



# The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



**June 2024 - Issue 108**

**The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter**

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**Through a Lens**



By Nigel Redman

Cormorants are not my favourite birds. That may sound a little harsh, but there are around 11,000 species of birds in the world and most of the cormorants are just black, occasionally with some white bits. There are currently 42 species of cormorants and shags throughout the world, with the greatest diversity in the southern hemisphere (although many of these are very similar and have only recently been split). We have just two species in Britain (excluding vagrants): the very familiar Great Cormorant and the exclusively coastal European Shag – the latter is a scarce bird in Norfolk. The Great Cormorant is the most widespread species of the family, occurring almost worldwide except South America and Antarctica, and can be found in both coastal and inland waters. It is loathed by fishermen who regard it as a serious (and more successful) competitor, but in China fishermen use them to catch the fish for them! One species is flightless, the Galapagos Cormorant, and the Red-legged Cormorant of coastal Peru and Chile is actually very attractive!

But there is one species in the family that is almost forgotten today, but which truly changed the course of history. This is the Guanay Cormorant which breeds on islands off the coast of Peru and Chile. The clue is in the name. I'm sure we all know that 'guano' refers to bird droppings, specifically those of a small number of seabird species, and most famously from the Guanay Cormorant. It had been known for a long time that guano makes very good fertiliser, and the very best guano comes from the Guanay Cormorant. There is a simple reason for this. The islands that the colonial cormorants breed on are hot and arid, receiving virtually no rainfall. Therefore, the guano is not regularly washed away as in other colonial seabird species. It just builds up year-after-year, century-after-century, eventually forming a hard crust up to 50 metres deep on the flat rocky surface. Quite why cormorants like to nest in their own poop is a bit of a mystery, but Guanay Cormorants nest on poop that is centuries old!

The Guanay Cormorant's story is one of greed, vast wealth and unimaginable suffering. Stephen Moss dedicates a whole chapter to it in his fascinating book, *Ten Birds that Changed the World* (which I thoroughly recommend). It is a fact that the use of guano as fertiliser transformed the rural landscape of Britain, Europe and North America, enabling us to grow and produce more food – although, ironically, by artificially prolonging the life of the soil, farmers ultimately failed to create a sustainable, long-term and wildlife-friendly method of producing food. But before the advent of

modern, chemically-produced fertilisers, guano was a treasured commodity and a very effective fertiliser. Indeed, the Guanay Cormorant was probably the most valuable wild bird in human history.

Perhaps the most remarkable, and sinister, fact of this story is that almost the entire guano trade of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was controlled by a single man – an Englishman named William Gibbs. He amassed a huge fortune from his near-monopoly of the Peruvian guano trade, so much that he was able to buy his own stately home, Tyntesfield, near Bristol in 1843, renovating and expanding it at great expense, and filling it with thousands of works of art. This extraordinary and extravagant building is now managed by the National Trust. But Gibbs' fortune was made at a cost, and a lot of suffering. Tens of thousands of Chinese labourers were tricked into working for Gibbs' enterprise, and treated as slaves. Each man was forced to excavate 5 tons of stinking guano per day, with little rest or nourishment, and many died in the process. This dark side to William's Gibbs' success has been conveniently overlooked by many, but Gibbs was not the first nor the last entrepreneur to exploit fellow humans in their greed and quest for wealth. Meanwhile, the humble Guanay Cormorant is still producing guano off the coast of Peru, but now it is left in comparative peace, as cheaper modern alternatives have largely replaced guano as a fertiliser.

Recently, I was fortunate enough to see my first Guanay Cormorants on the coast of Chile. They were mainly black with white underparts, and a little bit of red around the eye – so, much like most other cormorants then. But now I know the background behind this remarkable species, maybe I like cormorants a little bit more now.







By Carol Thornton

**Hi folks. Welcome to our June newsletter.** Thanks to the contributors as always and a shout to anyone else out there – I would love to hear from you with any articles or suggestions for upcoming newsletters, long or less long, so please do get in touch.

We have received final environmental consultancy reports back from all four of this year's University of East Anglia students and we are very pleased with the results. We'll be publishing the Executive Summaries in the next 4 newsletters so look out for those in the coming months. Interesting reading!

I know many of you have, like me, started using the [Merlin App](#) to try to get to grips with bird songs and calls. I came across an interesting article on the Cornell All About Birds website "[What's That Bird Song? Merlin Bird ID Can Tell You](#)" and learnt a new fact. I had kind of imagined that Merlin compared the sound recordings to identify a bird but it actually compares the images of the sonograms the sound produces similar to the way that it compares photos. Well I found that fascinating anyway!

Last month's **Through a Lens** subject for the front page was **JUVENILE BIRDS** and our cover images this time are Great Tit (Ken Thornton), Blackbird (Philip Cartlidge), Starling (Andrew Crossley), Tawny Owl (Richard Farrow) and Mute Swan (Mark Clements). The **theme for June is HIRUNDINES** - let's see how your photography skills are at getting these fast-moving birds – personally I am a bit rubbish, but still enthusiastic!

Rather than have an Editor's Pic of the Month photo going forward I thought you might like to look at my choice of photos from the website each month that don't make it in to the Monthly Report as they aren't classed behind the scenes as the 'rare or interesting' species. Here's May's selection: Skylark from Claire Brayne, Wren from Richard Farrow, Guillemot from Thomas Wright, Sparrowhawk and prey from Trevor Williams, Jackdaw from Richard Farrow and Sanderling from Jane Crossen. Oh and Tony Forster, obviously I have searched for that Sedge Warbler in your pic but I guess you must have been just listening to it that evening!

## Can You Help ???

The production of the NENBC Bird Report 2023 is well under way so many thanks to those species writers who contributed to the main text. For those of you who opted for one in your annual subscription, your copy will be with you at some point during the summer. **This is a call for all those budding artists out there** – if you have any bird artwork you have done of any species that we had in the club area last year which you would like us to consider using to illustrate our publication then please scan or photograph them (squarely if possible!) and send them on to Carol on [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk).

We look forward to seeing them as always - thank you!





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

**\* Roger & Margaret Emmens \* David Colbourne \***

422 individual  
members across  
274 households

45,155  
bird records  
logged

207 bird species  
reported

Please keep adding all your sightings to our website at [www.nenbc.co.uk](http://www.nenbc.co.uk). Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting or need assistance on how to upload your records. More information from our website records, Twitterings and social media presence in **Data, Records, Posts & Tweets** from [page 33](#).

## Club Achievement Awards

### Star Badges

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

Currently, **4** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **21** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **83** members now hold the **BRONZE STAR** status.

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

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



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

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

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

### Eco-Badges

**Congratulations to Elizabeth Shadbolt who achieved her Inland Green Badge last month and to Dave Billham who managed his Coastal Super-Green Badge. Woo-hoo!**

We currently have **26** members who have achieved their **GREEN ECO-BADGES** [Coastal: 16 | Inland: 10] and 5 who have achieved **SUPER-GREEN** [Coastal: 4 | 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!

See conservation article on [page 28](#) :**Green Birding on a Bike**



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.





By Carol Thornton

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

≈ 8,300 individual records covering 174 bird species were added in May

There were 8,329 records submitted for May which is 1,078 less than those submitted for the same period last year and 398 less than the previous month of April. Total species records were 174 which was 8 more than was recorded in the same period in 2023.

The more unusual records this month were **MANX SHEARWATER, GLOSSY IBIS, HONEY-BUZZARD, MONTAGU'S HARRIER, RED-BACKED SHRIKE, GOLDEN ORIOLE, BLYTH'S REED WARBLER** with full reports on each species below.

**Brent Goose** There were ten coastal records in May from Weybourne Camp through to Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs. All records were of 8 or fewer birds, except for a high count of 22 east at Weybourne Camp on 20<sup>th</sup>. The record of a single bird west on 9<sup>th</sup> was speed checked through our WhatsApp Seawatching group from Cromer to Weybourne and has added to our growing database of flight speeds.

**Barnacle Goose** Seventeen records over 9 days across the month from coastal locations between Weybourne Camp and Cromer plus two sightings from Muckleburgh Hill. Most commonly there were records of 7 or 8 birds with a high count of 14 high east from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Mandarin Duck** A drake was on the bank of the farm reservoir at Thornage on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-breasted Merganser** Two birds were on the sea off Weybourne on 1<sup>st</sup> and a pair flew east off Weybourne Camp on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Partridge** Eight reports of 1-2 birds in the first half of the month from Felbrigg Park & Lake, Thurgarton, Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course and Bodham, with one member recording a couple of birds twice at Felmingham using the 'At Home' tag on the website. *Photo 1 courtesy of Philip Cartlidge*



**Quail** A Third Party Report of a single bird heard calling just after dark at Thorpe Market on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Nightjar** Up to 8 birds were at Kelling Heath between 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, predominantly heard churring, flight calling or wing clapping but with a couple of clear sightings which included both male and female birds. Other reports came from Buxton Heath on 14<sup>th</sup> and a single seen and heard at Weybourne Heath from 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Cuckoo** Twenty five records of individuals during May from 1<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> covering a range of coastal (2) and inland (8) locations. Notable records came at Felbrigg Park & Lake on the monthly club walk on 15<sup>th</sup> (see [page 14](#) for walk write-up) and a bird a long way out off Sheringham on 22<sup>nd</sup> where the seasoned observer commented that they had never seen one staying out at sea before and they had initially assumed a bird of prey.

**Turtle Dove** Forty eight records of 1-2 birds at Kelling Heath from 9<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere individual birds flew west inland from Beeston Bump on 5<sup>th</sup>, west along railway at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 9<sup>th</sup> and west at Weybourne Camp the same day, on wires North Barningham on 19<sup>th</sup> and west again Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Club on 27<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 2 courtesy of Alan Stevens*



**Crane** Two Cranes were recorded flying west along the Norfolk coast as far as The Wash on 23<sup>rd</sup> and were recorded in our area past West Runton and Weybourne Camp.

**Avocet** Two birds west Muckleburgh Hill on 5<sup>th</sup>, then east Weybourne Camp on 12<sup>th</sup> and west there on 25<sup>th</sup>. A single was west there on 28<sup>th</sup> and on 29<sup>th</sup> a single and later a pair were reported west past the Weybourne sites.

**Grey Plover** Singles were over Weybourne Camp on 12<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and one was west at Sheringham on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Whimbrel** Thirty seven records throughout the month from coastal locations Weybourne Camp to Cromer Lighthouse & Cliffs. High counts were of 6 past Sheringham on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Weybourne Camp on 4<sup>th</sup> plus 5 past Weybourne on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. One record of a single bird slightly inland at Beeston Common on 5<sup>th</sup> via a noc-mig night recording.

*Photo 3 courtesy of Mark Clements*



**Bar-tailed Godwit** On 1<sup>st</sup> there were reports of 13 birds east at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs, including a flock of 7, during a 2½ hour seawatch plus up to 33 past Weybourne the same day. There were 2 birds recorded past Weybourne on 3<sup>rd</sup>, singles at Weybourne Camp on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and one west at Cromer again on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Knot** On 3<sup>rd</sup>, 13 birds were observed west at Weybourne and 18 at Sheringham followed by 20 west at Weybourne Camp on 4<sup>th</sup>. Two were on the beach there on 10<sup>th</sup> and 26 flew west on 22<sup>nd</sup> during a seawatch.

**Woodcock** A single flew west over Kelling Heath on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Wood Sandpiper** One flew west calling, Muckleburgh Hill, on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Kittiwake** Over 50 records along the coast from Weybourne Camp to Cromer throughout the month. With the exception of 37 at Weybourne Camp on 12<sup>th</sup>, during the first 2 weeks records were of 1-8 birds but thereafter virtually all records were in double figures, many between 20 and 60. High count was 213 at Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs during a 2 hour seawatch.

**Little Gull** Two sub-adults east, close in shore, past Cromer Lighthouse & Cliffs during 2 hour seawatch on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Mediterranean Gull** There were 17 records mostly of 1-6 birds at a range of coastal locations. The high count was 10 during a seawatch at Weybourne on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Sandwich Tern** Records along the coast Weybourne Camp through to Cromer. Lots of double-figure counts from seawatching sessions, with high counts of 119 at Weybourne Camp on 16<sup>th</sup> and 180 Weybourne on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Tern** A few records from the beginning of the month with the majority of sightings in the second half. Most were single figure records with high count of 115 at Weybourne Camp on 4<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 4 courtesy of Mark Clements*



**Arctic Tern** Three birds west Weybourne Camp on 4<sup>th</sup> and a single flew north over the Camp and out to sea to north east on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Arctic Skua** One past Sheringham on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Puffin** One east past Sheringham on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-throated Diver** All 10 records were of single birds, predominantly seen passing through on seawatches, with the exception of individuals on the sea in the Weybourne area on 6<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-throated Diver** One west mid-range in summer plumage off Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs during a seawatch on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Northern Diver** One west off Sheringham on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Storm Petrel** Sadly (for the petrel anyway), the only record was of a ringed individual being eaten by a Peregrine chick at Cromer church on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Fulmar** There were 90 records throughout the month of 1-9 local birds but on the 31<sup>st</sup> there was a steady passage west, clearly not local birds, with up to 77 recorded at Sheringham and 55 at Weybourne Camp. *Photo 5 courtesy of Richard Farrow*



**Manx Shearwater** Up to 4 west and 3 east off Sheringham on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Shag** A single bird on sea briefly at Weybourne Camp on 17<sup>th</sup>.



