Where did they stop over en route? We will never know.

The demise of the Slender-billed Curlew is surely a lesson for us all. Could more have been done to save them? Did the reports of hundreds in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century give a false sense of security? Were they even correctly identified? How did we get from a flock of 123 in Morocco in 1974 to just 5 in 1986 and none in 1995? It seems likely that the species was in big trouble long before conservationists realised and that a rapid decline took place in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 1980s several expeditions were mounted to look for the breeding grounds. They were unsuccessful. There was even a task force of scientists on standby, ready to go to the site of a credible sighting at short notice. Databases were created of all known recent records, and (finally) we learnt how to identify them. But it was all too late.



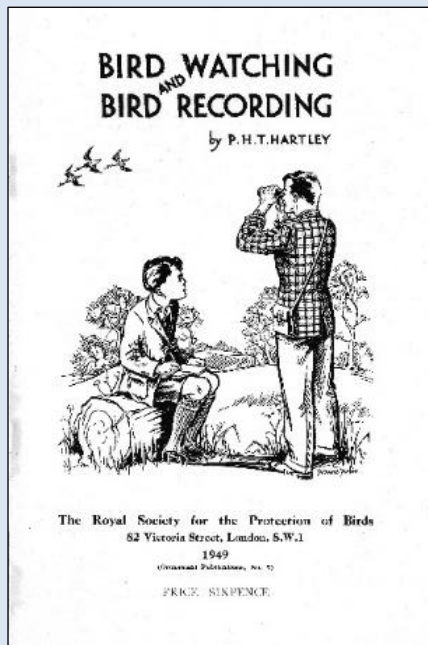
*Slender-billed Curlew, Merja Zerga (Nigel Redman). I located my original transparencies for this article, but sadly the colours have faded with time; I should not have waited until 2025 to scan this. Although it is hard to see much detail on my terrible photo, the size and shape of the bill is distinctive. Date unknown, but probably December 1990.*

## RSPB Young Birders 1940s Style – Part 2

By Carol Thornton



A quick reminder – in October we received some unexpected mail. An ex-colleague from years ago had been sorting out his attic and had come across a few RSPB leaflets from the 1940s and thought we would be interested. He was correct! One of the booklets was called '**Bird Watching and Bird Recording**' by **P H T Hartley**. It is a 10-page story produced for the youth market by their **Junior Bird Recorders' Club** and takes the form of a conversation during a day out between a pair of cousins. The older cousin is teaching their younger relative how to get the most out of their birding. It does quite a good job of covering a range of areas and still has relevance today. We put the first half of this extract in the October newsletter and this is the second half. You will need to enlarge it and apologies, this is as clear as I could get it.



**Older Cousin:** It is a lot of work; but I find I quite enjoy transcribing my notes and the idea of the system is that I should be able to turn up all I know about—shall we say—the food of the Song Thrush (we were talking about that this morning) as quickly as possible.

**Younger Cousin:** Is that the lot?

**Older Cousin:** Not quite. I keep a Diary each day—like this—with a record of the weather and temperature, and a list of the birds I have seen, with comments on where they were, and how many of 'em. And, by the way, do you keep an ordinary diary—a diary about what you do each day?

**Younger Cousin:** No.

**Older Cousin:** Then in that case I'd strongly advise you to make some note in your bird diary, about the chances you've had for seeing birds in the course of each day. There's an ornithological chestnut about a New England bird club which decided to make an exact record of the dates when the summer migrants reached New York State. When they came to compile the records, they found that all the species first appeared at the week-ends! So it's always worth while making sure that you are not mistaking your opportunities for bird-watching for some interesting routine in the life of a bird.

**Younger Cousin:** Why do you have all those graphs pinned up on the wall?

**Older Cousin:** Some of them are results of bits of work I've finished, but some of them, like this one with the coloured pins stuck in it, are what I call "running graphs," and show the results of things I am doing now. I alter them each night, when I have finished writing up my diary for the day.

**Younger Cousin:** I don't think I quite follow.

**Older Cousin:** Then have a look at this one. It shows the hours in each day when I have heard Swallows sing. I'll tell you why I'm interested in that some other time. The coloured pins (they call 'em Map pins at the stationers) mark my results up to last night. Suppose that today I hear Swallow song in the hours between 8 and 9, between 10 and 11 and between 5 and 6. Tonight, I move the pins for those three hours up one place; and as I do it night after night, so I see how Swallow song varies in the course of the day. At the end of each month I rule in the results as they then stand in colour—then if

LATER.

