

The Pied Flyer

North East Norfolk Bird Club



March 2026 – Issue 129

The NENBC Monthly e-Newsletter

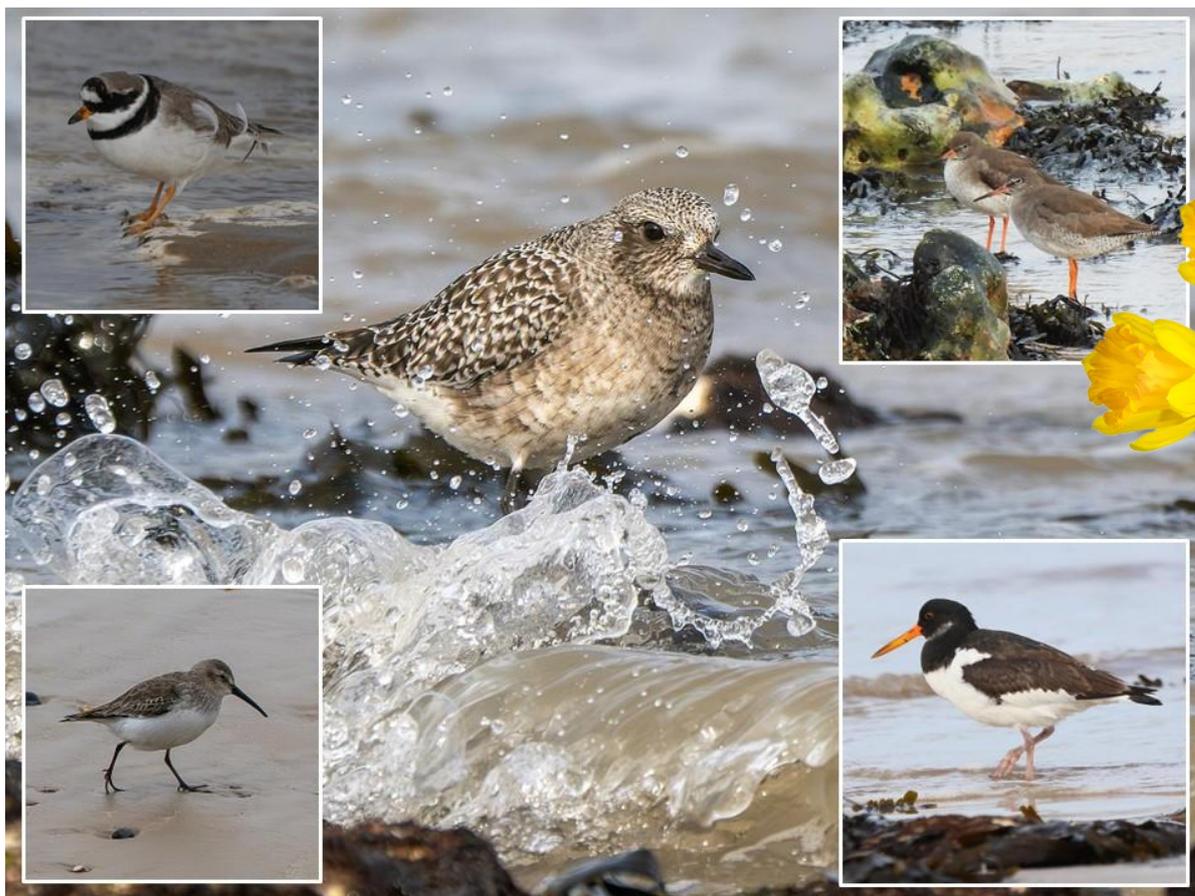
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Through a Lens



By John Swallow

I don't know about you but for the last two to three weeks I have become aware of bird song outside my bedroom window. Faint at first, my local Blackbird is becoming louder as each day passes, makes me smile every morning.

Each year, just after the winter solstice I notice birds beginning to sing. I haven't checked the scientific evidence and it may be in part be my wishful thinking but it seems that birds notice that days are becoming ever so slightly longer and they begin to sing. Even on dark winter days in January and February, my favourite bird, the Skylark sings and with few other singers the Mistle Thrush (or Storm Cock) is noticeable at this time of year as it too joins this early chorus.

In fact I don't think we should wait until May to appreciate the "dawn chorus", it is already with us. As I write this in late February, before the official (meteorological) start of spring, sunshine is beginning to feel pleasantly warm. So each morning this simple Blackbird song gives me pleasure, a welcome start to the day and reminds me to listen again to Blackbird by the Beatles.

As highlighted in January, Andy Clarke and I visited Dawn Balmer at BTO, Thetford in mid-February to hear more about the preparation for upcoming [Bird Atlas 2027-31](#) and it proved to be a very useful meeting. My key takeaways were that the methodology will be the same as the 2007-11 Atlas with timed Tetrad (2 x 2km squares) visits, 8 required per 10km square for the National Atlas, winter and summer visits etc but work is ongoing in providing an app which means that your sightings will automatically be assigned to the correct Tetrad. I'm "old school" so I like a notebook and an OS map but this new feature will help the many who don't and BTO are also putting effort in about how to record species seen at a distance (ie buzzards, where are they recorded?).

It sounds very promising and as a Committee we will be discussing how we might take part. BTO provides help to bird clubs like ours to create a local atlas so we will be considering the feasibility of our Club participating and creating our own Atlas. There are eight 10km squares in our Club Area, five are full squares and three are partial squares (in the sea!), so for the National Atlas there will be approx 48 Tetrads to survey and approx 154 Tetrads for a local atlas.

Don't worry if this doesn't make sense right now as we will plan a number of events to explain the terminology, some "how to" workshops and importantly newsletter updates on how you can be involved and make a difference in this excellent citizen science project.

Good birding!

Not too long now until **International Dawn Chorus Day** at the beginning of May. Here's a nice little article worth a read about why birds sing [The Dawn Chorus | Bird Spot](#).

Also, those of you with a copy of our NENBC Bird Report for 2018 (copies still available from the club for a small contribution!) could have a look at Moss Taylor's article "[Song Periods Recorded in 2018](#)". Based on records added by our members to our website that year, the article includes lots of charts showing the months in which 61 species were reported singing in our area along with some supporting commentary from Moss. For members who want a bit more of the science, Moss and Andy Clarke went on to write a paper based on our records entitled "Song periods of selected breeding birds in northeast Norfolk" which was published in the April 2021 edition of *British Birds*. Here's the **Abstract**:

"Song is a key feature of the annual cycle of passerine birds. The timing of singing and the factors affecting this were popular topics of investigation in the first half of the twentieth century but have been relatively little studied since. The timing of bird song in the UK may have changed in response to recent changes in climate. This paper presents the results of a project to document the song period of common breeding species by the North East Norfolk Bird Club. Comparing the results with earlier work indicates no significant changes in the timing of song, although comparison with Gilbert White's studies in the eighteenth century suggests that song in the Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* now starts earlier. Examining the song periods of UK birds on a wider geographical scale and over a longer period would be timely, to refine our understanding of how factors such as weather and climate influence the timing and intensity of bird song. Introduction Song is central to the life-cycle of passerine birds: it is how a male establishes and defends a territory, and how he attracts a mate (Marler & Slabberkoorn 2004). Singing takes considerable energy (Franz & Goller 2003; Ward & Slater 2005) and hence is used only when needed: many species cease singing once breeding is under way, whereas species that defend a winter territory resume singing in autumn. The timing of when birds sing is thus a key feature of their annual cycle."



By Carol Thornton

Welcome to our March newsletter! It was good to see a few of you at our **pop-up seawatch** last weekend at Cromer. I saw my first Eider of the year despite the mist so was quite pleased with myself. These are great events to get you into the swing of seawatching with an experienced lead and sightings and time in the 'field' will contribute to your Blue Badge so maybe give it a go next time? We advertise them on the club website and on our WhatsApp Groups a couple of days before. So far we have been running these from Cromer North Lodge Park with Trevor but we would be delighted to hear from any other members who would be happy to lead a pop-up and any of our other coastal locations. All of our other **upcoming club events** are listed from [page 12](#) so hope to see you at one of those soon.

Talking of events, those of you who have expressed an interest (and those of you who haven't yet!), we have some dates from our **Birding for Beginners** course – end of April and first part of May (see [page 14](#)). We were quite tight on potential times when we had lead and hall availability so this is an earlier spring course than we have run before but it may mean we get a better selection of birds to practice on! Do let us know if you can come.

Trevor, Andy and I have started meeting with this year's **UEA environmental consultant students** (see [page 34](#)). We would very much appreciate as many of you as possible taking part in an **online survey** from Maisie, one of our consultants, about the expanding use of AI in birding so expect an email on that in the near future. Maisie will also be joining us at next week's **Felbrigg Park double mid-week walk** to see how folk use Merlin in the field. She would love to meet some of you so please do come along and have a chat with her about birding and technology. Don't forget we have **two walks this time** – the usual with Trevor from 9am to 11am and a shorter more sedate affair with Nick from 10am to 11am. Hopefully see you there!

'Through a Lens' for the front cover last month was 'birds on the shoreline'. Here's a selection of images from members: main



photo Grey Plover [Richard Farrow] and then clockwise from top left Ringed Plover [Richard], Redshank [Mark Clements], Oystercatcher [Steve & Barbara Lines], Dunlin [Richard]. For March, our theme will be '**migrants incoming!**' so get clicking!

Here are my **favourite member photos** from February, selected from the ones that didn't make it on to our monthly NENBC Bird Highlights section of the more unusual species ... a lovely singing Wren showing spring is on its way and a hovering Kestrel, both from Richard Farrow, a garden Blackbird from Ken Thornton (I had nearly forgotten that it snowed last month!) and a Buzzard having a scratch from Jane Crossen.

Thanks all!

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

* Louisa Claxton * Freddy Wilke *
* Maisie Royal * Sofia Gruson * Vinnie Purdy *
If you have any queries, just drop us an email

Can anyone advise Val please?

Help! I want to see a Willow Tit!

"I have never seen a Willow Tit and I'm aware that it's extremely unlikely that I will ever see one in the NENBC area. However, I believe they are still to be found in the north of the country. In April we are heading off to Yorkshire for a few days to celebrate our Ruby wedding anniversary. Does anyone know any sites in Yorkshire that are likely to be good for Willow Tit at that time of year? It would be a great anniversary present to see one! Thanks"

Val Stubbs | vstubbs1961@gmail.com

A quick update from **Andrew Gorton**. You may remember from last month's newsletter that he was doing a sponsored walk during February to raise funds for our conservation partner **Felbeck Trust** (check out their new website!), with which plenty of you volunteer. We are delighted to report that Andrew walked over 70 miles and raised £350 for this excellent cause. Fantastic effort!



By Carol Thornton

≈ 6,850 individual records covering 139 bird species were added in February

All records are from the NENBC website and submitted by members unless otherwise stated. We used a little bit of AI to help collate this report but it is predominantly of human origin!

February 2026 | The highlight remained the **Eastern Black Redstart** that has been around The Leas in Sheringham since 24th December. Also of interest were **Velvet Scoter, Lapland Bunting** and a nice selection of geese including **Brent, Barnacle, Tundra Bean and White-fronted Geese** plus **Merlin, grebes** and **Shag** were also of interest. During the month 6.858 records were uploaded by 73 recorders and 139 species recorded which seems a bit down in terms of records compared to recent years.

Brent Goose | Records of birds throughout the month passing up and down the length of our coast. Lots of single figure counts but peak movement involved 117 birds at Weybourne on the 3rd, 106 west and 11 east during a seawatch. A flock of 62 grazing a winter cereal field at Doggetts Lane Happisburgh on 1st and 20 there on the 20th were the only records of birds away from the sea. *Photo 1 courtesy of Steven & Barbara Lines*



Barnacle Goose | Most records were from 1st to 8th around the Weybourne sites, generally feeding on harvested beet fields, with the largest count of 78 at Weybourne Heath on 7th. A single bird was reported in a ploughed field at Happisburgh on 17th in a flock of over 1,000 Pink-feet, with records of 17 birds there the following day. Three birds were west past Sheringham and Weybourne on 22nd. *Photo 2 courtesy of Mark Clements*



Tundra Bean Goose | There were records of up to 8 individuals in the harvested beet fields at Weybourne with the Pink-feet flocks up until the 8th of the month and no further Weybourne reports until 2 east past there on 26th. An intriguing apparent hybrid (suggested to be Tundra x White-front) apparently paired with a pure Tundra Bean Goose was reported there on 4th and 7th. Two birds were reported in a field at Happisburgh on 17th, with 8 birds there the following day. *Photo 3 courtesy of Mark Clements*



White-fronted Goose | Most records were from 1st to 8th, predominantly around the Weybourne sites. The 5th proved to be a spectacular day with up to 350 feeding up at Weybourne Heath with reports from across the country of a massive movement of this species, presumably prepping for or starting their migratory journeys. Triple figure counts also reported on 7th and 8th. In the second half of the month things were quieter, with double figure counts past



Sheringham on 17th and west Runton on 24th, two on a beet field in Happisburgh on 18th and two more in Aylmerton on 25th. *Photo 4 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Velvet Scoter | Two Velvet Scoters flew east past Weybourne on the 4th.