**Glossy Ibis** Two birds were reported heading south east over West Beckham Old Allotments (a Felbeck Trust site) on 2<sup>nd</sup> and there were reports of a single bird at Weybourne Camp on 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Spoonbill** Thirteen reports in May, mostly of 1-2 birds, over Weybourne Camp (high counts of 3 there on 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>), Muckleburgh Hill, Inceborough, West Runton (high count of 5 there on 23<sup>rd</sup>) and Bacton. *Photo 6 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Cattle Egret** A single bird east, then turned back west over Weybourne Camp on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Great White Egret** Eight records, all of flying birds. Two seen from Muckleburgh Hill and 1 at Weybourne Camp on 5<sup>th</sup> then no further records until 19<sup>th</sup> when one was east, also at Weybourne Camp, in formation with a Glossy Ibis in front and followed by two Grey Heron. Other records were singles at Sheringham on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> with 3 there on 24<sup>th</sup> and at Weybourne Camp there were 4 on 23<sup>rd</sup> and a single on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Osprey** One north west over Southrepps Common on 18<sup>th</sup> and one west at west Runton on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Honey-buzzard** A Third Party Report of one west of Sheringham Golf Course on 5<sup>th</sup>, which then flew inland towards Sheringham Park.

**Goshawk** Up to 2 birds at Swanton Novers on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Hen Harrier** One record from Kelling Heath on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Montagu's Harrier** A Third Party Report of one briefly west of Sheringham Golf Course on 5<sup>th</sup>, which then flew north-east and lost to view.

**Short-eared Owl** Two birds at West Runton on 4<sup>th</sup> (one west offshore and one flew inland), one Muckleburgh Hill and one West Runton on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1-2 birds at Weybourne Camp on 6<sup>th</sup> (one of which perched for a while near the scrape), singles at Beeston Bump on 9<sup>th</sup>, Felbrigg Park & Lake on 10<sup>th</sup> (rough grazing area below the dam), Paston on 14<sup>th</sup> and Weybourne Camp 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 7 courtesy of Russell Page*

**Kingfisher** Just one record of a single at Selbrigg Pond on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Bee-eater** Singles were reported at Sheringham, West Runton and Weybourne Camp on 13<sup>th</sup> and at Weybourne on 25<sup>th</sup>.

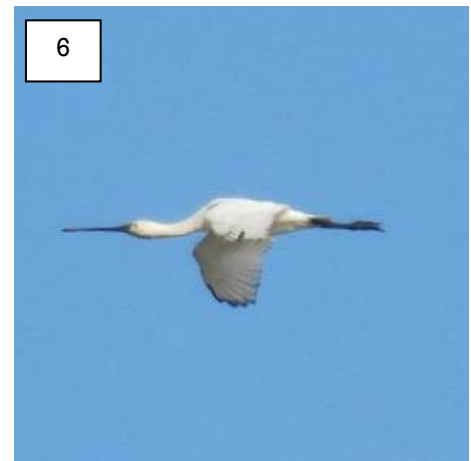
**Merlin** Two records of singles from Weybourne Camp on 2<sup>nd</sup> with one reported over reed bed and the other, probably the same bird, flew through a Sand Martin flock over the clifftops but did not attempt to catch any. A bird on the 4<sup>th</sup> over West Runton however was above the paddocks heading east chasing Sand Martins.

**Hobby** There were 27 Hobby reports in May, including a high count of 3 over Felbrigg Lake following a hirundine flock, during the 14 hour Big Sit on 11<sup>th</sup> (definitely the highlight of the day), admired by all present. Other records of 1-2 birds throughout the month came from Weybourne Cliffs, Weybourne camp, Beeston Regis, Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course, West Beckham, Kelling Heath, Roughton, Weybourne and Banningham. *Photo 8 courtesy of Mark Clements*

**Peregrine** Numerous records around Cromer of the church birds with other sightings a single east high over the sea and back again at Beeston Regis on 21<sup>st</sup> and a male west at West Runton on 23<sup>rd</sup>. *Photo 9 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

**Red-backed Shrike** A very mobile female which quickly flew off was recorded at Kelling Heath on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden Oriole** One bird west over West Runton early on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2, possibly 3, seen and heard from Muckleburgh Hill coming from the direction of Weybourne Camp (a female/immature and 1, possibly 2, males). A single bird



singing and calling was recorded by several members at Kelling Heath on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and on 24<sup>th</sup> a single was reported west at West Runton and Weybourne Camp. A female-type was also west there the following day.

**Hooded Crow** An individual was seen on 6<sup>th</sup> with Jackdaws in field near Letheringsett & Ford.

**Raven** One perched up at Bale on 5<sup>th</sup> and a single at Kelling Heath on 17<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 10 courtesy of Paul Laurie*

**Marsh Tit** Just 2 records of single birds at Beeston Common on 1<sup>st</sup> and Mannington Hall Park on 23<sup>rd</sup>,

**Woodlark** Thirty records from Kelling Heath from 1<sup>st</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> with a maximum count of 5 on 14<sup>th</sup>. Other records of 1 from Muckleburgh Hill on 5<sup>th</sup> and Buxton Heath on 14<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 11 courtesy of Andrew Crossley*

**Willow Warbler** Nearly 90 records throughout the month. Maximum count was 9 singing birds at Kelling Heath on 14<sup>th</sup> with other high counts there of 6 on 15<sup>th</sup> with 5 on 8<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> plus 5 at Muckleburgh Hill on 28<sup>th</sup>

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** On 27<sup>th</sup>, Beeston Regis and the Sheringham Cliffs played host to a Blyth's Reed Warbler which a good number of members were able to catch up with. One lucky member even achieved a garden tick!. The occasionally showing bird did give good views now and then and was heard in both full and sub song over several hours. Song included many short repeated phrases and mimicry.

**Grasshopper Warbler** The Beeston Regis bird from last month was still singing until the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a single was seen at heard in the Dilham Canal and Pigneys Wood area between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Whitethroat** Over 30 records from a range of locations both coastal and inland throughout the month. Where counts were given, and there were surprisingly few, they were predominantly of singles but there were reports of a couple of locations, Beeston Regis and Swanton Novers, hosting 2 individuals. *Photo 12 courtesy of Doug Cullern*

**Dartford Warbler** Reports of mostly singles with up to 6 birds (5 males and 1 female) at Kelling Heath from 1<sup>st</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. A female was only noted on one other occasion (9<sup>th</sup>). *Photo 13 courtesy of Trevor Williams*

**Firecrest** Singles recorded at Felbrigg Park & Lake, High Kelling and Beeston Common with 2 at Selbrigg Pond (pair) and Bodham plus 3 at Roman Camp.

**Nuthatch** Various records from Sheringham Park, Witton Bridge, Selbrigg Pond, Bodham, Bacton Woods, Dilham Canal, Gresham and Hunworth. Breeding was noted at Felbrigg Park & Lake with a record of a food item being taken to a nest hole and the removal of a faecal sack on 27<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 14 courtesy of Ken Thornton*





**Ring Ouzel** A female was at West Runton on 4<sup>th</sup>, a male in the water meadow at the eastern end of Felbrigg Lake on 5<sup>th</sup> and a male was at Weybourne Camp on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Flycatcher** Nineteen records from the 18<sup>th</sup> onwards, including returning birds (or at least re-use of a previous nest site) in members' garden at Alby. Singles at Mannington Hall Park, Felbrigg Park & Lake, Beeston Bump, Beeston Regis, Weybourne Camp, Muckleburgh Hill, Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course with up to 3 birds at West Runton 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 15 courtesy of Trevor Warren*



**Nightingale** A single bird was on Weybourne Camp, seen feeding in willow at field edge from coast path, on 5<sup>th</sup>. Swanton Novers was the place to be from 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> where a singing male entertained many members, sometimes showing well too. *Photo 16 courtesy of Mark Clements*



**Black Redstart** A single bird singing at Cromer on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Redstart** One at Weybourne on 4<sup>th</sup> (female) and a singing bird at East Runton & Thains Lane on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Whinchat** There were 1-2 birds at West Runton from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> with records of a female there on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. There was also one at Felbrigg Park & Lake on 4<sup>th</sup> and at Weybourne Camp on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Wheatear** Thirty one records from across 8 locations throughout the month: Weybourne Camp, Weybourne (high count 5 on 1<sup>st</sup>), West Runton (high count 7 on 4<sup>th</sup> and the only report of a male and female together), Felbrigg Park & Lake, East Runton (Coastwatch Station), Kelling Heath, Trimingham and Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course.



**Yellow Wagtail** West Runton was the most reliable place to see a Yellow Wagtail in May. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, up to 35 birds were recorded west with up to 20 dropping into Water Lane cattle fields to feed, including a male and female Blue-headed (flava) over 6 hours from 5.15am. Up to 15 were reported west the following day, including an adult Blue-headed plus 3 males and 2 females identified in paddocks. There were 3 at Sheringham Cliffs & Golf Course on 9<sup>th</sup> and 5 at Weybourne Camp that day and the following day. West Runton had another high count of 19 on 13<sup>th</sup> and then dropped off with 8 there on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6 on 24<sup>th</sup> and a single on 27<sup>th</sup>. Weybourne Camp attracted a further 9 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 1 on the 28<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 17 courtesy of Richard Farrow*



**Grey Wagtail** Twenty four records of mostly 1-2 birds from a number of locations throughout the month. High count was of 3 at Brinton on 13<sup>th</sup>. A male seen at Southrepps Common on 1<sup>st</sup> may have been carrying nesting material - mud.

**Tree Pipit** A single, maybe the same bird, recorded at Beeston Bump and Beeston Regis on 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 at Muckleburgh Hill on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1 at Weybourne Camp on 9<sup>th</sup> and 1 Kelling Heath on 19<sup>th</sup>. *Photo 18 courtesy of Trevor Warren*

**Lesser Redpoll** Five at Felbrigg Park & Lake on 4<sup>th</sup>, and singles at Kelling Heath on 12<sup>th</sup> and Weybourne Camp on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crossbill** One heard at Aylmerton on 12<sup>th</sup>, 5 were west at West Runton on 27<sup>th</sup> and one flew across Sheringham Golf Course on 31<sup>st</sup>.



**Barnacle Goose:** “7x east, including two with yellow ring coded rings, one black letter & numbers L02 on left leg & BTO ring on right leg. Had been ringed at Holkham on 5.7.2022, resighted at Holkham in 2023 and at Reydon Marshes, near Southwold in Suffolk on 19.12.2022” | Moss Taylor | Weybourne Camp | 17<sup>th</sup> |

**Storm Petrel:** “A ringed individual being eaten by a Peregrine chick at Cromer church” | Third Party Report | Cromer | 31<sup>st</sup> |

**Marsh Harrier:** “over camp. one orange wing tags, unable to read tags” | Phil Borley | Weybourne Camo | 6<sup>th</sup> |

## What to Look and Listen For in June



June can be seen as a more relaxed month after the excitement of spring migration, but it can still be an excellent one.

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

If you are near suitable habitat (farmland with grassland or cereal crop), then try to see if you can track down a Quail. They are the only migrant species in the Phasianidae family, and although Quails

are on the Amber List they are now in partial recovery. The chances of actually ‘seeing’ one are pretty slim but familiarise yourself with their distinctive “wet-my-lips” call. An example can be heard [here](#). Hirundines are still about so over any of the club’s lakes and ponds you will hopefully be able to watch swifts, swallows and martins hawking for insects and maybe even a Hobby.

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

### Historical June Records

by Russ Malin

Records taken from “Rare and Scarce Birds in North-east Norfolk”

by kind permission of the author Moss Taylor

For a supposedly quiet month June has played host to some fabulous historical records. A **Fea’s-type Petrel** was east at Sheringham and Mundesley on June 26<sup>th</sup> 1997, and was the first Norfolk record. Most years, small numbers of *Pterodroma* petrels are seen off the UK coast. Separating these petrels is one of the greatest identification challenges faced by birders and the majority go unidentified. Unidentified birds are suspected to be the more populous **Desertas Petrel**; however, it has been thought that amongst these a very few **Zino’s Petrels** might also occur. Obtaining good enough views and photographs to separate the two species has long been the challenge.

In 2002 an **Elegant Tern** was found at Happisburgh on June 20<sup>th</sup> - the first record for Norfolk and only the second British record. The same bird had been seen in Belgium on June 7<sup>th</sup> and the Netherlands on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> June. The primary moult state, and bill colour, was used to ascertain it was the same individual.

On June 19<sup>th</sup> 1982, an exhausted **Pacific Swift** was found on the Lemon Bank Shell gas platform 40km east-north-east of Happisburgh. It was flown to the heliport at Beccles, Suffolk where it was released. The first Norfolk record.

The first three records of **Roller** in our area were undated, but in 1884 a bird was at Gresham on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and nearly 130 years later a bird was present at Holt Lowes and Edgefield Woods between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June in 2013.

In 1968 a **Lesser Grey Shrike** was at Beeston Common on June 7<sup>th</sup> and, more recently, in 2020 we saw a remarkable three records of **Blyth’s Reed Warbler** from Beeston Bump, Pigneys Wood and Sheringham golf course.

A relaxed and quiet month? Possibly not...



