

The New Forest in Autumn

Naturetrek Tour Report

10th – 12th October 2025



Fly Agaric



Greenshank



Stonechat



Wigeon

Tour report by Jonathan Mycock



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Tour participants: Jonathan Mycock (leader) with four Naturetrek clients

Summary

This weekend tour mainly focused on the birds of the New Forest, with 81 bird species seen or heard, including displaying Goshawk, Dartford Warbler, lots of Stonechats, large flocks of Redpolls, a few Crossbills and close views of Marsh Tit in the heathland and woodland. A wide diversity of waders and wildfowl was observed on the coast, including Eider, Pintail, Wigeon, Greenshank and both godwits. Marsh Harriers and Kingfisher were added bonuses.

In addition, a good selection of typical plants of lowland heath, valley mire, woodland and coast were noted.

Finally, we could not visit the New Forest in the autumn without discovering a wide variety of fungi, particularly in the wood pasture near Bishops Dyke, and in the ancient woodland of Denny Wood.

Day 1

Friday 10th October

The group met the leader in the bar area of the hotel before dinner. Jonathan ran through the itinerary and gave a brief introduction to the area, before we sat down to an enjoyable dinner.

Day 2

Saturday 11th October

After a hearty breakfast, we drove through Lyndhurst and took the Beaulieu Road to Shatterford Bottom car park, near to Beaulieu Road Station. Lots of New Forest ponies were seen grazing close to the road. The lowland heathland supported lots of Stonechats and Meadow Pipits. Some damp, ephemeral depressions running parallel to the track held the scarce and local Coral-necklace, a low-growing plant. Also near the track were a few handsome male Pied Wagtails. At the medieval embankment known as Bishop's Dyke, a Dartford Warbler was heard calling, but remained unseen. On the sandy path, we found the strange-looking Devil's Coach Horse, a type of rove beetle.

Near the pool, a male Reed Bunting was seen briefly, while in the distance a few Red Crossbills were spotted in a tree top, and then one or two flew overhead, calling loudly.

In the wood pasture, the scattered mature Silver Birch trees held a lovely Treecreeper, which gave good views. An unusually large flock of over twenty Mistle Thrushes was seen feeding in the tops of some Yew trees. Big flocks of Redpolls (200+) and a few Siskins (20+) frequented the Birch trees. We had excellent views of two different perched Kestrels through the scope, one of which was buzzed by a passing Sparrowhawk, which in turn was being chased by a Mistle Thrush and a small flock of brave Redpolls!

A wide diversity of fungi was noted, including Fly Agaric and Tawny Grisette. Birch Polypore, a type of bracket fungus, was quite common on standing and fallen dead Silver Birch.

Lunch was taken in The Old Bakery, Beaulieu, which served excellent sandwiches! The Mill Pond in Beaulieu held a few species of waterbird, including Little Egret, Cormorant and Mute Swan.

After lunch, we returned to the Shatterford Bottom car park, only this time we walked in an anticlockwise direction toward Denny Wood. Above the distant tree line to the northwest, we saw several Common Buzzards soaring, and Jonathan picked up a Goshawk performing its “rollercoaster” display flight through the ‘scope. The causeway across the valley mire held a fine Common Darter dragonfly. In the deeper water, Bogbean was still in flower

Denny Wood had large numbers and a wide variety of fungi, including The Blusher, Chicken of the Woods, Porcelain Fungus, Honey Fungus, Orange Oak Bolete and Fairy Inkcap. One or two Hornets were still active. The ancient woodland contained many veteran Beech and Oak trees, and an abundance of standing and lying dead wood provided excellent habitat for fungi and beetles. Very close views of a tiny Goldcrest were obtained, while we heard Nuthatch and Chiffchaff.

We then returned to Lyndhurst and headed north to the Bolderwood Area. The groves of Holly held several Marsh Tits, which gave quite close, if rather brief, views. Unfortunately, we could not manage to locate any Hawfinches at this known location, but we had several Chaffinches, and saw a group of Pied Wagtails feeding on the lawn.

Day 3

Sunday 12th October

After checking out of the hotel, we drove down to Keyhaven on the Hampshire coast, opposite the Isle of Wight. First, we explored the harbour, where a Kingfisher flew off in a flash of dazzling blue. Waders on the muddy shore included Greenshank and both Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits. The tidal pool inland held some common wildfowl species and a pair of Little Grebes, while in the distance we picked out three female/juvenile Marsh Harriers quartering the edge of the reedbed. Further along the harbour shoreline, we encountered feeding Curlew, Turnstone and Grey Plover.

