

Spring in the New Forest

Naturetrek Tour Report

24th – 26th May 2021



Fallow Deer



Avocet & chick



Pearl-bordered Fritillaries



Dartford Warbler

Report & Images compiled by Martin Pitt



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Tour participants: Martin Pitt (leader) with five Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Monday 24th May

The trip started with the group gathering in the hotel for a discussion about the New Forest and our plans for the days ahead after which we settled down for dinner.

After our meal we headed out across the heath at Shatterford for a dusk walk. After the earlier heavy rain, the heath was quiet but still we managed to hear a number of scarce breeding waders in the local bogs, including Lapwing, displaying Snipe and the local pair of Curlew. It was clear that there were no moths or other insects flying and it was perhaps not surprising that no bats or even a Nightjar were detected.

Day 2

Tuesday 25th May

After breakfast, we gathered in the minibus and after the drive through nearby Lyndhurst, headed to Acres Down. There we embarked on a circular walk that offered a good introduction to a mix of woods, heath and bogs that make up the mosaic of habitats in the New Forest. We soon found the expected family of Stonechats and the singing Tree Pipits were still on territory. As with the next few days, our exploration was to the backdrop of calling Cuckoos, however none was ever seen.

We concentrated on watching the nesting activities of various species, firstly a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers feeding their young who were begging loudly hidden in their nest hole and then a pair of Redstart busily bringing food to their nest site. Heading back to the car park, we found a family party of Woodlark feeding quietly on the heath.

For lunch we headed to the picturesque Eyeworth Pond, the historic site of Gunpowder manufacture. Here the local Mandarin were shepherding a couple of ducklings and a mixture of local woodland birds were constant visitors to seed left around the car park. Nuthatch and the localised Marsh Tit soon were seen here. Around the pond, Yellow Flag Iris had just started to flower and Bog Bean were plentiful along the banks. We then drove along both Bolderwood and Rhinefield Ornamental Drives before stopping to walk a circuit of Holmhill. We

initially walked along Ober water and the riverine woods were full of calling Willow Warblers. We found a female Wheatear on the heath before finding a target, a song-flighting Dartford Warbler that then gave tantalising views atop the gorse bushes. More forms of Water Crow-foot were found and newly emerging Yellow Waterlilies (only leaves at this stage). With the rain returning we headed back to the minibus, but not before stopping to admire a displaying Firecrest.



With the rain set in, we headed to Brockenhurst, where on the lawns close to a campsite we could view a herd of Fallow Deer with around fifty animals, including a 'white hart', present – these areas have been popular with the animals during the pandemic as they give good grazing and have been virtually unused by campers. We headed back to the hotel and over supper planned our last day with an eye to the better forecast.

Day 3

Wednesday 26th May

The day dawned sunny and still and it was great to have the forecast set fair as we headed out from the hotel at 6.30 and walked across the heath to Denny Wood. We hadn't gone far before we found the pair of locally breeding Curlew and then a couple of Woodlark that seemed unconcerned with our presence.

In the ancient trees of Denny Wood were found a mix of tree hole nesting species, including Redstart and Stock Dove and were treated to a steady soundscape of singing birds. In the wood itself interesting plants including Wood-sorrel and Butchers-broom were found and a party of three bachelor Fallow Deer seemed to be as interested in us and we were in them. We headed back to the hotel for a welcome breakfast.

We crossed the southern edge of the New Forest and headed to Pennington, via Lymington. Here we followed the seawall to Keyhaven. This area of the Solent coast is a renowned nature reserve and the combination of the sea, salt marsh and shallow pools, inland of the seawall, give a mix of species. The sea wall also has a number of salt tolerant plant species and the Sea-thrift was fully in bloom giving some much-needed colour. The reedbeds and scrub were full of singing warblers and the coastal pools held a mix of waders and ducks. The elegant Avocet is perhaps the star, and the nesting island they have chosen gave everyone good views of the newly hatched Avocet chicks. The tide was high and this brought terns and a flock of Eider into range, but perhaps of more

surprise was a Common Seal that was bobbing around the moored boats. The high tide had also pushed in some of the waders from the saltmarsh, and although Oystercatchers were the most numerous, we also found small numbers of Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit and Curlew.

Heading inland our final stop was at Pignall Inclosure, here the habitat is specifically managed to provide the food plants and conditions ideal for Pearl-bordered Fritillaries and we were treated to views of a good number of these butterflies. We headed back to the hotel via another heathland stop and then said our good-byes., all having a wealth of memories from this wonderful area in which to spend a short break.

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Species Lists

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	May 2021		
			24	25	26
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>			✓
2	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>			✓
3	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓	✓
4	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>			✓
5	Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>		✓	
6	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			✓
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓
8	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			✓
9	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>			✓
10	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>			✓
11	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			✓
12	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			✓
13	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			✓
14	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			✓

	Common name	Scientific name	May 2021		
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15	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓	✓
16	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓	✓
17	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			✓
18	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>			✓
19	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>			✓
20	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓		✓
21	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubias</i>			✓
22	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓		✓
23	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	✓	✓
24	Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>			✓
25	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			✓
26	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			✓
27	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			✓
28	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓	✓
29	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>			✓
30	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>			✓
31	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			✓
32	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>			✓
33	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			✓
34	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		✓	✓
35	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓
36	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓
37	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		✓	✓
38	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		✓	✓
39	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		✓	
40	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		✓	
41	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			✓
42	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	
43	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>			✓
44	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		✓	✓
45	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		✓	✓
46	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			✓
47	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>		✓	
48	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		✓	
49	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓
50	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓
51	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		✓	✓
52	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			✓
53	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>			✓
54	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			✓
55	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓
56	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓
57	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			✓
58	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓

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59	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		✓	
60	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		✓	✓
61	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓	✓
62	Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>		✓	
63	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>			✓
64	Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>			✓
65	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>		✓	
66	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		✓	✓
67	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓	✓
68	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		✓	✓
69	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓
70	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓
71	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓	✓
72	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓	✓
73	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓
74	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		✓	✓
75	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓
76	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		✓	✓
77	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		✓	✓
78	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓
79	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓
80	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>		✓	✓
81	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓
82	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		✓	
83	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓
84	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		✓	
85	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		✓	✓
86	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓
87	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓
88	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		✓	✓
89	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>			✓

Other species

	Common name	Scientific name	May 2021		
			24	25	26
	Mammals				
1	Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>		✓	✓
2	Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>		✓	✓
3	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓	✓
4	Common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>			✓

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	Butterflies				
1	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>		✓	
2	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>			✓
3	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>			✓
	Interesting Plants				
1	Common Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>		✓	✓
2	Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>		✓	✓
3	Common Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>		✓	✓
4	Heath Milkwort	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>		✓	✓
5	Bog Myrtle	<i>Myrica gale</i>		✓	✓
6	'New Forest' Water-crowfoot	<i>Ranunculus novae-forestae</i>		✓	
7	Bog Bean	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>		✓	
8	Butchers-broom	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>			✓
9	Sea Thrift	<i>Armeria maritima</i>			✓