**Older Cousin:** I say, we're going to be frightfully late for lunch. I thought I was feeling pretty empty. Come on home.

**Younger Cousin:** Will you show me how you keep your notes this afternoon?

**Older Cousin:** Yes, if you like. But note taking is like that Kipling poem about there being—"—nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays, And every single one of them is right." I suppose there must be as many methods of recording as there are field ornithologists. I've found mine works, but lots of other people would show you other methods and say just the same of them.

AFTER LUNCH.

**Older Cousin:** Come on up to my room—I've got all the books up there. Now, first of all, you'll want a Field Note Book, to carry in your pocket, and write down your observations the very moment you've made them.

**Younger Cousin:** But wouldn't it be easier to write them when you get home?

**Older Cousin:** It might be easier, but the results wouldn't be much use. It is positively frightening to find how quickly your mind will begin to add all kinds of fancy details which weren't really there if you try to keep things in your memory. So make a rule always to write the thing down at once. Of course, if you are watching at a nest for hours at a time, you can't hope to keep the record in your memory. But in any case, don't try.

**Younger Cousin:** But suppose you saw something frightfully important when you just couldn't out with your note-

there's a change in the amount which Swallows sing at any one part of the day, it shows up during the next month.

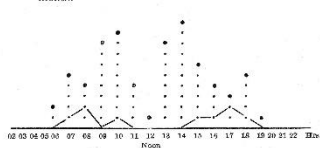


Figure II. Changes in singe activity of Swallows in the course of the day: figure based on observations at Barmington, Cambridgeshire, in 1939. Results are shown up to May 31st. The large black dots represent the positions of the map pins on the evening of May 31st. The smaller dots represent previous positions of the pins. Results for April connected by a line.

**Younger Cousin:** Really, all you've been telling me means that if I observe carefully and record very fully, I'm bound to be a good ornithologist.

**Older Cousin:** That's almost all the truth, but there is one other thing. I saw it just exactly the other day in a book by Professor Raven (who, incidentally, has written some very enjoyable bird books). The passage struck me so much that I copied it down in my common-place book. Yes—here it is: "Imagination and sympathy, uncorrupted by the interpretation of the star and the stone, become essential for the explanation of life." If you're going to do any good, you've got to be really fond of birds, and sympathize with them. That doesn't mean you must think that they have minds like ours—they are very different in many ways—but you need to like them not because you feel that they are really little feathered men in miniature, but because they aren't. You have to love them, so to speak, on their terms—simply as birds. Here, I'm starting another sermon; that's enough talk—let's go and do some more bird-watching.

book and write it down? Suppose I saw something while I was attending your funeral—

**Older Cousin:** In that case, you little ghoul, you might write "Record made two hours later" at the head of your note. And here's another point; always get your field note-books with stiff covers. They are much more comfortable to write in when you are standing up. And write your field notes in pencil. Then if you fall into a river, the record won't be all blurred, as it would be if you had used ink.

Now look. Each field note-book has a number. I write it on the cover in Chinese White. The next thing is an Index Book, like this. There's a page for each species—here's the one for the Little Grebe. You see that it says here—

XV. 13.iv.34, 16.iv.34 (3), 17.iv.34, 19.iv.34— and so on—That means that in Field Note Book No. XV I've got notes on Little Grebes on April 13th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 1934. The three in brackets after the date of the 16th means that on that day there are three separate entries about Little Grebes; and the plus after the date on the 19th means that that note refers to some other bird as well as the grebe.

**Younger Cousin:** What do the red lines through them mean?

**Older Cousin:** They mean that I've already copied them into my permanent Note Book. You see, the Index Book is simply a list of the occasions when I've made notes on each species.

Now, here are my Permanent Note Books. You'll see that they are actually a lot of loose leaf covers, with the pages held in place by clips, or by cords running through holes. If you will take my advice, you'll always use loose-leaf note-books—then you can have as much space or as little as you require for each subject.

**Younger Cousin:** How do you mean, each subject? Judging by the labels on the backs, you have one book for each bird.

**Older Cousin:** Yes, that's true. But it wouldn't help much if I had notes on breeding habits, and migrations, and food, and song all muddled together, just in the order I had made the observations. So, in each book I have a series of sections—Displays, Nest-building, Incubation, Food, Migration, and so on, and I copy my field notes into one (or more) suitable sections.