Goosander | A single redhead east past Weybourne on 5th and a pair, east again, at Sheringham on 9th were the only records this month.

Red-breasted Merganser | A pair west past Sheringham on 17th and a single drake west at Weybourne Cliffs on 22nd.

Grey Partridge | Five were flushed from a field in Weybourne on 1st, and two flew across a lane at Aldborough on 11th.

Red-necked Grebe | A single was on the sea at Sheringham on 6th having flown in from the west, and a single heading west landed on the sea off Beaston Bump on 17th.

Slavonian Grebe | A single drifted west past Weybourne Cliffs on 21st, the only record of the month. *Photo 5 courtesy of Ollie Allison*

Black-necked Grebe | A single was on the sea off Weybourne on 10th, drifting west.

Grey Plover | With the exception of a single west off Sheringham on 24th. all February records were from West Runton irregularly from 1st through to 26th. .Most records were of 1-4 individuals, with 6 there on 18th and 7 on 24th. *Photo 6 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

Bar-tailed Godwit | A single bird moving west along the coast on 17th from Cromer Lighthouse & East Cliffs was speed-checked for our flight speed data project at Sheringham Tank.

Knot Twenty-four west past Weybourne on 16th.

Dunlin | Five east at Sheringham on 3rd, with up to 2 feeding there the same day. Nine west past Weybourne on 16th plus 2 similarly on 20th and finally a single on the beach at West Runton on 24th. *Photo 7 courtesy of Richard Farrow*

Purple Sandpiper | Having been sadly absent from the usual haunts in Sheringham this past winter, the first sighting of a single bird was on 3rd. Likely to be the same bird with plumage suggesting a juvenile, was reported also reported there on 4th, 6th, 7th and 8th with a further report of a single on beach and 'new' rocks west of the pier at Cromer on 10th. No further reports. . *Photo 8 courtesy of Mick Rebane*

Woodcock | Twenty six records from 1st through to 27th from 12 locations. Predominantly singles with 2 recorded at Beeston Common, Weybourne, Kelling Heath and Ingworth plus 3 at Swafeld and Spa Common. A bird struck a window at Cromer on 2nd and recovered (see [page 10](#)).



Jack Snipe | One flushed at Felbrigg Park on 17th and one located with thermal imager at Thornage water meadows on 25th and one in Gresham 6th.

Kittiwake | Just 7 records with singles reported along the coast off Weybourne and Sheringham in the first half of the month, with 26 east past Weybourne on 3rd and 4 east past Sheringham on 6th. *Photo 9 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Little Gull | Seven reports over 5 days with 5 past Weybourne on 4th and up to 8 past there on 5th, Singles reported offshore feeding from Sheringham on 6th and 28th and Weybourne on 18th.

Mediterranean Gull | Singles off Weybourne on 4th and 9th then no reports until 14th. Twenty four reports between then and 28th, mostly singles from Sheringham, Weybourne, Walcott, West Runton, Weybourne area, and Cromer sites with 2 at Sheringham and West Runton on 18th and 5 passing Weybourne on 26th. Away from the sea, there was a single on fields around Sheringham Cemetery on 27th and 28th. *Photo 10 courtesy of Russell Page*

Red-throated Diver | Plentiful records from 1st through to 28th. Most records were of birds in flight with just a handful reported on the sea. Records came from Weybourne area through to Trimingham with triple-figure counts from Weybourne on 1st (128) and 2nd (142) plus Sheringham (114) on 28th.

Great Northern Diver Great Northern Divers were recorded off Weybourne on the 2nd, when two birds were seen moving along the coast, and again on the 17th, when a single bird was noted.

Fulmar | Fifty reports of generally 1-6 birds from Weybourne, West Runton, East Runton, Sheringham and Cromer. A high count of 16 east at Sheringham on 19th and 16 again at Cromer on 10th, nesting on cliff face.

Shag | A single adult Shag was seen on the sea off Sheringham on the 6th. *Photo 11 courtesy of Stu Buck*

Goshawk | Up to 3 birds reported at the usual haunt of Swanton Novers between 14th and 25th, including exhibiting soaring and displaying behaviour. Elsewhere, a bird heard only at Selbrigg pond on 21st, and a single was seen over Edgefield on 21st and 25th. If you haven't seen Goshawk before (or even if you have) consider joining our club walk at Swanton Novers on 14th March (see website or [page 13](#)). *Photo 12 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Hen Harrier | A male was heading east over Southrepps Common on 18th and a female flew west over Felbrigg Park & Lake on 25th.

Kingfisher | Two were seen around the lake island at Blickling Park on 20th and also heard calling plus a single bird was also reported near the bridge there on 27th. *Photo 13 courtesy of Nick Kimber*



Merlin | Singles were noted at both Walcott and Sustead Common on 1st.

Peregrine | Birds were reported around Cromer church on 7th, 12th, 14th and 23rd, sometimes the breeding pair together or sometimes records of them apart. There are many more sightings of this celebrity pair on the Cromer Peregrine Project's social media sites and the webcam is now up and running for 2026 (see page 34 for details). Further afield, sightings of singles at Weybourne on 4th, 18th and 21st plus Sheringham on 17th.

Raven | Ravens were seen on six dates this month, including two birds at Dilham Canal on 21st. Other sightings involved single birds over Gresham, Sheringham, Holt, Felbrigg Park, Glaven Valley, Kelling Heath and Holt Country Park & Lowes.

Marsh Tit | Disappointingly few records of this species thus far this year with just 6 sightings of singles at Selbrigg Pond, Felbrigg Park, Thornage and Mannington Hall park.

Woodlark | Woodlarks were active on Kelling Heath on three dates in the month, with reports on the 14th, 24th and 25th with some singing and showing noted.

Dartford Warbler | Reports of 1-2 birds from Kelling Heath on 5 dates. On 24th two males were heard in rival song. *Photo 14 courtesy of John Wheeler*

Firecrest | Single birds were recorded at Beeston Common on 8th and 25th, with 2 birds reported at Felbrigg Park on 21st. *Photo 15 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Black Redstart | Sixty three records of Black Redstart last month, predominantly of the lingering Eastern Black Redstart at Sheringham. Also reports there of a more regular male and female. Elsewhere, a 'superb' male was recorded at Happisburgh on 14th and 16th and another single on feeders at Melton Constable on 26th. *Photo 16 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Tree Sparrow A single Tree Sparrow was recorded at an undisclosed site Sheringham on the 17th and 22nd. *Photo 17 courtesy of Mark Clements*

Grey Wagtail | Twenty reports of this lovely bird from 8 locations in February – Sheringham, Sheringham Cemetery, Selbrigg Pond, Holt, Felbrigg Park, Beeston Common, Beeston Regis, Blickling Park. All were singles except for 2 at Sheringham on 4th and 8th. *Photo 18 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

Rock Pipit | Singles reported at Sheringham on 27th and 28th. *Photo 19 courtesy of John Wheeler*



Brambling | There were high counts from Thornage at the beginning of the month with 30 there on 1st and 25 on 2nd. A single was at Selbrigg Pond on 4th and singles again at Gresham on three dates.

Redpoll | A single (Lesser) Redpoll was heard singing from the church grounds at Bodham on 10th.

Common Crossbill | Four birds were at Swanton Novers on 4th and 22nd, 2 flew over Kelling Heath on 24th and a flock were heard flying over the Great Wood at Felbrigg Park on 21st.

Lapland Bunting | An immature or female was seen with Skylark and Linnets on a club walk on 14th and a single flight call was also heard.

Snow Bunting | Flocks were noted along the Weybourne Cliffs coastal path, with 30 birds in a harvested beet field on 8th and 20 on or over fields west of Deadman's on 18th. On 23rd, 16 were feeding in a field east of the coastguard cottage at Weybourne. *Photo 20 courtesy of Jane Crossen*

18



19



20



March: What to look forward to



Early migrants will begin to move in greater variety and numbers in March ensuring sea-watchers and vis-miggers are rewarded. **Finches, pipits, larks and “alba” wagtails** will be on the move, as well as **corvids, and thrushes** returning north will bring with them the first **Ring Ouzels** especially in light north-east winds. **Stonechat** numbers normally peak in late March and **Black Redstarts** can be numerous towards the end of the month. At time of writing, the last sighting on the wires of the celebrity Eastern Black Redstart at Sheringham was 2nd March; it may have left but it may be because you all have recording fatigue! **Teal flocks** can be checked for **Garganey**, and any inland pools of water could produce a **Little Ringed Plover**. Along our coast the first **Sandwich Terns, Sand Martins and Wheatears** will be found. Scarce birds occurring in March, with warm temperatures and south-east winds, may include **Hoopoe and Alpine Swift**, a speciality of the club area, between Sheringham and Mundesley. Last March we had a credible report of a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** at Selbrigg Pond. According to the **Lesser Spot Network**, March and April are the best times to look and listen for this UK red listed species calling and drumming in wet, broadleaf woodland so you never know, you could be lucky! And don't forget to keep an eye out for displaying **Goshawk** – or you could join us on the 14th for a walk around Swanton Novers followed by a static watch for Goshawk – see [page 13](#).

Ringed Bird Highlights

Just a reminder to folk logging ringed birds on our website. Although we send our data off en masse to the county recorder through BirdTrack uploads, we don't directly contact ringing coordinators of individual projects – that needs to be down to you if you have a sighting. Project coordinators love to get data on their birds – after all, that is the reason for ringing them - so here is a reminder on how to do it from Chris Lamsdell:

“Please report your colour ring birds to the relevant project co-ordinator which can be found through the EU Colour Ring website <https://cr-birding.org/>. Locally ringed Turnstones (red flag three letters starting JAA), Black-headed Gulls (red rings starting 2C00) and Marsh Tit (white rings 00-99) can be reported through <https://iceni.shinyapps.io/sightings/> Metal only rings can be reported to the BTO <https://app.bto.org/euring/lang/pages/rings.jsp>”



There were no comments on our website last month that we could spot regarding ringed birds but I did see this photo on the website gallery from John Wheeler

Marsh Tit

Mannington Hall Park, 27th February

There are a couple of articles on ringing this month from [page 24](#).

Member Highs, Lows and Ponderings

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



Brent Goose | “62x Grazing winter cereal field at the north end of the lane and in the recording area including one pale bellied brent.” | John Hurst | Happisburgh (Doggetts Lane) | 1st

Barnacle Goose | “Briefly on the River Mun meadows. A first and most unusual record.” | John Hurst | Mundesley | 5th

HYBRID Tundra Bean Goose | “harvested beet field with pinkfeet. Pair. First observed this pair of birds on the 28 of January, one has an all pinkish / orange beak and small white blaze. I couldn't make this feature and the plumage add up, and was left with several thoughts as to its identity. Having finally spoken to James McCallum, who with others, have seen this bird, general consensus is it is considered to be a Tundra / White-fronted goose hybrid.” Phil Borley | Weybourne | 4th

Pink-footed Goose | “150x Sustead Rd. Lovely to see them heading to roost against a blue sky instead of just hearing them in the fog.” | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 14th

White-fronted Goose | “350x harvested beet field with pinkfeet. A truly awesome sight to see this size flock in Norfolk. Massive movement of Whitefronts in

the country today, reported as moving east or south east. Presumably starting migration, leaving the UK, maybe heading for Holland first ?” | Phil Borley | Weybourne Heath | 5th

Mallard | “A pair; bill-dipping display and mating on pond.” | Tony Pope | Sheringham Park | 21st

Pintail | “Female on the pond at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary again. I am beginning to wonder if this is the second one that visited as she is much shyer than the other and tends to swim about at the back of the pond. The first visiting one was a lot bolder and would come out onto the bank to feed with the sanctuary geese and ducks.” | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 26th

Teal | “Keeping well out of the way of the feeding dog Otter!” | David Griffiths | Selbrigg Pond | 4th

Woodpigeon | “2x On fence, courting - very appropriate for Valentine's Day” | Val Stubbs | Weybourne | 14th

Water Rail | “3 at least, squeaking and shrieking from the canal banks and marshes.” | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 24th

Moorhen | “Sustead Road. Garden pond. Nice to see after an absence.” | Alan Stevens | Gresham | 18th

Oystercatcher | "The oystercatchers are back! 3 flying around the pond and surrounding fields at Hillside Shire Horse Sanctuary today. Lots of calling and posturing. They've been back a few days but this is the first day I've seen them, and they've landed in the Pond Paddock." | Ellie Farrow | West Runton | 23rd

Lapwing | "300x Minimum estimate, large flock flying low over field between Antingham and North Walsham" | Stella Baylis | North Walsham | 2nd

Purple Sandpiper | "At last a Purple Sandpiper on rocks in front of The Crown. Nice to get a size comparison shot with a Turnstone." | Jane Crossen | Sheringham | 4th

Woodcock | "I was called out from a neighbouring shop in Cromer where a bird had flown into their window. Now recovering behind our shed at work looking more lively now. The Woodcock flew off strongly heading east after recovering for a couple of hours" | Mark Clements | Cromer | 2nd



Goshawk | "In the woods opposite Selbrigg Pond. Sound only via Merlin so not confirmed but we heard it about 4 times. Sounded similar to a green woodpecker but not quite right." | Ellie Farrow | Selbrigg Pond | 21st

