

Isles of Scilly

Naturetrek Tour Report

3rd – 11th October 2025



Wilson's Phalarope



Hoopoe



Fascicularia bicolor



Tresco's Abbey Gardens

Tour report by Neil McMahon
Photos by Usha and John Potter, Carol Shepherd and Neil McMahon



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Summary

Travelling to islands always adds an extra dimension to a tour, particularly when the great British weather intervenes! However, despite the best efforts of Storm Amy, everyone eventually arrived safely and we went about our business of exploring the islands, admiring the landscape and enjoying the wildlife on offer. For many, the star of the show was a Wilson's Phalarope present at the beginning of the week, which performed marvellously right in front of us. This bundle of energy had flown from the other side of the Atlantic and provided unforgettable views in the shallows of Porthellick Pool on St Mary's. The pelagic trip on one day took us a long way out from the isles after admiring a number of birds in the shallower waters, and we connected with pods of Common Dolphins as they cavorted around us, splashing, leaping clear of the water and bow-riding our boat in the manner that only dolphins can! They were accompanied by diving Gannets, Bluefin Tuna and Great, Sooty and Manx Shearwaters, and we went on to see Storm Petrels and a Grey Phalarope feeding alongside the boat.

Our visit to the island of Tresco provided an opportunity to wander the excellent terraced gardens and to admire the many succulent plants, and shrubs and trees from the southern hemisphere. Introduced Red Squirrels scurried around, and our walk around the Great Pool provided views of Water Rail, Cattle Egret and Firecrest. Our boat trip back to St Mary's yielded a hunting Marsh Harrier over the uninhabited island of Sampson, a flock of Mediterranean Gulls, and two Spoonbills.

St Agnes also provided great memories; we encountered new birds every few yards in very warm conditions, with the Hoopoe on Periglis beach being very special. We also enjoyed a Spotted Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpipers, Peregrine, Merlin, Pied and Spotted Flycatchers, Clouded Yellow butterflies and huge numbers of Red Admirals nectaring on the banks of ivy. An optional afternoon revisit to St Agnes on another day produced transatlantic migrants in the shape of an American Mourning Dove and an American Pipit, plus a Red-breasted Flycatcher showing particularly well. Wrynecks are always sought-after birds, and on the lovely island of Bryher we managed to see a long-staying individual, but only after it led us a bit of a merry dance!

Despite the stormy start, the weather was always warm, and we saw little in the way of rain. Our enjoyment of these very special isles was enhanced by daily visits to island cafés, comfortable lodgings, good food and great hospitality. On our ferry back to the mainland, our last wildlife wonder was yet more very active and excited Common Dolphins, and some flocks of Great Shearwaters flying around Scillonian III: a very fitting end to a great week!

Day 1

Friday 3rd October

The tour was due to commence on Saturday 4th October, but stormy weather caused the cancellation of the sailing of the ferry from Penzance. Naturetrek staff contacted all clients with an offer of travelling early to the islands on the Friday. The tour leader was already there and two clients were able to take that opportunity to arrive on the Scillonian III a day early. The remainder of our party arrived by ferry on Monday 6th October.

The morning crossing on the Scillonian III provided sightings of Manx Shearwaters, Gannets and Arctic Skua. With their arrival at about noon on Friday, the advance party were met off the ferry and walked to the hotel in

Hugh Town. Following hot drinks and a light lunch, we took an afternoon walk to Porthellick Pool, to try and see a Wilson's Phalarope that had arrived a few days earlier. We were successful in our endeavours, and found the American wader busy in the shallows, plus Teal and Greenshank.

We bumped into most of the common birds on the island, including birds such as Song Thrush, Blackbird, Dunnock, Wren and House Sparrow, and in numbers that we could only wish for on the mainland. On our walk back we took in Porthloo Beach, which was good for Whimbrel, Sanderling, Stonechat, and both Grey and White Wagtails. A few Mediterranean Gulls were with the more common Black-headed Gulls,

That evening we ate at The Atlantic in Hugh Town before preparing for a weekend of Storm Amy!

