

Norfolk species lists and trip report, 28th October to 2nd November 2012

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



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#	DATE	LOCATIONS
1	28 th Oct	arrival, The Old Rectory, Crostwick
2	29 th Oct	The Broads: Horsey Gap, Hickling Broad, Stubb Mill
3	30 th Oct	Ouse Washes: Welches Dam and Welney
4	31 st Oct	Mid-Yare Valley: Strumpshaw Fen and Buckenham Marshes
5	1 st Nov	North Norfolk: Salthouse, Cley, Holkham
6	2 nd Nov	depart



Grey Seals at Horsey Gap... suitable captions welcome!

Cover: sunset at Welney, and Otter at Strumpshaw Fen

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29th October 2012 The Broads. After our first night in the Old Rectory, we headed off eastwards from Crostwick, into the Broads. Our first stop was at the beach car park at Horsey Gap, from where we climbed to the top of the dunes to have a look out to sea. A large raft of Common Scoter showed well offshore, mostly the pale-cheeked females, with just a handful of the lovely sooty black males. A couple of Red-throated Divers drifted past, a Guillemot dived just off shore and some distant Gannets flashed white out towards the horizon.

Back down on the landward side of the dunes, we walked south about a mile, before climbing the dunes again to look down onto the beach, where about 65 Grey Seals were clustered together, beside 6 of the much smaller Common Seals. Tucked in to one of the rocky breakwaters was a single new Grey Seal pup, whose mother returned to give him a feed while we watched. A Woodcock flying in off the sea was a nice surprise.

From here we struck inland, to the open fire and hot tea at the Nelson's Head pub, where we had our lunch and were entertained by a couple of late Swallows and a female Black Redstart on the wires.

A brief stop at Hickling Broad coincided with the arrival of the rain, and an almost total lack of birds! So on we went, to the view point at Stubb Mill. The raptor roost took a while to get going, but we did eventually enjoy the arrival of around 35 Marsh Harriers, as well as a close fly past by a female Hen Harrier and a family of four Common Cranes feeding quietly on the grazing marsh in front of us.

30th October 2012. Ouse Washes. Further afield today, and in the opposite direction: we headed west, crossing the northern edge of the Brecks, passing through 'High Norfolk' and into the black soils of the Fens.

We spent the morning at the RSPB/Wildlife Trust reserve at Welches Dam. Much of the Washes was flooded, with good numbers of Coot, Tufted Duck and smaller numbers of Wigeon, Gadwall and Shoveler to be seen. A flock of Lapwings resting on one island were joined by 3 Ruff and a couple of Snipe. A Kingfisher put in a brief appearance, and in the distance a first winter Little Gull flicked and dipped over the water. Leaving the reserve, we were very lucky to bump into a single Waxwing in roadside rowans, which posed up in the top of a tree for us all to admire through the scopes.

The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust's reserve at Welney isn't quite so 'low key' as Welches Dam, and we took full advantage of the facilities here, notably the café, before heading over the bridge to watch the evening feed. A small number of Whooper and Mute Swans joined the large numbers of Mallard and Pochard in taking advantage of the free grain on offer. Less impressed by the grain were the Black-tailed Godwits, Ruff and single Grey Plover roosting and feeding amongst the Lapwings. A Short-eared Owl came over, being chased by a pack of Lapwings, and as the sun set to our left, several hundred Whooper Swans came in to roost from their day spent feeding out in the sugar beet fields.

Alas, our bus chose now to break down, but we were well looked after by the coach company, and were only an hour late in getting back 'home' for dinner.

31st October 2012. Mid Yare Valley. Today we headed south (well, south east to be precise), to the Mid Yare Valley, and Jono's former stomping ground. We started our day at Strumpshaw Fen, with Marsh Tit and Nuthatch on the bird feeders by the toilet block, and some very well fed Brown Rats.

Initially, not a lot seemed to be going on at the main pool, so we moved around to Fen Hide, hoping to bump into the Waxwings that had been reported near there that morning: no luck, unfortunately. With a volunteer work party cutting and burning the reeds in front of Fen Hide, there didn't seem a lot of point hanging around here, so most of us carried on round to Tower Hide, where they enjoyed good numbers of ducks, a Little Egret and a nicely posing Kingfisher.

The rest of us went back to the Reception Hide, to stake out the main pool... and we were in luck, first with a Chinese Water Deer who was quietly grazing right in front of the hide. Then with a Bittern that flew

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across the pool, and then stalked out into the open at the edge of the reeds. And at last, with a panic attack from the Coot flock, a young male Otter appeared, swimming across the pool. For the next hour or so, he put on quite a show, actively hunting around the reed edges, and particularly around a nearby fish refuge, even waiting around long enough for the rest of the group to get back from Tower Hide in time to enjoy the show. As if that wasn't good enough, a second Bittern appeared, twice flying past in the same view as the Otter! Norfolk's wetland wildlife at it's very best.