Red Kite | "Male in Upper Gresham flying around looking for road kill poor chap hasn't read the signs road closed today !!!" | Anne Sims | Gresham | 16th

Buzzard | "3x In the air together. These are the first Buzzards I've seen over the Sheringham section of the ridge for weeks." | Janice Darch | Upper Sheringham | 14th

Kestrel | "Female - plucking chest feathers for about half an hour - so presumably getting ready to lay some eggs!! Lost balance occasionally!" | Jane Crossen | Sheringham Cemetery | 25th

Merlin | "Flew parallel to the car as we travelled west before it headed inland." | John Hurst | Walcott | 1st

Skylark | "6x All singing - I had just commented that I couldn't see any, when 1 promptly flew E over Mill Lane, and another 4 flew out of the field W of Mill Lane!! Another heard but not seen over clifftop grassland" | Val Stubbs | Weybourne Cliffs | 4th

Cetti's Warbler | "4x quite a lot of variation in the songs but all still unmistakably Cetti's. Perhaps a couple of learners?" | Bob Farndon | Dilham Canal | 24th

Goldcrest | "Feeding in tree by field nr Sexton's Lodge - it was fluttering under the branches picking off small insects; looked more like a moth than a bird! Club Walk 9.00-11.00" | Val Stubbs | Felbrigg Park | 18th

Treecreeper | "3x First song of the year from our local Treecreepers, a lovely song with a cheeky upward inflection at the end of the phrase" | Stella Bayliss | Southrepps Common | 17th

Song Thrush | "Sat with my first coffee of the day, and for the first time this year was treated to the full works of this wee songster right outside the window for a full fifteen minutes. Wonderful." | Dave Billham | Beeston Common | 11th

Goldfinch | "Been visiting our garden almost daily for the last two weeks and feeding on the dried seedheads of the cottage garden borders" | Hale Family | High Kelling | 24th

"I've been around the Leas and Burlington Court area quite a lot for the last couple of months (for obvious reasons!) and a few weeks ago I thought it very odd that I could hear an Oystercatcher. Not that odd, you might think, but it appeared to be sitting on the Burlington roof and not on the beach or passing through. I then noted that a Starling was in the same area as the calling Oystercatcher. For four or five days - the same thing - and then one day it was obvious it must have been the Starling as there were no other birds around. So I had a brainwave: as it was calling I used my Merlin app - yep - it said it was an Oystercatcher. Damn good impressionist that bird!" | Jane Crossen

Library pics from John Wheeler and Richard Farrow



Contributions to the Newsletter

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

Looking forward to hearing from you!

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

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

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10:15am-4:00pm
Tuesday to Saturday
9:00am-4:00pm
Sunday Closed



Speaker Suggestions

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

Thank you!

Restocking our 2nd hand bookstall

We could do with some more book donations for our birds and other nature stall at our indoor events. We have rather a lot of Field Guides to the rest of the world so don't really need any more of those, but we could do with some more reading material from a bit closer to home. If you have any books languishing on your shelves that might suit, bring them along to one of our events or let us know on nenbc@aol.co.uk

NENBC WhatsApp groups

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

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

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

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

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

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

Membership Renewal

Subscriptions for 2026 – LAST CALL!!!!

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

2026 calendar year membership of £15 per household to include a copy of the club's printed 2025 Annual Bird Report which we hope will be ready for publication in the summer, or **£12 without the report.**

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

We aren't intending to issue membership cards to existing members this year due to the rising costs of postage. Our club sponsor BirdVentures, who offer discounts on their own brand bird food to members at their Holt shop, are happy to accept your 2025 cards as proof of membership. Please get in touch if you can't find yours!

Many thanks for your continuing support and engagement and happy birding for 2026!

What's On?

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



Overview

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

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

General Walks Information

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

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

DOGS: We regret no dogs except assistance dogs.

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

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

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

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

General Talks Info

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

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

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

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

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

Upcoming Events

In the coming weeks we have an extra special **Felbrigg Park Walk** offering a short or a standard stroll, and walk around **Swanton Novers**. Our **March Evening Talk** is about **RSPB Strumpshaw Fen** with the BTO's Drew Lyness. Look forward to seeing you at these events soon.

Felbrigg Park Monthly Walk 18th March 2026

By popular request we will be trialling something different for this month's walk. In addition to our usual romp (with Trevor promising we will be going somewhere we don't usually get to!), we will also be leading a second shorter and slower walk for those who find our normal offer more than they are willing / able to do. We really hope that many of you will come and join us. The plan is a staggered start with us all meeting up in the café afterwards at 11am.

Our Felbrigg Park walks are sociable events and cater for all levels of birding ability so come and give us a try. Our route is dependent on the local bird and other wildlife recently reported or likely to be present on the day. We normally see around 40 bird species on an average walk and even on the 'worst' of days more than 30.

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

Walk 2 | 10:00am to 11:00am | ≈ 1 mile
Slow and steady with Nick Kimber

NO BOOKING REQ'D | PARK & MEET: Main Felbrigg Hall car park – free for National Trust members | **ACCESSIBILITY:** footbaths, grassland, a bit of mud usually and can be uneven in places | **FACILITIES:** Café and loos at the Hall | **CLUB BADGES:** In area so all appropriate individual records count.

18th March | 15th April | 20th May

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

26th March 7:30pm to 9:30pm
Gresham Village Hall and via Zoom

'Scarcities & Swallowtails: 50 Years of RSPB Strumpshaw Fen' with Drew Lyness

Drew is currently the Development and Engagement Coordinator for England at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), a freelance guide for Birding EcoTours and, perhaps most importantly to him, a passionate volunteer at his favourite nature reserve, RSPB Strumpshaw Fen, where he largely organises and leads guided walks. Drew is a dedicated 'patch birder', having spent over a decade watching birds and other fantastic wildlife at Strumpshaw, making new discoveries as he goes. His talk will celebrate this fantastic reserve, now into its 50th year since it was opened to the public by the RSPB, showcasing the incredible, scarce and surprising species that call this special place home.

Swanton Novers – searching for Goshawks Saturday 14th March 2026 9.00 am to midday Walk Leader: Seán Dempster

The aim of walk is to see Goshawks which should be performing their aerial courtship displays at this time of year. Hopefully, we will get a bright, warm, sunny morning which will encourage the Goshawks to fly. Mid-morning is often the best time so we will start off by walking through the Swanton Novers woods to a water meadow where the Norfolk Rivers Trust have created a new river through a wetland. We will walk for about 2 hours, covering a distance of about 3 miles. We will then return to Swanton Novers church, set up a watch point and hope to see Goshawks displaying. Telescopes would be useful as the birds can be distant. Common woodland birds should be seen on the walk but the main aim of the morning is to see Goshawks and other birds of prey

PARK & MEET: St Edmunds Church, Little Wood Lane, Swanton Novers, NR24 2QU. Note that the postcode is the nearest available | Grid reference: TG 015 323 | What3Words: shaver.dentistry.finally | GIS: Easting 601541, Northing 332391

DISTANCE: approx 3 miles

ACCESSIBILITY: The walk will be on level ground, along a forest track and then on grassy paths beside the river. The ground should not be too wet so walking boots will suffice. We can encounter poor weather in March, so please come prepared for chilly or wet conditions. There will be some standing/sitting while scanning for Goshawk, so lots of layers needed. Bring a folding chair if standing is a problem.

FACILITIES: None!

CLUB BADGES: The walk is in the club area so records count towards relevant club badges.

No prior booking is required for this walk

.... some advance notices



Strumpshaw Fen and Buckenham Marshes A Grand Day Out



Sadly this January walk was postponed as there was flooding at Strumpshaw and the site was closed for a few days. We had hoped to run something similar in the near future but we have taken the decision to reschedule this for the end of the year when we hope to have Drew Lyness on board again. In the meantime, Drew will be delivering our March talk so do come along to that “Scarcities & Swallowtails: 50 Years of RSPB Strumpshaw Fen”

The Runtons –

Saturday 18th April | 9am to 1pm

Walk Leader: Trevor Williams

By mid-April, spring migration should be getting started. This walk, around the villages of East and West Runtun, will explore a variety of coastal habitats and local migrant ‘hot spots’ looking for a mix of late wintering, summer breeding and migrating birds. Depending on weather and the state of the tide, this circular route will include some beach walking as well as mostly quiet country lanes. There is a café on route (run by long-time Club supporters Martin & Louise) which we may call in at, time permitting - also toilets available. At this time of the year anything could turn up but we’ll be particularly looking for Wheatear, wagtails, warblers, hirundines and displaying raptors. Suitable for all skill levels - beginners to experts welcome!

NO ADVANCE BOOKING REQUIRED | DETAILS ON WEBSITE AND WILL BE IN NEXT MONTH’S NEWSLETTER

Birding for Beginners Programme 2026



After a couple of years of not running this course, we hope to get back on track again this year with a spring course. We are still in the planning stages but we will be plugging this over the next few newsletter issues and very much hoping that sufficient of you will express an interest ASAP.

[Delia, Kala & Mike, Tam & Mary, I have you down already]. Trevor and Carol run the programme one evening a week over three successive weeks and we charge members £10 towards the hall hire costs, £15 for non-members. General outline below

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

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

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

Taking your interest to the next level including: the club website, new technology

Proposed dates: Three consecutive Wednesday evenings | probably 6:30pm to 9:30pm

29th April | 6th May | 13th May

A date in your diary – NENBC Annual Big Sit | Saturday 9th May

How many bird species can we see from the same spot dawn to dusk – join us to find out! Full details in next month’s newsletter with sites provisionally at Felbrigg Park and Beeston Common. Coinciding with Global Bird Day / World Migratory Bird Day we will also be fundraising for worthy bird causes. We are also hoping to run both a morning and afternoon walk at Felbrigg Park starting from the Big Sit site.



By Carol Thornton

Last month we were delighted to welcome **Louisa Claxton** to speak to us. She is an RSPB Conservation Advisor supporting Operation Turtle Dove, a partnership project focused on reversing the decline of one of England's most loved farmland birds. Her role is to support farmers and landowners in creating the right habitats to help Turtle Doves breed successfully. Since joining in January 2025, she has mainly worked in Suffolk, and she says she has very much enjoyed meeting landowners who care deeply about wildlife.



Louisa started off with a bit of ecology. European Turtle Doves breed across much of Europe and they migrate using three main flyways: the western, central and eastern routes. The birds we see in the UK belong to the western flyway - they migrate through France, Spain, and Portugal and winter in western Africa. The Eastern Flyway, by contrast, stretches through Malta, Italy, and Cyprus, connecting to populations further east. Turtle Doves typically arrive in the UK around mid-April and stay until mid-September. They are the UK's only migratory dove species.

Louisa then gave us a mini masterclass on how we can identify a Turtle Dove on the ground and in flight, gave us a run down on their breeding cycle, including that they make up to three nesting attempts with two chicks per brood. Chicks normally appear from towards the end of June and the juveniles feed themselves. Turtle Doves preferred nesting habitat is dense, tall, and thorny vegetation that offers good protection from predators. Ideal nesting spots include hawthorn and blackthorn hedges or clumps, especially when threaded with native climbers like dog rose and bramble. Historically, Turtle Doves nested in more open habitats as well, such as fruit orchards. This was likely due to higher population densities in the past, which meant more competition for prime nesting sites. Turtle Doves feed almost exclusively on seeds of plants, unlike our resident pigeons and doves, which will eat vegetation. They forage by walking, not perching. Unlike finches or other small birds that can balance on stems, Turtle Doves need to wander through weedy areas or along edges, using tracks and open patches to access seed so ideally they need areas of bare ground (roughly 30-60%) and short vegetation with lots of seed plus a water source.



How to identify a Turtle Dove

- Turtle Doves (TD) slightly larger than a blackbird
- Striking chestnut & black markings on their wings
- Juvenile TD's - faded versions of the adults, lack the neck markings
- Their soft, purring song is unmistakable!

Images: Mike Langham

What do Turtle Doves need?

NESTING HABITAT

- Dense, tall and thorny (At least 3m high, 4m wide) protection from predators, support nest structure – messy, poorly constructed
- Hawthorn/blackthorn hedges, with climbers such as Dog rose and Ivy
- Bramble scrub
- Height + density is more key (nest 2 metres high, on average)

Adaptable

What do Turtle Doves need to breed in UK?

FORAGING AREAS

Examples of seed rich areas with bare ground:

- Field edges
- Vehicle tracks next wildflowers
- Farmyards
- Edges of ponds, campsites - anywhere with a mix of bare ground and seeding plants
- Messy or full of life and purpose?

Foraging areas

What do Turtle Doves need?

