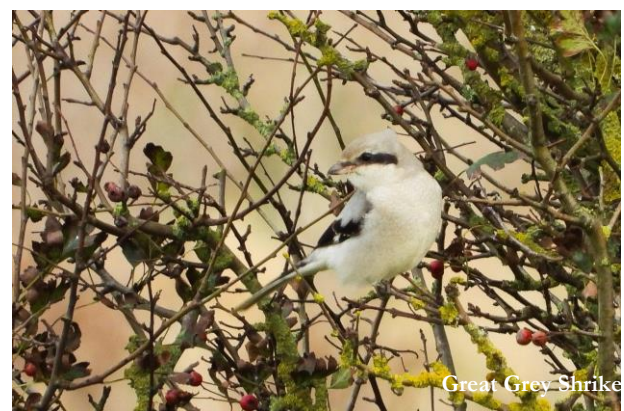


East Yorkshire: The Magic of Migration

Naturetrek Tour Report

18th – 21st October 2020



Report compiled by Matthew Capper
Images by Jason Middleton & Matthew Capper



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Matthew Capper (leader) and Jason Middleton (co-leader) with five Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Sunday 18th October

Patrington

We assembled at five pm for an introduction to the tour and a run through of the all the additional measures that by now, were very much the norm in Covid restricted times. A choice of Sunday lunch options followed and were very much enjoyed by all and the majority followed my recommendation and went for the sticky toffee pudding! Having had a chance to get to know each other, we retired for the night, but only after the moth trap had been primed and switched on..

Day 2

Monday 19th October

Hornsea, Flamborough and RSPB Bempton Cliffs

The night had been breezy but clear and rain free and Jason had potted and assembled a collection of moths for the group to enjoy once we had all had a full breakfast. This complete, we were on the road and heading to Flamborough. However, our first stop was Hornsea Mere, the largest freshwater lake in Yorkshire and a noted birding spot. Confusion followed when the usual entrance was locked and a path that should have taken us through to where we wanted to be had been recently fenced and barbed wired off. Both leaders reached for their phones and Google to try and work out what had gone wrong, whilst one of the more sensible members of the group simply asked a passing dog walker, who informed us that it was now closed on Mondays and Tuesdays but there was a path and excellent views on the south side of the lake, just a couple of minutes drive away. Sorted!

Our first target species was soon spotted – a female Scaup out on the water with Tufted Duck. A good selection of waterbirds was present and we soon were amassing quite a list. We decided to turn our attention to the second target bird and a pair of Slavonian Grebes were soon picked out on the far side, giving distant views between their frequent dives. A Cetti's Warbler called from the reedbed and a Snipe was tucked up on the shore to our left.

Our next stop was South Landing at Flamborough, a well-known migrant hotspot, although it was fairly evident that the clear conditions had led to a clear out of the migrants that had come in over the previous few days. A quick check in with the local ringers resulted in them showing us a Goldcrest that had already been ringed – in Finland! Just incredible that it could make such a long journey and the weight – just under 5 grams – suggested that it was new in that morning.

We headed round to the old hotel, adding Treecreeper, Blackcap, various thrushes and finches and a few more Goldcrests. Migrants were still present, just maybe not in the numbers for which we had hoped. Our best moment came when we heard, but sadly couldn't pick out, a much rarer Yellow-browed Warbler.

The rocky beach at South Landing had a selection of gulls and waders and we had a brief Wheatear that flew off and didn't come back, along with a pair of Stonechat and a few Rock Pipits - one of which wandered by at very close range. Strangely no Turnstones though, despite a good search.

Nothing of note had been reported from Flamborough Head but the lighthouse and headland is just too iconic to not at least stop in for the view, so that is exactly what we did next. It turned out to be a smart move as we added a few more species including Blackcaps in the brambles and Red-throated Diver and Shag out on the sea.

Our first priority at RSPB Bempton Cliffs was to get some food and a hot drink. Once that had been sorted, we wandered round to the feeders which were literally dripping with Tree Sparrows, sadly a very uncommon sight in most parts of the country these days. The hedge down to the cliffs failed to turn up the hoped-for Brambling but the view from the cliff top more than made up for it, as did the views of Grey Seal and Harbour Porpoise (a mother and calf) and the Gannets gliding by just beneath us. Further out, there must have been several hundred loafing on the water and the best bird of the lot was a Red-breasted Merganser that headed south close in to the cliffs.

We ended the day with a wander around 'The Dell' seeing plenty of Redwings, Blackbirds, Fieldfare, Chiffchaff, Blackcaps and Goldcrests. And then the finale was a stunning Short-eared Owl that gave us a flyby before landing on the slope opposite and giving extended views in the 'scopes'. A great way to end the first day.