**Younger Cousin:** It seems a lot of work.

## A NOTE ON BIRD BOOKS

There are hundreds of bird-books varying in value from the indispensable to the useless. You will need a text-book to help you to identify your birds: a hand-book of bird study is useful: and you will want to read about some special subjects and species.

Among text-books, one of the best-known is T. A. Coward's *The Birds of the British Isles and their Eggs*, in two volumes, published by Warne. C. A. John's *British Birds in their Haunts* (Routledge and Kegan Paul) is another old favourite; it has recently been brought up to date by Mr. W. B. Alexander. A smaller work is N. H. Joy's *How to know British Birds*, published by Witherby. If you can save up enough money *The Handbook of British Birds*, also published by Witherby, in five volumes, is by far the fullest text-book. Even if you cannot afford to buy it, you should try to borrow it from the county library. Hand-books of bird study include E. A. Armstrong's *The Way Bird Live* (Lindsay Drummond), E. A. R. Emlen's *The British Bird* (Oxford University Press) and E. M. Nicholson's stimulating *How Birds Live* (Williams and Norgate).

A. Landborough Thomson's *Bird Migration* (Witherby) gives a concise summary of migration studies. H. E. H. Howard's *Territory in Bird Life* (Collins) is one of the most important bird books in the English language; some of his later works, though full of value, are rather stiff reading. David Lack's *Life of the Robin* (Witherby) and F. Heatherley's *Peregrine Falcon at the Eyre* (Country Life) are outstanding examples of single species studies, and G. K. Yeates's *The Life of the Rook* (Philip Allan) is full of interest.

Among the books which deal with the birds of a single area, some, such as E. L. Turner's *Broadland Birds* (Country Life) and B. H. Ryves's *Bird Life in Cornwall* (Collins) have far more than a merely local interest. If you can get Abel Chapman's *Bird Life of the Borders* from the county library, it has some magnificent chapters on wild fowl.

W. H. Hudson's *British Birds* (Longmans, Green) is probably still the most useful text-book on bird songs. E. A. Armstrong's *Bird Behaviour and Display* (Lindsay Drummond) is a very treasure-house of information. There is no good text book of bird foods.

## Check This Out!

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

-  [Global BirdFair donation boosts protection for Antipodean Albatross - BirdGuides \[09-Nov\]](#)
-  [Snow Goose overpopulation threatens Arctic tundra - BirdGuides \[26-Nov\]](#)
-  [Teesside bird tracking antenna picks up first sightings - BBC News \[28-Nov\]](#)
-  [Tees Valley conservationists celebrate barn owl increase - BBC News \[15-Nov\] – this is somewhat different to stats we are anecdotally hearing reported in for Norfolk this year.](#)
-  [Nature reserve installs bird protection film on windows - BBC News \[10-Nov\]](#)
-  [Avian flu latest: it could be a worrying winter ahead RSPB Website \[02-Dec\]](#)
-  [France's birds start to show signs of recovery after bee-harming pesticide ban | Birds | The Guardian \[17-Nov\]](#)







## 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?

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

A bit of a change this month - the descriptions shown are of **three species** listed in the three books below. Can you tell what they are?

Answers are at the back of this newsletter, along with a link through to a website where you can listen to audio excerpts of the species concerned.

"Hard, fast metallic 'chuch-uch-uch-uch-uch'; twangy 'tsooooe'. Song (often long, bouncy song flight) mixes calls with jingly trill 'trrrreeee'."

*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*

"The call is a trilling 'tji-tji-tji'."

*from RSPB Handbook of British Birds 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves*

"Very like (... above ...) and difficult to distinguish. The reeling trill is on average a little softer and has more cracked and almost 'lispings' quality, and the 'chett-chett-chett' call is also softer and higher in tone."

*from Collins BIRD GUIDE 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Mullarney, Svensson, Zetterström*

## Wordsearch



This month, we have the 12 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in December 2024 for which we have just one records – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)


Bar-tailed Godwit  
Caspian Gull  
Corn Bunting  
Goshawk  
Greenshank  
Merlin  
Raven  
Red-necked Grebe  
Rock Pipit  
Short-eared Owl  
Tundra Bean Goose  
White-fronted Goose

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





No new ‘Accepted’ records from the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter but their current ‘**NRC work in progress**’ file has been updated to 13-Oct-25. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a ‘**BBRC work in progress**’ file available on their website [Dec-24].