## A Members' Night of 4 Mini Talks! September 2024

We are looking for volunteers to take to the floor for our next "Members' Night" and give us a 20-minute talk of their choice on something about birds or any other related subject. This has been a popular event previously with an eclectic range of subjects embraced by our members.

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

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

Please get in touch if you want to have a chat.

| Alan Stevens | 07765892515 |  
| [ahstevens52@gmail.com](mailto:ahstevens52@gmail.com) |

## Urban Birding - Help!

For a forthcoming project we need some help with suggestions of good urban birding in the NENBC area. Do you bird in Cromer, Aylsham, North Walsham, Holt or Sheringham? If so, do you have any good locations for birding, any exciting sightings or interesting anecdotes? Any information on where, when and how you bird in a built-up setting would be great - contact Val via

[vstubbs1961@gmail.com](mailto:vstubbs1961@gmail.com),

or catch us at one of the monthly Club walks at Felbrigg. Thank you!

Nick and Val Stubbs

One of our Vice Presidents, Lin Pateman, has kindly agreed to take on the role of NENBC representative on the Cromer Peregrine Project Steering Group. Thanks Lin!

## Conservation Corner

If you have any suggestions for content for our Conservation Corner slot, please let us know and we'll pass your ideas on to our writers.

## 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!

## 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)

## 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!

## 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.

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












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

Telephone 01263 710203  
[salesbirdventures@aol.com](mailto:salesbirdventures@aol.com)

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



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

-  Talks on the last Thursday evening of the month at Gresham Village Hall from Sep-Nov and Jan-Apr, also available live via Zoom
-  Walks around Felbrigg Park on the 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

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

## INFO FOR ALL WALKS:

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

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

**DOGS:** We regret no dogs.

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

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

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

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

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June | 9.00am-11.00am |  
**Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk**  
 with Trevor Williams



No advance booking needed

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

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

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June | 9.00am-1.00pm |  
**NWT Hickling Broad & Marshes**  
 with Janice Darch



Booking required via Janice by 5pm on the Friday before [janicedarch@gmail.com](mailto:janicedarch@gmail.com) (15 places)

*A summer visit to Hickling should provide us with good views of warblers such as Sedge and Reed Warblers which will be breeding in the reedbeds and maybe something rarer like Grasshopper or Savi's Warbler. Bearded Tit should be bouncing around. Terns and gulls will be on the scrapes and Marsh Harrier overhead. Something rarer may be visible too such as Black-winged Stilt, seen in June 2023. It is also a good time of year to spot Swallowtail and other species of butterfly, damselflies and dragonflies. It is a good site for Norfolk Chaser.*

**MEET:** NWT car-park | **PARKING:** Park at [NWT Hickling Broad & Marshes](#) car-park, NR12 0BW [grid reference TG 428222]. Please bring your NWT membership card or be prepared to pay for entry. | **DISTANCE:** 2½ miles | **ACCESSIBILITY:** Walking is easy but it is partially along uneven footpaths and as such this event probably isn't suitable for wheelchair users. | **FACILITIES:** NWT Visitor Centre with a small café, shop, picnic tables and toilet | **BADGES:** Outside club area so records can't count for Star Badges or Green Eco-badges this time.





## A couple of other non-club events you may be interested in .....

We'll be at **Mannington Hall** with a stand alongside **Felbeck Trust** on the 15<sup>th</sup> and it would be great to see some of you there for the **Wild About Mannington** day. Our Janice Darch will be leading a walk and club member John Swallow will be bird ringing.

The following other groups will have stands at the event: One Stop Nature Shop;


Norfolk and Norwich Bats; NWT; Norfolk Rivers Trust; Wensum Valley Bird Society, CPRE; Norfolk Butterfly Society; Waterlife Recovery Trust; Wildsounds; Easton College; Wild Spaces Project; Norfolk Ramblers Association; Aylsham Swift Group; Aylsham Wildlife Society; Norfolk Master Composters.

There is a £10 entrance fee but it looks like they have a full programme of events. Hope some of you can come along!


SHARRINGTON VILLAGE HALL PRESENTS

# A Double Bill of Nature Talks


A journey from the world's last great wilderness to the struggles and success of an iconic bird of prey.



**ADVENTURES IN ANTARCTICA**  
with Nigel Redman



**THE RETURN OF THE OSPREY TO THE UK 1954-2024**  
with Kim Boccato



**SATURDAY 29TH JUNE 7.30 PM**  
DOORS OPEN FROM 7.00PM

FREE ENTRY - RETIRING COLLECTION - LICENSED BAR

Missing our monthly club talks? NENBC President Nigel Redman will be giving a talk at **Sharrington Village Hall** on the 29<sup>th</sup> entitled "**Adventures in Antarctica**" as part of a double bill of nature talks. Why not pop along?

## Wild About Mannington Programme of Events

9 - 12 - Bird Ringing Demonstration at Bird Hide

10:15-11:15 - Bird Walk with Janice Darch from the North East Norfolk Bird Club Meet at Visitors Centre

10:30 - Moth Trap opening on Butterfly Conservation stand

11:30 - 12 - Nick Acheson Goose talk in the Hall

12 - 12:30 - Nick Acheson walk meet at Visitors Centre

12:45 - 1:30 - Patrick Barkham Butterfly talk in the Hall

1:30 - 2 - Patrick Barkham Butterfly walk meet at the Visitors Centre

2:30 - 3 - Ajay Tegala book talk in the Hall

3 - 5:30 - Ajay Tegala meadow walk meet at the Visitors Centre

Other activities including bioblitz all day, Charity stalls, children's activities

Dogs on leads welcome in the grounds but no dogs in the Hall

www.manningtongardens.co.uk  
admin@walpoleestate.co.uk  
01263 584175

**MANNINGTON ESTATE**

## Last Month's Club Specialist Walk

Kelling Heath walk | 22<sup>nd</sup> May

Janice Darch

Given the weather forecast it was a case of shall we or shan't we on the day scheduled for our annual Nightjar walk. Most of the participants couldn't make a later date that I suggested so I felt that if at all possible we should go. By lunch time it looked as if the rain would clear so I made the decision to risk it. And, a good job I did as we had an excellent evening! The first bird churred at 9.10pm then after a time we had a single flight. Then a pair of Nightjars flew and we saw their dayglo white tail corners and white wing spots. In all we heard churring from 6 different places on the heath - not all in the NENBC area though. Depending on where people were standing and looking we had various other views and up to 8 sightings and we all heard the wing clapping display. There were smiles all round as we stood and listened to the Nightjars and the full moon rose. A good evening.

Library photo: Richard Farrow 2017







By Dave Billham

To borrow (and mangle) a phrase from Dickens; "It was the best of walks, it was the worst of walks". 'The worst of walks' – well, a slight exaggeration, but it was raining. Enough to put off most participants, as there were only six of us present (but not, as it turned out, as heavy as the gloomy forecast was predicting – through luck and good planning we got slightly damp, rather than soaking wet). Also, the heavy, drizzly-grey sky probably meant that the resident birds would be keeping their heads down, and migratory arrivals would be unlikely. So far, so not looking too promising. As for 'the best of walks' - well, read on!

The usual list of species seen around the car park was, as we expected, smaller than usual; **Rook**, **Jackdaw**, singing **Great Tit** and **Robin**, and overhead a pair of **Feral Pigeon** and a lone **Herring Gull**. Plus a **Blackbird**, which Nick narrowly avoided running over as he drove in. Following Trevor's briefing, and avoiding the temptation to head straight to the café, the decision was made to initially stick to the woods and avoid the rain, a tactic which worked well. However, our first port of call would be the newly-opened garden at the rear of the house, to see if the pair of **Firecrest** noted there the day before were still present. **Wood Pigeon** and a singing **Blue Tit** were noted on the way round. The garden itself was jolly nice and well worth a look, containing many flowering rhododendron and a sweet-scented pink hawthorn in full flower, a magnificent sight. Within it was a **Jay** lurking in a tree, a singing **Chiffchaff** and a 'ticking' **Blackcap**, whilst in the distance could be heard the call of a male **Pheasant**. About three-quarters of the way down the garden was a sign reading "Danger" and asking us not to proceed beyond it. However, despite looking really hard, we could see nothing even slightly dangerous between it and the fence at the far end. Added to the sign by members of the public were lots of examples of what the danger might be; bears, dragons, old people(!) spiders and many more. We resisted the urge to add a few ourselves. **Firecrest**, unfortunately, were not one of the possible dangers, as we saw none. A passing **Stock Dove** was the last species noted here. Leaving the garden and entering the woods we could hear plenty of birdsong, but very little was visible amongst the foliage. Singers added to the list as we progressed were **Wren**, **Chaffinch**, **Greenfinch** and **Whitethroat**. Arriving in the area of Sexton's Lodge on the edge of the estate a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** was noted flying overhead, and

we actually saw a small bird, in this case a **Wren**, rather than just hearing it.



Now on the edge of the woods, with a clear view across more open ground to one side, we saw **Common Buzzard** and **Kestrel**, albeit distantly. With such a small group it had not separated into a 'front' and a 'back', and we had all been able to chat as we walked.





One of the topics of conversation that arose was an oft re-visited one; once-common birds that we had not seen on the day, and in some cases for quite some time; months or even years. Trevor had been bemoaning the lack of Cuckoo at Felbrigg, which in years gone by was a regular sight and sound in the park in spring-time, but one that he personally had not experienced for a few years. A short while later a single, loud and clear call of ‘**CUCKOO**’ stopped us in our tracks; looking around the bird was spotted in the top of a tree, from which it promptly flew determinedly off until lost to sight. Carol managed to grab a quick flight shot, but the whole event was over in seconds; be there at that moment or miss it, as is so often the case.



The mood of the group was definitely lifted though! (See the last paragraph of this report for Felbrigg Cuckoo statistics).

Nearing the lake we heard a **Dunnock** singing a quiet sub-song from a shrub, and amongst an active tit flock was seen a **Long-tailed Tit**. Approaching the lake from its southern end we could see a pair of **Mallard** and a **Moorhen** on the water, along with, more surprisingly, six **Tufted Duck**, including two hybrids. A pair of **Mute Swan** swam into view, being followed by a number of cygnets; different counts gave different results but eventually we settled on seven, a smashing sight. Here we also bid goodbye to Carol, who had to leave us early. As we walked along the dam wall the grey clouds were starting to lift; we could hear a **Skylark** singing, and overhead a **Swift** shot across the sky. We finally added **Carrion Crow** to the list, with a single bird positively identified coming into view. A **Reed Bunting** seen singing from the top of a hawthorn was the last new species for the list by the lake.

With time running out we now headed back in the direction of the house, along the path that runs above

the lake and water meadows. A **Swallow** was hawking over the lake’s edge, and arriving at the reedbed we could hear and see a singing **Linnet**; a singing **Reed Warbler** was heard only. The resident Sedge Warblers, however, were keeping silent and out of sight. The final new species for the walking part of the list was a **Green Woodpecker**, seen flying into a tree near the house (for clarity, to alight on a branch, not crashing into it). As the group was so small we were all still present outside the café as a **Sparrowhawk** flew low over us carrying a prey item, and again, following hot drinks and treats, we were all still there as a pair of **Goldfinch** flew over as we left the café! So, a grand total of **38** for the two hour walk, not too bad at all considering the inclement weather conditions. Best of all though; a Cuckoo on the list, seen well and clearly heard.

With regards to Cuckoo sightings at Felbrigg, checking the club’s more recent records revealed the following (please note that I have only counted ‘Cuckoo days’: that is, multiple sightings on any given day are counted as one sighting, as I could not determine if a day’s sightings were all of the same bird or more than one):

2024	1 (so far!)	2019	9
2023	0	2018	8
2022	3	2017	9
2021	3	2016	15
2020	2	2015	13



As with all records I have extracted from the club website comparing year on year species lists, the overall trend for our resident birds is depressingly and steadily downwards. If you have also read Francis Farrow’s excellent account of the decline in species numbers he has witnessed locally (‘Silent Spring’, April 24 NENBC newsletter), all I can add is that we all need to get out and about and see our wonderful birds - while they are still there.

# The Big Sit: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## NENBC's Dawn to Dusk Static Bird Count



By Carol Thornton

For those of you new to the Big Sit, there is a bit of general info on the right but basically we hang about in the same spot watching, listening and taking note of what birds are about. It is always a fun day out with the chance to chat during the slower periods, engage with the passing public and with the added bonus at Felbrigg of an events shelter if the weather is a little inclement. You absolutely don't need to be a birding expert to take part and we love to see as many folk as possible stopping off during the day.

We were looking forward to this year's event following last year's washout and from the weather the previous day we were quite optimistic. However, nature had other ideas as you will see from the reports and pics below from our two sites, Beeston Common (near the coast) and Felbrigg Park (a bit more inland) plus some info on the stats for Global Big Day with which we always try and coincide this event

### The Big Sit Made Easy



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

## 'Big Sit' at Beeston Common

By Francis Farrow

The 20+ C degrees on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May boded well for the 'Big Sit' the following day and it was not likely to be a repeat of the very cold 2023 day. So up before dawn and on the Pill-box Hill site on Beeston Common by sunrise at 5am, except if the sun did rise it could not be seen because of the mist, a rolling sea fret that obscured Beeston Bump and half the Common. The warm air produced the day before had passed over the cold North Sea and a fog quickly formed which was blown inland by an onshore wind. The wind was also cool and it was quite chilly on the exposed hill and within the hour we were wishing we had not left off a layer as the sun was not appearing anytime soon.