WATER

- Little moisture in seeds – water to aid digestion
- They feed chicks crop milk
- Not fussy! Just need access – shallow edge or a perch

John Buckingham

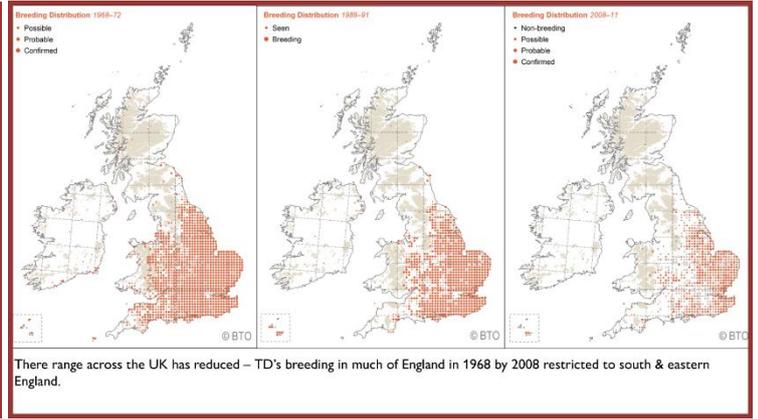
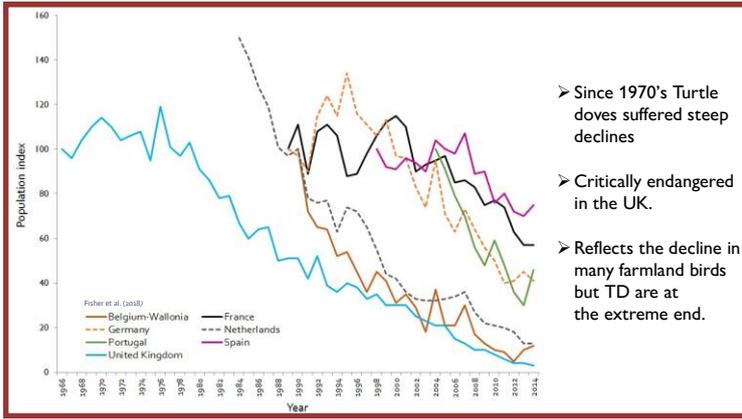
This is what we are aiming for!

Lots of seed for Turtle Dove to feed (April – September)

This field pansy poised to dry and burst open just like the one beside it.

Photos - Eliza Leat & Mark Nowers RSPB

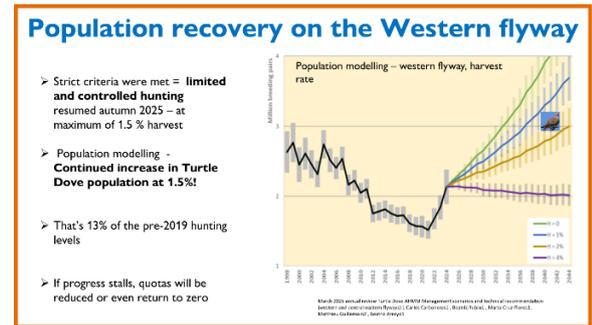
In the UK Turtle Doves have declined significantly between the 1960s and present day and their range has decreased. They are now classed as a red-listed bird in the UK which represents the highest level of conservation concern. Their decline reflects that in many farmland birds but they are at the extreme end.



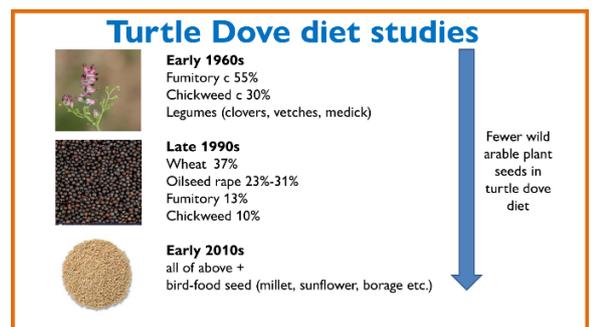
Year	Population estimate pairs
1966	140,000
2009	14,000
2016	3,600
2021	2,100

In 2021 the first national Turtle Dove census found that there were an estimated 2,000 territories remaining in the UK, with Norfolk supporting 10% of the total population. The next survey is likely to be in 2027. Across Europe, the birds have also experienced substantial declines. In 2015 their global threat level for Turtle Dove was updated from least concern to vulnerable on the IUCN red list. This resulted in a major project and in 2018, a 10-year action plan was developed by experts from 50 countries, aiming to restore the Turtle Dove to a favourable population status. It detailed

conservation actions to tackle issues such as habitat loss, lack of food availability and the impact of hunting. Prior to 2019, around one million Turtle Doves in total were being hunted legally each autumn across the Spain, Portugal and France affecting the breeding population on the western flyway and this was unsurprisingly declared unsustainable. A 4-year hunting moratorium was imposed in 2021 and this resulted in an amazing 30% increase in Turtle Dove population by 2024. As the UK is at the northern edge of their breeding range, there is likely to be a time-lag before we see a rise in Turtle Dove numbers here. In 2025 the criteria for hunting resumption was met, allowing a very limited, strictly controlled hunting quota in Western Europe. This wasn't unexpected and the quota was set at 1.5% of the population across Spain, France and Portugal. That's only 13% of the pre-2019 hunting levels and is designed to maintain sustainable recovery. If progress stalls, quotas will be reduced or return to zero. This adaptive approach ensures conservation remains the priority.



Having covered the conservation challenges of the birds in Europe, Louisa went on to describe why Turtle Doves had declined in the UK. Studies have shown that between the 1960s and the 1990s there was a distinct reduction in productivity with fewer nesting attempts. The breeding season has shortened with the laying date 10 days later in 2016 than it was in 1966 and departure dates 8 days earlier on average. Over the same period, as it has become more difficult for birds to find seed-rich areas, natural seed in their diet has drastically reduced and intake of wheat and brassicas has risen. Farming changes over the years have resulted in fewer and less variety of weeds due to herbicides, a move from spring cropping to autumn cropping, and a reduction in number of mixed farming systems as societal and political changes influence policies and choices. Other studies show that fledglings have a greater chance of survival if their nests are in seed-rich habitat. Turtle Doves are also susceptible to disease like trichomoniasis.



Having given us all a wealth of background on Turtle Dove, Louisa went on to talk about conservation action in the UK and what we can do to help keep them a UK breeding species. Louisa and her team at Operation Turtle Dove work with landowners and managers to give advice on managing existing habitats for these doves and creating new suitable habitats for both nesting and foraging, signpost funding opportunities and support them with supplementary feeding initiatives.

Louisa explained that the biggest impact is meeting the 300m rule – foraging habitat and a water source should be within 300m of nesting habitat. This helps support the fledglings in their first 3 weeks as they don't venture far. She then went on to describe how dense nesting habitat is best and we can help facilitate this through better management of scrub, including hedges eg: trimming higher and wider to encourage a denser structure, a 2–3 year rotation to promote flower and berry production, rotational hedge-laying or coppicing for over-mature or leggy scrub, mixed-age scrub across local habitats etc. This supports other species as well as doves. Louisa talked to us about the importance of accessible water. She recommends pond restorations where possible, including ghost and zombie ponds, because of the fantastic benefits for general farmland wildlife. Where restoration isn't an option, a water-filled horse bucket will do the trick too! Foraging areas are important for Turtle Doves and often there are existing 'accidental' foraging habitat areas that are suitable – low growing plants, seed production etc. It is important to look at creating new habitat too and cultivated margins for rare arable plants are one way to do this, with the proviso that due to the rules on some agri-environment schemes that don't allow for mid-season vegetation management, these margins can become too dense for the doves. Sowing a tailored wildflower mix next to tracks is a less perfect but acceptable solution.



Acknowledged barriers exist due to changed approaches to arable farming in recent years which have led to a focus on soil health to tackle problems like compaction, waterlogging and erosion and a move away from soil disturbance and bare ground – not so good for the doves. Type of soil can also limit the development of margins with light free-draining soil more suited to this than clay types. Louisa explained that often when they visit a farm, they can find suitable nesting habitat and water source but not always the foraging habitat within close range. As a transitional measure, they advise supplementary feed between mid-April and mid-July. Chicks and fledglings will be more healthy on a diet of natural seed, so once good quality natural foraging habitat is established, there shouldn't be a need to continue supplementary feeding.

Louisa concluded with a reminder on how important it is for Operation Turtle Dove to receive records on the birds as it helps advisers to target their work, so please continue to report on the club website, being mindful of rules around exact breeding locations (if we should be so lucky!) so that our records can feed in to the county data. Here's a nice quote from her that was a good transition into our second presentation on local Turtle Doves: *“Getting habitat right for Turtle Doves can be done by individual landowners but where we seem to see most success is where habitats are being created across a landscape. It makes sense – adult Turtle Doves can travel up to 10km for food, so if one food source is used up or becomes inaccessible there are more likely to be others nearby. The three habitats Turtle Doves need don't have to be owned by the same landowner, collaboration between sites and within farm clusters and green villages is a great way forward.”*

We finished the evening with our own Trevor Williams who gave us a brief potted history of Turtle Dove in the NENBC area against a backdrop of citations from The Norfolk Bird Atlas (1986), The Birds of Sheringham (1987), The

NENBC records since 2015

- * although birds have bred successfully at Kelling Heath in most years - often two pairs - no field observations of juveniles were reported
- * birds seen in Weybourne village and on the camp in the breeding season probably relate to Kelling Heath birds foraging further afield
- * most recent ad hoc reports come from coastal locations and are thought to be migrants
- * the number of ad hoc reports from inland sites (which may have been an indication of breeding) have declined since 2018
- * mid-May to mid-August on Kelling Heath is 'prime time'

Photos from Mark Clements

NENBC records since the club started

2025 - bred at Kelling Heath (17th Apr - 9th Aug) ad hoc reports from 3 locations
2024 - bred at Kelling Heath (9th May - 31st July) ad hoc reports from 3 locations
2023 - bred at Kelling Heath (2nd May - 28th Aug) no ad hoc reports
2022 - present at Kelling Heath (23rd May - 13th June) ad hoc reports 2 locations
2021 - bred at Kelling Heath (5th May - 9th Aug) ad hoc report from 5 locations
2020 - bred at Kelling Heath (8th May - 26th July) ad hoc reports from 3 locations
2019 - bred at Kelling Heath (14th May - 22 Sept) ad hoc reports from 1 location
2018 - present Kelling Heath (11th May - 13th June) ad hoc reports from 4 locations
2017 - bred at Kelling Heath (18th April - 15th Aug) ad hoc reports from 5 locations
2016 - bred Kelling Heath (1st May - 14th Aug) ad hoc reports from 6 locations
2015 - bred at Kelling Heath (2nd May - 21st Aug) ad hoc reports from 7 locations

Birds of Felbrigg Park (2018), the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report 2024, the work of [Felbeck Trust](#) and the aspirations of joined up thinking with the [Upper Bure & Glaven Conservation Triangle](#). There was much discussion and questions at the end of the evening and how engaged the audience were shows how important and loved species the Turtle Dove is.



Louisa.claxton@rspb.org.uk



Operation Turtle Dove



www.operationturtledove.org.uk





By Dave Billham

For the first time in what felt like many months, it appeared that we were going to have a dry walk! Yes, it was grey, windy and rather chilly, and still muddy underfoot from the previous day's rain, but today we would stay dry. And that was a good thing! Seventeen members had turned up, including our lead, Trevor, and our sweeper-upper at the back, Carol. We were getting decidedly cold as we stood in the car park waiting for the off, so Trevor thought it was best to spend most of the walk in the woods, where we would be somewhat sheltered and would hopefully find some of the winter woodland species we had not yet seen this year.

The car park list was a little shorter than usual, consisting of the many **Common Gull** that were still over-wintering on the grassland, along with smaller numbers of **Woodpigeon**, **Rook** and **Jackdaw** that call the same land 'home' all year round. **Blackbird** and **Robin** were singing from the bushes around us, a small flock of **Goldfinch** were in the trees and a lone **Greenfinch** flew overhead, calling as it went. Just before we were due to set off, a **Common Buzzard** was spotted, starting its day by sitting in a distant dead tree. As we were watching it, we noticed movement in the grass below it; a thrush flock feeding on the ground. **Mistle Thrush** and **Redwing** were noted, along with a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and a **Pheasant** – a good start.

Moving towards the woods behind the house, **Blue Tit** were heard in the trees, and **Feral Pigeon** seen on the garden walls. A **Magpie** flew over, and as we entered the woods a **Jay** was heard raucously calling before being seen high in a tree. Then, bird-wise, it all went a bit quiet, and we walked for quite some distance before we heard the calls of **Nuthatch**, somewhere in the

branches above us. A **Great Tit** started singing, and as we tried to find it a small flock of **Long-tailed Tit** appeared, flitting busily through the trees.



We were now approaching the small area of heathland, recently cleared of the Western Hemlock trees that had filled it, as part of the National Trust policy of removing non-native trees from their land. (Interestingly, Trevor told us that in a warming climate, where certain native tree species would start to struggle, Western Hemlock has been listed a species that would flourish, and could be a suitable replacement for those we might lose). Here we hoped to find something avian, but a calling **Stock Dove** was all we came across, until a **Woodcock** burst into the air in front of us, giving most of us a very good view as it shot towards the trees then dropped down into cover. A flock of five finches, seen a few minutes later and too distant to identify, escaped the list.