2025

Club

Stats

460 individual members

across 307 households

85,200

bird records logged

251

bird species reported

NENBC Website

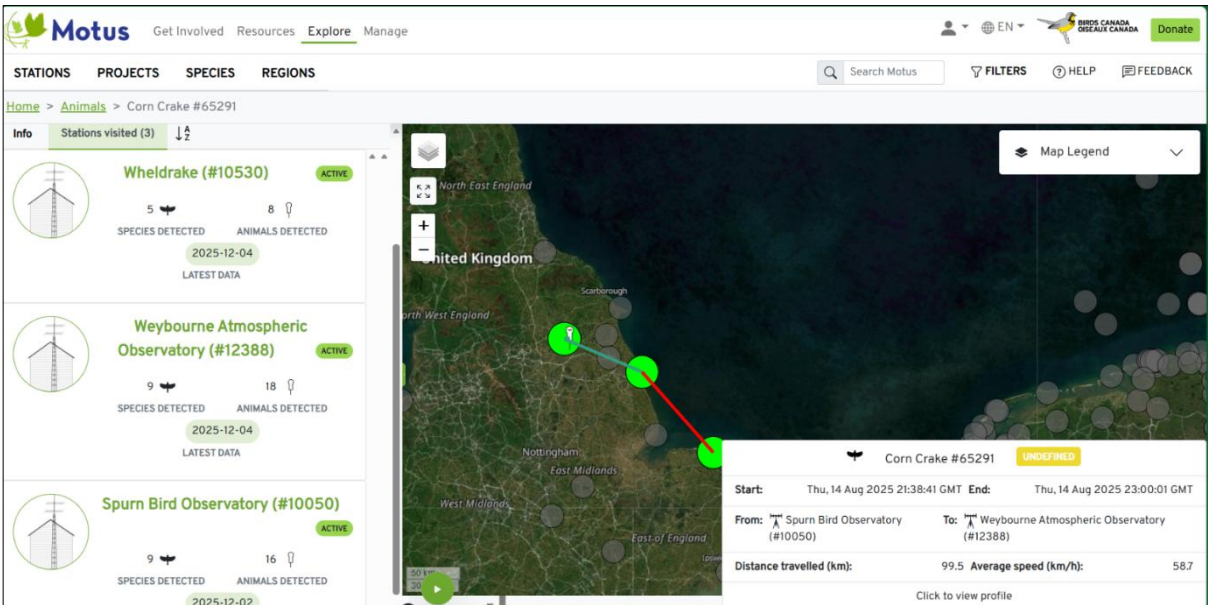


A huge thanks to everyone who has uploaded records to our website so far this year date – nice to see some of our new members getting to grips with the website. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports. Not started adding records yet? Plenty of time to get going this! If you need any assistance, just drop Carol a line on [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk) or through the messaging element of the website. Please keep adding all your sightings to our website at [www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club](http://www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club) (or typing ‘NENBC’ into your search engine will get you there). Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting or need assistance on how to upload your records.

**New Motus Data:** As mentioned at the November Indoor Meeting, the Motus station we part-funded at Weybourne picked up a Corn Crane back in August. Here’s a screen dump:

You can delve into this data and the rest of the Motus project here:  
<https://motus.org/>

Another recent record (thanks Steve Stansfield!) was of a quick movement of Redwing from Norway to Cley - 418 miles in 12 hours, average speed of ~ 35mph. The Redwing was ringed/tagged on 13 November on the tiny island of Store Færder Which lies 60 miles south of Oslo. It then passed a motus tower at 1830 at Lindesnes - about the most South Western point in Norway. It was then detected by the NENBC Motus tower at the Weybourne Atmospheric Station just inside the Cley Sq at 0630 on 14<sup>th</sup> November.



Social Media



Steve Stansfield @bardseyobwarden.bsky.social · 17d

Red Kite at Kelling today.



5



Ken T @velociraptor500.bsky.social

Birds visiting the garden early this morning.



5 Nov 2025, 19:49

Everybody can reply



Ken T @velociraptor500.bsky.social

You know winter is not far away when the Golden Plover start to appear on the local fields. About 150 seen this morning, never seeming to settle and flying up frequently and as they turn in the sunlight their underbellies flash like silver - amazing to watch.



18 Nov 2025, 20:00

Everybody can reply



## Star Badges

**CONGRATULATIONS Tony Forster on your GOLD plus Stella Baylis, Nick Kimber and David Griffiths on your SILVER.**

Currently, **6** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **25** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **86** 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 achievers this month but a couple of members now really close!**

We currently have **27** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 11] and **9** who have achieved **SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 8 | Inland:1].