Day 2

Saturday 4th October

The winds were very strong and from the south-west, but in comparison to Scotland the stormy conditions were manageable. After breakfast, we trundled up to King Edward Road to walk along the ridgeline towards Peninnis Head, our intention being to remain on St Mary's for the day. We cashed in on somebody else's find, with a tired-looking Short-eared Owl perched next to a hedge in a field, sheltering from the fierce, gale-force wind. A few Meadow Pipits were pottering around near the owl, and a Rabbit popped out from the hedge. The owl and the rabbit eyed each other up before deciding they weren't a threat to each other!

We continued our walk in a few showery squalls, but it was mostly warm with sunny periods. A quick march down to the lighthouse produced Stonechats, Gannets and Great Black-backed Gulls on the hunt for tasty snacks.

Our walk took us down towards Old Town Bay, where two Grey Seals could be seen in the relatively calm water of the bay. A Greenshank and Little Egrets were feeding in the bay, and we took a little detour to find Lord (Harold) Wilson's grave in Old Town churchyard cemetery. On exiting the churchyard, we espied a dark bird flying in from the sea, and this proved to be a Glossy Ibis, one of many that invaded the southern half of the UK this autumn. This bird was subsequently seen all over St Mary's by other birders, before departing with a tailwind to Cornwall. We then took a walk through Lower Moors, stopping at one hide to admire a Greenshank at close range. At 'Shooters Pool', we stood behind the blind and watched a mixture of small birds coming in to bathe; they included Great Tits, Blue Tits, Greenfinches, Chaffinches and Goldfinches. Resident Moorhens fed around the edges of the pool and we progressed towards the centre of the island to Carreg Dhu Gardens, but failed to locate the reported Spotted Flycatcher and Firecrest. We reached a universal agreement to visit Longstone Café and ate our main meal of the day with a take-out goodie for the evening!

The sun kept shining, but the strong wind prevented us finding any interesting insects at the Four Lanes intersection. Sunnyside farm and Farmer Brown's Bulb Shop provided a traditional variety of bulbs for sale, including agapanthus, belladonnas and narcissi. During a gentle walk back into Hugh Town along Rocky Hills, sheltered areas of ivy and other flowering plants provided a refuge for Red Admiral and Specked Wood butterflies. A few Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps were noted in roadside bushes on our way back, and we caught up with Spotted Flycatcher before arriving at our hotel.

After our light evening snack, we duly completed our checklists and made plans for the following day with an improved weather forecast: less wind and no rain!

Day 3

Sunday 5th October

After breakfast, the three of us took a walk down to Newman's Battery on the Garrison, where we encountered a couple of Kestrels, a Grey Wagtail and a scarce bird down here: a Common Gull. At 10.15am we took the boat to St Martin's, and after a pleasant crossing, disembarked at Lower Town, with optional return times from Higher Town, in the north of the island. We checked the area nearby, and in a small orchard came across a smart first-year male Common Redstart, which permitted super views through the telescope, despite its skittish feeding style. A check of the bushes above the Seven Stones Inn provided nice views of a feeding Willow Warbler, but little else despite interesting birds having been reported.

We took a slow dawdle in the lovely autumn sunshine along the main track connecting Lower Town, Middle Town and Higher Town; Kestrels, a fly-over Skylark and a Raven (probably the only one on this island) were all noted, and a flock of Meadow Pipits showed nicely in a field. The local community were having a coffee morning at the island hall, so we joined in and consumed some great-tasting coffee (ground on the island) and home-made cake. We made donations as a thank you. St Martin's maintains a community observatory, based at the back of the hall, and we were invited to take a look. Not surprisingly, the island does not suffer from significant light pollution, and the amateur astronomers hold regular events to examine the night sky. On our visit, it was bright sunshine so the enthusiastic volunteers had a telescope trained on the sun. We were encouraged to take a look and witness the regular solar flares flashing out from our own yellow dwarf star. It was fascinating stuff, as was the information freely given by these educated enthusiasts.

In time, we meandered our way to Higher Town, and in a bare field next to the Bakery was a nice showy female Common Redstart, initially chased by a Robin, but then left alone to hop around close to us and 'tremble/quiver' her red tail to emphasize her presence. We had great views across the islands, and saw more Kestrels, a Sparrowhawk and more distant waders feeding and gathering on the sand banks before we boarded our boat back to St Mary's.