We re-entered the woods, heading for a spot favoured by Firecrest, in the hope of seeing one of these wee sprites. None were showing today, but we did find

another small bird, a **Wren**, calling from the depths of some scrub. Further woodland perambulating brought us near to the house, where a most unusual call stopped us in our tracks and had us looking at each other in puzzlement. We decided to wait to see if the call came again; once more it did, then it morphed into the tuneful song of a **Song Thrush**! Perhaps it was just warming up, or practising a new variation – whatever, it was not what you would expect of this songster!

We were now passing off to one side of the house, heading for the lake, when suddenly a thirty second burst of sunshine appeared courtesy of a small hole in the clouds, just as Carol was taking a photo of the group. This brief blast proved to be the only sun we saw all morning, so if this photo is the only one illustrating this article, believe me it was not typical of the morning!



Passing some low scrub, a Robin and a **Dunnock** were seen, along with another singing Song Thrush and more Redwing. Along a grass track with small trees either side, a **Goldcrest** was found on a tree right by us, initially looking like a moth as it hovered around the lower branches, looking for insects. It gave good views, but an even better poser was a **Treecreeper**, which allowed excellent views from a distance of just a few feet and, for once, remaining on the visible side of the tree!



On the walk down towards the lake we added **Carrion Crow, Chaffinch** and **Kestrel** to the list, before arriving at the top of the slope overlooking the water meadows.



From here we spotted **Mute Swan, Coot, Teal** and **Mallard**, along with six male **Shoveler**, asleep half hidden on the edge of the reeds.



On the lake itself were thirty-two **Tufted Duck**, this number including the Tufted/Ferruginous hybrid. Also present were a number of **Gadwall**, a lone **Moorhen**, and two species of gull; **Black-headed Gull** and **Herring Gull**. With our time almost up, we headed back to the house; we found no new species on the way, but our total of **40** for the morning was not too bad at all.

The March walk will be a little different, as there will be two walks – the usual 9am start for a walk of two hours, and the second starting at 10am and lasting for one hour, led by Nick Kimber. Both walks will finish at the house at 11am, so we can all get together to compare notes and drink coffee! So if the thought of two hours walking seems too much, why not give the shorter version a try? You don't have to get up so early either! *Tufted Duck photo – Ken Thornton*



Last Month's Weekend Walk

Happisburgh – sea and coast in winter | Saturday 14th February



By Andy Clarke

After what seemed never-ending dull and dreary weather it was a delight to arrive at Happisburgh in glorious sunshine. The northerly wind might have been cold but that was not going to deter the seven club members who gathered for a Valentine's Day walk in this quiet corner of the NENBC recording area. After the usual health and safety briefing we started by scanning the gulls feeding in the surf but were unable to find anything other than the usual Herring, Black-headed and Common Gulls. No sign of a possible Little Gull that Jo had called while we were assembling, nor of the Iceland Gull that has recently been hanging around the sea defences at Sea Palling which could be seen in the distance. While we were looking a small group of Brent Geese approached from the east and then settled on the sea. We opted to do the circular walk to the old coastguard lookout rather than heading south to Cart Gap, and we were rewarded immediately with a pair of Stonechats on the rough ground on the cliff top, this being all that remains of the garden of the last house standing along Beach Road. A quick look at the paddocks by Happisburgh Manor (the Arts & Crafts 'butterfly-style' house known locally as 'St Mary's') revealed feeding Jackdaws, Woodpigeons and a lone Stock Dove, with Collared Doves and Magpies in the nearby trees. A Robin flitting in the roadside spinney, a calling Dunnock, a brief burst of Wren song and a fly-over pair of Meadow Pipits meant that the smaller birds were not missed.

The churchyard and nearby gardens can be good at migration time, but are often quiet in winter. However we were lucky with a small but mobile flock that included Great Tits, Blue Tits, a lone Coal Tit and two Long-tailed Tits. The churchyard trees held singing Greenfinches and three Goldfinches, and the sheltered hedges a number of Blackbirds taking ivy berries.

The walk to the playing field was quiet, but did produce the expected Pied Wagtails and the identity of a distant flock of Lapwings in flight was confirmed from a photograph. We decided to have a look at the bowling green, and quickly found a single Fieldfare feeding on the green.



Then came a call of 'Black Redstart!' and the group quickly got onto a superb adult male Black Redstart sitting on the fence. Although it was being harassed by the local Robin, it nevertheless allowed all of the group to get excellent views of this lovely bird. After showing for a short while, it then dropped out of view but it was quickly relocated once the group had moved past the old duckpond to where they could look back at the bowling green fence. Everybody took their time to savour what was undoubtedly the bird of the day.



We then moved along the track past Church Farm, and on checking the Linnet and Skylark flocks flying around the harvested beet field found that there was at least one Lapland Bunting with them. John Hurst had picked it out in flight, and it had also called once. However when the flocks landed, they did so far away and despite some careful telescope work it proved impossible to locate the bird on the ground. So we decided to try again from a different angle, and proceeded up the lane. The horse paddocks produced another pair of Pied Wagtails, but that was about it, and the gardens held only a couple more Robins, Blue Tits and House

Sparrows. As we moved into the more open ground several group members could here distant Pink-feet calling, but nobody could locate the birds. We tried again to located the Lapland Bunting amongst the Skylarks but once again the birds were distant and often feeding out of sight. However every now and then the Lapland Bunting emerged into view but being a female or immature was not easy to pick out and only John Hurst was able to obtain a good enough view to be certain of the identification. As so often with this species, this was a very tricky bird to locate when feeding on the ground.

We moved on to the old coastguard lookout, from where we scanned the sea. This was very quiet, with none of the hoped-for divers, auks or grebes. We did locate a couple more passing Brent geese and Cormorants, followed by a single Turnstone feeding on the seaweed-covered groynes, and a male Kestrel hunting over the fields. The gentle walk back to the car-park added just a single further Stonechat and the walk finished at 1 pm, just before everybody's car-park tickets expired. By now the car-park was full, the wind had eased and everybody had enjoyed a leisurely morning's birding in the unaccustomed sunshine, with some nice birds to boot. The list was 40 species if we included the distant Pink-feet we never saw.

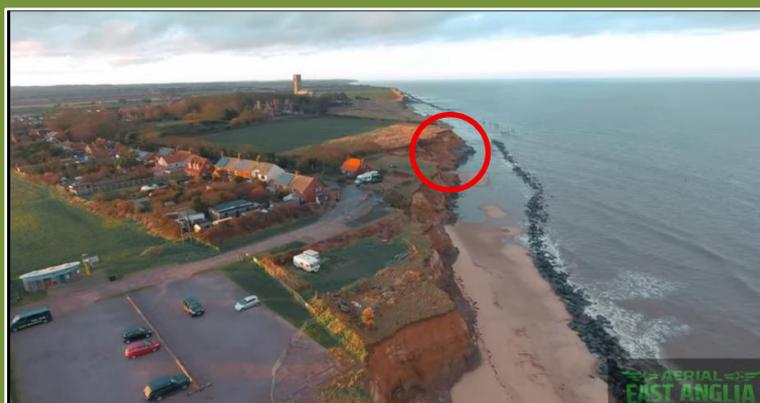
Bird photos courtesy of Jo King, team pic from Andy Clarke



Happisburgh is a lovely site but unfortunately one of those along our coastline that is suffering the effects of erosion. Work has already begun on relocating the car park. As you can see from the two recent images at the bottom, stills from the You Tube site [Aerial East Anglia](#), the coastline has really been eaten away



The spot from where we used to do our coordinated seawatches is long gone – it was somewhere near that red circle!





By John Swallow

Back in 2024, the Felbeck Trust Ringing Group applied for NENBC 'surplus funds' to purchase consumables for bird ringing in the NENBC area. The group had been operational for 8 months at that point and had already rung over 300 birds. Different birds take different rings (sizes, thickness and height) so a wide variety of rings are necessary to cover all of the bird species encountered. After assessing their comprehensive application we were able to fund the purchase of AA rings for Chiffchaff, Long-tailed Tit, Goldcrest, A rings for Blue & Coal Tit, Blackcap, Bullfinch, Chaffinch etc, B rings for Dunnock, Great Tit etc, C rings for Blackbird, Starling etc, CC rings for Song Thrush etc, D2 rings for Jay etc, E rings for Magpie etc, F rings for Wood Pigeon etc, G rings for Barn Owl etc. Below is a summary of the work of the ringing group over the past couple of years. For those of you unfamiliar, Felbeck Trust are a local wildlife conservation charity who include numerous NENBC in their volunteer pool and on their Board of Trustee. We've also included a map of the Felbeck Trust sites referred to in the article.



Key to Felbeck Trust Sites

- 1 Aylmerton #2 Surveyor's Allotment
- 2 Bale Surveyor's Allotment
- 3 Brinton 9 Holes
- 4 East Beckham Common
- 5 Hindolveston
- 6 Stow Heath, Felmingham
- 7 Sustead Cluster
- 8 West Beckham Green
- 9 West Beckham Old Allotments
- 10 Wood Norton

Now, over to John

It was a chance meeting at Cley NWT visitor centre in Feb 2024 between Trevor Williams and I which led to the creation of the Felbeck Trust Ringing Group (FTRG). Of course we had met several times before and chatted about many things including bird ringing but on this occasion when I mentioned I was a bird ringer there was a light bulb moment. Trevor was keen to see ringing on sites managed by Felbeck Trust and after moving to North Norfolk in 2022 I was ready to begin ringing on new sites in the area. It would have been possible to ring birds using rings in my name but I was keen that this new venture was properly associated with the Felbeck Trust (FT), therefore, I contacted the BTO (www.bto.org) to register a new ringing group hoping to be ready for the start of spring migration. Not unreasonably the BTO pointed out that groups are normally more than one person so I asked other ringers I knew in the area and Mark Boyd kindly responded. BTO were then quick to approve my request and FTRG was officially born on 20th March 2024. Within hours bird rings were ordered and our first foray was made to West Beckham Old Allotments (WBOA) on Tuesday 26th March.

We did not expect to ring large numbers of individuals or species but any bird caught would add to our knowledge of birds using WBOA and the many other FT sites. While the numbers caught at WBOA are modest when I looked at the native planting undertaken by FT volunteers I had no doubt that our visits would provide a baseline against which increases would be measured as these sites matured and became more attractive to birds. Our group also started monitoring nest boxes and ringing pulli (birds in the nest) at Spurrell's Wood (SW), Bale and Brinton 9 holes and BioBlitz events at S W and Wood Norton.

We became a team of 4 by early September 24 and by then ringing highlights at WBOA included our first migrant, a chiffchaff on 10th April, two recently fledged Whitethroats on 17th July, a large flock of 100 Goldfinch on 6th August, an adult female Song Thrush and a recently fledged Lesser Whitethroat on 12th August. Meanwhile highlights at SW included our first Treecreeper (a recently fledged juvenile), an adult male Bullfinch and a juvenile Kingfisher on 24th September.

We continued ringing throughout the autumn migration period and on 4th Oct we caught our first **Firecrest** at WBOA. The bird was still in post-juvenile moult suggesting it hadn't travelled too far, most likely from a known

nearby breeding location, it was accompanied by 3 Goldcrests and a couple of chiffchaff (our last of the year). We hoped that through ringing we would prove migration occurs across/along the Cromer Ridge and ringing at WBOA on 17th Oct we did just that by trapping a **Yellow-browed Warbler!**



Firecrest WBOA 4th Oct 24



Yellow-browed Warbler WBOA 17th Oct 2024

Winter Thrushes added to the mix with flocks of 50+ seen but not yet trapped but Siskin too were recorded and on 23rd Oct we caught a Lesser Redpoll.

We also caught some very unexpected birds at WBOA, a Red-legged Partridge on 17th Oct (released unringed as this is a non-native and potentially raised and released bird), Carrion Crow (this NEVER happens and was my first in 40 years of ringing) on 23rd Oct, and a young Kestrel at SW on 13th Nov. Roger Emmens has an uncanny knack of returning from net rounds with the most unusual birds.

We make an end of nesting season visit looking for ringed chicks which sadly failed to fledge. This information completes the nest record and the data are then sent to BTO. At SW there are almost 80 boxes and some 21 nesting attempts were found and monitored; 17 Blue Tit (5 failed completely, c 30%) and 4 Great Tit (none failed). However, even in successful boxes (where at least 1 chick fledged) a number of dead Blue Tit chicks were found. Of the 50 Blue Tit chicks ringed, 15 were found dead in another 5 boxes. So from 17 Blue Tit boxes, 10 had lost some young (c 60%). In many years of nest box monitoring I had not seen this level of chick mortality. This was perhaps a result of the wet spring weather in 2024.

I joined a Great Tit sampling program for a UEA PhD student. This research study was using faecal samples to understand the impact of different environments (from rural areas to urban spaces) on their gut microbiome communities, and seeks to explore potential connections between these microbiome characteristics and the birds' learning and cognition. We successfully sampled several Great Tit pulli and adults at SW and the samples sent to UEA for further analysis.

Seán Dempster helped with monitoring the nest boxes at Bale and Brinton 9 holes. A total of 8 blue tit and 2 stock dove at Brinton 9 holes, and 3 blue and 3 great tit nest records at Bale have now been completed and submitted.