The birds were mainly recorded by their songs or calls as nothing could be seen, although two Red-legged Partridges were flushed from around the old Pill-box on arrival. Around 16 species had been recorded within the first hour which included Great-spotted Woodpecker and a singing Dunnock.

The second hour up to 7.00am only saw three species added – Swallow, Mallard and Blue Tit. The next hour added five more species including Stock Dove. A Grey Heron and Sparrowhawk were added before 9am followed by Swift and Buzzard as the mist lifted. We could now see Beeston Bump and it was populated by a long line of people walking for the Macmillan Charity. With clearer skies we had some flyovers with Greenfinch and Goldfinch bringing our total at 11am to 33 species. By now the four observers were down to two and with another half an hour only turning up Collared Dove, Green Woodpecker and a handsome male Bullfinch before the mist again shrouded Beeston Bump we called it a day.

My thanks go to Dave Billham, John Snow and Stephanie Witham who braved the chilly conditions and helped record a total of 36 species for the day.



**‘Big Sit’ at Felbrigg Park**

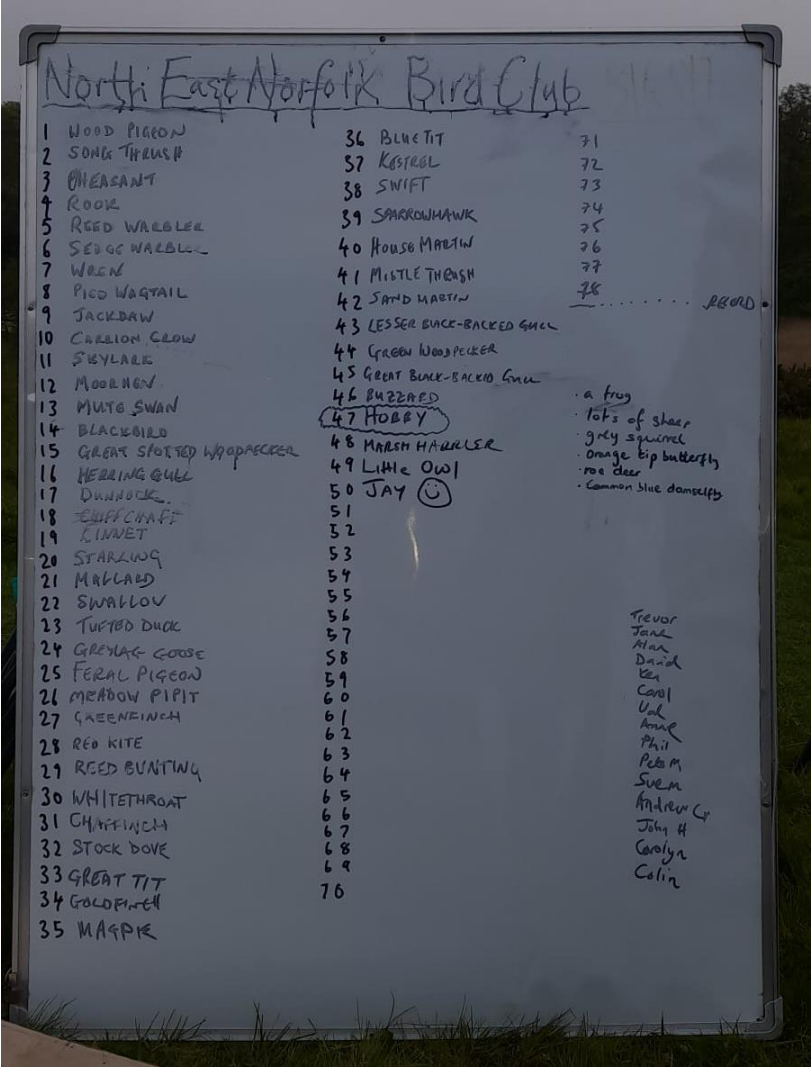




Well, the photos pretty much sum up the day: It was foggy and cold to start (and our listening recognition skills were severely tested!), it brightened up (sort of) for a bit in the middle of the day and then it got cold (again)! The wind was biting and we were very glad of the event shelter and the hot sausages and wine (thanks Carolyn!). We were significantly down on previous years (with the exception of 2023), well short of our record 78, and in the end we were relieved to get as many species as we did! Full list on the board on the right. Here's what Trevor Williams had to say ....

“Hard would be the best word to describe yesterday’s NENBC annual Big Sit. We arrived at just after 04.30 and unloaded our kit in cold and thick mist. We did get to see a bit of direct sunshine around lunchtime but for most of the day it remained overcast and, as the wind moved round to the east, decidedly chilly. As a consequence the birding was s-l-o-w..! Eventually we managed 50 species before packing up 14 hours after we started. The highlight came around lunchtime when the mixed hirundine flock over the lake – Swift, Swallow, Sand and House Martin – was joined by *three* passing Hobby. The ‘low’ – in a year when every single bird was hard-won – was missing several near-by species, which were visible / audible from just *outside* our 17’ recording circle, and therefore didn’t count towards our total! Robin, Blackcap, Long-tailed Tit, Lesser Whitethroat – to name but a few. A huge thank you to Team Felbrigg whose unwavering support and good company made the event a thoroughly enjoyable experience – just not the one we had planned!”

Many thanks from Trevor and me to: Jane Williams, Alan Stevens, David Barrass, Ken Thornton, Val Stubbs, Phil Hall, Carolyn Hall, Anne Sims, John Hayward, Andrew Crossley, Sue & Peter Morrison, Colin Blaxill.



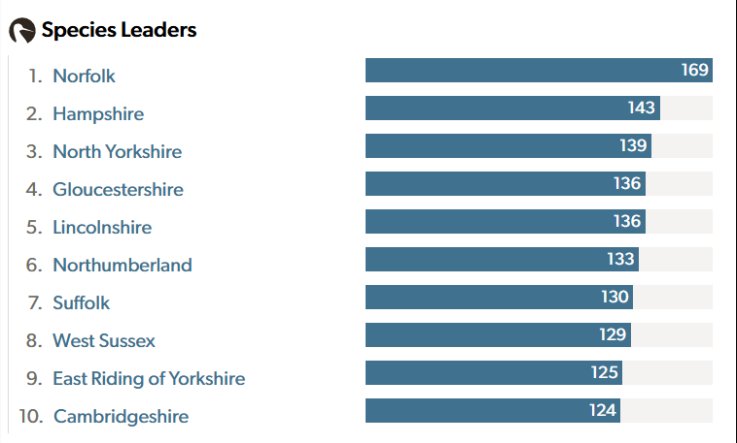
birders from around the world watch and count birds. They record those sightings on the eBird platform. Here’s a run down of this year’s first event:

A World of Positive Impact: Results from Global Big Day 2024 - eBird

The Global Big Day organisers say: “The event is more than just a bird count; it fosters community and encourages a shared passion for birding. Participants of all ages, from seasoned birders to beginners, contributed to the collective effort, making discoveries and sharing their experiences on social media with the hashtag #GlobalBigDay.”

NENBC members recorded 111 species on our website which we then submitted as Team NENBC to eBird. Stats on the right show that Norfolk as a whole had 169 species logged and we reported 66% of those in our area, and 46% of the UK overall totals too – **well done Team NENBC!**

eBird Stats		11 MAY 2024		Updated ~9 hr(s) ago.	
	Species	Checklists	eBirders		
World	7,768	163,402	65,640		



eBirding This Event		Global Big Day–11 May 2024		Updated ~10 hours ago	
	Species	Checklists	eBirders		
	239	2849	8020		



# Cromer Peregrine Project ...

## Notes from an even busier Watchpoint)



NOTE: The webcam is now up and running and you can view it here: [Livestream Link](#). Pics below are either stills from it or photos from Jane

## Episode Two – Bad news and Good news

By Jane Crossen

Visitor numbers to date (8<sup>th</sup> June): over 8,000

### A recap of the story so far....

- 2019: three chicks ringed – juveniles fledged successfully
- 2020: three chicks ringed – juveniles fledged successfully
- 2021: one egg laid – was not viable – no chicks hatched
- 2022: one chick ringed – juvenile fledged successfully
- 2023: two chicks ringed – both fledged successfully
- 2024: two chicks ringed – one fledged successfully (see below).



One of the juveniles from 2019 was found dead – he had flown into a telegraph wire in an open field. The only surviving bird from 2022 was found dead in Fakenham. Apart from a strong, green diarrhoea stain, there were no injuries and the bird had a full crop and was not malnourished. General consensus of opinion was that the cause of death was avian flu.

### Now, on to 2024 ....

- This year three eggs were laid on 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March. One egg did not hatch. Eggs 1 and 3 hatched on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April.
- Ringling took place on 15<sup>th</sup> May. Phil Littler was the ringer. He's fully-licensed and very experienced and has ringed all the chicks since 2019 (so 11 in total, with no hiccups whatsoever).
- 2024 birds ringed as VTN (most likely female) and VNN (most likely male). We say "most likely" (\*) because the weight and wing and feet measurements would indicate that. However, we take DNA samples to confirm - or otherwise. Last year we thought they were both females when they were, in fact, both males. This can happen if the weight is borderline at ringling and there can be exceptions to the rule.



These are VTN and VNN's measurements. Note the 'female' is already significantly bigger even at this early stage, especially weight-wise. Both were in very good health

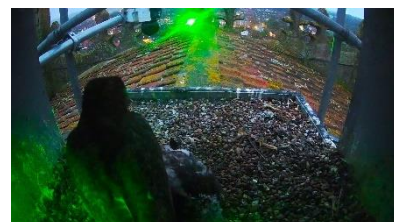
	Sex	weight	wing	feet
VTN	F*	945g	177mm	100mm
VNN	M*	705g	154mm	97mm

With thanks to Bev Coleman, an NENBC member, who is brilliant at keeping/recording data concerning the birds.

### First the bad news .....

The weather was extraordinarily bad during incubation and the days after the chicks first hatched. Sadly, it was noticed by the project members (via the webcam) that VTN's behaviour was starting to cause concern. Her right eye was often closed and, after she accidentally fell out the front of the box, she could not get back in. The weather deteriorated even more and the falcon constantly tried to feed her on the roof. She was clearly hungry but appeared unable to take the food offered. On 26<sup>th</sup> May, after advice taken from several experts and going through the proper channels, the decision was made to put VTN to sleep. The vet (an expert on bird issues) said she weighed less than she did when she was ringed. That is a pretty horrendous fact. We are going to have a post mortem carried out, but the initial findings indicate *Trichomonas* (canker) which is particularly prevalent in pigeons. Pigeons being a reasonably large part of the birds' diet.

Meanwhile, on the 25<sup>th</sup> May, as has been widely reported on TV, radio, social media and the press, a laser beam was pointed into the nest box (from some distance away, south of Cromer). The incident was caught on webcam and all details/footage were given to the rural police, who took the incident very seriously. It should be noted that the laser beam was not the cause of VTN's demise – we had already made the decision to bring her down for the vet's appraisal and she was not in the box or anywhere near the beam when it was fired.





On 2<sup>nd</sup> June a 40-year-old man went to Cromer police station and admitted the offence. The incident was dealt with by way of a community resolution and it was agreed the laser would be destroyed, the man would make a donation to the Cromer Peregrine Project, and that he would engage in a formal discussion with a police officer about the safe use of lasers.

### That's the bad news – here's the good!

The adults' behaviour was slightly different this year when it came to plucking prey and quite comical. Check this photo out! The whole pigeon was plucked IN THE BOX!



Speaking of prey – last year's rarity was the Red-Back Shrike. Check out this bird caught by the adult male and brought straight into the nest box for VNN – who snatched it off him and, as you can see, was pretty determined that it was going to be his, and his alone. Any ideas? Yep – a Storm Petrel! That is added to the list of over 100 species of prey caught since 2019. And a pretty remarkable cross-section of birds they are too. They've had at least four Swifts this year who, in their infinite wisdom, have been migrating in OVER the church tower. Not a wise move.....



VNN's progress has been really good. He fledged on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, which was exactly on time, and in a very short space of time he's flying really well and has been seen flying round the

church and slightly away from it following an adult bird. He struggles a bit to keep up but it's excellent flying practice and wing exercise.

The next development will be food drops from an adult. Always interesting to watch! Last year the female dropped the prey just at the entrance to the church – the juvenile missed it and she was so fast she swooped down and caught it before it hit the ground and flew off with it. Hotly pursued by the juvenile. I have nightmares that one day it might be a headless pigeon and that both birds will miss it and there might be a bride going into the church in a lovely white dress.....



VNN on a lower ledge just minutes before his first full flight away from the church.



VNN really developing his juvenile plumage now.





**By Moss Taylor**

**This is the 5<sup>th</sup> in a monthly series this year of the wildlife at Weybourne Camp during 2024 ...**

Well, did May live up to our expectations, in some ways yes, and in others no. I was away in Ireland visiting one of my sons for the first week, wondering all the time what I was missing on the Camp. In the event, the only bird of note was a singing Nightingale in the scrub at the east end one morning.

