

Swallow **BIRDING & WILDLIFE**

Great Value Wildlife Tours

NORFOLK WINTER BIRDING BREAK

Friday 7th - Monday 10th February 2020

TOUR PARTICIPANTS

GEOFF CATCHPOLE
TIM CONNETT
MARGARET HUTT

JANE NOBLE
AVIS & KEN SHARPE
IAN TARBIN

TOUR LEADER

STEVE GRIMWADE



Eastern Yellow Wagtail by Steve Grimwade

Friday 7th February 2020

After making our pickups, we headed north through Suffolk and after stopping off for a fine breakfast at Browns in Mundford, drove the short distance to Lynford Arboretum.

Fine weather had encouraged lots of people out and the car park was busy to say the least. Our walk took us down through the Arboretum to the viewing area known as the tunnel. There were many birds coming and going including BLUE, GREAT, COAL & MARSH TITS plus some stunning male YELLOWHAMMERS along with BRAMBLING and EURASIAN NUTHATCH. Further down we set up our scopes on the large pines and with a little manoeuvring, two lovely TAWNY OWLS roosted in the top of the tree which although a little obscured were great to see!

With the sun now warming the day, we wandered on a few yards to the paddocks where it didn't take long to see our first HAWFINCH perched in a tree. Over the next twenty minutes or so we had seen a good number in flight coming back and forwards to the Hornbeams where good scope views were enjoyed. MISTLE THRUSH, COMMON PHEASANT and some flyover EURASIAN SISKINS were seen and heard before we retraced our steps to the bridge. Here we had lovely views of MARSH, COAL, BLUE and GREAT TITS along with a particularly lovely male COMMON REED BUNTING.

After another look at the TAWNY OWL we walked up to the tunnel and spent some time trying to get better views of Brambling. With some patience we found at least two birds feeding at the back along with COMMON CHAFFINCH and more YELLOWHAMMERS.

Back near the carpark we had good scope views of EURASIAN SISKINS feeding in larches that were laden with cones.

From Lynford we made the short drive to Cockley Cley where not long after setting up our scopes we saw our first displaying male NORTHERN GOSHAWK. The light was perfect on this scarce raptor and during the following thirty minutes, we saw at least two males and a female which delighted the group. COMMON BUZZARDS were very much in evidence plus both COMMON KESTREL and EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK which we viewed whilst tucking into lunch.

Recently a site nearby had been a great place to see Willow Tit, but despite a thorough attempt we could only manage COAL, BLUE, GREAT and MARSH TITS and although a bird that looked much larger than Marsh Tit came in, it was so fleeting we couldn't claim it as Willow Tit.

A brief stop was made in Swaffham for toilets and then we carried on through Fakenham where two RED KITES were seen before we visited Thornham Harbour. The sunset was amazing although pretty quiet bird-wise with the exception of thousands of gulls plus WESTERN MARSH HARRIERS, LITTLE EGRETS and both COMMON REDSHANK and EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER.

With the light virtually going, we drove the short distance to our hotel for the next three nights and after checking in, had some time to relax before meeting for a pre-dinner drink and to complete the bird list in the bar.

Our evening meal was wonderful and we retired for the night after a long but rewarding day!



Thornham Marsh by Steve Grimwade

Saturday 8th February 2020

We met for breakfast at 08.00hrs, tucked into a hearty breakfast and soon afterwards made our way south towards the small village of Sedgeford. After parking we took a walk along the track to an area of manure piles, where just a minute or two later we caught a glimpse of the long-staying first winter male EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL.

This rare bird, the seventh or eighth sighting in the U.K. and first for Norfolk put on a good show. It foraged around muck heaps often with a WHITE WAGTAIL (PIED) for company. After around 10 minutes it flew off uttering its diagnostic harsh call.

With this bird seen so easily we wandered back down to the main road where lo and behold, it was on a heap right next to where we had parked!



Western Barn Owl by Steve Grimwade

Over the next ten minutes or so we had excellent views as it wandered about and the long hind claw showed up really well. With the weather due to change later in the day, we left the bird and drove east to the edge of Wells-next-the-Sea, noting two WESTERN BARN OWLS along the way.

We immediately located the juvenile ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD perched on a distant bush and luckily it flew towards us, perching up much closer where we had lovely views in the scope. A couple of GREY PARTRIDGE were present along the track and over the marsh we noted RED KITE, WESTERN MARSH HARRIER, COMMON KESTREL and COMMON BUZZARD.