Ringing in early 2025 showed that Dunnock was the most common bird captured in SW and now many were retraps. These subsequent encounters are valuable as they provide useful data on annual survival and residence. In contrast we also caught 7 Blackbirds but these winter thrushes do not "hang around" as none of these birds were recaptured nor did a Song Thrush caught on 4th March. We did encounter some new birds for the site, a fine first year Jay on 26th Feb and a Redwing on 4th March.

Early indications of breeding came with the capture of a pair of Goldcrests on 4th March at SW, interestingly the male was a retrap from 13th Nov. Meanwhile visits to WBOA again confirmed Dunnock common status there and there were early signs of spring with Blue Tit and Great Tit caught "in pairs" on 26th March. Early spring migrants had arrived with Chiffchaff singing, and two were caught including a retrap (ringed 10th April 2024). This ringed Chiffchaff had likely bred at WBOA in 2024 and had returned to be recaptured in March and April! Another

Chiffchaff, a female ringed in April last year was also recaptured at SW in June 2025. Chiffchaff are partial migrants but clearly they either stayed on site (unlikely) or returned here perhaps after a trip to southern Spain/North Africa to breed in our area again.

Even more interesting is a Whitethroat, ringed in July last year at WBOA as a juvenile and so probably raised on site or nearby, and caught again as a female in breeding condition in June 2025. This bird has been to sub-Saharan Africa between those encounters, so it clearly likes West Beckham Old Allotments!

We had always hoped that we would encounter some of our special farmland birds and it was great to see two Yellowhammers in the net at WBOA on 26th March 25. On close inspection one was an adult male the other a male hatched the previous year. We caught four more in April 25 bringing the total to 6, five males and one female. We hear birds near the ringing base at WBOA but we haven't seen an indication of breeding nearby.

We spent a busy two months nest box checking and pulli ringing during May to June 25, our second season of nest box monitoring. With knowledge from the first season in 2024 we made the first visit to SW this year slightly later on 8th May (18th April in 2024). Some twenty nests had at least an egg (21 in 2024) and a further five visits were made between 12th May and 27th May to ring all of the young when they are developed enough to ring but not too well feathered that they would try to leave the box as we lifted the lid. This 15 day variation gives an indication of breeding synchronisation between the pairs linked to the emergence of their caterpillar food source.

Thankfully the spring of 2025 was much kinder and while the number of occupied nests was very similar between 2024 and 2025 productivity was much higher that year.

Species	Total Young 2024	Total Young 2025
Blue Tit	50	96
Great Tit	23	28
TOTAL	73	124

In 2024 we found 15 of the 73 ringed chicks dead in their boxes during the final check. I

was not expecting to find this many dead young on the last nest box check in 2025 and indeed on 8th October there was a much lower proportion with only 9 dead chicks from 124 ringed this year. Therefore fledging success per breeding attempt at the end of the 2025 showed a substantial increase over 2024.

We again supported the taking of faecal samples from Great Tit chicks for a UEA PhD student. We successfully took 8 samples, the first during the early visit on 12th May made specifically to "target" Great Tit nests with chicks for this study. Seán Dempster again monitored the nest boxes this year at Brinton 9 holes and Bale.

Other highlights of the spring included our first **Willow Warbler** at SW on 24th April. The Willow Warbler was most unexpected, no song was heard before it "turned up" in the net. Our first Chiffchaff was on 2nd April when an unprecedented 6 were caught at SW, our first Blackcap was also at SW on 24th April. Juvenile birds (ie hatched this year) started to appear in the nets in early June with 4 Robin and a Blackcap at SW on 8th June. More was to follow later in the month with young Bullfinch and Greenfinch at SW and young Dunnock, Blue Tit, Whitethroat and Chaffinch at WBOA.



Willow Warbler Spurrell's Wood 24th April 25

It was also great to be a part of the Bioblitz at SW on 8th June. Mindful of reducing stress to the birds we positioned ourselves away from the main tent and there we were able to safely show those interested a few birds being identified, ringed and measured before release. There was also a retrap which made my day. We hadn't caught any of the "Class of 24" tits ringed in nest boxes last year so it was great to catch a young Great Tit, PY95107, which had been ringed just over the road in Box 111, one of six ringed there on 12th May. More have now been recaptured from the "Class of 25", probably a result of the better breeding season adding more fledged chicks to the local population.

We made a total of twelve visits between July and October, five SW, six WBOA and one to Wood Norton with over 200 captures made. The latter visit was part of the Bioblitz event there on 9th Aug 25, 9 birds of 8 species were caught, including two chiffchaffs and a blackcap.

Again Dunnocks were our most common bird in late summer with 44 of the 232 captures, many were juveniles indicating they had had a good breeding season in 2025. We caught the following migrants in autumn 25.

	Blackcap	Chiffchaff	Whitethroat
Wood Norton	1	2	
WBOA	3	10	11 (almost all youngsters)
Spurrell's Wood	11	18	

The max season captures at each ringing site have also increased with 31 at WBOA (17th July) and 47 at WBOA (10th Sept).

Peak captures occurred for Whitethroat with 5 at WBOA on 17th July, 9 Chiffchaff and 4 Blackcap at SW on 6th August. Both Blackcap and Chiffchaff were caught into the end of Sept and early Oct but none have yet been found to be carrying pre-migration fat. This, in my experience, is unusual as Blackcaps in September build up large stores of fat ahead of migration, perhaps migration was delayed in 2025?

The most unusual migrants were two **reed warblers**, both juveniles trapped and ringed at WBOA on 17th July and 28th Aug. While reed warblers are normally associated with water and reed beds these captures remind us that these birds, especially juveniles, can occur anywhere.

We look forward to our birds been found elsewhere. We have received a recovery of a wren ringed at SW on 10th Sept. Sadly but not uncommonly, only 11 days after ringing, it was found "freshly dead, taken by cat" 1km away in the village of Sustead. There was better news for our first "control" (a bird ringed elsewhere) caught during a ringing demonstration for our conservation volunteers at SW. The control was a Goldcrest which proved to have been ringed at Fordham in Norfolk, as a juvenile on 23rd September 2025. As we caught it in December, it had completed its moult into adult type plumage, so we were not able to age it, but we could sex it as a male. Its movement was 69km in 86 days in an ENE direction, a demonstration of how some species indulge in what is known as 'juvenile dispersion', where the young birds explore to find possible new places to breed next year. It will be interesting to discover if it stays around and we catch it again.

Other interesting captures towards the end of 2025 was our second Firecrest (the first for 2025, a male hatched this year) at WBOA on 10th Oct and single Redwings there on 16th and 22nd Oct the latter with two **Siskins** which may also have come from further north. There was a notable influx of Blackbirds into SW towards the end of 25, winter visitors perhaps from north-west Europe, we caught 18 in December alone.



Juvenile Reed Warbler WBOA 17th July 2025



Male Siskin Spurrell's Wood 22nd Oct 2025

A **Woodcock** was surprise first at SW on 7th Nov. This was also a young bird, as shown by the buffy tips to its retained juvenile primary coverts (in an adult they would be whitish), and sexed as male on biometrics (ie size measurements).

We had a total of 40 ringing sessions over 2025 (up from 31 in 2024), 34 for netting and 6 for nestbox checking and ringing pulli (chicks). All bar one of these were at either the Sustead cluster or WBOA, the odd one out being a ringing demonstration at Wood Norton during the bioblitz there on 9th Aug.

We have ringed 1187 birds of 34 species and our 2024 to 2025 ringing totals can be found in the table below. During the last two years our group has risen to six, Mark Boyd, Andrew Canon, Janice Darch, Roger Emmens, Tim Turner and myself. We also appreciate nest box help from Seán Dempster and volunteer friends from Felbeck Trust.

We would also like to acknowledge receipt of £550 from NENBC Surplus

Funds for “Bird Ringing in the NENBC area” from 1st Dec 2024 to 31st Dec 2025. These funds enabled the purchase of the rings used by our Ringing Group, provided a sound platform from which FTRG can develop further into the future and we would like to thank NENBC for this valuable help.



Woodcock Spurrell's Wood 7th Nov 2025

Years 2024 and 2025					
Species	Total	Pulli		Total	Pulli
1 Blackbird	61		18 Lesser Whitethroat	1	
2 Blackcap	35		19 Long-tailed Tit	34	
3 Blue Tit	399	234	20 Redpoll (Lesser - cabaret)	1	
4 Bullfinch	8		21 Redwing	4	
5 Carrion Crow	1		22 Reed Warbler	2	
6 Chaffinch	13		23 Robin	86	
7 Chiffchaff	62		24 Siskin	2	
8 Coal Tit	14		25 Song Thrush	6	
9 Dunnock	165		26 Stock Dove	2	2
10 Firecrest	2		27 Treecreeper	2	
11 Garden Warbler	1		28 Whitethroat	18	
12 Goldcrest	24		29 Willow Warbler	1	
13 Goldfinch	13		30 Woodcock	1	
14 Great Tit	132	55	31 Woodpigeon	1	
15 Greenfinch	3		32 Wren	84	
16 Jay	1		33 Yellow-browed Warbler	1	
17 Kestrel	1		34 Yellowhammer	6	
Total pulli	291				
Total all birds	1187				

Ring Reading

Uncovering mysteries for birds



By Jo King

Before moving to Norfolk in 2024, I'd lived and birded alongside the Exe estuary, Devon for many years and during that time developed a passion for ring reading. I've always been a little squeamish about seeing birds in the hand but I totally understand the need to gather data and the benefits of using that data to understand bird behaviour, land use and the protections which can be put in place to help survival rates. So as a bird watcher I've felt that if we are going to ring these birds then the least I can do is to try and read some of the rings and contribute as much as I can to the data. Ringing projects only work if there are ring readers and whilst ringed birds can sometimes be recaptured in nets I was surprised to learn there is quite a low rate of recapture, so spotting them in the field and submitting ring reads to the project co-ordinators is always welcomed.

What was unexpected when I embarked on ring reading was just how much it would add to my birding life and the people I would meet as a result.

One of my regular birding excursions was to cycle the Exe estuary cycle trail to the Turf hotel which is positioned on a promontory on the West side of the estuary alongside Exminster marshes. It's in a perfect position to watch the tides come and go and to view thousands of wading birds feeding on the calorie rich muds alongside the pub. As the tide recedes the first birds to arrive on the exposed muds were usually the Redshanks. One winter lunchtime I noticed a Redshank wearing a green flag on its left leg so I photographed it and the photo also showed a white ring bearing the number C73 in black on its right leg.



In those days I found Twitter a great resource for connecting with other birders so posted the photo and almost instantly a Dutch lady messaged me to say "That is Wim Tijssen's bird, he will be delighted to see this photo" and she tagged him in the conversation. I didn't know about 'ringing projects' or 'project co-ordinators' but soon learnt! Wim got in touch and showed me where to upload the information about the location I'd seen the bird, date and ring details. He then went on to tell me that this particular Redshank was "the daughter of the widow of Ol' Bill", Ol' Bill being the oldest recorded Redshank in Europe at that time, aged 19 I believe. It turned out C73 had strong genes too and for the next few years she would return promptly to her breeding grounds on the Dutch polders, select one of the best territories and the strongest breeding partners, hatch her

eggs then leave her partner to rear her ‘children’ whilst she would recuperate on the coast for her summer vacation, before returning to the same stretch of muds in front of the Turf hotel on the Exe Estuary usually sometime in October. This pattern continued for 15 years before she disappeared, presumed dead unfortunately, but not before Wim decided to come and visit the Exe Estuary to see where his now famous little Redshank was spending her winters. So I met him and his partner and spent a delightful day on the Exe Estuary showing him C73’s favourite feeding spot and giving them a tour of the local reserves, including a boat trip across the estuary where he entertained locals with the story of this feisty little Redshank.

EDIT: When contacting Wim for permission to use his photos, he told me that C73’s partner at one time was one of his ringed Redshanks E87 but C73 divorced him in 2018 as he was 2 days late back to her breeding territory, E87 is apparently still alive today, aged 17 years and known as the “husband of the daughter of the widow of Ol’ Bill”.



Overview for redshank C73 who was wintering for 15 years at Topsham, Exe estuary, Devon, UK. Only 630 km away from her breeding territory, which provides her to be always one of the first arrivals from my colourringed population in the Retrapping Adults for Survival study, and pick up a good territory... or a better partner?



Children of C73 - photo by Wim Tijssen



Now I understand more of C73 at the wintering place: Turf Hotel, Exe estuary, Topsham – Jo King

Another famous bird which lived on the Exe Estuary for many years was ‘Herbert’ the Slavonian Grebe. Herbert was unable to fly and the RSPCA took him in for rehabilitation, he was ringed and released in Feb 2007 back to the estuary as a 2nd year bird. Unfortunately Herbert was still unable to fly but he seemed to thrive living full time on the Exe, mostly he remained quite distant out in the deep waters of the Exe making it impossible for anyone to read his ring and submit the sighting to the BTO. Then in December 2020 I was cycling past Cockwood harbour, a small shallow harbour midway up the West side of the estuary and to my surprise Herbert was feeding very close to the harbour wall. I photographed and filmed him diving and after hours of collecting stills from the video clip managed to read his metal ring and submit it to the BTO. This was one of the last sightings of Herbert but the report from the BTO showed that Herbert broke the longevity record for a Slavonian grebe by a long shot being around 15 years of age.



