



**1-DAY NORFOLK AUTUMN BIRDING TOUR – BIRDING THE  
NORTHWEST NORFOLK COAST**

**06 November 2021**

**By Oliver Reville**



*Great (White) Egret was one of the highlights of our Birding the Northwest Norfolk Coast tour.*

## Overview

This Birding the Northwest Norfolk Coast day tour saw us enjoy some of the lesser-known birding locations on this stunning part of the Norfolk coastline. The tour was conducted for sisters Mallory and Abi as a belated 30<sup>th</sup> birthday present for bird mad Abi! Conditions were, unfortunately, less than ideal with persistent strong winds throughout the day, but we still managed a respectable total of 51 species, including some top birds and good views of them.

## Detailed Report

Our tour began at the wild and beautiful Thornham Harbour. The area around the car park proved immediately fruitful as **Common Linnet**, **European Rock Pipit**, **Meadow Pipit**, **Common Starling**, and **Eurasian Skylark** all made themselves known quickly, often in flight overhead. Birds of prey were also present with a distant **Red Kite** and prolonged views of a stunning male **Western Marsh Harrier** starting off what turned to be an excellent day for sightings of this species.

Waterbirds and shorebirds were the most numerous species found here with the tidal channels hosting **Greylag Goose**, **Pink-footed Goose**, **Brant** (Dark-bellied Brent) **Goose**, **Common Shelduck**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Mallard**, **Eurasian Teal**, **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Common Redshank**, **Black-headed Gull**, **European Herring Gull**, **Great Cormorant**, and **Little Egret**.



*Eurasian Wigeon proved a firm favorite for our clients Mallory and Abi.*

After a mid-morning stop for coffee and cake we proceeded to our next location. The beautiful Burnham Norton loop is a fascinating section of coastline, with extensive freshwater grazing meadows and incredible views across the saltmarsh to Scott Head Island.

The wind had really begun picking up by the time we arrived here, but we were still able to enjoy some great birding. The grazing marshes held good numbers of **Pink-footed Goose**, **Greylag Goose**, **Brant** (Dark-bellied Brent) **Goose**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, and **Eurasian Teal** and these were joined by smaller numbers of **Mute Swan**, **Egyptian Goose**, **Common Shelduck**, **Mallard**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Western Jackdaw**, **Carriion Crow**, and **White (Pied) Wagtail**.

While walking along the sea wall we enjoyed prolonged views of **Grey Plover**, **Common Redshank**, and **Eurasian Curlew** in the tidal channels, and we got to watch **Great (White) Egret** and **Grey Heron** fly across the grazing meadows at close range. As we reached the end of our walk, a sheltered area allowed us to hear the distinctive song of **Cetti's Warbler** and watch a **Common Blackbird** fly from nearby gardens to willows by the car park.

Other notable species recorded during our visit were **Little Grebe**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Red Kite**, and **Eurasian Skylark**.



*Pink-footed Geese winter in large numbers on the Norfolk coast and we were able to enjoy great views of this species.*

Our final stop of the day was at the dramatic expanse of Burnham Overy Dunes. This area is well known in birding circles as being an excellent location to visit at pretty much all times of year. Despite the near gale force winds, we had a productive visit and racked up a respectable 41 species at the site, in just a couple of hours.



The tidal channel by the sea wall proved especially productive with great views had of **Brant** (Dark-bellied Brent) **Goose**, **Common Shelduck**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **Grey Plover**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Common Ringed Plover**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Dunlin**, **Common Redshank**, and **Great Black-backed Gull**.

The grazing meadows to the east of the sea wall gave us an amazing spectacle of five **Western Marsh Harriers** perched in the long grass, trying to shelter from the battering wind. This group included two wing tagged birds but unfortunately, they were too distant to get a reading of the tags. Also present around the meadows were **Greylag Goose**, **Pink-footed Goose**, **Brant** (Dark-bellied Brent) **Goose**, **Mute Swan**, **Egyptian Goose**, **Gadwall**, **Eurasian Teal**, **Common Wood Pigeon**, **Common Buzzard**, **Common Kestrel**, **Eurasian Skylark**, **Common Starling**, **White** (Pied) **Wagtail**, **Meadow Pipit**, and **Common Linnet**. The small lake set into the meadows gave us distant views of a beautiful female **Common Goldeneye**, a surprise species.



*Burnham Overy Dunes is a wonderful place for birding, although it wasn't quite as sunny as this during our visit!*

Continuing the walk, we eventually reached the great expanse of dunes. Just before moving through them, we enjoyed watching a **Little Egret** hunting in a small pool and close to the path a **Eurasian Wren** gave out its distinctive alarm call, but sadly did not show. Moving through the dunes to the beach gave us excellent views of shorebirds (waders) feeding on the tideline with scores of **Common Ringed Plover** and **Dunlin** joined by smaller numbers of **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Common Redshank**, and **Sanderling**.

After a windy but bird filled day, we made our way back to the car park just as the heavens opened. Thank you to both Mallory and Abi for joining me and making this day tour so enjoyable.

**Bird List - Following IOC (11.2)**

Birds 'heard only' are marked with (H) after the common name, all other species were seen.

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
<b>Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)</b>	
Brant (Dark-bellied Brent) Goose	<i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
<b>Grebes (Podicipedidae)</b>	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
<b>Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)</b>	
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
<b>Rails, Crakes &amp; Coots (Rallidae)</b>	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
<b>Oystercatchers (Haematopodidae)</b>	
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
<b>Plovers (Charadriidae)</b>	
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
<b>Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)</b>	

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
<b>Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)</b>	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
<b>Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)</b>	
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
<b>Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)</b>	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
<b>Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)</b>	
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
<b>Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)</b>	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
<b>Crows, Jays (Corvidae)</b>	
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
<b>Larks (Alaudidae)</b>	

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
<b>Cettia Bush Warblers &amp; Allies (Cettiidae)</b>	
Cetti's Warbler (H)	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
<b>Wrens (Troglodytidae)</b>	
Eurasian Wren (H)	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
<b>Starlings, Rhabdornis (Sturnidae)</b>	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>
<b>Thrushes (Turdidae)</b>	
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
<b>Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)</b>	
Duncock (H)	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
<b>Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)</b>	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>
<b>Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)</b>	
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>

<b>Total seen</b>	<b>48</b>
Total heard only	3
Total recorded	51