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



**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

**CONGRATULATIONS to Phil Borley, Trevor Williams, Mark Clements, David Griffiths and Russell Page whose submissions were signed off by the Peer Review Group last month.**

**We currently have 5 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!**



## **Celebrate Like the Birds**

**Holidays are special to us...we excitedly await them...  
and when those days arrive...we love to celebrate them.**

**On birthdays we make wishes, open presents  
after blowing out the candles on our cakes.  
At Christmas we sing carols, open presents  
and eat cookies that we've baked.**

**Every morning on my walk I see birds flying...  
and hear them singing as I pass by...  
It looks and sounds like they're celebrating.  
throwing a party in the sky.**



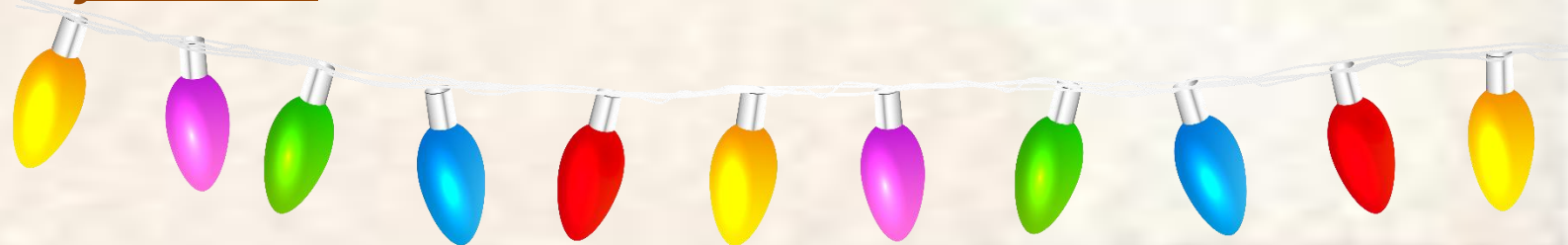
**Which makes me wonder as I listen to the joy they  
are creating...  
What is it about every day they could be celebrating?**

**Birds do not have calendars...no special dates to claim...  
no holidays to anticipate...yet they celebrate each day the same.**

**They don't need to wait to blow out candles...  
for a special day to come their way.  
Every morning they celebrate...opening the gift of another day.**

**Celebrating every day they are alive...  
Is that one of the craziest things you ever heard???  
Or:  
Could we all learn a little bit about joy and happiness...  
by watching...  
and listening  
to the birds?**

**© Jim Yerman**







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

A crossword puzzle grid featuring two yellow compass roses on the left and right sides. The grid contains the following words:

**Across:**

- 10. Z H
- 16. F M X N
- 20. J S T O
- 27. D X Z G W T
- 30. P E O W N K
- 38. X J S C Z R C M
- 40. D H E F F Z L X
- 49. E A M E R O M B E T
- 54. W M Q P R W J H S Y
- 60. K D K U O O Q M V V L M
- 64. W L L C A A B W H Y G X
- 70. V K L K V P H N C L D J N A
- 74. Z O P C A S P I A N G U L L
- 80. D J I K I T V I I W B X F C W E
- 84. V P Q U E U P C Z L G G M T X
- 90. T I V E O V J Y T I J O P N F S N K
- 94. T O C T U N D R A B F A N G O O S E
- 100. T H W F G R C T K X W R A V A C O M Q U
- 104. D C Q R J X F R A X G R E E N S H A N K
- 110. U H O M Q O M E R L I N H A W W G L O T P H
- 114. Y B I H A T I W D O G D E L I A T R A B C S
- 120. T M V F Y W H I T E F R O N T E D G O O S E W O
- 126. E R E D N E C K E D G R E B E V R U G T U V V J T P
- 132. S U F G T E B R D M E W R M Q E X I S X W V Z R A J
- 138. K O E H H Z J R A V E N L S S H O R T E A R E D O W L O
- 144. E A P R C O R N B U N T I N G W Q B O L N A K O N H L S I V

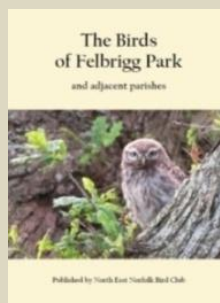
**Down:**

- 1. T E L H
- 5. I F W K
- 9. N Q D Z
- 13. D R M W

## 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