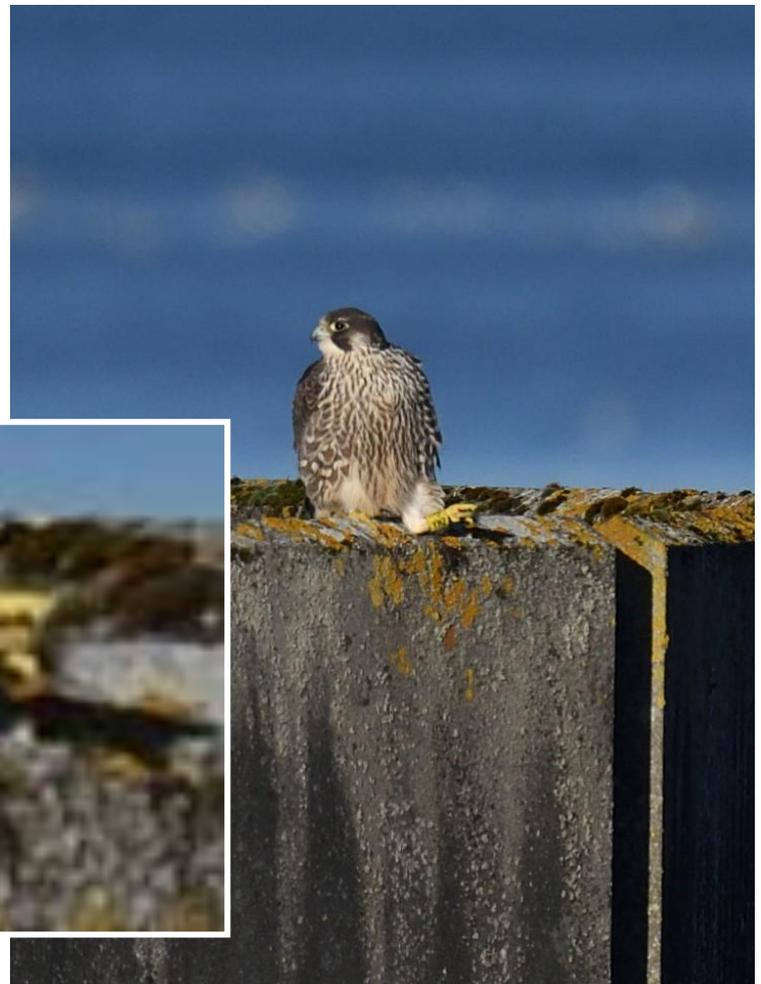
Many Oystercatchers were ringed by the Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing Group, usually on Dawlish Warren at the southern end of the estuary. Most of them wore blue rings with a combination of large white letters and numbers, making reading them relatively easy. A few of the older Oystercatchers still wore black and white rings, each with a unique pattern to them. However, one of these older birds ringed in September 1989 was later recaptured and given a new blue ring with the letters EH. My last sighting of this bird was in 2022, but before writing this article I visited the Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing Group website and note this bird was sighted in Holland in 2025 so hopefully it is still alive after 35 years! What makes this particular bird even more special for me is a coincidence which I still find quite amazing. I used to do the commentary on some of the [Stuart Line Birdwatching](#) cruises on the Exe Estuary, these are very popular trips on a large boat carrying well over 100 passengers. I was recounting the story of the Oystercatcher EH to demonstrate to people the longevity of these special waders. At the end of the trip a lady approached me and said “I ringed that bird in 1989”. What made this more of a coincidence was this was her first ever trip on the Stuart Line cruises and she happened to be on one of my cruises and I happened to talk about this particular Oystercatcher. We then went on to have a wonderful conversation about the birds she’d ringed and the history of Oystercatchers on the Exe estuary.



For several years I noted a Curlew roosting on the Starcross golf course on the west side of the estuary which was wearing a small brass coloured metal ring. Most Curlews now wear colour rings making ring reading much easier, but reading this small metal ring seemed impossible. When I talked to other birders about this bird there was a general opinion that it might be a Polish ring but nothing could be proven. Then in November 2022 whilst cycling past a small orchard next to the golf course I noticed this Curlew just a few metres from the cycle path so I took lots of photos of the ring. Once home I posted what I thought was the ring number onto Twitter and other birders who carry out ringing said I was missing a number - frustrating! So I returned the following day and luckily the Curlew was on the golf course but still quite close to the path. I managed to get the missing number and submitted it to the BTO. It turned out to be another bird ringed by the Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing Group, in October 1990 on Dawlish Warren 'age unknown'. So the bird had been ringed 32 years and 2 months before my sighting. Graham Appleton picked up my tweet about this and advised me the longevity record at that time was 32 years 7 months. A few months later I got a message from a Dutch birder to say the bird which held the longevity record had been found dead, hit by a car in Holland so if our bird 'Archie Collins' returned the next winter it would hold the longevity record. Unfortunately I never saw Archie again. Note the fabulous gothic style black nails on this bird!



On 12 January 2022 we took a day out to Roadford Reservoir in West Devon, we hadn't been there for over 30 years. I photographed a juvenile Peregrine on the overflow out on the reservoir and noticed it wore a bright yellow ring with black lettering. It was quite distant so I took numerous photos which after much fiddling with appeared to be YH2. I checked the European colour ringed projects and it appeared to fit a Yorkshire project. I got in touch with the project co-ordinator who was adamant it was not one of her birds, she thought it was likely a foreign bird but didn't know which country. Again I took to Twitter and Dawn Balmer suggested a Facebook group which helps with puzzling ring readings. Well they came up trumps as someone posted a photo of the ring YH2 with a black dot above the H which when I double checked my photos I could see there was indeed a black dot. The poster told me it was a 'Finnish' ring and gave me details of who to send it to. Bingo! This juvenile peregrine had been ringed in Helsinki, Finland just 6 months earlier as a fledgling and here it was in southern England. 2370 kms from its ringing site. The project coordinator was fascinated by the distance this young bird had flown and asked if he could use my photos for a paper he was writing.



Sometimes it takes a bit of collaboration between birders to obtain a ring read. A few years ago there was a ringed Yellow Browed Warbler at Broadbands, Devon. Someone on Twitter took all our photos and managed to work out the ring number from them. If my memory serves me right I believe the bird was ringed in Norway.

Sometimes birds don't travel too far from where they were ringed but even then it can paint an interesting picture. I once photographed a ring on a Siskin on my feeders. We often got flocks of around 60 Siskins in the Alder trees opposite the house during winter and wondered where they went to during summer. I submitted the ring number to the BTO and discovered it had been ringed in the summer at my friend's farm on Dartmoor. I guess it makes sense for a little bird like that to come down to the warmer coast in winter where there's abundant food in the Alder trees.

Ring reading is not only a fun hobby which can contribute to vital data, it can also open doors and expand your birding experience more than you might think!

Colour ringing projects and details of project co-ordinators can be found on the website below:-

<https://cr-birding.org/colourprojects>

UEA Environmental Consultancy Projects 2026



By Carol Thornton

Just a quick update on our University of East Anglia Programme for 2026. We are delighted to have been matched with 4 UEA students this year and are very much looking forward to working with them in the coming months and receiving their final consultancy reports in June.

Alongside other organisations, we pitch real-life environmental consultancy projects to 3rd year students in the Environmental Science Department in the capacity of 'client' and we get selected by 'consultant' students in line with their areas of interest. Working on the briefs provided by us, they research and document their topic, feedback regularly via Zoom or in-person, and at the end of the process present us with an individual consultancy report.

Our three projects this year are:

1. **The population trend and potential for recovery of Marsh Tit in Norfolk** [1 student]
2. **"There's no substitute for human experience" – or is there? The impact of AI on birding** [2 students]
3. **Climate Change and UK Birds** [1 student]

Cromer Peregrine Project



Welcome to the 2026 season of the Cromer Peregrine story! The webcam, this year sponsored by The Cliftonville Hotel, went live on 1st March and you can watch it here [Cromer Peregrines 2026 Live Stream](#). There is also a Facebook page here [Facebook](#) and a website here [CPP | Home](#) so lots of choice if you are

not local. If you are local, why not consider volunteering on the watchpoint this year which will be up and running in a matter of weeks? The volunteer coordinator is Mick Hill and you can get in touch direct on mick.hill@btinternet.com or through us.

It was the CPP AGM last month and here is the cheque presented to the church from donations made by visitors and supporters. You'll probably spot a few familiar faces in that picture!



When should we expect eggs? The 17th / 19th March has been good the past couple of years so fingers crossed!

Check This Out!

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



-  [Birders encouraged to detect Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers with passive recorders - BirdGuides \[19-Feb\]](#)
-  [Birdwatching could help slow ageing, breakthrough study finds | BBC Science Focus Magazine \[25 Feb\]](#)
-  [RSPB in race to halt rapid erosion at Titchwell Marsh - BirdGuides \[24-Feb\]](#)
-  [Storms blamed as dozens of Puffins wash up dead on east-coast beaches - BirdGuides \[25-Feb\]](#)
-  [Isabelline Wheatears exhibit unusual behaviour in Western Sahara - BirdGuides \[02-Mar\]](#)
-  [Study charts dramatic westward spread of Blyth's Reed Warbler across Europe - BirdGuides \[25-Feb\]](#)
-  [Ringed Bewick's Swan seen in UK for first time in 20 years - BirdGuides \[03-Mar\]](#)
-  [Lucy McRobert: when birding isn't the answer - BirdGuides \[26-Feb\]](#) and as referenced in the article, [Lucy McRobert: new approach - BirdGuides \[27-Aug\]](#)
-  [Hotspots of accelerated North American bird decline linked to agricultural activity, - RareBirdAlertUK \[Feb\]](#)
-  [Lakenheath Fen re-wets land the size of 168 football pitches - BBC News \[03-Mar\]](#)
-  [New stamps released to celebrate Alderney Bird Observatory - BBC News \[22-Feb\]](#)
-  [The Norwich pigeon wars: how birds are dividing a UK city | Life and style | The Guardian \[17-Feb\]](#)
-  [The brilliant and bizarre ways birds use their sense of smell from natural cologne to pest control - The Conversation \[06-Feb\]](#)
-  [Strong opinions matter: Why some birds refuse to follow the flock - The Conversation \[01-Mar\]](#)
-  [What Happens in the Arctic, Doesn't Stay in the Arctic | Audubon \[26-Feb\]](#)
-  [Migration distance and the timing of breeding - Wadertales \[28-Feb\]](#)
-  [Learning from their elders - Wadertales \[05-Feb\]](#)
-  [Bid to add East Anglia's rare chalk streams to UNESCO natural world heritage list | ITV News Anglia \[20-Feb\]](#)
-  [New British and Irish bird atlas announced for 2027 - BirdGuides \[06-Mar\]](#)
-  [£4.6m Norfolk Wildlife Trust project will create 336-acre nature reserve, #ornithology news via @RareBirdAlertUK \[March\]](#)





A slight deviation from our usual type of articles this month

A Call for Records from Russ Malin

House Martin Conservation is an independent charity that aims to increase knowledge of the house martin and create a channel for support throughout the UK and Ireland.

The 2026 season sees the charity make a renewed call for all nesting records of this declining species.

In partnership with Coreo, House Martin Conservation have developed the **'House Martin Mapper' app**. The app allows you to record details of yours, or other colonies, along with a facility to record mud collecting data.

Data is shared with Local Environmental Record Centres (LERCs), the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas and bird clubs, upon request to Dean Cornish, Data Lead at datasharing@housemartinconservation.com, to maximise the data use for conservation locally and nationally and informing planning decisions/mitigation.

Although our social media accounts allow us to see your reports of national locations of house martin colonies across the UK and Ireland, we needed a more consistent and accessible way of collecting and utilising data, to enable us to refine and enhance our conservation efforts.

For further details on the work of our charity and for instructions on downloading and using this free app please visit

<https://housemartinconservation.com/house-martin-mapper-app>

We also welcome new members to the charity. We are hugely grateful to our membership family. Membership is entirely free and members will receive a welcome pack, a twice-yearly digital newsletter and will be invited to take part in charity events as we grow and increase our activities. Members will also be able to attend our AGM and vote to elect trustees and officers. We have very active social media groups attracting members and followers from all over the world.