It was then onto Holkham and after parking on Lady Anne's Drive we spent time overlooking the wet fields where there were good numbers of EURASIAN TEAL, EURASIAN WIGEON, NORTHERN SHOVELER, GADWALL, MALLARD and a large flock of DARK-BELLIED BRENT GEES.

Muddy edges proved attractive to waders and amongst EURASIAN CURLEW, BLACK-TAILED GODWITS and COMMON REDSHANK we found a few RUFF and COMMON SNIPE.

At the northern end of the drive a superb GREY PARTRIDGE showed incredibly well whilst a couple more fed along the field edge. We then walked out along the beach and reached the cordoned off area, straight away finding five SHORELARK feeding on the saltmarsh with their yellow and black faces positively glowing in the morning sunshine. Whilst watching these, a small party of SNOW BUNTINGS dropped in at the back of the beach before flying off over the dunes towards the sea.

Our plan was to head round to the sea and on our arrival, a massive flock of COMMON SCOTER were present offshore and with diligence, we picked out at least four VELVET SCOTER but conditions were quite choppy. RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS bobbed around and SANDERLING scurried on the beach.

The SNOW BUNTINGS flew over our heads but were chased by a dog and they flew off down the beach which was such a shame.

With our stomachs rumbling we retraced our steps and along the saltmarsh we watched a flock of around 70 COMMON LINNETS feeding and flying about. We picked up a hot drink at 'the lookout' before wandering back to the van for lunch which went down a treat.



Eurasian Woodcock by Steve Grimwade

With the wind starting to pickup, we drove to the RSPB reserve at Titchwell for the remainder of the afternoon. Our first priority (after toilets!) was a visit to the Fen trail where we were keen to see one of the wintering EURASIAN WOODCOCKS that are often seen amongst the tangle of bushes and tree roots. Finding the spot was easy, although finding the bird was slightly trickier. Yet with patience we managed to get good scope views of its head but it refused to come out from behind a branch.

We then wandered along the west bank where light was amazing on the flocks of waders and wildfowl on the fresh marsh. EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVERS, NORTHERN LAPWINGS and PIED AVOCETS positively glowed and we spent time in the Island Hide where a scan of the roosting gulls yielded at least five MEDITERRANEAN GULLS some of which were moulting into summer plumage. A few WESTERN MARSH HARRIERS were seen in flight over the reed-beds and a scan along the sheltered edge saw us locate a feeding WATER RAIL as it furtively crept amongst the cut reeds.

With the light starting to drop, we took a walk down to the beach noting good numbers of roosting BAR-TAILED GODWITS, RED KNOT, GREY PLOVER, DUNLIN and a few BLACK-TAILED GODWITS plus a small number of LITTLE GREBE. The tide was right up when we reached the beach and a scan of the sea revealed a few COMMON GOLDENEYE plus drake COMMON EIDER, RED-BREASTED MERGANSER and GREAT CRESTED GREBES.

The time and light was now against us and we walked back quickly so we could be in position to look over the reed-beds and as the sun disappeared behind the cloud, good numbers of WESTERN MARSH HARRIERS took to the air and we were treated to quite a sight. Two WESTERN BARN OWLS quartered the marsh behind us and we continued watching the harriers until it was too dark to see.



Waders, gulls and wildfowl at Titchwell RSPB by Steve Grimwade

We then retraced our steps back to the carpark and drove towards base, where along the way EURASIAN WOODCOCK was seen flying down the road.

After a hot shower and some time to relax, we met for our evening meal which was delicious and filled us to the brim before heading off to bed.



Water Rail by Steve Grimwade



Titchwell Beach by Steve Grimwade

Sunday 9th February 2020

Overnight the winds had strengthened and we awoke to find incredibly gusty conditions and news that all nature reserves in Norfolk were closing or closed as Storm Ciara moved through the U.K. We opted not to go out in the vehicle for safety reasons, but to attempt a walk after breakfast to the nearby beach.

After another feast we donned our coats and waterproof trousers and made our way towards the coast. It was incredibly windy although very mild and highlights included SANDERLING, EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK, COMMON BUZZARD, RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE, GREAT CORMORANT and some fast flying COMMON PHEASANTS!

With the weather getting worse we returned to base, we enjoyed a hot drink in the bar and stayed there until early afternoon. We had some time off and reconvened for a pre-dinner drink at 18.30.



