



## November 2018 Tour reports

### November 7<sup>th</sup> Day One of 3 day Norfolk Tour

We started the day at Holkham, with lovely views of a small covey of **Grey Partridge** showing very well in the adjacent fields. There were also small groups of **Pink-footed Geese**, **Dark-bellied Brent Goose & Curlew**. On the other side of the track there was nice groups of **Wigeon** and **Teal**.

We then headed out on to the saltmarsh, mid marsh there was a nice flock of **100+ Linnets** and plenty of **Skylarks** at the eastern end we soon located a beautiful flock of **29 Snow Buntings**, that showed on and off over the next hour eventually landing right in front of us just a few metres away. Our attention was also taken by a feeding frenzy just offshore of around **c250 Northern Gannets**, obviously taking advantage of a big shoal of fish. The shoreline also held **Turnstone**, **Sanderling**, **Redshank**, **Curlew** and lots of gulls.

Heading back we watched as **11 Shorelarks** dropped into the area in front of us, the newly cordoned area provided good security for these beautiful Scandinavian visitors and it was a pleasure to watch them foraging.

We then headed over to the Washington hide, we had a few **Long-tailed Tits**, **Treecreeper**, **Goldcrest** in this area. But the air attracted most attention with **2+ Marsh Harriers**, **6+ Red Kite**, **Sparrowhawk**, **several Buzzards** and **Kestrel**.

Nice groups of wildfowl, **Teal**, **Gadwall**, **Little Grebe**, **Tufted Duck** and numerous **Wigeon**.

In the afternoon we did a circuit of Stiffkey Fen, there was a nice strip on one of the fields and this was attracting **Reed Bunting**, **Yellowhammer**, **Greenfinch** and **Linnets**. There were **Rock Pipits** over the saltmarsh and lots of **Shelduck** and more commoner wildfowl out on the estuarine areas.

The fen held lots of duck, and **c120 Black-tailed Godwit**. The walk back produced the most interesting bird, a probable **Siberian Chiff-chaff** – the bird was calling and sounded spot on, though it refused to give satisfactory views.

We rounded off the day with a brilliant raptor roost of **5 Hen Harriers**, including a grey male, a **Merlin** and **6 Marsh Harriers**. Just as we were leaving huge streams of **c20,000 Pink-footed Geese** arrived at their roost out on the saltmarsh.

### November 8<sup>th</sup> Day Two of 3 day Norfolk Tour

We started the day with a search around the Meadow lane area of Salthouse, where the “Eastern” probable Stejnegers Stonechat had been present. After around a 45 minutes of searching we were getting nice views of **Common Stonechats** - but no sign of the main quarry. We were wandering back

resigned to the Stejnegers maybe having departed when a very smart male **Sparrowhawk** was located perched on a nearby bush. Whilst admiring this bird, I glanced down the channels for about 20th time! Out of thin air and close by there was the **Stejneger's Stonechat**, beautifully pale and cleanly marked just 20m away, "here it is" I yelled! We had great views over the next 30 minutes, studying it's every detail.

We next headed off to Kelling, as we pulled up I could see the **7 Waxwings** perched atop a shrub! We took them in quickly from the minibus and then got the scopes out for superb scope views, they were obliging sitting right out throughout our spell of watching them!



We then headed off to Sheringham for another staying rarity - the King Eider! We walked up the hill to the top of Skelding and from here we had quite good scope views. The **King Eider** was looking at it's best in the late morning sunshine, the colouration to the head and bill standing out very well, plus the little sails were just prominent enough to note. A few **Redwing** and a **Blackbird** were watched arriving in off the sea, but a real great moment came when we picked up a **Woodcock**, flying in low off the sea, finally reaching the shoreline and diving over the hedgerows into cover, a wonderful bit of migration to witness.

We now had a bit of a drive over to East Norfolk, we headed over towards Horsey and settled on an area for lunch with a good vista and view. We met up with Mick Saunt at the lay-by and had barely got the lunches out before we had views of the **Rough-legged Buzzard** hunting distantly over the dunes. Though distant, through the scopes we managed to get nice views of the distinct underwing and tail pattern, the bird constantly holding up to hover and hunt. There was a nice flock of several hundred **Pink-footed Geese**, plus a nice group of **Lapwing** and **Golden Plover**. We next had great views of

**Great White Egret** as it flew across the road in front of us and then landed in the field, great views on the ground too.



We rounded the day off with several **Marsh Harriers**, a **Short-eared Owl** and eventually as we were leaving **3 Cranes** flew over.

### **November 9<sup>th</sup> Day Three of 3 day Norfolk Tour**

A very early start today, I collected the group at 6am and we headed off to Snettisham for the high tide. We arrived as it was getting light, just in time to enjoy thousands of **Pink-footed Geese** leaving their roost, a wonderful sight and sound as they flew overhead in waves and lines.

As the tide reached its highest point we were treated to numerous fantastic and very intensive Mexican waves, in wonderful light, **30,000 Knot**, **1000+ Oystercatcher**, plus many **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Redshank**, **Dunlin** and **Curlew**. Overhead there was a nice passage of finches, including several **Brambling** as well as a few hundred thrushes, some **Redwing** but many more **Fieldfare**. Nice views along the shoreline of **Scandinavian Rock Pipits**, from the hide then followed by a mass of **Wigeon**, **Teal**, **Shoveler** and **4 Goldeneye** from the hide. As we headed back along the track to live the reserve, I noted a low raptor on the Southern bank, I got the bio's on it and immediately realised we were watching a superb adult female **Rough-legged**

**Buzzard**, unlike the bird yesterday this one was close and low and I managed to grab the camera and get some pics, a great surprise, it kept moving and headed off south!



We next stopped off in Hunstanton for late morning coffee and cakes, before heading on to Titchwell. There was the usual mixture of geese and wildfowl out on the scrapes but the highlight was wonderful views of **2 Water Pipits** showing very well from Parinder. A nice end to a great 3 days of birding!

If you are interested in joining us on any of our future trips then please contact us via the website or email below

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