That evening, we walked through to Old Town and ate at the Old Town Inn, enjoying their Sunday carvery. It was dark by the time we were back in Hugh Town, and we settled down to work out the plans for the following day when the rest of the group were due to arrive. Being somewhat stranded in Cornwall, Naturetrek staff asked Cornish birder and Naturetrek tour leader Adrian Langdon to help out and provide some guided birdwatching for clients still in Penzance. This worked very well and some great birds, were seen at a variety of locations including a Red-necked Phalarope, a long list of other waders including a probable White-rumped Sandpiper, and plenty of other wildlife.

Day 4

Monday 6th October

The weather for today was sunny, turning cloudy later; it remained dry with a pleasant light breeze. Our initial morning excursion was around the Garrison on St Mary's, and we were able to find the UK's latest-flowering orchid (Autumn Ladies Tresses), although they had mostly gone over. Common birds popped up in front of us (the likes of Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Wren etc.), all quite tame and permitting a close approach. We wandered back down into Hugh Town, where my two collaborators elected to try a Boatman Association seal trip at 11.15am. In addition to regular sailings between the islands, the boatmen and women regularly put on additional excursions, including wildlife-watching from the boat, often cruising around the uninhabited islands and islets.

At aboutnoon the Scillonian III arrived and the remainder of the group disembarked, after a good crossing and with wildlife spotted too: Common Dolphin, Great, Sooty and Manx Shearwaters, Arctic Skuas and plenty of auks. We wandered towards our hotel in Hugh Town, pointing out places of interest en route. We placed our orders for the evening meal and made some purchases from a nearby café for lunch. Keen to get going, our band of new arrivals took a slow walk out on Church Street; our first venue was a front garden at the top of the hill where a stick insect had been found. One of three species at large on the island, this mature insect was still there and provided some photo opportunities. In the meantime, the seal trip had delivered, with plenty of Atlantic Grey Seals to be seen and a host of inshore seabirds too.

Old Town churchyard was visited, a special serene place. Birds on view in Old Town Bay included a perched Kingfisher permitting telescope views, and a Greenshank among more common fare. It was a bit of a hike to our next venue, as we walked to Porthellick to try and see the still-present Wilson's Phalarope. We were lucky not only to see the phalarope, but to enjoy very close views as this hyperactive wader fed around the hides, and even under the new Stephen Sussex hide! Its antics and variety of feeding styles made for compulsive viewing, and we were able to see other waders for direct comparison, including Greenshank, a very close Ruff and numerous Common Snipe. With a little movement between hides and shuffling seating positions, everyone managed fabulous views. We scanned Porthellick Bay for common waders and some common finches, but the Common Rosefinch seen earlier didn't show for us.

After our successful venture, we strode back into Hugh Town, arriving at about 5.00pm and finding all the incoming baggage safely delivered from the Scillonian. Our dinner at the hotel was at 6.30pm, and *finally* we had our group all together!

After dinner, we successfully initiated those new to Naturetrek into the delights of the checklist methodology, and talked through the plans for the remainder of the week. Following a long day of travel for the majority, it was then 'lights out' and further adventures on the morrow.

Day 5

Tuesday 7th October

A warm and sunny day provided a wonderful opportunity for more exploration. A pre-breakfast walk took us along the Peninnis west footpath and through the allotments. Another Kingfisher fishing from the rocks was a treat, and we saw a distant Peregrine which subsequently perched up on a rock on the island of Gugh. Of two Yellow Wagtails flying over, one provided a very raspy call, which was tantalising. Quite a number of Stonechats were flycatching from the bracken, Gannets began collecting in the channel between Gugh and the Garrison, and we studied Mediterranean Gull and Grey Wagtail.