Sandstorm on Hunstanton Beach by Steve Grimwade

Monday 10th February 2020

The wind had eased significantly as we met for breakfast and although still gusty and cold, it was much better than the previous day. After breakfast we said our goodbyes to the hotel and began our journey east along the coast. Our first destination was Salthouse which took longer to get to due to diversions, but once there we explored the area around the church. Sadly there was no sign of the recently present Waxwing which had last been seen a few days previously,

we did however see our first HOUSE SPARROWS and EUROPEAN GREENFINCHES of the trip.

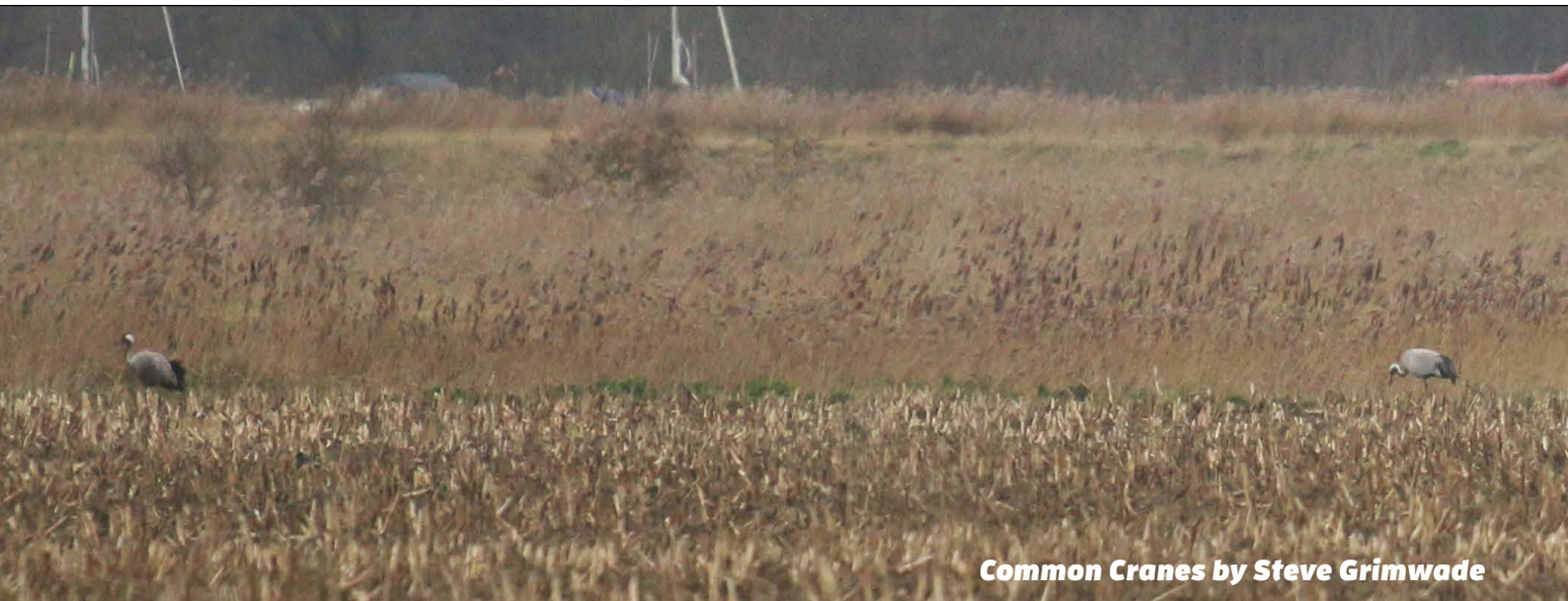
A short drive later we were in the coastal town of Sheringham and after a tip-off from a birder/dog walker we soon found the very smart-looking 1st winter CASPIAN GULL loafing on the beach with a small group of BLACK-HEADED & EUROPEAN HERRING GULLS. After looking at the identifying features, we carried on along the promenade where two PURPLE SANDPIPERS showed incredibly well, along with a small flock of RUDDY TURNSTONES.

It was good to get back into the warm van and we made our way down to the Norfolk Broads area. With the weather due to deteriorate we tried to fit in a couple of sites, the first at Ludham Airfield. As we drove to the airfield we could see a herd of swans in the distance, but as we took a small lane to get closer views, the lane was blocked with a fallen tree!