As far as wildfowl were concerned, the most interesting sighting was a small skein of 7 Barnacle Geese that flew east on 17<sup>th</sup>. Spring has traditionally been the month when the species is recorded overflying the Camp, but what was so special was the fact that two of the flock bore engraved yellow colour rings. Not visible at the time in the field but apparent when I checked my photographs, one of the rings carried the black inscription L02 indicating that the bird had been ringed at Holkham on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022, reported from Reydon Marshes, near Southwold in Suffolk on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and had been resighted back at Holkham in 2023. Regarding duck, a pair of Gadwall was present on the scrape intermittently throughout the month and an unseasonal pair of Red-breasted Mergansers flew east offshore on 24<sup>th</sup>.



Swift passage peaked at 161 west on 28<sup>th</sup> and a male Cuckoo was heard singing on three dates but sadly was predated by a Sparrowhawk. The only Turtle Dove of the spring was one flying west with 2 Collared Doves on 9<sup>th</sup>. Two Cranes that were



initially identified at great range over the Cromer to Holt Ridge by eagle-eyed James McCallum, later flew west over the Camp and along the entire north Norfolk coast, being seen at many locations en route to The Wash.

No fewer than 17 species of wader were noted in May, including up to 3 Avocets, a party of 3 Little Ringed Plovers west on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a summer-plumaged Bar-tailed Godwit on the Camp on 10<sup>th</sup>, a maximum of 30 Black-tailed Godwits east and 5 Ruffs south-east on 1<sup>st</sup>. An almost daily passages of Kittiwakes moving west offshore peaked at 38 on 29<sup>th</sup>, a record count of 27 Lesser Black-backed Gulls flew west close inshore in gale-force north-westerly winds on 31<sup>st</sup>, the day on which a total of 55 Fulmars also flew west (clearly not all local birds). The first Little Tern was recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> and an Arctic Tern flew north over the Camp and continued heading in a north-easterly direction on 30<sup>th</sup>.

An extraordinary formation of a Glossy Ibis and a Great White Egret leading 2 Grey Herons flew east on 19<sup>th</sup>. Peak counts of the 'herons' included 5 Spoonbills and 4 Great White Egrets on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 5 Little Egrets on 26<sup>th</sup>.

An exceptional passage of 21 Red Kites (including up to 7 together) was recorded on 24<sup>th</sup> and the first Hobby on 5<sup>th</sup>. Three sightings of Short-eared Owls included one flying high over the Camp from the south and continuing north out to sea.

A single Bee-eater, also seen at West Runton and Sheringham, flew west on 13<sup>th</sup>, while three records of Golden Orioles included an adult male singing on Muckleburgh Hill on 6<sup>th</sup>. Scarce passerines were otherwise few and far between with only a single Garden Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher during the month. At least three pairs of Stonechats had fledged young by the end of May and there were occasional sightings of White Wagtails and Tree Pipits with a Mealy Redpoll flying west on 7<sup>th</sup>.

By the end of the month, 14 species of butterfly had been recorded, three new for the year: Brown Argos, Small Heath and Common Blue, but only one species of dragonfly: Broad-bodied Chaser.



*Summer plumaged Bar-tailed Godwit.*



*Immature Spoonbills.*



*Short-eared Owl posing for a photograph!*



*Broad-bodied Chaser.*



*Stoat with Rabbit.*

As always I am very grateful to all the observers who have submitted records and made this report as comprehensive as possible.





We decided to have a few days away to celebrate our wedding anniversary (don't ask how many years!), and so we headed off to visit Frampton Marshes, which my sister has been recommending to me for months.

## 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – Of Gulls and Terns

On arrival at [RSPB Frampton Marsh](#) Frampton Marsh, we were assaulted with the sight of a cornucopia of birds before we had even left the car park. **Shovelers** ploughed the water with their beaks; **Lapwing** flew over giving their plaintive cry; groups of **Greylags** surveyed the scene; **Black-headed Gulls** squabbled; **Little Egrets** stood like statues; **Ruffs** meandered about; **Wigeon** and **Teal** dabbled; a **Pied Wagtail** scuttled along; and several **Moorhens** picked their way around the edges of the wetlands.

A quick trip to the visitor centre got us heading out onto the main reserve with the promise of a number of interesting and potential lifers for us.

A few **Pochard** were drifting on the water in front of the visitor centre, and a pair of **Great Crested Grebes** carried out their ritual dance in front of us. A **Cetti's Warbler** clamoured in the bushes, and a diminutive **Wren** responded in kind. A couple of **Coots** had a kung-fu fight. A little group of **Tufted Ducks** bobbed and dived while several **Avocets** daintily waded through the water. By the side of the main scrape, a huddle of birdwatchers was gathered, intensely focused on a group of gulls. We joined the throng and were soon rewarded with an immature **Little Gull** flying past repeatedly, but that was soon eclipsed by a beautiful, elegant **Black Tern** which put on a wonderful aerial display. Lifer ticked. A Bonaparte's Gull had been reported in the same location, but no-one was able to pick it out now among the Black-headed Gulls. While we were searching, I was watching an oddly behaved gull in the distance, which kept trying to pick up a stick but kept dropping it before trying to retrieve it from the water.



We made our way to the hide at the end of the scrape, where a lone birder was watching. There didn't seem to be much about until the other birder suddenly shouted "Bonaparte's Gull!". We trained our binoculars on a gull that was rapidly flying away from us and continued to watch in the hope that it would turn around, but it eventually disappeared from view without a backward glance. So technically we saw a Bonaparte's Gull, but it didn't make its way onto our list.

After a long chat with the spotter, who told us about some interesting places for birding further north in Lincolnshire (another trip required!), we headed for the 360° hide. Here we admired a number of long-legged **Black-tailed Godwits** probing for titbits, and **Redshank** mooching about. A **Gadwall** was resting on the water, and a pair of **Canada Geese** were settled on the distant bank. Some 30 **Dunlin** were gathered on a sandbank, with a single **Ringed Plover**. Among the **Mallards** we spied three small diving ducks which made our lives difficult by constantly diving, but eventually we were able to work out that they were female **Goldeneye**.

By now our stomachs were rumbling, so we decided to set off for Boston, but not before a final scan of the flooded fields by the car park, which yielded two **Barnacle Geese**, two **Shelduck**, hundreds of **Brent Geese**, a carrot-billed **Oystercatcher** and a couple of Brown Hares. As we left the reserve, a **Wood Pigeon** flew over and we passed a couple of **Carriion Crows** in a field. On the short journey to Boston, we saw four cock **Pheasants** strutting their stuff and showing off their gorgeous colours in the early evening sunshine.

Having refuelled with excellent fish & chips, we made a quick detour to Asda, and while Nick was shopping, I did a bit of car park watching, adding two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and several **Feral Pigeons**, while a Wren was singing in a small tree. On the way to our campsite at Kirton, I spotted a **Blackbird** on a roof and several **Starlings** flying through suburban gardens.

That evening, I did some research on Bonaparte's Gulls, trying to convince myself that I had seen the gull well enough to add it to the list, and was struck by the fact that they are "the only gull that makes a stick nest in a tree"

(Merlin) – so the gull I had watched with the stick probably was the Bonaparte's! But still not sure enough to go on the list.

## 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – Wading and Waders

We were up early, having been kept awake by a stream of traffic rumbling past - shan't return to this site! But in compensation, there were several **Tawny Owls** calling, and a splendid dawn chorus, comprising the songs of Blackbird, **Chaffinch**, **Goldfinch**, **Greenfinch**, **House Sparrow**, Wood Pigeon, **Collared Dove**, **Great Tit**, **Robin**, Wren, **Song Thrush** and Blue Tit.

As we drove to [RSPB Freiston Shore](#) in time for high tide, a **Magpie** flew across the road at Wyberton, while there were **Rooks** in the fields and two **Jackdaws** on a rooftop. We reached Freiston Shore at about 8am, where we made an abortive attempt to find an alleged Green Winged Teal, during which we did manage to find a **Pintail** and two **Cormorants** drying their wings - one of my favourite sights. We then transferred to the hide where we were treated to a feast of waders. There were plenty of Redshanks on the sandbars, and one of their more elegant cousins – a **Spotted Redshank** – flew in to join them. Two **Grey Plovers** were picked out among the masses of Dunlin. A **Mute Swan** decided to wander through the flock – the contrast in size was stark, with the swan's foot dwarfing the little shorebirds, and the Dunlin moved rapidly out of the way with one-legged hops. Behind the Dunlin a flock of **Knot** came into land. The shores of the scrape were spangled with Oystercatchers, while a few **Herring Gulls** towered over them. Again, Brent Geese were in abundance.

Our next stop was [LWT Gibraltar Point](#), which was one of my mother's favourite reserves and managed by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. Alas, the café wasn't open when we arrived at 10 am so we couldn't treat ourselves to a fry-up and had time to make do with a DIY beverage from our van. As we were setting off on our walk, a **Buzzard** drifted over by the car park. A couple of **Meadow Pipits** sauntered overhead, while a **Skylark** trilled above us as we crossed the dunes to the salt marshes, where a Brent flock flew in. We ambled onto the beach and were watched suspiciously by a young Grey Seal. On turning back inland we spotted two **Siskins** in a Willow tree. Various other birds were singing in the scrub: **Chiffchaff**, Wren, Chaffinch and **Dunnock**. The water level on the scrapes was high meaning that there were few waders present, although a **Curlew** was feeding in the fresh marshes. In places the paths were flooded, but fortunately we'd checked the website the night before, and had come in our wellies. A Black-headed Gull chased a **Lesser Black Backed Gull** away, while Shovelers and a Coot frequented the waters.

On the path back to the car park, there were Goldfinches and **Blackcaps** singing. From the hide we observed Canada Geese, a pair of Shovelers head bobbing, a couple of Greylag Geese, Tufted Ducks, Mute Swans, Lapwing, a hybrid farmyard goose, a Cormorant fishing for his dinner and a number of Shelduck fighting aggressively in the distance. All of a sudden, many of the ducks took to the air, and we soon worked out why when we spotted a **Marsh Harrier** soaring over. On reaching the visitor centre we enjoyed a delicious lunch.

We set off north through Skegness, giving Nick a chance to reminisce about his youth when he had played in a band at Butlins.

But not really our cup of tea now, so we drove inland and into the rolling wolds. We found our way to [LWT Red Hill Nature Reserve](#) at Stenigot – another Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust site. This is a Coronation meadow, but it was too early in the year for it to be





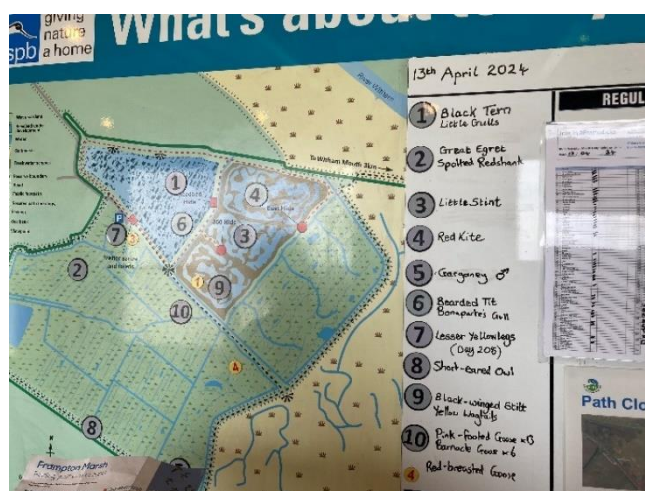
at its floristic best. However, we heard a **Yellowhammer**, and three Roe Deer grazed peacefully in the valley below. It was not far to our campsite for the night at Benniworth. This was a complete contrast to the previous night – peaceful and pastoral, with Alpacas thrown in for good measure. A **Red-legged Partridge** scuttled across the campsite, and half a dozen Mallards waddled around in the field where the Alpacas were grazing. After a makeshift meal, we set off to explore, wandering along the lanes and verges of the village, where there was plenty of bird activity, including two Goldfinches, a large mixed flock of Yellowhammers and Chaffinches in the hedges and feeding in the fields, at least six male Blackbirds on the verges, and a Song Thrush and a Chiffchaff both singing in the churchyard.

### 13<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – Long-legged Beasties

After a long sound sleep, we emerged refreshed and ready to go. As we packed up the van, a **Linnet** serenaded us from the hedge, like a canary, occasionally interrupted by the seesaw song of a Great Tit. We decided to return to Frampton Marshes, and en route added a **Kestrel** in a tree to the list. We reached Frampton by 12.15 and after consuming the most enormous fruit scone, headed out onto the reserve. The cast of birds was pretty similar to our previous visit, but with a few rather splendid additions. In the visitor centre we were told that the long-staying Lesser Yellowlegs was showing well from the car park, so we grabbed the telescope and joined the other birders who were scanning the pools. I honed in on a wader wandering about in the scrapes, and after a little while was able to ascertain that it did indeed have yellow legs. We watched it for a while, but I said “well, if I hadn’t been told any better, I would have thought that was a Ruff”. At this point a RSPB staff member pulled up in her car and called that the **Lesser Yellowlegs** had just landed on the edge of a pool right in front of us. We turned the ‘scope to the place indicated and lo – a bird was showing that was clearly completely different from any I had previously seen. Lifer number two.