After breakfast, it was a case of organizing ourselves for an excursion to the small island of St Agnes, with a slightly earlier boat than normal at 10.00am. The usual gulls, Shags and Gannets were seen en route, and on landing we took an anti-clockwise walk around this small island. Curlews, Oystercatchers and Grey Herons demanded attention, as did many Stonechats and Wrens fidgeting on the rocks. A Whinchat posed nicely, and the beach at Periglis attracted Sanderling, Dunlin, Ringed Plover and Turnstone. The first of several Clouded Yellow butterflies showed briefly, the later individuals moving very rapidly as the day warmed up. A Sparrowhawk and a Peregrine unsettled the waders. Then we struck gold, finding a fabulous Hoopoe methodically feeding at the top of the beach; it permitted a close approach. A unique bird to see anywhere, it's even more special when this bird of

warmer climes visits us in the U.K. Our slow, gentle meander was paying off with plenty to look at. White Wagtails and Rock Pipits feeding on the beach were alongside a very cold-coloured Yellow Wagtail, the grey tones of the plumage resembling 'Eastern Yellow Wagtail' from Asia rather than of European origin. However, the call was unremarkable, even though the facial features looked good.

With plenty more of the island to see, we wrenched ourselves away and walked towards the centre of the island. The *Pittosporum* hedges and trees were good for Chiffchaffs, three Spotted Flycatchers and a rather brief Pied Flycatcher. It was then time for some refreshments, so we popped into Coastguards Café with the sun still shining, and a variety of butterflies and other insects whizzing about. Our next venture was to rejoin the coastal path, this time at Werna's Cove. Here, we were hoping to encounter a juvenile Spotted Sandpiper which had been feeding on the tide-line there. We were lucky to find the bird in situ as it tried to catch flies and other insects attracted to the rotting seaweed. Rock Pipits, Wrens and wagtails were its foraging companions. This American wader bobbed and curtsied for us. We walked slowly on to watch over a couple of cow fields which had been home to an American Pipit, feeding loosely with a flock of Meadow Pipits. Unfortunately, most of the birds had disappeared just prior to our arrival, and our little wait proved fruitless. However, more Stonechats and a Wheatear were discovered, and a Merlin made an electrifying visit in a typical dash-through experience. With time marching on, we scanned over Wingletang and walked along Barnaby Lane, gradually heading for our 4.30pm boat departure. News broke of a possible Mourning Dove having been spotted on the island and a Turtle Dove too, but we would have been compromised with our boat back had we joined others in what proved to be a fruitless search.

There was time, however, for a quick walk down to the sand bar separating St Agnes from Gugh, and/or some refreshments at the Turk's Head Public House, before we gently boated back to St Mary's. For those still with some energy for birdwatching, after a quick comfort break at the hotel we walked along to Porthloo and Porthmellon Beaches seeing Wheatear, another Kingfisher (this time hovering in a little bay) and our own self-found Black Redstart at the Porthmellon Industrial Estate. Our evening meal was at the Mermaid Public House, and afterwards there was an opportunity to gaze at the Harvest Moon, big and bright, through a telescope before we retired for the night.

Day 6

Wednesday 8th October

Today was mostly a dull day with some unwelcome drizzle in the morning, but the remainder was dry and mild. Our pre-breakfast walk took us to Morning Point on the Garrison, and we succeeded in seeing a Harbour Porpoise and a rather distant pod of cavorting Common Dolphins. Gannets and gulls were gathering offshore, and passerines included Chaffinch, Stonechat and Goldcrest, before we headed back for porridge and other delights.

Our adventure today was to visit the island of Tresco, and we caught the first boat over there, landing at Carn Near. It was only a twenty-minute or so stride down to the Abbey Gardens Café, so it was a rather premature coffee and snack prior to further exploration, but we saw the island's Red Squirrels almost straight away. Afterwards, we took a walk around the Great Pool, with some of our number doubling back to walk around the gardens. A slow, methodical walk around the pool and adjacent tracks was at a time when the sun came out, and we saw Migrant Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies, as well as butterflies, bees and hoverflies. The nice light conditions allowed us to appreciate Water Rail, an assortment of ducks, Greenshanks and Redshanks. Passerines included both Firecrest and Goldcrests, Chiffchaffs and Swallows, and we heard three different Cetti's Warblers. An adult and a juvenile Cattle Egret showed nicely.