Our afternoon walk was a little further down the valley, at Buckenham Marshes, where hundreds of Wigeon whistled, a small flock of feral Barnacle Geese barked in the distance, and a female Peregrine came through, putting hundreds of Lapwing and Golden Plover up. Walking along the river bank towards a derelict mill, we found two more Chinese Water Deer grazing on the marshes, and got our first hint of what was to come as a couple of thousand Jackdaws and Rooks gathered noisily on the fields at the far side of the river.

Back across the marshes, we walked up the hill to the top of the lane, where the main crow flock (a mix of Jackdaws and Rooks) was gathering. As dusk fell, maybe 10,000 or more birds gathered in the fields and then took off, swirling over the woods in great clouds: a very impressive end to a great day!

1st November 2012. North Norfolk Coast. With South, West and East all covered already, today it was our turn to head North, up to the coast.

Our first port of call was the small beach car park at Salthouse, at the base of the shingle bank sea defences, where a small group of Turnstones were, handily, turning stones, unconcerned by our bus parking next to them! Walking up on to the shingle bank, we found a small group of birders avidly watching 'something', which turned out to be a very smart adult Shore Lark, shuffling around in the company of a couple of Skylarks. Although sometimes hard to see amongst the Yellow Horned Poppy and dock plants, he gave everyone good views of his smart yellow face, black mask and tiny black 'horns'. Offshore, a single female Long-tailed Duck flew in, very close to the shore, before (bizarrely!) flying over our heads and onto the freshwater marsh behind us!

From here we drove on westwards, passing a rather scruffy looking Sacred Ibis in a field with a group of crows, an exotic escapee from a bird collection in the Netherlands. And then we were at the famous Wildlife Trust reserve of Cley Marshes, the very first Wildlife Trust reserve and still amongst the best. One a small grazing field, we found a mixed group of geese at close range, a mixture of smaller Dark-bellied Brent Geese from the Russian Arctic and the larger, local Greylags, plus a single European White-fronted Goose, showing its dark belly-barring and white forehead-flash. We walked on, to the little cluster of hides overlooking Pat's Pool, where a pair of juvenile White-rumped Sandpipers, rare vagrants from across the Atlantic, had taken up temporary residence amongst the larger numbers of Dunlin. They eventually gave brilliant views, flying to right in front of the hide, giving us all the chance to appreciate their smaller size, shorter beak and more attenuated, long-winged shape (compared to the Dunlins). Other waders included a large group of Ruff, Black-tailed Godwits, one or two Ringed Plovers and a pair of sleepy Avocets. Behind the hide, a single Chiffchaff was calling noisily.

After a heavy rain shower, an impressive rainbow and some very welcome hot drinks at the visitors' centre, we headed westwards again, this time to Lady Anne's Drive at Holkham. Here we walked through the pine woods, enjoying the Goldcrests and tit flocks, plus a single all-too-brief Firecrest, to the hide overlooking the grazing marshes inland. A flock of Pink-footed Geese were feeding out on the marshes, with a couple of sleeping Egyptian Geese, a passing Marsh Harrier and a handful of Curlew.

Another brief rain shower, and then we walked through the pines to the beach, which was pretty empty really: a handful of Oystercatchers and two female Common Scoter on the sea being all we could come up with. And so it was back to Lady Anne's Drive we headed, arriving just in time for a beautiful sunset, the departure of a few thousand Pink-footed Geese for their offshore roost and a trio of Barn Owls hunting over the field edges. As promised, our day in North Norfolk ended with the cackles of thousands of Pink-footed Geese in our ears... a suitable end to a very successful few days.

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ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	28 th	29 th	30 th	31 st	1 st	2 nd
Family Anatidae (Swans, geese and ducks)							
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			X	X	X	
Black Swan	<i>Cygnus ater</i>	An escaped bird at Strumpshaw					
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>			X			
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		X	X	X	X	
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>					X	
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>		X			X	
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		X	X	X	X	
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>		X			X	
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>				X		
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>					X	
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		X		X	X	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		X	X	X	X	
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>			X	X	X	
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			X		X	
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>			X	X	X	
Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>			X	X	X	
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		X	X	X	X	
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			X			
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			X			
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>		X			X	
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	1 female on the sea off Salthouse					
Family Phasianidae (Pheasants and Partridges)							
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		X	X	X		
Family Gaviidae (Divers)							
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		X				
Family Podicipedidae (Grebes)							
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		X	X		X	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		X			X	
Family Sulidae (Gannets)							
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		X				
Family Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants)							
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Threskiornithidae (Ibises)							
Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	1 escape, in fields near Salthouse					
Family Ardeidae (Herons)							
Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	3 (!!) seen at Strumpshaw Fen					
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		X		X	X	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Accipitridae (Hawks and Eagles)							
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1 female at Stubb Mill					
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		35	X	X	X	
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		X		X	X	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>				X		
Family Falconidae (Falcons)							
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 big female at Buckenham					