At the same point where we had seen the Black Tern previously, we found another group of birders, but this time they were watching a **Bonaparte’s Gull** on the water with a gaggle of Black-headed Gulls. We had excellent views – so lifer number three. And the Black Tern put in another appearance for good measure. In the 360° hide an adult Little Gull showed well. We then decided to walk around the perimeter of the reserve. As we headed for the sea wall, we could see a lot of people studying the large flocks of Brent Geese, and wondered whether they had spotted the **Red-breasted Goose** that had been reported – Nick quickly picked it up in the ‘scope, and we had good views, though nothing to rival the bird at Holt last December. As we continued towards the sea wall, we could see a small bird on a post and wire fence. Again, the ‘scope came into its own, and we could see a delightful **Sedge Warbler** singing heartily. The walk along the perimeter was pleasant but uneventful until we reached the northwest corner, where a group of telescopes were focused on the scrape, and we soon had a **Black-winged Stilt** in our sights! The day was rounded off with a majestic Marsh Harrier floating across the sky.

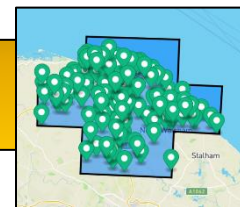
**A great trip, with wonderful weather and fabulous birding (74 species), including 3 lifetime ticks for both of us – what’s not to like?**





# Club Area Boundaries

By Trevor Williams



A recent news info item appeared on the website concerning club boundaries:

*"Just a quick reminder to old hands and a note for the newer members. The club recording area covers the eight Ordnance Survey (OS) map 10km squares TG03, TG12, TG13, TG14, TG22, TG23, TG24 and TG33. They stretch in a cross shape from Swanton Novers in the west to Happisburgh in the east, and from Sheringham in the north to Hevingham in the south. Records logged on the website need to be for birds seen or heard in the club area only so within the straight line boundaries to these squares as shown on the OS maps AND NOW REPRESENTED ON OUR LOCATIONS MAP. The vast majority of our regularly watched sites lie completely within these boundary lines so there are no issues but there are a few crunch points - Kelling Heath, north of Letheringsett and west of Weybourne Camp - where you need to ensure that your record does actually lie within the club area before posting as the sites straddle the boundary."*

This item had been prompted by a couple of interesting spring bird records posted on the website which some of our more established members rightly observed were almost certainly *not* within the club recording area. This article is my attempt to explain how our boundaries came about, why they matter and how we can all make sure that the records we post are actually NENBC birds!

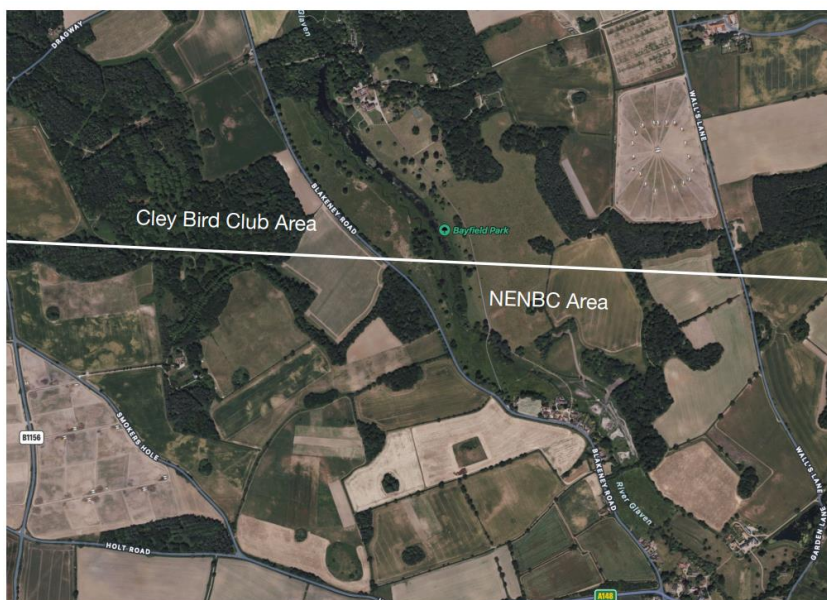
But first let's go back to the beginning. A decade ago, before the Club was created and the recording area defined and agreed, there was a process of consultation with the other established bird clubs and groups in North Norfolk, including: Cley Bird Club (CBC), Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society (WVBS), Great Yarmouth Bird Club and Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society - who each had existing recording areas. The boundaries of the *new* NENBC were eventually agreed by all concerned, as defined in Carol's news item above, and largely filled the gap left by the other clubs - but as there was a mix of areas defined by grid lines (CBC) or geographical features (WVBS), there is *some* unavoidable overlap.

Once the NENBC was officially established a number of our early members acquired the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map No 133 (which very helpfully encompasses the entire club area) and enthusiastically marked the boundaries along the relevant grid lines. Many of us have grown up with these boundaries etched on our brain! Subsequent representations of the club area, including those on the website (old and new) use different mapping tools and might vary a little. The OS map thus remains the definitive version!

So why do these boundaries matter? Well, apart from sticking to our agreement with our neighbouring clubs, from the data collection perspective - a corner-stone of the club's contribution to ornithology and conservation - there need to be clear boundaries so that year on year data can be accurately assessed and compared. Another reason why boundaries matter is for those members who keep lists (probably more than you'd think) we need an agreed area - birds are either 'in' or 'out'. Of course much of this is taken on trust and as such we all have a responsibility for entering records which conform to the 'rules' - put simply 'in or over the Club recording area - as defined on the OS map!'

Most of the places where our members see birds are already pre-loaded as locations on our website e.g. Felbrigg Park & Lake - shown as a drop-pin on the map and also listed on the drop-down list of locations. The vast majority of these locations are wholly contained within the club recording boundaries - it's only the odd one where they span recording areas of two clubs. The most controversial of those sites were highlighted in the news item, and to which the rest of this article is mostly dedicated, in an attempt to remove confusion now and in the future.

**Glaven Valley & Bayfield Lake** The road from Letheringsett to Glandford crosses the boundary between the NENBC recording area into the 'Cley Square' immediately north of the first block of woodland on the west side of the road. But, as can be seen from the map right, the boundary cuts back across the valley towards Holt - meaning that all of Bayfield Lake and most of the grassy floodplain is outside the NENBC. Strict interpretation of this boundary-line cost the finders (and the many members who followed) the addition of Squacco Heron to their NENBC lists, as the bird stubbornly refused to come closer than 20 metres of our boundary!





**Kelling Heath** This much-visited site straddles the boundary between CBC and ourselves. Unhelpfully, from an NENBC perspective, when visitors arrive in the designated carpark they are *not* in the club recording area - in fact they are some way off it. Roughly speaking the public footpath which runs north-south from the railway level crossing to Holgate Hill is the club boundary. Birds seen (or heard!) in the bushes around the car park are actually in the 'Cley square' - some distance from the NENBC recording area. Similarly, much of the western heath approached through the five-bar gate at the top of the car park is also out of area. Happily all the heath to the east of the railway line and a good chunk of the northern heath, on either side of Holgate Hill is firmly NENBC territory.



**Weybourne Camp** The camp itself is private and can only be accessed by special permission (which Moss Taylor has kindly arranged in the past for a number of celebrity birds) - however good views can be obtained by walking the coastal path west from the Weybourne beech carpark. The trouble is that for the unaware or over-enthusiastic following the fence along towards Kelling Water Meadows you cross from NENBC into the Cley recording area. The boundary (as seen on the map right) comes between the Fishermen's gate and the old RAF buildings. A recent Wryneck spent most of its stay the *wrong* side of the line and a much-watched Woodchat Shrike - much like the aforementioned Squacco - never quite made it. If you follow the boundary-line south over Muckleburgh Hill it passes just west of the visible high-point of the tumulus. Happily in autumn 2015, the Olive-backed Pipit was just the right side of the line!



**Cart Gap** Not included in the news item above but worthy of mention is Cart Gap. In the far east of the NENBC recording area is the excellent and, by NENBC standards, relatively under-watched coastal strip between Happisburgh and Cart Gap. It's a pleasant walk along the cliff tops (coastal erosion permitting) from one to the other and plenty of good birds have been seen here. The Club boundary here to the south is easy to misinterpret as the path behind the coastal chalets comes to a natural junction with the road and the unconscious assumption is that all the coastal fields are in our area. But as in other locations the actual boundary cuts across the natural lie of the land, rendering the last few roadside fields outside the area. For those lucky enough to see the Ortolan Bunting at Cart Gap 'back in the day' - pre-NENBC - it would have counted! More recently a Little Ringed Plover feeding by a roadside pool was outside the recording area until happily it obliged by flying north across the boundary towards the lighthouse!



I hope this article has helped explain why we all need boundaries (in a club context) and how to interpret them in the field. Of course there are many places where you might end up birding which could rightly result in birds being added to the NENBC website. The 'Out & About' feature allows you to pinpoint exact location by clicking the 'Tell us where' tab - but before you do, *if in doubt*, consult your OS map!



# Contemplating Conservation

## Green Birding on a Bike



By Carol Thornton

Lots of you will know Josh Jones, current Editor of the highly recommended [Birdwatch magazine](#), and others will remember him coming to give us a couple of fantastic talks, [Birding in the Azores \(2015\)](#) and [Gull ID Made Easy \(2019\)](#).

We were reading his Editorial this month, reproduced with his kind permission on the right here, and it resonated with us and our Green Eco-Badge endeavours. Josh spent a day out on his bike on green birding challenge.

Josh said "Really enjoyed the experience and look forward to doing it again next year" and told us they have a feature lined up on green big days for the August issue so we are looking forward to that. Josh undertook his mammoth day out with Jake Williams, son of our club Chair Trevor, and this is what he had to say about why he enjoyed it:



**THE** weather was very pleasant in my area over the early May bank holiday weekend, which was a blessing for my 'green' big day effort. Along with fellow local birder Jake Williams, we set

out on our bikes into the calm night air at 4 am on Sunday 5th. Our first stop was Etton-Maxey Pits, where migrant waders including Whimbrel, Wood Sandpiper and Grey Plover were bonuses as we cleaned up on the expected species partaking in the dawn chorus, on what was a gloriously mild and still morning.

Over the next 16 hours, we cycled 105 km around the Deepings area in Lincolnshire, netting 117 species in the process. To say that we were knackered by the evening would be an understatement – so much so that we didn't have the energy to seek out the crepuscular 'bankers' of Long-eared and Little Owls.

Big days often teeter on a knife edge. Connecting with tricky residents can go one way or the other. Reflecting on our total, we

had single fortuitous encounters with the likes of Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Common Kingfisher and Eurasian Bullfinch, which could so easily have eluded us. Conversely, a big day wouldn't be complete without some silly misses – this year's included Jay and Common Swift.

Another local team did a big day on the Sunday, albeit across the wider Peterborough area and motorised. Despite covering more ground, their total was only eight higher (125).

There is a lot to be said for bird-racing via bike. Your eyes and ears are always in play, even while travelling, which is a big advantage. Then there is the eco-friendly element to cycling, as well as (I would argue) a greater sense of achievement. Is it time that more of us recalibrated our idea of what a successful 'big day' is? Does it have to involve driving hundreds of miles? I would encourage anyone to give the greener way a try.

Josh Jones

**DID YOU KNOW?** If you have a Norfolk Library Card you can Borrow an electronic version of Birdwatch magazine (and many other titles) for free each month. Info on how to join the library [here](#).



"It was late 2023 when Josh and I decided on the idea of a joint Big Day, around the local area and only by bicycle. Josh had done it 2 years prior and managed over 100 species, so we had a benchmark in mind already. Due to the heavy rains early in the year and the River Welland breaching its banks, the Lincolnshire fens where we live had infinitely more wader habitat than we could usually expect, so we were hopeful of a decent total. However, neither of us could have predicted the mammoth 117 total we eventually finished on.

The obvious benefit here is having zero impact on the environment that a big day would otherwise incur if you were travelling by car. Climate change IS happening and

was clearly evident in our species list. Goosander, Short-eared Owl (4), Whooper Swan to name a few unexpected birds to find in May. Whilst great to see, they were a frightful reminder of the rapidly changing world around us.

The highlight for me though was the time spent just watching and listening to birds you'd otherwise pass by, birding is about that spontaneous connection with the natural surroundings, not darting from one site to another looking for the next rarity. So I'd encourage you all to get back in the saddle or strap on your walking boots and take on the green big day challenge, you won't regret it!"

Jake Williams

Green birding doesn't just have to be a condensed adventure like Josh and Jake's Big Day. Closer to home we received an email this week from, it has to be said, a fairly excited club member, Elizabeth Shadbolt:

"I've done it - almost two years taken to get the 75 birds for the inland Green Eco Award on my old push bike or on foot!. Two birds I needed help with were the Sand Martins at Blickling where I was on a U3A bird watching walk with Colin Blaxill leading, and the Goshawk at Swanton Novers watch point where a group of experienced birders helped me use their telescopes to see it. Owing to the fact that I'm only on the nursery slopes when it comes to bird watching, the vast majority of birds have needed to be stationary in order to be identified. The exceptions have been: Buzzard, Swallow, Swift, Goshawk, Kestrel, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Skylark, Common Tern, Sand Martin, Sparrowhawk, House Martin. I saw all the birds apart from the following four which I identified from their call – Green Woodpecker, Tawny Owl, Willow Warbler (my



favourite bird call), Turtle Dove. Thirty eight birds were identified close to home but 37 birds needed me to go further afield on my bike. I have used the club website records enormously in my hunt for birds. They have been a great help and I couldn't have done without them. Many thanks to all who administer it, and also to those who upload their records. Thanks to Trevor who told me the exact spot to stand at Kelling Heath to see a Woodlark, Stonechat and Dartford Warbler!" *Elizabeth Shadbolt*

Well done Elizabeth!