Having walked down one side of the Great Pool, we took a route known as Back Lane, a narrow track connecting the villages of Old Grimsby and New Grimsby. A couple of fields being worked on were proving attractive to a variety of small birds, including Stonechats, thrushes, and a couple of Whinchats. Some nice sheltered hedging further towards Old Grimsby was good for more Chiffchaffs, a calling Blackcap and two sallying Spotted Flycatchers. Five Siskins whizzed by, calling loudly.

For those who had enjoyed the gardens, it was a pleasant walk along Abbey Drive to New Grimsby, and we all met up at the quay there. We jumped on to the returning boat to St Mary's, gently rounding the sand bars and islets at low tide. Mediterranean Gulls in the channel numbered thirty-four, and a Marsh Harrier could be seen hunting over the uninhabited island of Sampson. Our boatman slowed down as we passed Green Island, where there was a mass gathering of gulls and waders. In among them was a single Shelduck, and a Spoonbill.

We were back in Hugh Town for just after 5.00pm and had time to relax and refresh ahead of our very good evening meal at the hotel, and of course the Naturetrek checklist. We talked through the potential itinerary for the next day, and retired to power up for the next part of the Scilly adventure!

Day 7

Thursday 9th October

Our 7.00am walk-out from the hotel took us in the direction of Porthloo Beach. A Portuguese Man O' War was heaped up on the seaweed, so we re-floated it in case it was still a viable unit. Birdwise, it was pretty quiet, but we saw Mediterranean Gull and Chiffchaff in addition to the resident birds. A small population of black Rabbits exist in the wild by Porthloo Lane/Mount Flagon, and we found one to study.

Following breakfast, the plan was for most of us to try a pelagic trip in an effort to see seabirds and mammals. One of our number elected to revisit Tresco to see friends and to revisit the gardens, while the remainder of us stepped on board the Sapphire prior to the 9.30am departure. Trips out on the Sapphire with skipper Joe Pender and the Scilly Pelagics team have become a regular fixture in recent years, and we never know if we are to see plenty or little action out at sea. On this particular occasion, we were to head north and then north-east of the islands, but before that we scouted out the shallow inshore waters off Tresco and St Martin's. We encountered a Black-necked Grebe, Mediterranean Gulls, a Sparrowhawk, a Peregrine, a brief Marsh Harrier and one or two Great Egret(s) before we headed north into a decent swell, north of the archipelago.

We mostly left the Shags and Cormorants behind and said hello to the Gannets! It was possible to see a concentration of feeding Gannets a few miles out, so we aimed for the frenzy of diving birds. By the time we arrived, many of the Gannets were afloat and digesting their catch, but there were other things here too! A juvenile Little Gull flew mostly away from us, but there were Kittiwakes, Fulmars and Manx Shearwaters whizzing past. Auks were on the water, also attracted by the fish shoal, but the showstopper was a pod of Common Dolphins which contained at least one of the huge Bluefin Tuna. The dolphins were split up into smaller groups, herding fish ahead of them and regularly scything through the water in a diagonal formation or blade. Some jumped clear of the water and splashed alongside the boat in their excitement. And we were pretty excited too!

A single Great Shearwater circled the boat a few times, and gulls and Gannets flew around in all directions. As the fish disappeared so did the activity, so we headed out to the Seven Stones reef. En route, we glimpsed more dolphins, and saw a couple of Puffins and several Eurasian Storm Petrels, including some resting on the sea. The

occasional Sooty and Manx Shearwater wafted past. At the reef, there was plenty of Gannet action, plus a few auks and Kittiwakes, but not much else. However, we did find a super first-year Grey Phalarope, and Joe maneuvered the boat nice and close to this little ocean wanderer. For some on the tour this was the third of all three species of phalarope seen: Red-necked, Wilson's and Grey!

While we had been out at sea, birders on the islands had been finding interesting birds, including the relocation of the Mourning Dove on St Agnes, plus a suite of other scarce birds. Our skipper gave us the option of being dropped off on St Agnes with later boats to pick us up, which sounded very appealing. The sea to the east of St Mary's was quiet for seabirds as we made our way to St Agnes, where some of our party made landfall and the remainder headed back to St Mary's and some downtime ahead of our dinner together at The Mermaid.