Shallow saline pools on the landward side of the sea wall supported bright red-pink stands of low-growing Sea Blite. On the seaward edge of the saltmarsh, we spotted a solitary Grey Seal loafing, looking like a large grey sausage at a distance! Small numbers of Brent Geese were roosting on the shoreline, together with flocks of Oystercatchers and a few Cormorants. On the edge of the Solent, we picked out two female Eiders and a Great Crested Grebe.

Keyhaven Lagoon held many Wigeon, Teal, Gadwall and Shoveler, together with a few handsome Pintail. The adjacent Fishtail Lagoon supported a few secretive Snipe, while the Lymington Marshes held a flock of Egyptian and a few Greylag Geese. We completed our circular walk back to the Keyhaven car park, then drove back to Lyndhurst, dropping off one of the group at the train station in Brockenhurst. Everyone had had a thoroughly enjoyable autumn weekend in the New Forest.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

I=Introduced		October 2025		
Common name	Scientific name	10	11	12
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>			✓
Canada Goose - I	<i>Branta canadensis</i>			✓
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>			✓
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓	✓
Egyptian Goose - I	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>			✓
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			✓
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			✓
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			✓
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>			✓
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			✓
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>			✓
Common Pheasant - I	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		✓	✓
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			✓
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			✓
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			✓
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			✓
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			✓
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>			✓
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			✓
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			✓
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			✓
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>			✓
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			✓
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			✓
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			✓
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			✓
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			✓
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			✓
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓	✓
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>			✓
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>			✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓	✓
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓	✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			✓
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		✓	✓
Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>		✓	
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			✓
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓	
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>			✓
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		✓	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			H
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓		✓
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓

I=Introduced		October 2025		
Common name	Scientific name	10	11	12
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓	✓
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>		✓	
Marsh Tit	<i>Parus palustris</i>		✓	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		H	✓
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>			✓
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			H
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		✓	✓
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	
Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>		H	
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		✓	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H	H
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		H	
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		✓	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓	
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			✓
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarellii</i>		✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓
European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>			H
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			✓
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓
Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>		✓	
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>		✓	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		✓	
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		✓	✓

Mammals

		October 2025		
Common name	Scientific name	10	11	12
Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>		✓	
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓	
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>			✓

Insects

Common name	Scientific name	October 2025		
		10	11	12
Butterflies				
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		✓	
Dragonflies				
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		✓	
Beetles				
Devil's Coach Horse	<i>Ocypus olens</i>		✓	

Fungi

Common name	Scientific name	October 2025		
		10	11	12
Birch Polypore	<i>Fomitopsis betulina</i>		✓	
Tawny Grisette	<i>Amanita vaginata</i>		✓	
Fly Agaric	<i>Amanita muscaria</i>		✓	
The Blusher	<i>Amanita rubescens</i>		✓	
Velvet Rollrim	<i>Tapinella atrotomentosa</i>		✓	
Chicken of the Woods	<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i>		✓	
Porcelain Fungus	<i>Oudemansiella mucida</i>		✓	
Fairy Inkcap	<i>Coprinellus disseminatus</i>		✓	
Parasol Mushroom	<i>Macrolepiota procera</i>		✓	
Orange Oak Bolete	<i>Leccinum quercinum</i>		✓	

Lichens

Common name	Scientific name	October 2025		
		10	11	12
a lichen	<i>Chladonia spp.</i>		✓	

Plants

Common name	Scientific name	October 2025		
		10	11	12
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	✓	✓	✓
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus scotica</i>	✓	✓	✓
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	✓	✓	✓
Silver Birch	<i>Betula nana</i>	✓	✓	✓
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	✓	✓	✓
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	✓	✓	✓
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	✓	✓	✓
Holly	<i>Ilex europaea</i>	✓	✓	✓
Crab Apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	✓	✓	✓
Ling	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>		✓	
Bell Heather	<i>Erica cinerea</i>		✓	
Cross-leaved Heath	<i>Erica tetralix</i>		✓	
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>			✓
Scarlet Pimpernel	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>			✓
Thrift	<i>Armeria maritima</i>			✓
Sea Aster	<i>Aster tripolium</i>			✓
Common Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>		✓	

Common name	Scientific name	October 2025		
		10	11	12
Harebell	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>		✓	
Common Centaury	<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>			✓
Cotton-grass	<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>		✓	
Sea Purslane	<i>Halimione portulacoides</i>			✓
Coral-necklace	<i>Illecebrum verticellatum</i>		✓	
Bogbean	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>		✓	
Bog Myrtle	<i>Myrica gale</i>		✓	
Heath Milkwort	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>		✓	
Bog Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton polygonifolius</i>		✓	
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>		✓	
White Campion	<i>Silene alba</i>			✓
Annual Sea-blite	<i>Suaeda maritima</i>			✓
Devil's-bit Scabious	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>		✓	
Common Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	✓	✓	✓