The spring 2024 edition of the National Trust (NT) Magazine also ran a feature entitled 'On Your Bike' where Huw Davies, their Head of Data, undertook a quest to cycle to every place in the National Trust handbook – all 624 of them – often starting from rail stations. The knowledge he has gathered will be filtering through in the coming months / years to improve facilities for cyclists at NT properties (secure cycle storage, accessibility, signage, access to tea and cakes (!), charging points for e-bikes, cycle ratings for each property etc) and the information available on their property websites on finding the best 'green' routes to them. Here are some of his top cycling tips:

- It's never too late to learn or return to cycling
- Keep it fun – start off with short, easy routes and build up as you get fitter
- You don't need to invest in lots of gear for casual cycling – comfortable clothing, helmet, hi-vis jacket are sensible investments though
- Make sure your bike is in good working order before you set off and carry tools to fix a puncture
- Follow good trail etiquette – let folk know you are coming with a bell / say hello, give way if needed and always pass wide and slow, especially around horses

The NT magazine isn't available online but you can listen to selected highlights each month, including from Huw Davies's article [here](#).

In 2021, the [Low-Carbon Birding website](#) ran an article entitled [Birding with a breeze: on birdwatchers and bicycles](#) which contained thoughts on the subject from many proponents of two-wheeled birding, including Norfolk's Nick Acheson, author of '[The Meaning of Geese: A Thousand Miles in Search of Home](#)' (also available as an audiobook from your local library!):

"It's many years since I kept lists of birds. Since I started birding exclusively by bike and on foot, however, each species I see seems somehow new again. Mentally, I suppose, I have a list of birds I've seen while actively limiting my emissions. Low-carbon birding, for me, is about loving birds without the guilt of knowing I'm harming them by driving. But it's better than that. I cycled everywhere as a child, and loved both the exercise and the birds I heard along my way. Cycling around Norfolk for birds (and flowers, and insects, and other wildlife) today feels like a portal back to the happiest times of my childhood." *Nick Acheson*

In a follow-up article later that year called [Low-Carbon Young Birders](#), the authors Joe Parham, Keir Chauhan and Finley Hutchinson summed up their feelings very nicely:

"For many young birders, 'patch birding'—regularly birding an area near home—is a much more accessible and climate-friendly form of birding than regularly driving to far-flung sites to see rarities or enjoy other landscapes. Our decision to focus on local birding is partly related to the fact that travelling across the country to see birds is limited by the cost of public transport and poor accessibility to many of the major nature reserves across the UK. Also, many young birders cannot afford or don't want to own a car. But our interest in local birding is also related to a resetting of our expectations. To many young birders the most inspiring stories are not about long-distance trips to see a rare bird but about those miraculous local finds and those unexpected or just delightful bird behaviours, demonstrating how even the most unlikely places can afford very pleasant experiences."

The article included this contribution from NENBC member Louis:

"There is a growing need to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases significantly to halt global warming and low-carbon birding is a great way to achieve this. I enjoy birding by bike locally in Norfolk, and I have found and twitched some great birds while doing so. One memorable twitch on my patch was when a male Eider turned up on a local broad. After hearing the news, I raced there on my bike and managed to enjoy this unexpected patch tick at dusk with a friend (who also cycled there). As well as increasing your fitness, birding by bike enables you to find birds on route in unexpected places. My first patch Yellow Wagtail was found this way on a beautiful spring day last year and I wouldn't have noticed its call had I been in a car." *Louis Parkerson*



















So, if this appeals, why not give birding by bike a try? It is better for the climate than motorised transport and as Elizabeth pointed out, you can expand your horizons and get that much further on your bike than you can on foot – nearly half of her Green Eco-Badge birds were from cycling.

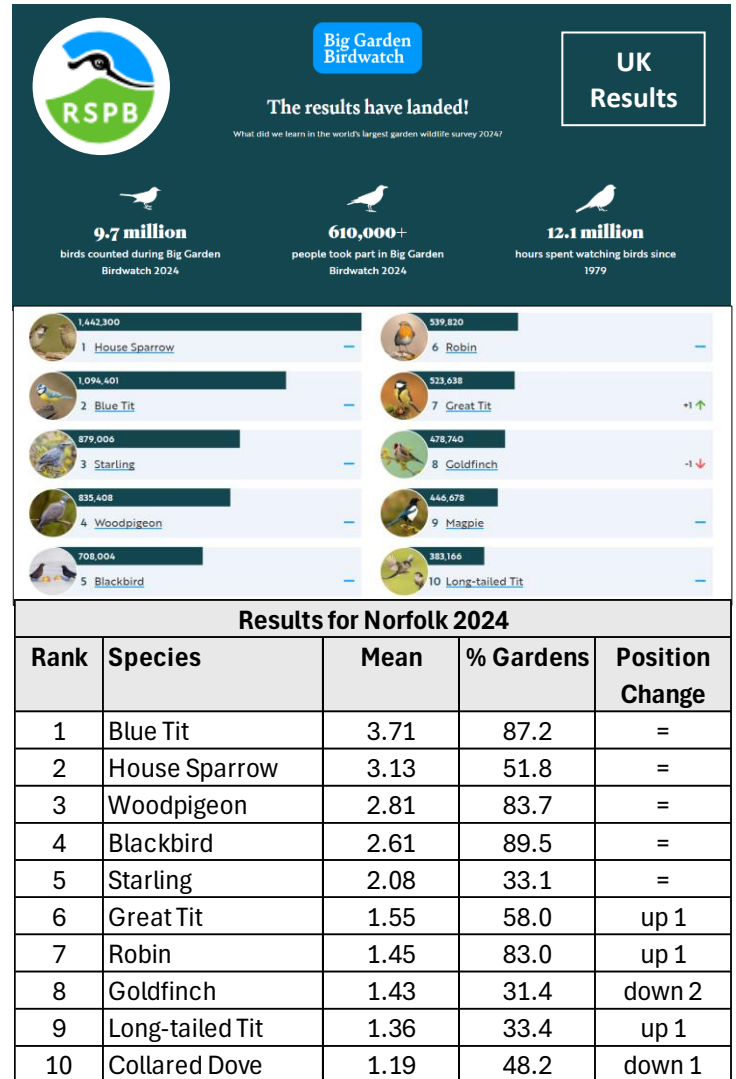


# Check This Out!

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



-  [Survey reveals British opinion on Ring-necked Parakeet - BirdGuides \[29-May\]](#)
-  [Wildfowl on the wane as winters become milder - BirdGuides \[02-May\]](#)
-  [French conservationists challenge capercaillie reintroduction - BirdGuides \[03-May\]](#)
-  [Kittiwakes snub Tyne Bridge nesting 'hotels' - BirdGuides \[04-May\]](#)
-  [Wicken Fen celebrates 125 years with major peat restoration scheme - BirdGuides \[09-May\]](#)
-  ['Nofence' collars trialled on RSPB reserve - BirdGuides \[11-May\]](#)
-  [Serial wild bird egg thief avoids jail - BirdGuides \[14-May\]](#)
-  [How to report a Corncrake - BirdGuides \[21-May\]](#)
-  [Bearded Vulture that toured Britain seen for first time in three years - BirdGuides \[22-May\]](#)
-  [Breeding Bird Survey reaches 30-year milestone - BirdGuides \[23-May\]](#)
-  [Black-tailed Godwits hatch from rescued eggs - BirdGuides \[24-May\]](#)
-  [Woodcock still declining in UK, survey reveals - BirdGuides \[28-May\]](#)
-  [Birdwatching can help students improve mental health, reduce distress | ScienceDaily \[03-May\] | North Carolina State University\]](#)
-  [BOURC: Changes to the British List, May 2024, #birds #birding #ornithology news via @RareBirdAlertUK \[21-May\]](#)
-  [British Antarctic Survey seeking penguin counters for new citizen science app, #birds #birding #ornithology news via @RareBirdAlertUK \[07-May\]](#)
-  [Needingworth Quarry's wetland project passed halfway point - BBC News \[28-May\]](#)
-  [Nottingham pupils parade to celebrate swift project success - BBC News \[20-May\]](#)
-  [Winter waterbird numbers shift in a warming climate | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology \[24-Apr\]](#)





**Biodiversity loss – it's not too late**

Tree Sparrow, by Edward Fellows / BTO

**A Note from the BTO on their Biodiversity Loss Appeal ...**

“BTO’s latest appeal is to help support solutions to biodiversity loss. It is an incredibly important issue and the decline of wild birds in the UK is truly heartbreaking – 46% of species have declined between 2016 and 2021. The bird monitoring schemes they run are foundational to understanding changes so that effective solutions are developed. Find out more about how birds like Skylark, Curlew and Cetti's Warbler are benefiting from conservation underpinned by BTO’s vital work: [Biodiversity loss and the UK’s birds.](#) Lots of info on that link to their website on biodiversity loss and if you want to make a personal donation, here’s the link: [BTO Biodiversity Loss Appeal.](#)

**Wild bird population trends in the UK**



\*Sources: DEFRA (UK Government Statistics), BTO, RSPB and JNCC.





## What's That Song?



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

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

"The song is a pretty, liquid series of descending notes that starts softly and ends with a flourish. The common 'hoo-ee' call is almost two notes run together."

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

"Call more firmly two syllables than Chiffchaff, 'hoo-eet', like Redstart. Song immediately distinctive, short, lilting, whistling descending cadence."

*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*

"Call a soft whistle, disyllabic and upslurred, 'hu-itt'; varies a little (and some more like Chiffchaff's faster and differently stressed 'hweet'); very like Redstart's call, but a bit weaker. Song a frequently repeated soft whistling, somewhat descending verse c. 3 sec. long, eg: 'sissi-vüy-vüy-vüy svi-svi-vi tuuy tuuy tuuy si-si-vüy-sü'; recognised by delightfully sweet voice with softly inflected notes."

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

## Wordsearch



This month, we have the 21 species or races recorded in June 2023 for which we have just one or two records for each – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter](#).

Barnacle Goose  
Black-tailed Godwit  
Brent Goose  
Dunlin  
Golden Plover  
Great White Egret  
Long-eared Owl  
Marsh Tit  
Marsh Warbler  
Redshank  
Ringed Plover  
Shag  
Shoveler  
Turnstone  
Yellow Wagtail  
Yellow-legged Gull  
Arctic Skua  
Grasshopper Warbler  
Hen Harrier  
Honey-buzzard  
Whinchat

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





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!

**Swift:** "Moving north, away from yet another heavy squall followed by a very large raptor that turned out to be a rectangular black plastic bag!" | John Hurst | Mundesley | 29<sup>th</sup> |

**Cuckoo:** "Cuckoo-ing at top of Ash tree on water meadow just after we said we hadn't seen a Cuckoo here for years. Flew west-ish before we could get a decent shot. Club walk with the 6 of us that braved the rain!" | Carol Thornton | Felbrigg Park & Lake | 15<sup>th</sup> |

**Woodpigeon:** "Squab on the road - relocated to our garden, but later back on the road, with 2 adults wandering around on the verge - not sure they are great parents!" | Val Stubbs | At Home | 9<sup>th</sup> |

**Turtle Dove:** "Its been far too long since I last heard or saw Turtle Dove, and hearing and seeing a purring male today was wonderful of course, but sad at the same time, how much longer will we have them?" | Stella Baylis | Kelling Heath | 14<sup>th</sup> |

**Oystercatcher:** "Nesting in the halls back garden which was cordoned off as they are being a bit feisty!" | Di & Richard Farrow | Mannington Hall Park | 19<sup>th</sup> |

**Herring Gull:** "27 nests on roof of industrial building adjacent to Waitrose" | Julian Thomas | North Walsham | 21<sup>st</sup> |

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** "8 nests on flat roof of industrial building adjacent to Waitrose" | Julian Thomas | North Walsham | 21<sup>st</sup> |

**Glossy Ibis:** "Flying east in formation with a Great White Egret in front followed by the 2 Grey Herons." | Moss Taylor | Weybourne Camp | 19<sup>th</sup> |

**Osprey:** "Worth waiting 7 years for a fly over Osprey, first seen to the east, flew over the Common and our garden and headed north-west. A reward for a day gardening, seen whilst relaxing with a beer in the garden." | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 18<sup>th</sup> |

**Sparrowhawk:** "female in the road causing a traffic jam - attempting to despatch a feral dove" | Trevor Williams | Cromer | 20<sup>th</sup> |

**Marsh Harrier:** "Female over the garden. A chance glimpse skywards whilst thinning carrots. First garden record." | John Hurst | Mundesley | 2<sup>nd</sup> |

**Red Kite:** "Sustead Rd. Slowly shadowing a Greylag over the garden!" | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 19<sup>th</sup> |

**Red Kite:** "An exceptional passage of Red Kites to west in parties of up to 7, totalling 21" | Moss Taylor | Weybourne Camp | 25<sup>th</sup> |