For those landing on St Agnes, it was almost a conveyor-belt of birding as we walked from one bird to another, beginning at a private area of the island where the landowner had provided access and where the American Mourning Dove had set up its temporary home. The dove was seen almost straightaway, in the same view as a European Turtle Dove, both attracted to grain put out for domestic poultry. Generous donations by visitors ensured that in excess of £1700 was generated, the land-owners electing to pass this money to the local Wildlife Trust. After watching the doves, we took a walk along Barnaby Lane, where a Red-breasted Flycatcher was showing. With a little patience, this little dot showed nicely, with its distinctive markings and ultra-quick fly-catching sallies. We pushed on to try for the American Pipit which was showing in grass fields nearby. The bird was calling on our arrival, and we enjoyed very close views of this subtly-marked pipit from the west, as it stalked the fields just a few metres away.

In danger of suffering birding overload, we made a revisit to Barnaby Lane. The flycatcher was showing much more closely as it snapped at insects in a variety of trees and shrubs along the lane. We came across a Common Redstart and a Spotted Flycatcher feeding almost together, using ivy and elm sprigs as flycatching perches. With time to catch the late boat, we then took a stroll down to Periglis Beach to see if the Hoopoe was still present. It was, and we enjoyed close views of this distinctive bird all to ourselves. We caught the late boat back and arrived on St Mary's for 6.20pm: it had been a very enjoyable and rewarding day indeed. After a late dinner, we put off the checklist to the following evening, finalized our arrangements for our last full day on the islands. and retired to dream of dolphins and other wildlife encounters!

Day 8

Friday 10th October

It started as a rather grey and cloudy day, but with very little breeze and dry conditions. Our 7.00am walk took us to Lower Moors, where we found two just-arrived Jack Snipes with three Common Snipes outside one of the hides, providing close views. Two Water Rails showed, and we connected with Cetti's Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Reed Warbler before our walk back for our 8.30am breakfast. At 10.15am, we caught the boat to the lovely little island of Bryher. We landed at Anneka's Quay and, once assembled, walked slowly towards the island church. A Firecrest showed very nicely, at one stage alongside a Goldcrest for comparison. There was a collection of Song Thrushes in the hedges there.

The church is always worth a visit, to see the locally-created stained glass windows. We then took a wander up through the central ridge of the island, and of course had to check out Olivia's café for beverages and cakes! After indicating our satisfaction, we wandered towards Hell Bay Hotel and the western shore of the island. A bank of

ivy attracted huge numbers of insects here, which in turn brought in Chiffchaffs and Reed Warblers. Some sunshine brought out the butterflies, comprising Red Admirals, Speckled Woods, Large White and a late Common Blue.

A Wryneck had been seen in a garden right next to one of the beaches, and we waited patiently to see if it would show. It did, but we were standing in the wrong position; after a bit of maneuvering, the bird flew out of the garden and showed for us on the sandy path and bushes, and we all managed good views of this reptilian-looking bird.

Popplestone Bay with bums parked on boulders was our lunch stop, with the tide out and the sea looking blue. Linnets, House Sparrows, Stonechats, Meadow and Rock Pipits all jostled for our attention as we meandered around the coastal path and then cut across a couple of fields on a permissive path to reach Veronica Farm. A Peregrine was perched on a distant rock. Little kiosks and cabinets are a feature of the islands, with an opportunity to purchase local produce, flowers, bulbs etc., and even with card readers too. Bryher has numerous such opportunities including within the Veronica Farm complex. We skirted around on the eastern side of the island, with fine views of Tresco opposite, and caught the 4.15pm boat back to St Mary's, with views of Spoonbill and Mediterranean Gulls en route. There was time for just a little last-minute shopping and perhaps packing ahead of our 6.30pm dinner at our hotel. We then tackled our checklists, discussed the admin and final arrangements for the last day, and tried a little Hedgehog safari on the local beaches with no success. But we witnessed some bats, wading birds and thousands of sandhoppers on the heaped seaweed.

Day 9

Saturday 11th October

Our 7.00am walk took us to the Garrison, starting at Morning Point and then on to the Woolpack Battery, where we found a Black Redstart. Goldcrests and Chaffinches were busy in the conifers, and we walked back for breakfast. After taking the Community Bus, our plan was to go up to the north of St Mary's, and slowly walk back. The timetable had changed, so we had a look at Porthcressa Beach and watched a Peregrine on high, scanning the area for a potential prey item. We caught the bus and disembarked near Deep Point.