Day 3

Tuesday 20th October

Kilnsea, Spurn and Skeffling

Our first stop this morning was scheduled to be Church Field for a ringing demonstration. There were plenty of birds in the area but no sign of Paul, the warden. We wandered over to the Heligoland trap and talked through how it is used and enjoyed the sight of Linnets, a Sparrowhawk and plenty of Redwing. We were wondering what was keeping Paul when we got a text to say that Black Redstart was showing round the corner at Grange Farm, a bird too tempting to miss. So, we nipped back to the vehicles and were soon enjoying a pale juvenile bird perching on the farm trailers and dropping down onto the grass to feed. The Black Redstart safely ticked off, we returned to Church Field and as we entered the field, a male Peregrine showed extremely well, buzzing the hedgerow to flush out potential prey. With still no sign of Paul, we went searching for him and found out that with the wind and clear skies, few birds were being caught and it would be better to put the demo off for a day.

So, back to the cars and round to Kilnsea Wetlands to enjoy the last of the waders on the pools before the tide dropped and exposed the mud back out on the estuary. A couple of Ruff flew over as we arrived and there were plenty of ducks, geese, gulls and waders to sift through. Mediterranean Gulls were plentiful and Pintail were the pick of the ducks. At this point the radio crackled into life with news that a Firecrest had been trapped and ringed in Church Field and if we headed straight round, we could see it. This was starting to get a bit ridiculous – yo-yoing back and forth to Church Field! But a Firecrest is always worth it so we ignored the feeling of déjà-vu and hot-footed it back for a third time.

By now we were ready to have a proper walk and so made our way to Syke's Field, down to Canal Scrape and on to the Warren for a view over the Humber. We had a few Swallows on the wires around Syke's Field and single Migrant Hawker and Common Darter in a warm sheltered spot next to one of the ponds. A Great Egret flew from one of the ditches in Well Field but the hoped-for Jack Snipe at Canal Scrape wasn't on show. However, there were plenty of waders on the Humber to sift through and we saw several species including both Golden and Grey Plover, Knot and Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Redshank and Curlew.

After lunch we walked back alongside the canal, picking up more waders, a few close Brent Geese, a Grey Wagtail and more Swallows heading south. The observatory garden had had a report of a Yellow-browed Warbler so we tried there without any luck but did have a few Lesser Redpoll and very nice views of a female Brambling on top of one of the young trees back in Church Field.

With the afternoon drawing on, we drove half way back to the hotel and stopped in at Skeffling, the site of a proposed managed realignment. With the land having been purchased but no work undertaken yet, the lack of agricultural activity has created a large area of grassland next to the seawall that has in turn attracted plenty of birds. We spent a hugely enjoyable hour or so sat on the bank watching a Great Grey Shrike hunting from various perches. At one point it spotted a huge bumblebee and pounced, regurgitating a pellet before setting about eating the bee. At the same time, we were able to enjoy four Marsh Harriers and a juvenile Hen Harrier hunting over the rough grassland, several Roe Deer feeding quietly by the far hedge, a Merlin bombing through behind us hunting waders out on the Humber and a hundred and fifty or so Pink-footed Geese that flew over calling and dropped in to feed on field at the back. A magical way to end the day where the light was perfect, the wildlife superb and you didn't quite know where to look next.

Day 4

Wednesday 21st October

Kilnsea and Spurn Point

The forecast for our last day was sadly poor and having already knocked the moth trap on the head, we got the news that the re-arranged ringing demonstration would also be a casualty of the weather. Still, we had managed to see Goldcrest and Firecrest in the hand and had a selection of moths on the first morning, so we didn't mind too much.

With high tide at 9am, instead we began our day with a return visit to Kilnsea Wetlands to see what waders had taken refuge from the rising water on the Humber. Ten Whooper Swans flew over the car as we pulled up; definitely a great start. There was again plenty to sift through with three Ruff on the deck in amongst hundreds of Redshank, godwit and Knot. A sleeping Knot did a very good impression of a Spotted Redshank but when it woke up and moved it turned out that the red legs we thought it had were actually attached to a Redshank stood behind it! Frustratingly, a view of Little Owl on the pile of concrete rubble at Grange Farm was only brief and despite Jason keeping vigil with his scope trained on the spot, it didn't show again.

Time to move on and try again for the Yellow-browed Warbler which had again been reported in the observatory garden. This time we were far more successful than the previous day and after Jason had picked up the bird on call, we all enjoyed good views as it moved through the bushes and off into Church Field. A quintessential east coast Autumn migrant and high on the wanted list for the trip. Overhead we could hear Lesser Redpoll and Siskin calling and plenty of Linnets.

With the rain still falling steadily, we made our way down to the Warren and met Andy, our guide for the Unimog Trip down to the Point. With the tide only recently on the way out, waders were still roosting or just heading back onto the newly exposed mud and we enjoyed great views as they wheeled and banked in tight flocks or hunkered in tightly packed groups on the shore. Seven Goosander close in were a surprise as we crossed the breach and we were soon at our first stop, the hide at Chalk Bank. Here we were able to enjoy many

more waders with Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Knot, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Grey and Golden Plover, Redshank, Oystercatcher and, new for the trip, – both Turnstone and Sanderling. Very nice!

The weather wasn't conducive to stunning views from the lighthouse but it was still a great sight and Andy's knowledge of the history and heritage made for a fascinating visit. And conditions were still good enough to be able to pick out our second Black Redstart of the trip from the very top, which we duly tracked down, along with two Rock Pipits, once we had descended back to ground level.