**Buzzard:** "First bird seen circling up from the common carrying a large snake; a second Buzzard flew from the trees to join the first but was mobbed by a Rook; both Buzzards lost to sight behind the trees before I could see the end result" | Dave Billham | Beeston Common | 9<sup>th</sup> |

**Bee-eater:** "Picked up by IP, flying west low over paddocks, calling. Useful speed check as what was presumably the same bird seen at Weybourne Camp (0655), Scolt Head (0806), Thornham Marsh (0816) and Hunstanton." | Andrew Clarke | West Runton | 13<sup>th</sup> |

**Hobby:** "1 perched in Deadman's, then 2 hunting suspected meadow pipit. Both chasing hard; at one point the prey took cover in rank field-margin and a hobby apparently landed briefly to flush the prey. Lost to sight against among scrub with both hobbies in pursuit." | Tony Pope | Weybourne Cliffs – Coastal Path | 2<sup>nd</sup> |

**Golden Oriole:** "Fantastic morning with two maybe three birds. 0725 male over Weybourne Camp flew towards me (on top of the hill) then dropped into the trees, 0755 male calling, jay like call they have, then full song. 0835 female/imm flew over Weybourne village towards the heath then joined by a male. 0910 male flew out of trees on north side towards Kelling village before returning and dropping back in to trees on the hill." | Paul Laurie | Muckleburgh Hill | 6<sup>th</sup> |

**Jackdaw:** "In meadow, eating millet - supposed to be for Turtle Doves!" | Val Stubbs | At Home | 9<sup>th</sup> |

**Swallow:** "A likely pair hanging around a derelict house with no roof north of main entrance to the Common, they've been there a few days now and the male is singing pretty much all the time from the aerial, lovely to hear but will they set up home?!" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 19<sup>th</sup> |

**House Martin:** "17x West small movement again, late migration/weather displaced birds? So nice to see so many House Martins" | Peter Geary | Beeston Regis | 23<sup>rd</sup> |

**Blackcap:** "Female seen in mature oak tree, this tree was busy with birds gathering small green caterpillars: Blue Tits, Great Tits, Coal Tit, Robins and this Blackcap" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 15<sup>th</sup> |

**Lesser Whitethroat:** "Singing from same location of previous suspected nest site, lets hope it stays and doesn't move on like all the other Lesser Whitethroats on my local patch have apparently done so far this Spring!" | Stella Baylis | Southrepps Common | 4<sup>th</sup> |

**Whitethroat:** "Feeding amidst herbs in a sunny area in the garden. An unexpected and very enjoyable new record for the garden being quite out of context and late as a migrant" | John Hurst | Mundesley | 27<sup>th</sup> |

**Firecrest:** "Seen at about 3 feet, singing with crest raised." | Tony Pope | High Kelling | 10<sup>th</sup> |

**Nightingale:** "raptor watch point. Absolute belter, singing regularly on and off. Found it with the thermal imager and it is not singing from where you think it is." | Phil Borley | Swanton Novers | 9<sup>th</sup> |



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



A couple of new rare bird records have been 'Accepted' by the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since the last

newsletter. You can view their current '**NRC work in progress**' file on their website [24<sup>th</sup> Nov 23]. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [11<sup>th</sup> Mar 24].

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

## NENBC Website



A huge thanks to the **117** of you who have uploaded records to our new website this year to date covering **47,387** records. It is very much appreciated by us and the bodies we send the data on to for inclusion in the county reports.

Up to the end of May we have collectively recorded **207** species across the NENBC area this year. Don't forget that 100 species will earn you a Bronze Star badge from the club so do get out there recording yourself and telling us what you see. Attending club walks is a great way to see more birds with the added bonus of the extra sets of eyes from other members. The monthly Felbrigg walk is within the club area so all sightings there count towards your Star badges (and your Eco-badges if you have walked or cycled there) and some of the weekend walks are in the club area too.

Most recorded species for May remained Blackbird for the 3<sup>rd</sup> month running. At the other end of the spectrum, we had single records of the following species: Arctic Skua, Black Redstart, Cattle Egret, Great Northern Diver, Greenshank, Hen Harrier, Honey-buzzard, Hooded Crow, Kingfisher, Little Gull, Mandarin Duck, Montagu's Harrier, Puffin, Quail, Red-backed Shrike, Ruff, Storm Petrel, Water Rail, Wood Sandpiper, Woodcock. The location with the most records overall was Weybourne Camp (1,166), with nearly double its nearest rivals of Weybourne, Bodham and Kelling Heath, the latter being a seasonal hotspot for some key species but also attracting a lot of other more common birds..

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



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

Please continue to tag us **@NENBC\_info** in your own Tweets. Here are some highlights from the last month ...



Here's a list of the members who we know have a Twitter X account they use for bird sightings, although not all are NENBC area residents - let us know if you're not on here!

James Appleton	Colin Blaxill	Tracy Brighten	Emma Buck	Stu Buck	Ben Clark	Sally Clark	
Jane Crossen	James Emerson	Ian Gordon	Andy Hale	Sarah Hanson	Emma Hurrell	Russ Malin	Louis Parkerson
Lin Pateman	Steve Stansfield	Val Stubbs	Alan Stevens	Carol Thornton	Ken Thornton	Pauline Walton	
Lizzie Wallis	Trevor Williams						

Don't forget that you don't have to have a Twitter X account to peruse Twitter pages – take a look at our feed on your computer / laptop / phone etc: [www.twitter.com/NENBC](https://www.twitter.com/NENBC) Info

## The Club Website



### Getting Started

If you haven't yet, take a look at this short video clip on how to get started on the website so you know what to expect once you are in:

#### NENBC on BirdClub

If you haven't yet 'activated' yourselves on the new website by changing your password then you can do that by clicking this link and following the instructions

<https://www.bird.club/members/password/new>

Don't forget to use the email address for yourself that you had registered with the old NENBC website – if you reset your password and then try and log in using a different email address then it won't work.

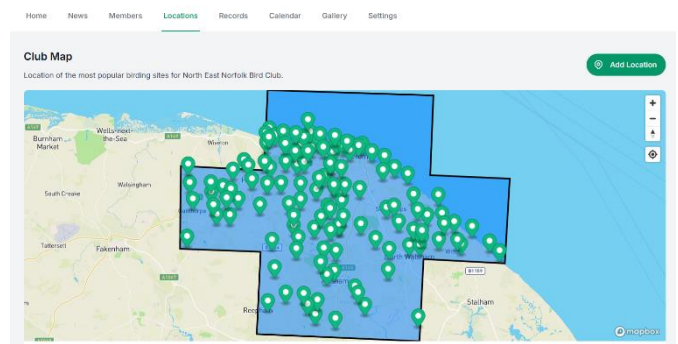
If you are already a user of the BirdClub platform with another club or group, you shouldn't need to change your password and you can switch between your different clubs once you are logged in to any of them - click on the arrow by your name at the top right of your screen.

Do give the new website a go and please contact us if you are struggling, have questions or queries or want to provide some feedback (we welcome both positive and less positive / constructive communications!) please get in touch - [nenbc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nenbc@aol.co.uk)

There have been some developments on the website since the last newsletter and more on the way so watch this space.

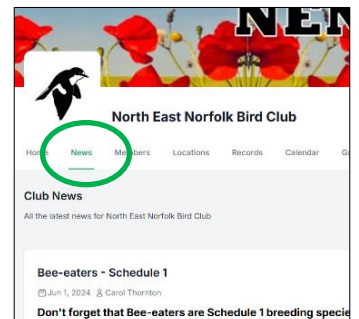
### Club Area Boundary Map .....

We have had plenty of feedback from folk that they miss not being able to see the club boundaries on the new website and we are pleased to announce that this feature is now up and running. The zoomable map on the Locations tab will enable you to see more clearly where we sit. A couple of quick reminders: 1) only birds seen or heard in or over the club area should be logged on the club website; 2) the definitive edges of our borders follow the grid lines on the Ordnance Survey map of the area – the image on the website is a representation of this and for the crunch points where a Location straddles our boundary, the OS map is where you should check. Take a look at Trevor's article on [page 26](#) which gives some more detailed info on club boundaries and pitfalls.



### News tab .....

Since we launched we have had the facility to add an Announcement on the Home page of the website. We anticipated using this much like the Bulletin banner on the old website for short reminders on things between newsletters and emails but increasingly we have found that we have had to drop quite a bit of text in there which made it a bit unwieldy. Well we now have an additional tab you can access at the top of the screen called 'News'. We will use this for the longer messages that need a bit of explanation and the Announcements as we originally intended. At the moment we can upload text and images but coming soon we will be able to add documents such as the newsletter to this section which will be handy.



### A new location .....

We are rather excited about a new location for wildlife within our boundaries. At the moment the site isn't open access so any records added from within the site will be from survey visits with the permission of the owners. It is envisaged that in the future this will be a nature reserve with access but in the meantime, just look at that habitat!





# Cultural Birds – Swifts



By David North

Noisy, screaming parties of swifts mark the arrival of summer. Swifts are the most aerial birds on the planet, sleeping, feeding and mating on the wing. Young swifts may fly for over a year without ever landing, crossing continents between Europe and Africa.!

*Photos courtesy of:*

*Richard Farrow - three at top*

*Mark Clements – two bottom left*

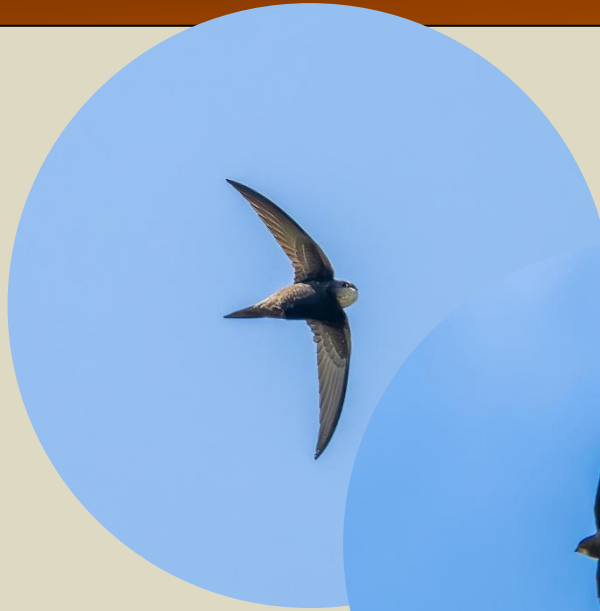
*Moss Taylor – bottom right*

Check out this vid link to a Swift's journey – [Nature's Voice](#)

## Swifts

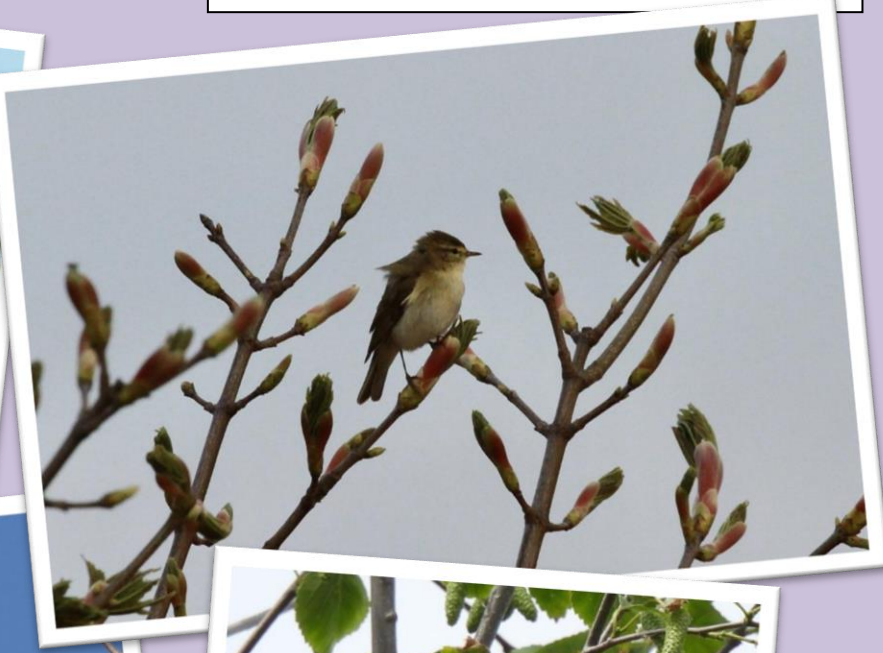
Inky black night shadow  
Screaming against blue skies.

Einstein's bird, you know the equations  
Energy momentarily materialised as bird,  
Time and space meet at the point of your scream  
Your black wings cut across days, nights and continents  
And your passage marks my summers



**Swift Awareness Week** is 29-Jun to 07-Jul with some information available on the RSPB website [Swift Awareness Week 2024 \(rspb.org.uk\)](#)

The bird voice variously described was that of a **Willow Warbler**. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the **BTO BirdFacts: Willow Warbler** page. There is also a BTO Bird ID Video featuring Willow Warbler: **Identifying Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler** *Photos from Francis Farrow, Trevor Williams, Moss Taylor, Andrew Crossley, Mark Clements.*



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

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



## Back Page Club Info .....



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

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

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

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

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

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

**Club Sponsor:** A 5% discount on Bird Ventures branded wild bird food is available to NENBC members at their shop in Holt all year on production of a current NENBC Membership Card. Have a look at the [Bird Ventures website](http://www.birdventures.co.uk) 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