

BIRDWATCHING *Group*

WEEKEND AWAY TO NORFOLK – 25-27 FEBRUARY 2022

Day 1 Frampton Marsh

Finally, after 2 years of being unable to go away the group set off for our weekend bird watching trip to North Norfolk. After days of heavy rain and storm Eunice the previous weekend, there was much relief that good weather was forecast.



Golden Plover

Our first stop was Frampton Marsh RSPB nature reserve this is an area that has a variety of fresh and salt water habitats and provides close views of the abundant birdlife of The Wash.

The RSPB volunteers welcomed us and gave a resume of what we could expect to see. As we were being told there were up to 5000 Golden Plover on the site we were duly rewarded with a view of a flock in flight shining in the sunshine. They repeatedly performed throughout the day along with lapwings the sight and the noise creating an impressive spectacle.

Looking out over the marshes near to the visitor centre we were surrounded by bird life there were groups of wigeon, a ruff foraging for food, skylark, gadwall, shoveller, pochard to name but a few.

Stopping at the 360 hide for lunch a kestrel flew closely next to the window. Little stint and ringed plover could be seen feeding out on the marshes. A stonechat sat on a post close to the hide.



Stonechat

From reedbed hide a female goldeneye and redshank were added to my list of sightings.

We headed off to the sea wall braving the gusty winds on route we met some other members of our group who had seen marsh and hen harrier in the distance and a spotted redshank on the corner of the marshes. Noisy flocks of Brent Geese flew over, Avocets and curlew could be seen across the marsh. From the sea wall the views across the marshes and out to the wash were panoramic all enhanced by very bright light and clear skies.



Snipe & Lapwing

Walking back along the track to the visitor centre with marshes on either side we spotted 4 snipe, their plumage magnified by the light. A flock of pink-footed geese flew into the marsh, at the side of us male and female pintail could be seen with the naked eye just to the side of the path. More large flocks of Golden plover could be seen gathered together on the ground intermittently taking to flight.

At the visitor centre there was a nice spot to watch the feeders and enjoy a brew. Finally our last sight was provided through the scope of an RSPB volunteer with a peregrine falcon sitting on the ground surrounded by flocks of wigeon. A good end to our first day of bird watching rounded off by a nice meal in the hotel.

Day 2 Cley and Holkham

Some of our members began our second day with an early start to have a look around the area near the hotel for any early morning birds. They were rewarded with a sighting of a barn owl flying over the field and eventually flying into the barn owl box that was located in the field next to the hotel. Unfortunately, I missed it by five minutes but never mind there was still Sunday morning to have another try! Flocks of curlew and red-legged partridge could be seen in fields nearby and brown hares at the top of the field.



Cley Marsh reserve

After breakfast we set off on the coach, members made various sightings from the coach including Egyptian Goose, brown hares on the fields, grey partridge, jackdaws and buzzard.

Our first stop was NWT Cley Marshes. This was the first Wildlife Trust nature reserve in the country and has a variety of habitats again containing both saltwater and freshwater marsh with large areas of reedbed and grazing marsh. From

here we were hoping to see a Red-breasted Goose which had been showing with a group of brent geese.

Looking out from Bishops Hide onto the marshes the highlight was the multitude of Avocets gracefully pacing through the water there were also teal, shovellers, redshank and a ruff could be seen chasing a dunlin.

We then headed up on the East Bank which provided elevated views across the marshes from here we could hear a little grebe, had good views of wigeon, mute swans, more flocks of golden plover and knot. Along the way someone had spotted a kingfisher in the reeds I would never have seen this without being told it was there but once seen there was no mistaking it. Marsh harriers could be seen in the distance to both sides of the path. Further along the path we saw ringed plover, little egret, godwit and redshank. Other members were lucky enough to see a jack snipe from Cley hide.



Red-breasted Goose

On reaching the end of the East bank we were informed that the red-breasted goose was showing from Beach Road on the west side. In order to see it we embarked on a strenuous walk along the coastal shingle path which was difficult under foot but there were beautiful views of the beach and shoreline. We then headed up the path there was no mistaking where the red-breasted goose was with the view of lots of twitchers in the distance, on route a red kite flew overhead. On arrival we were rewarded with a very close up view of the red breasted goose mingled in with the other geese. Following this we

headed back for lunch and to the coach a satisfied group of birders who had literally been on a successful "wild goose chase"!



Fieldfare

Our next stop was Holkham we headed up Lady Anne's drive with fields of birds on either side and flocks of geese. There were excellent views of two hares boxing and running through the field. We were able to add a fieldfare to the list with a very close up view next to the path.

At the end of the path there was the option to walk out onto the beach or head down the wooded path to a hide. Some members of the group headed to the beach for another quite strenuous walk but were rewarded with shore larks. Those members that walked to the hide were able to add spoonbill to our expanding list.

Following this we were all glad to get back on the coach for another enjoyable evening at the hotel.

Day 3 Titchwell

The last day was all too quickly upon us but to begin the day, the majority of the group got up early in the hope of seeing the barn owl we only had to step out of the hotel and wait on a cold but bright morning. We were not disappointed the barn owl flew over the field in the bright sunshine giving us all a great view. Three barnacle geese also flew over, what a treat and a happy group of birders returned for our breakfast.



Barn Owl

After this we visited Titchwell RSPB reserve on entering we spent time looking at the feeders and saw several birds including brambling, siskin, long-tailed tits, blackbird, chaffinch and dunnock. We then headed up the path leading to the marshes and the beach. Along the path we spotted a water rail moving very quickly. Once again the views across the marshes were magnificent with brent geese flying overhead, redshanks feeding on the banks, turnstone and a grey plover. We headed down to the vast sandy beach and from there we saw sanderling, bar-tailed godwit and oystercatchers.



Brambling

Walking back we went into the hides with close up views of the brent geese. The last route we took was the Fen trail. In the woodlands there were more bramblings and bullfinch and some members had reported seeing a Siberian chiffchaff. At the end of the path at the hide there were very close up views of marsh harriers in flight.

Other sightings of interest were a peacock butterfly and muntjac deer.

After a pleasant few hours at Titchwell we headed back to start our journey home a very satisfied group of birdwatchers. In total we had seen 107 species of birds what a great weekend!

Photos by Robert D

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For more photos from this trip please visit Sandpiper's Page on the Group website at <http://www.wgbwcopy.wikidot.com/sandpiper-s-page>