Retracing our steps we took a different route and had good sightings of mainly WHOOPER SWANS with a couple of TUNDRA SWANS (BEWICK'S) thrown in for good measure and whilst watching them, a dapper male MERLIN zipped across the field in front of us which was an added bonus!

Our final site of the day was between Acle and Billockby where we quickly found two distant COMMON CRANES feeding in harvested Maize fields. Luckily another two birds appeared and although still distant, we had good scope views. It was then back to the van for lunch which was well timed as rain started to fall and within a few minutes it was very heavy.

Afterwards we stopped for a hot drink and toilets before making our way back home after a fabulous weekend of great birds, challenging weather conditions, lovely food and accommodation but most of all, a lovely group!



Common Cranes by Steve Grimwade



Whooper Swans by Steve Grimwade



Purple Sandpiper by Steve Grimwade



Rough-legged Buzzard by Jane Noble



Eastern Yellow Wagtail by Jane Noble



Grey Partridge by Steve Grimwade



Ruddy Turnstone by Steve Grimwade



Shorelark by Steve Grimwade



Blue Tit by Steve Grimwade



Coal Tit by Steve Grimwade



Caspian Gull by Steve Grimwade



Full Moon by Jane Noble



Marsh Tit by Steve Grimwade



Common Reed Bunting by Steve Grimwade

BIRD LIST

	Species	Scientific Name	1	2	3	4
1	RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	X	X	X	X
2	GREY PARTRIDGE	<i>Perdix perdix</i>		5		
3	COMMON PHEASANT	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	X	X	X	X
4	DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	X	X		
5	CANADA GOOSE	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	H	X		
6	GREYLAG GOOSE	<i>Anser anser</i>	X	X	X	X
7	PINK-FOOTED GOOSE	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>		X		
8	MUTE SWAN	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	X	X		X
9	TUNDRA SWAN (BEWICK'S)	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>				2+
10	WHOOPEE SWAN	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>				c.30
11	EGYPTIAN GOOSE	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		X		X
12	COMMON SHELDUCK	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	X	X		X
13	NORTHERN SHOVELER	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		X		
14	GADWALL	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	X	X		
15	EURASIAN WIGEON	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		X		X
16	MALLARD	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	X	X	X	X
17	NORTHERN PINTAIL	<i>Anas acuta</i>		X		
18	EURASIAN TEAL	<i>Anas crecca</i>		X		
19	COMMON POCHARD	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		X		
20	TUFTED DUCK	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	X	X		
21	COMMON EIDER	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>		10♂		
22	VELVET SCOTER	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>		4		
23	COMMON SCOTER	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>		c.2000		
24	COMMON GOLDENEYE	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>		X		
25	RED-BREASTED MERGANSER	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		X		
26	ROCK DOVE / FERAL PIGEON	<i>Columba livia domest.</i>	X	X	X	X
27	STOCK DOVE	<i>Columba oenas</i>				2
28	COMMON WOOD PIGEON	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	X	X	X	X
29	EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	X	X	X	X
30	WATER RAIL	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		1		
31	COMMON MOORHEN	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	X	X	X	X
32	EURASIAN COOT	<i>Fulica atra</i>	X	X	X	X
33	COMMON CRANE	<i>Grus grus</i>				4
34	LITTLE GREBE	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	H	X		
35	GREAT CRESTED GREBE	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		2		
36	EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	X	X	X	X
37	PIED AVOCET	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		X		
38	NORTHERN LAPWING	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		X		X
39	EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		X		
40	GREY PLOVER	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		X		
41	EURASIAN CURLEW	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		X		
42	BAR-TAILED GODWIT	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		X		