Lunch was taken in one of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust buildings down by the lifeboat station; a welcome shelter from the rain and then we were out again and exploring the end of the point. We made our way through the scrub and remains of the second world war defences and out to the very tip on the beach. Thrushes were very evident, especially Redwing and Blackbird and we got lovely views of some Lesser Redpoll. Out at the point, a Red-throated Diver flew east, a Common Seal was watched eating something and we had a close look at another youngster, sadly washed up dead on the tideline. As we headed back across the dunes, we spotted a large number of Dune Brittlestems and got distracted by fungi for while, adding some superb Collared Earthstars and a range of grassland fungi such as Snowy Waxcap, Horse Mushroom, Woolly Milkcap and Common Puffball.

By now the rain had largely stopped and we headed back to the Unimog and our return journey back up the point. Our last good bird of the trip occurred just as Andy was pulling up back at The Warren – a Short-eared Owl being mobbed by a crow that gave prolonged views as it moved slowly north. And that was it. We agreed to all reconvene briefly at the hotel for a final goodbye and then it was onwards and back to our homes, full of great memories of another hugely successful autumn trip to the wonderful east coast of Yorkshire.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers and exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



www.twitter.com/naturetrektours



www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; h = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	trip	October 2020		
				19	20	21
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓	ca.20	2	2
2	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	✓			10
3	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓		2
4	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	✓		✓	✓
6	Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	✓	✓	✓	ca.70
7	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓		✓	✓
8	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	✓		✓	✓
9	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	✓	✓	✓	2
10	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓		3	✓
12	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓	4	✓	✓
13	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	✓	2		
15	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	✓	1♀		
16	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	✓	✓		1
17	Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	✓			7
18	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	✓	1		
19	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	✓		3	
20	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	✓	1		1
22	Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	✓	2		
23	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓	✓		
24	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	✓	✓		
25	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	✓	✓		
27	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓		✓	✓
28	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓		1	□
29	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	2	1	1
30	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓		4	
31	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	✓		1 (juv)	
32	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓		2	
33	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	1	1	
34	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	✓	✓	1+	✓
36	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	✓		1♂	
37	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓		✓	✓
38	Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓		

	Common name	Scientific name	trip	October 2020		
				19	20	21
39	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓		✓	✓
41	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓		✓	✓
42	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓		✓	✓
43	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	✓		✓	✓
44	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	✓		✓	✓
45	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	✓			✓
46	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓		✓	✓
47	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	✓		2	3
48	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓	1		
49	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓		✓	✓
50	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	✓		✓	✓
51	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	ca.5	✓	✓
52	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	✓		1	
53	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓		✓	✓
54	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	✓			✓
55	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
57	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
58	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	✓		✓	✓
59	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
61	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
62	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	✓	✓	✓	
63	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
65	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	✓			1
66	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	✓	1		1
67	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓		✓	✓
69	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓			
70	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
71	Eurasian Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	✓	✓		2
72	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓		1	
73	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	1	2	✓
74	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
77	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	2	2	✓
78	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	✓	1		
79	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	✓		1	1

	Common name	Scientific name	trip	October 2020		
				19	20	21
80	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
81	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
82	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
83	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	
84	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓	h	h	
84	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	
86	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓		1
87	Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	✓	h		1
88	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	✓		1	
90	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	✓		
91	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
92	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
93	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	✓	1		
94	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	✓		1	
95	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
96	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
97	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
98	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
99	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
100	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
101	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
102	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
103	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
104	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	✓		1	
105	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
106	Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	✓		2+	3+
107	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
108	Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	✓		✓	✓
109	Linnet	<i>Acanthis cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
110	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	✓	h		
111	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	✓	2	1	h
112	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mammals						
1	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	✓	1	2	
2	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	✓	1		
3	European Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	✓		15	3+
3	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	✓			1
4	Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	✓	1		
4	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	✓			1
4	Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	✓	1		
4	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	✓	2		

				October 2020		
	Common name	Scientific name	trip	19	20	21
Moths						
1	Large Wainscott	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	✓	✓		
2	Blair's Shoulder Knot	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	✓	✓		
3	Angle Shades	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	✓	✓		
4	Pale Mottled Willow	<i>Aglais io</i>	✓	✓		
5	Beaded Chestnut	<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>	✓	✓		
6	Setaceous Hebrew Character	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	✓	✓		
Dragonflies						
1	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	✓		1	
2	Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	✓		1	
Fungi						
1	Shaggy Parasol	<i>Chlorophyllum rhacodes</i>	✓		✓	✓
2	Snowy Waxcap	<i>Cuphophyllus virgineus</i>	✓			✓
3	Meadow Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe pratensis</i>	✓			✓
4	Common Puffball	<i>Lycoperdon perlatum</i>	✓			✓
5	Collared Earthstar	<i>Geastrum triplex</i>	✓			✓
6	Horse Mushroom	<i>Agaricus arvensis</i>	✓			✓
7	Dune Brittlestem	<i>Psathyrella ammophila</i>	✓			✓
8	Woolly Milkcap	<i>Lactarius torminosus</i>	✓			✓



Short Eared Owl



Roe Deer