From here, we had a look at the small, disused quarry nearby, which hosted just common birds, and then strode up to Porthellick Down to examine an ancient burial chamber. Common waders and passerines were in Porthellick Bay, but again there was no sign of the hoped-for Common Rosefinch. We had a look from the hides at Porthellick Pool but in contrast to our previous visit there was little to see. We had similar conditions to the day before; it was mostly grey and cloudy, with a light north-easterly wind, and dry.

We walked through to Salakee and were in time to visit the Longstone Café for lunch, encountering more of the very endearing Firecrests at three different spots. After lunch, we checked out Old Town Bay and Lower Moors, and slowly meandered back into Hugh Town, picked up our day-bags from the hotel, and walked down to the quay. We were all aboard the Scillonian III for 3.30pm, and it sailed early at 4.15pm. We said our goodbyes to the fabulous Isles of Scilly, and steamed back in calm, cool conditions to Penzance. The Scillonian waters west of the Wolf Lighthouse were busy with plenty of Common Dolphin pods, which always delight, in excess of seventy Great Shearwaters, four Sooty Shearwaters, and Manx Shearwaters, Kittiwakes, Razorbills, Common Guillemots and a few Puffins. We docked at about 7.00pm, and our happy band of clients went their separate ways, hopefully with many happy memories of their Scilly experience.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

I = Introduced		October 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>				3						
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>						✓				
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>						✓				
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>						✓				
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>						✓				
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>					✓					
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓			✓		✓				
Common Pheasant - I	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Red-legged Partridge - I	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>						✓				
Feral Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia 'domestica'</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>						✓				
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>							✓			
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>							✓			
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>				H	✓	✓		✓		
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓	✓				
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>							✓			
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓			
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	✓				H					
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Jack Snipe	<i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>								✓		
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				✓				✓		
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	✓			✓						
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>							✓			
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>					✓					
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>						✓				
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>				✓						
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	✓				✓				✓	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>					✓		✓	✓		
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>							✓			
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>							✓		✓	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>			✓				✓		✓	
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	✓			✓						
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>				✓						
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>							✓			
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>							✓		✓	

I = Introduced		October 2025								
Common name	Scientific name	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>				✓			✓		✓
European Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>							✓		
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>							✓		
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>				✓			✓		✓
Great Shearwater	<i>Ardenna gravis</i>				✓			✓		✓
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	✓			✓			✓		✓
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		✓							
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>						✓		✓	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>							✓		
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>						✓			
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>						✓	✓		
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>		✓							
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>					✓		✓		
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>			H	✓	✓				
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>								✓	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>					✓				
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			✓						
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			✓			✓			
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓	✓				✓		✓	
Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>									✓
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			✓						
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>								✓	
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>						✓		✓	✓
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>							✓		
European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>					✓				
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>					✓				✓
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			✓				✓	✓	
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>					✓	✓			
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					✓				

I = Introduced		October 2025								
Common name	Scientific name	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>					✓				
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>							✓		
European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Mammals

I = Introduced		October 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
European Rabbit - I	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brown Rat - I	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>				✓				✓		
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>						✓	✓			
a bat	<i>Chiroptera</i> sp.				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>				✓		✓	✓		✓	
Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	✓					✓				
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Butterflies & moths

		October 2025								
Common name	Scientific name	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>					✓				
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			✓	✓	✓				
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>				✓					
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>								✓	
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>					✓				
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>					✓				
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>						✓			
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ruby Tiger (moth: caterpillar)	<i>Phragmatobia fuliginosa</i>		✓				✓			

Others

Common name	Scientific name	October 2025								
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Orthoptera										
a stick insect	<i>Phasmatodea</i> sp.				✓					
Dragonflies										
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>				✓		✓			
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		✓				✓			✓
Fishes										
Atlantic Bluefin Tuna	<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>							✓		✓
Jellies										
Portuguese Man o'war	<i>Physalia physalia</i>							✓	✓	
Plants										
Autumn Lady's Tresses	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>				✓		✓			✓