BIRD LIST

	Species	Scientific Name	1	2	3	4
43	BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	<i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>		X		
44	RUDDY TURNSTONE	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>				X
45	RED KNOT	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		X		
46	RUFF	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>		X		
47	SANDERLING	<i>Calidris alba</i>		X	X	
48	DUNLIN	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		X		
49	EURASIAN WOODCOCK	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>		2	1	
50	PURPLE SANDPIPER	<i>Calidris maritima</i>				2
51	COMMON SNIPE	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		X		
52	COMMON REDSHANK	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	X	X		X
53	BLACK-HEADED GULL	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	X	X	X	X
54	MEDITERRANEAN GULL	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>		c.5		
55	MEW GULL (COMMON GULL)	<i>Larus canus</i>		X	X	X
56	GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL	<i>Larus marinus</i>				1
57	EUROPEAN HERRING GULL	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		X	X	X
58	CASPIAN GULL	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>				1 1st w
59	LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		X		
60	GREAT CORMORANT	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	X	X	X	X
61	LITTLE EGRET	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	X	X		
62	EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	X		X	X
63	NORTHERN GOSHAWK	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	2♂ 1♀			
64	WESTERN MARSH HARRIER	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	X	c.30		X
65	RED KITE	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	2	1		X
66	ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>		1 juv		
67	COMMON BUZZARD	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	X	X	X	X
68	WESTERN BARN OWL	<i>Tyto alba</i>		4		
69	TAWNY OWL	<i>Strix aluco</i>	2			
70	COMMON KESTREL	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	X	X		X
71	MERLIN	<i>Falco columbarius</i>				1♂
72	EURASIAN JAY	<i>Garrulus glandarius rufitergum</i>			X	X
73	EURASIAN MAGPIE	<i>Pica pica</i>	X	X	X	X
74	WESTERN JACKDAW	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	X	X	X	X
75	ROOK	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	X	X		X
76	CARRION CROW	<i>Corvus corone</i>	X	X		X
77	NORTHERN RAVEN	<i>Corvus corax</i>	1			
78	COAL TIT	<i>Pariparus ater britannicus</i>	X			
79	MARSH TIT	<i>Poecile palustris dresseri</i>	X			
80	EURASIAN BLUE TIT	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus obscurus</i>	X	X	X	X
81	GREAT TIT	<i>Parus major newtoni</i>	X	X		X
82	SKYLARK	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	X	X		
83	SHORELARK	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>		5		
84	CETTI'S WARBLER	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H		

BIRD LIST

	Species	Scientific Name	1	2	3	4
85	LONG-TAILED TIT	<i>Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus</i>	X			
86	GOLDCREST	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	X	X		
87	EURASIAN WREN	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus</i>	X		X	X
88	EURASIAN NUTHATCH	<i>Sitta europaea caesia</i>	X			
89	COMMON STARLING	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	X	X	X	X
90	COMMON BLACKBIRD	<i>Turdus merula</i>	X	X	X	X
91	SONG THRUSH	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		H	H	
92	MISTLE THRUSH	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	X			
93	EUROPEAN ROBIN	<i>Erithacus rubecula melophilus</i>	X	X	H	X
94	HOUSE SPARROW	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			H	X
95	DUNNOCK	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	X	X	X	X
96	WHITE WAGTAIL (PIED)	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	X	X		X
97	EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i>		11st w ♂		
98	MEADOW PIPIT	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	X	X		
99	COMMON CHAFFINCH	<i>Fringilla coelebs gengleri</i>	X	X	X	X
100	BRAMBLING	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	2			
101	HAWFINCH	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	c.20			
102	EUROPEAN GREENFINCH	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				X
103	COMMON LINNET	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		X		
104	EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH	<i>Carduelis carduelis britannica</i>	X	X	X	X
105	EURASIAN SISKIN	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	X			
106	SNOW BUNTING	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>		c.20		
107	YELLOWHAMMER	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	X	X		
108	COMMON REED BUNTING	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	X	X		

H = HEARD X = RECORDED ♂ = MALE ♀ = FEMALE Juv = JUVENILE

Bird names based on The IOC World Bird List by Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). 2020. IOC World Bird List (v 10.1)

OTHER WILDLIFE

	Species	Scientific Name				
1	BROWN HARE	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>				
2	EUROPEAN RABBIT	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>				
3	MUNTJAC DEER	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>				
4	CHINESE WATER DEER	<i>Hydropotes inermis</i>				
5	RED DEER	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>				
6	GREY SEAL	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>				

ITINERARY

7th FEBRUARY 2020

Essex - Lynford Arboretum - Cockley Cley - Thornham Harbour - Old Hunstanton

8th JANUARY 2020

Sedgeford - Wells-next-the-Sea - Holkham - Titchwell RSPB Reserve

9th JANUARY 2020

Old Hunstanton Beach, Church & Hunstanton Cliffs

10th JANUARY 2020

Salthouse - Sheringham - Ludham Airfield - Billockby - Acle - Essex



Eurasian Teal by Steve Grimwade

Swallow
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