

Eagle-Eye Tours – England Birds & Gardens: Southeast

Saturday, 21st April – Wednesday 2nd May 2018

Leaders: Lucy Chang, Mike Hoit & Richard Knapton

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* Common; seen every day.

Brant (Dark-bellied Brent Goose) *Branta bernicla* A distant flock in flight at Cley on 29th April, then much better views at Titchwell on 30th.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* Many at Minsmere, where they have started to nest recently.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* Fairly common in small numbers or flocks, seen on seven dates

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* Very common, pairs or small groups seen on nine dates.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* First seen with well-grown young at Kew Gardens. A few were at Abberton Reservoir, then on a number of occasions in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* First seen at Minsmere, then many good sightings of this large, very handsome duck at wetland sites in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* Great views on the River Little Ouse in Breckland.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* Small numbers at many wetland sites, with good views in particular at Minsmere – subtly beautiful when seen well.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* The default duck anywhere with water!

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Another good-looking duck, seen well at Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Pairs and small groups at Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell (where we had particularly good views).

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* A couple on a roadside pool near Cley, then a nice group at Titchwell.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Seen at Kew, Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell, plus a few on ponds at some of the gardens.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* A flock of over 40 on the sea off Dunwich was a bit of a surprise.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* A few seen around Minsmere and Westleton, in Breckland and at Holkham

Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* Very common in some areas, with some confiding birds being much appreciated by some!

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Excellent views at Kew, then seen at many wetland sites.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Smart breeding plumaged birds seen on larger bodies of water – on the Thames at Kew, Abberton Reservoir, and Island Mere at Minsmere where we saw a pair displaying.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* A small group flew east past Cley in the strong winds on 29th April.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Seen at many of the wetlands visited, notably Abberton where there was a large nesting colony of the European freshwater-breeding *sinensis* subspecies.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Prolonged flight views of one which then landed in the open long enough to be scoped at Minsmere on 26th April, where we heard at least four more giving the amazing ‘booming’ song. Another calling at close range but not seen at Hen Reedbeds.

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* – First seen at a heronry by the Thames at Kew, then on six dates in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Great Egret *Casmerodius albus* One or two at Cley on 29th, and one in flight at Holkham on 30th April.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Particularly nice views of this small white heron at Minsmere; also at Abberton, Cley and Titchwell.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Our best sightings were of several pairs over the reedbeds at Minsmere, also seen at Hen Reedbeds and along the north Norfolk coast.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Singles at Channels Lodge and Dunwich Heath.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* One at Hyde Hall, and several by the roadsides on 1st May.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* Fairly common, seen on nine days.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* Outstanding views of one that emerged from reeds at Minsmere at 26th April. Heard at Cley.

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Seen on most days, on almost any waterbody.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Encountered on most wetlands we visited. The first ones were particularly enjoyed busily constructing a nest in Kew Gardens.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Excellent views of these elegant waders from the hides at Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* First seen on the golf course at Channels Lodge, then in Breckland, Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell..

Gray/Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Two at Titchwell RSPB.

Eurasian Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* At Channels Lodge, then common at the coastal reserves.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A small group at Cley.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Close views of a pair at Abberton Reservoir, and one at Titchwell.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* One at Hen Reedbeds.

Redshank *Tringa totanus* Small numbers at each of Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* Seen by those who stayed in North Hide at Minsmere on 25th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* See the note for Spotted Redshank – two very fortunate sightings!

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Flocks of the bright *islandica* subspecies at Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* A few seen on the scrapes at Minsmere and Cley.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* A single male at Minsmere on 26th, then three closer birds at Titchwell.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* Single birds with the godwits at both and Titchwell.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Three breeding-plumaged birds at Cley on 30th April.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Very common, seen almost every day with large numbers breeding on the scrapes at Minsmere and Titchwell.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* Many pairs scattered in the gull colonies at Minsmere and Titchwell.

Common / Mew Gull *Larus canus* A few (mostly 1st-summer birds) at Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell.

Herring Gull / European Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* Fairly common, seen on eight days.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus (fuscus) graellsii* First seen on the River Thames at Kew on April, then a few at the coastal reserves and in fields.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* A few seen on the sea and on scrapes around Minsmere, Cley and Titchwell.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Plenty over Abberton Reservoir, then seen close up at both Minsmere and Titchwell.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Large numbers on the scrapes at Minsmere and Titchwell, seen particularly well at the latter.

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* Seen in most built up areas.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* A pair were performing a great aerial display at Channels Lodge on 22nd, but our best views were in the scope at Santon Downham.

Common Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* Very common, seen each day of the tour.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* One heard at Westleton Heath.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* Small numbers seen most days.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* After hearing a distant one at Marks Hall and getting a very fast flyby at Bressingham, we were treated to great views of a singing male at Santon Downham.

Common Swift *Apus apus* This summer migrant was fairly late arriving this year, and we only had two quick sightings (at Hyde Hall and Cley).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* Singles seen at Channels Lodge and Bressingham, and heard on another two dates.