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Family Rallidae (Rails and Crakes)							
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			H			
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Gruidae (Cranes)							
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	A family of 4, Stubb Mill					
Family Haematopidae (Oystercatchers)							
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>					X	
Family Recurvirostridae (Avocets)							
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>					X	
Family Scolopacidae (Sandpipers)							
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				X	X	
White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	2 juveniles on Pat's Pool at Cley					
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>					X	
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			X	X	X	
Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	1 flew in off the sea at Horsey					
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		X			X	
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>			X	X	X	
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			X		X	
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			X		X	
Family Charadriidae (Plovers)							
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					X	
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			X			
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		X	X	X	X	
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Laridae (Gulls)							
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoeleus minutus</i>	3 first winters on the Ouse Washes: 1 at Welches Dam and 2 at Welney					
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		X	X		X	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			X	X	X	
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>		X	X		X	
Family Alcidae (Auks)							
Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		X				
Family Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)							
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>		X	X	X	X	
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Tytonidae (Barn Owls)							
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Brief singles at Stubb Mill and Buckenham, with three hunting together at Holkham					
Family Strigidae (Owls)							
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	1 flew over at Welney					
Family Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)							
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>			X	X		
Family Hirundinidae (Swallows and Martins)							
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		X	X	X		

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Family Alaudidae (Larks)							
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		X	X	X	X	
Shore Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	1 on the beach at Salthouse					
Family Motacillidae (Pipits and Wagtails)							
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		X	X	X	X	
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Troglodytidae (Wrens)							
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		X		X	X	
Family Prunellidae (Accentors)							
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		X		X	X	
Family Turdidae (Thrushes and Chats)							
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		X	X	X	X	
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>		X				
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	1 female near the pub at Horsey					
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		X	X	X	X	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		X			X	
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Sylviidae (Warblers)							
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>				H		
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>					H	
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	1 in the pines, Holkham					
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		X			X	
Family Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)							
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Panuridae (Bearded Tit)							
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>					H	
Family Paridae (Tits)							
Marsh Tit	<i>Parus palustris</i>				X		
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>					X	
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Sittidae (Nuthatches)							
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				X		
Family Corvidae (Crows)							
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		X	X	X	X	
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			X	X	X	
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>		X	X	X	X	
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Bombycillidae (Waxwings)							
Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulous</i>	1 in roadside Rowans, near Welches Dam					
Family Sturnidae (Starlings)							
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Passeridae (Sparrows)							
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		X	X	X	X	
Family Fringillidae (Finches)							
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		X	X	X	X	
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>			X	X		

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Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		X	X	X	X	
Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>			X	X		
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>				X	X	
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		X				
Family Emberizidae (Buntings)							
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citronella</i>		X				
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>				X	X	

LARGER MAMMALS

Family Muridae (Mice and Rats)

Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>				X		
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Family Sciuridae (Squirrels)

Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>				X	X	
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Family Leporidae (Rabbits and Hares)

Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		X	X	X	X	
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Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>				X		
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Family Phocidae (Seals)

Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	65 on the beach at Horsey, including a white fluffy pup and a single offshore at Holkham					
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Common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	6 with the Grey Seals at Horsey					
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Family Mustelidae (Mustelids)

Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	A young male in front of the Reception Hide at Strumpshaw Fen, for about an hour					
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Family Cervidae (Deer)

Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjac</i>	One in the woods, briefly, at Holkham					
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Chinese Water Deer	<i>Hydropotes inermis</i>		1		3		
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INVERTEBRATES

Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	1 at Horsey, 3 at Welches Dam					
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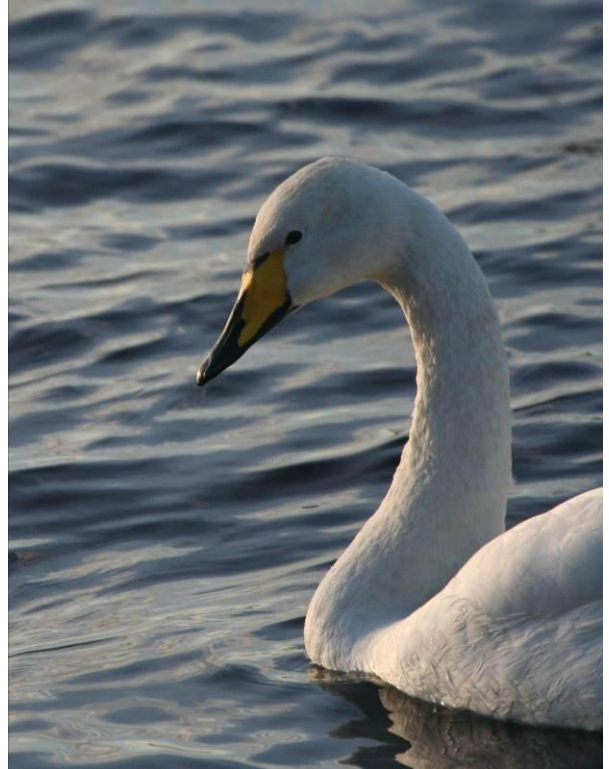
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	1 at Horsey					
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Fox Moth	<i>Macrothylacia rubi</i>	The large furry caterpillars at Horsey					
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Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Several in warm, sheltered spots at Welches Dam and Strumpshaw					
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Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Strumpshaw Fen					
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White-fronted Goose (left), Whooper Swan (right) and Chinese Water Deer (below)