For more information on membership please visit

<https://housemartinconservation.com/join-us>





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.](#)

“Call near nest recalls Green Woodpecker, repeated, shouted ‘cha-cha-cha-cha’ and high whine.”
from *WILDGuides BRITAIN'S BIRDS 2nd Edition - An identification guide to the birds of Britain and Ireland 2nd Edition* by Hume, Still, Swash, Harrop and Tipling

“Mainly silent outside breeding season. Calls, heard mostly at dawn, much as Sparrowhawk’s, but distinctly louder, lower-pitched and more fierce, and cackling slower, ‘kya-kya-kya-kya-.....’. Begging -call of female and young a wild, melancholy piii-lih’. Both calls cleverly mimicked by Jay.”
from *Collins BIRD GUIDE 3rd Edition* by Mullaney, Svensson, Zetterström

“Most calls are heard close to the nest or when displaying. The most frequent is ‘gek-gek-gek’, which is also given when birds are alarmed.”
from *RSPB Handbook of British Birds 4th Edition* by Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves

Wordsearch



This month, we have the 24 species or races recorded on the NENBC website in March 2025 for which we have less than 4 records – you never know what might crop up on your walks at this time of year so keep your eyes peeled! For the purposes of this puzzle, ignore any hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and spaces. [Solution is at the end of this newsletter.](#)

- Caspian Gull
- Glaucous Gull
- Hawfinch
- House Martin
- Kittiwake
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
- Merlin
- Pallid Harrier
- Razorbill
- Tree Pipit
- Great Northern Diver
- Lesser White-fronted Goose
- Little Owl
- Pintail
- Ring Ouzel
- Ruff
- Whooper Swan
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Cattle Egret
- Goosander
- Great White Egret
- Hen Harrier
- Knot
- Little Gull

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





Just 3 new 'Accepted' records from the Norfolk Records Committee [NRC] for our area since our last newsletter and their current '**NRC work in progress**' file has been updated to 24-Feb-26. The British Birds Rarities Committee also have a '**BBRC work in progress**' file available on their website [Dec-24].



Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Cory's Shearwater Mundesley 1st August 2025

04:19 · 24 Feb 2026 🔒 Everybody can reply



Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Dusky Warbler Sheringham 8th-11th November 2025

04:18 · 24 Feb 2026 🔒 Everybody can reply



Norfolk Birds
@norfolkbirds.bsky.social

Norfolk Records Committee

Accepted: Cory's Shearwater Mundesley 10th August 2025

04:20 · 24 Feb 2026 🔒 Everybody can reply

NENBC Website

Prolific Posters February 2026 By Val Stubbs

Phil Borley remains way out in front with nearly 35,000 points. Mark Clements – on just over 15,000 points – has pulled slightly ahead of Tony Pope, who is neck and neck with Philip Cartlidge, both on over 14,000 points, while Val Stubbs has pulled into fifth place with over 12,000 points.. Out of 94 members who have logged birds so far this year, 24 have already scored over 2,000 points, with 44 on 1,000 points or more. Keep logging!

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

1	Phil Borley	34,480
2	Mark Clements	15,340
3	Tony Pope	14,420
4	Philip Cartlidge	14,160
5	Valerie Stubbs	12,060
6	David Griffiths	9,130
7	Ken Thornton	4,850
8	Carol Thornton	4,590
9	Doug & Jenny Cullern	4,150
10	Ann Gladwin	4,080
11	David Barrass	3,820
12	Peter & Sue Morrison	3,190
13	Michael Harcup	3,010
14	Colin Blaxill	2,960
15	Stuart Jones	2,950

16	Russell Page	2,560
17	Stephanie Witham	2,410
18	Di & Richard Farrow	2,400
18	Philip Hall	2,340
20	Stella Baylis	2,160
21	Christopher Mason	2,160
22	Nick Kimber	2,110
23	Roger Unite	2,110
24	Thomas Wright	2,030
25	Ellie Farrow	1,920
26	Andrew Kershaw	1,880
27	Andrew Gorton	1,870
28	Steven & Barbara Lines	1,770
29	Bob Farndon	1,750
30	Francis Farrow	1,730



**2026
Club
Stats**

**415 individual members
across 274 households**

**20,242
bird records logged**

**153
bird species reported**

A huge thanks to everyone who has uploaded records to our website this year to date..

For the newbies reading this, we would really appreciate it if you start uploading any of your records on our website going forwards. The website is easy to use and we can guide you through how to do it if you are unsure. Please don't think that your records aren't of interest – they are. We submit all our data on to the BTO's BirdTrack for inclusion in the county reports, which appear in published format annually. How common species are faring is just as important to keep track of as sightings of the less common species. If you need any assistance, just drop Carol a line on nenbc@aol.co.uk or through the messaging element of the website. You can access our website at www.bird.club/clubs/north-east-norfolk-bird-club (or by typing 'NENBC' into your search engine will get you there). Let us know if you have forgotten your password and need it resetting.

Not sure on your ID? Just ask – drop us an email or a WhatsApp or ask another birder when you are actually viewing the bird. Find it difficult to be sure or to describe what you are looking at? Well, we are planning to run a **Birding for Beginners** course this spring (see [page 14](#)) so if you think that might be of use, please get in touch.

Social Media & WhatsApp – a couple of bits from social media and WhatsApp in the last few weeks. This is something we really haven't got to grips with of late so if you can tag us in any of your BlueSky posts or indeed have an interest in social media and can help us out, please do get in touch!

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Colourful Pheasant seen today, good to see something bright on a very dull day.



Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Great Spotted Woodpecker visiting the garden, one of only a few visits this year. Solitary Collared Dove on the lawn, normally visit in two's so hopefully the second one will appear soon. Bit of a surprise seeing a Moorhen eating a windfall apple.



Chris Lamsdell
@chrislamsdell.bsky.social

A couple of Adders warming up, only slightly on a on and off overcast morning - Kelling Heath



bridgetjanejones.bsky.social
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

Bit unusual - 2 x Knot identifying as Turnstone at the front here in Sheringham! I've seen them occasionally on rocks but never marching up the prom!! @nenbc.bsky.social



Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Birds singing are a good sign of spring arriving, and with it longer and brighter days, so having a Song Thrush singing in the garden is quite pleasing. For now we have rain, which is making the ground increasingly muddy, still managed to walk over this field in the tyre tracks.

Gordon Hamlett
@gordonhamlett.bsky.social

We are lucky enough to have the Swanton Novers raptor watch point within 10 minutes of where we live. After several bad weather days, the birds were showing well today, and we logged 5 goshawks, including one female flying in front of us for 5 minutes. Also 14 buzzards, 2 sparrowhawks and a kite.

Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

Mostly black & white! The head on this Black-headed Gull is just starting to turn 'black' (well, brown really!) whilst the Tufted Duck is a striking pied bird. The Coot appears black at a distance but the white face shield stands out and close up the red eye is clearly visible.



Ken T
@velociraptor500.bsky.social

These are the finches seen in the garden at the weekend. The regular visitors, seen year round, are the Greenfinch, Chaffinch and Goldfinch. The Siskin and Brambling are normally only seen during the winter months when they move south to avoid the cold winter weather.



Drew Lyness
@djbirding.bsky.social

A few highlights from patch (RSPB Strumpshaw Fen) today, including Sand Martin, Raven and Woodcock. The sunset was worth sticking around for too. #BirdsSeenin2026 #NorfolkBirding



bridgetjanejones.bsky.social
@bridgetjanejones.bsky.social

Singing Chiffchaffs - hoorah! Not sure what this one is trying to tell me though! @nenbc.bsky.social @rspbengland.bsky.social @bbcspringwatch.bsky.social



Star Badges

Congratulations to Steven & Barbara Lines, Stuart Jones and Jonathan Anderson who all achieved their Bronze Badges in February.

Currently, **6** members have achieved **GOLD STAR** status, **25** members have been awarded **SILVER STAR** status and a fabulous **89** members now hold the **BRONZE STAR** status.

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

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



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

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

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

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

Eco-Badges

No new achievers this month but a couple of members now really close!

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

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



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

Number of bird species recorded in the NENBC area at or from home without the use of motorised transport since 1st January 2020 (or date of joining if later):

- GREEN ECO-BADGE:** 75 species required for lists with only inland sites / 100 for lists with any coastal locations
- SUPER-GREEN ECO-BADGE:** 125 species required for lists with only inland sites / 175 for lists with any coastal locations

Lists to be submitted by members from **their club website records** to nenbc@aol.co.uk along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.

Sea-watching Badge

No new achievers this month.

We currently have 6 members who have achieved their BLUE BADGE.

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



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

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

Lists to be submitted by members from **their club website records** to nenbc@aol.co.uk along with a declaration that award requirements have been met.

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



This one is from an old poetry book by Betty Docking called 'Once in a Blue Moon' with illustrations by S E Axten which was published in 1960.

THE NOISY MAGPIE

A plump little Magpie screeched : "Fiddle-de-dee !"
As he sat on the branch of a sycamore tree.

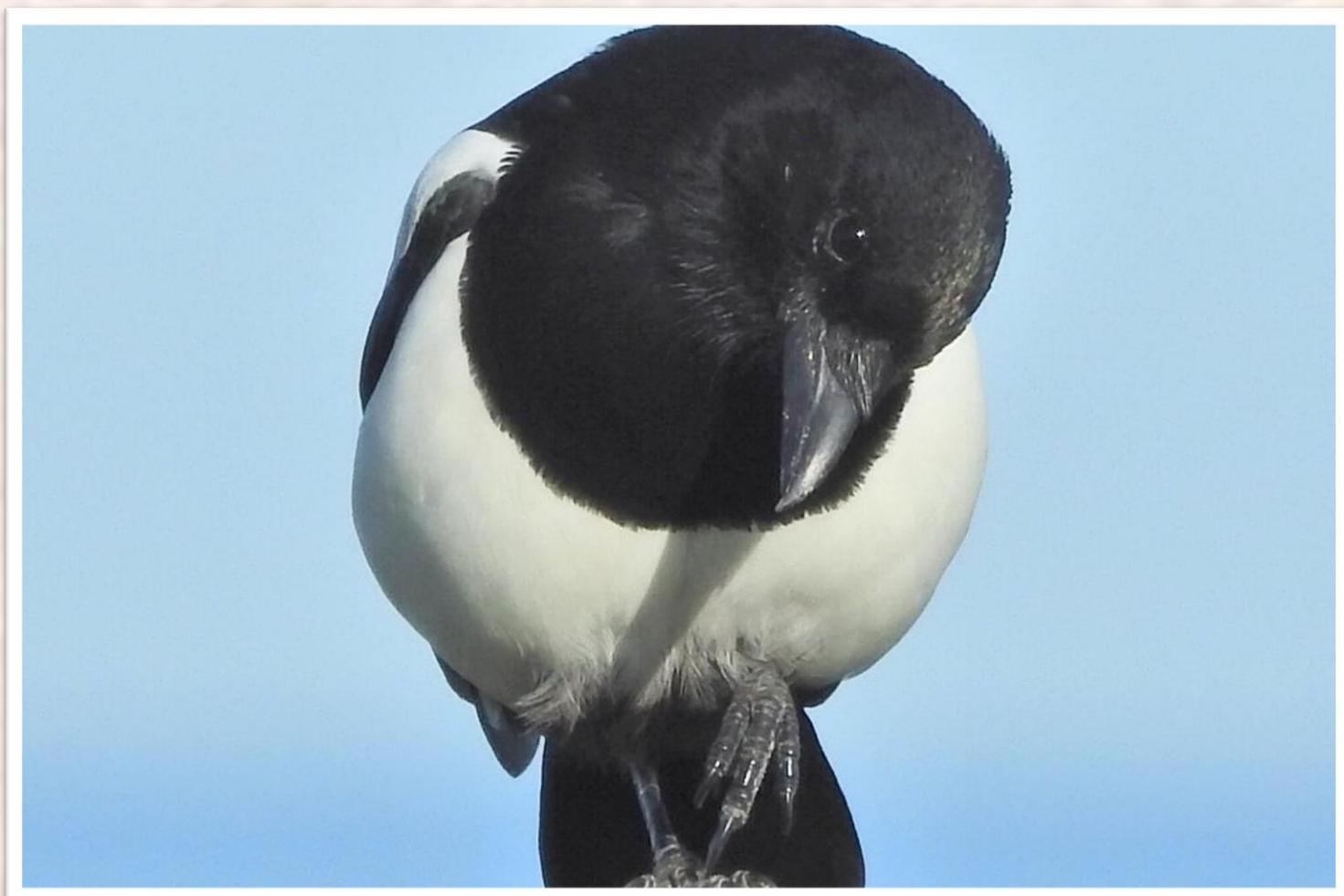
He sounded so cross that the other Birds said :
"He must have climbed out of the wrong side of bed.
Just look how he's flapping and screaming with rage !
He really deserves to be put in a cage."

But old Mother Magpie said : "Come, Birdies, come !
I fancy he's swallowed a very tough crumb ;
And tho' he is making a fearful to-do
Remember, the same thing may happen to you.

"So don't be too ready to scold him, my dears,
A pat on the back is more helpful than jeers !"



Photo from Doug Cullern



The bird voice variously described was that of a **Goshawk**. Click on the bird name to take you through to the xeno-canto website where, if you click on any of the play arrows on the left of the page, you will be able to hear the song. Don't forget to have your sound turned on and the volume up! Here's a link to the **BTO Bird Facts Goshawk** page too. *Photos from Geoff Snelson, Paul Laurie, Julian Thomas, David Griffiths and Nik Borrow (right).*



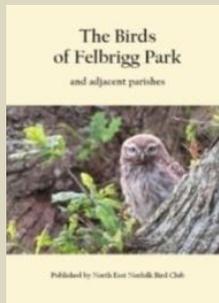
This month's **Wordsearch Solution:**
BIRDS RECORDED IN THE NENBC AREA IN
MARCH 2025

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

Back Page Club Info



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



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

www.felbecktrust.org.uk

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

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



The NENBC objectives:

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

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