Eurasian Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* Seen on five days, including scope views at Kew and Minsmere, and (especially) one on the lawn at Channels Lodge.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Seen at a number of sites, with the best views at Hyde Hall, Minsmere and Cley.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Only seen on our day at Kew, where we had lots of good viewing opportunities.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Several in Kew and a couple at Bressingham showed very well.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* A common sight at nearly every place we visited; seen every day.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* Seen on most days, with confiding birds at Kew (visiting a nest) and Minsmere.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* Seen on nearly every day, with many roadside rookeries.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* Small numbers every day of the tour.

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus* Three superb males seen by the early risers at Hen Reedbeds, even posing for the telescope.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis* Seen (and mainly heard singing) at Hyde Hall, Abberton, Minsmere, Hen Reedbeds, Cley and Barnsdale.

Sand Martin / Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* The colony in the bank by the visitor centre at Minsmere gave us the best views; small numbers also over Abberton Reservoir, Cley and Titchwell.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Small numbers seen on most dates.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Seen at various places in Essex (including around the buildings at Channels, Abberton Reservoir and Beth Chatto Gardens), then again at Cley and Titchwell.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* Good looks at a pair by the river at Santon Downham; also seen at Fairhaven and at Barnsdale Gardens.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* After some excellent singing birds on Dunwich Heath, small numbers at Minsmere, Bressingham, Santon Downham and Lynford Arboretum.

Great Tit *Parus major* Very common; seen – and heard giving it's loud, variable songs - every day

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* Seen every day.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* Small numbers at Channels Lodge, Hyde Hall, Marks Hall, Minsmere and Santon Downham.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Heard (and seen fleetingly visiting a nest) at Bressingham, but then we had some brilliant views of a few at Santon Downham, where it seems very common.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* Seen very well at Lynford Arboretum and then at a nest at Fairhaven Water Gardens the same day.

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* Encountered almost every day - not always easy to see well though.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* Seen or heard on six days, eventually coming down to eye-level at Lynford Arboretum.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* Only heard once, at Cley.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Heard singing at Minsmere on 26th, then seen at Santon Downham and around our hotel at Kelling.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Far commoner than the similar-looking above species. Recorded on nine days, seen well at Minsmere and Kelling.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* One singing at Muckleburgh Hill on 29th, a scarce migrant.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Small numbers heard singing at Minsmere, Santon Downham and Cley; seen very well at Hen Reedbeds on a rare calm day.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Much as Sedge Warbler; also heard and seen at Titchwell.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* Very common at all wooded sites visited; some excellent views at Kew, Abberton Reservoir, Beth Chatto Gardens and Kelling.

Greater Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* Only a few heard or seen at Minsmere, Hen Reedbeds and Santon Downham.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* A singing male posed surprisingly well in the scope at Hen Reedbeds. Others heard at Marks Hall and Cley.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* Two or three at Dunwich Heath proved elusive, but eventually a male performed very well.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* A superb male in the car park of the Pheasant Hotel at Kelling on 1st May.

Eurasian Robin *Erithacus rubecula* Common, seen every day.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* Three singing in woodland at Abberton Reservoir, with one or two giving views.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Two migrants of the Greenland-breeding subspecies at Minsmere on 25th.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula* One of the commoner birds of the tour, seen each day.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* Seen on seven dates, often feeding out on lawns.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* We had some good views of this species, including at Channels Lodge, Marks Hall, Bressingham Hall and Holkham. Best of all were the birds attending a nest of chicks on an exposed branch at Beth Chatto Gardens.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Common, seen on most days.

Duncock / Hedge Accentor *Prunella modularis* Very common, seen or heard singing throughout.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Some showy birds outside the visitor centre at Abberton Reservoir.

Pied Wagtail / White Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii* Small numbers on nine days.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* A singing bird scoped at Santon Downham.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* A few at Cley.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* Only recorded at Muckleburgh Hill, across the road from our hotel in Kelling.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* Seen at Abberton, Minsmere, Hen Reedbeds, Santon Downham, and Cley.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* Common, seen nearly every day.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* Small numbers seen on most days, including some nice singing males.

European Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Seen at Marks Hall, Minsmere at Hen Reedbeds, but unfortunately none stuck around for long.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* Seen nearly every day, often in small flocks with their distinctive tinkling call.

Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* Seen on five dates, with good views had at Dunwich and Minsmere.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Common, recorded every day.

Mammals

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Seen on most days.

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus* A few roadside animals and three at Cley.

Eastern Gray Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* Seen on seven days.

Reeves's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* Seen very well at Minsmere.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* Two at Dunwich

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* One fishing at Hen Reedbeds.

Insects – Butterflies

Peacock *Aglais io*

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

Comma *Polygonium c-album*

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

Insects – other

Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*

Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*

Garden Bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*

Early Bumblebee *Bombus pratorum*

Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascorum*

Hairy-footed Flower-bee *Anthophora plumipes*

Dark-edged Bee-fly *Bombylius major*