

Leighton Moss and Morecambe Bay (Day Trip)

Naturetrek Tour Report

18th,20th August and 3rd, 4th
September 2020



Osprey



Juvenile Avocet



Little Egret



Common Sandpiper



Garganey



Redshank

Report and Images by Barrie Cooper



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: Barrie Copper with five Naturetrek clients on the 18th August, four Naturetrek clients on the 20th August, six Naturetrek clients on the 3rd September and five Naturetrek clients on the 4th September.

Highlights from our August Day Trips

An Osprey was seen well on both days at Leighton Moss (probably in view for 15 minutes on 20/8). A good selection of waders included an Avocet family with two juveniles, Turnstone, Whimbrel, Curlew, Ringed and Golden Plovers, Greenshank, Common Redshank, Dunlin, Common Sandpiper and Ruddy Turnstone still in stunning breeding plumage. Small groups of Swifts were seen on migration on both days. Some common species of butterflies and dragonflies were seen including Brown Hawker.

Highlights from our September Day Trips

A good range of birds seen on both days with the explosive song of Cetti's Warblers and the squeals of Water Rails providing a soundtrack from the reedbeds. Marsh Harriers provided good views as they hunted over the reedbeds causing panic with the large number of wildfowl including Teal, Shoveler, Gadwall, Wigeon and, on the 4th, four Garganeys which eventually showed very well. An Osprey enjoying a decent sized fish while perched on a post on the saltmarsh on 3/9 was a very welcome sight as was a Great White Egret. Good numbers of Common Redshank, Greenshank and Lapwing on both days with a Green Sandpiper on 4/9. Marsh Tit, Treecreeper, Bullfinch and Nuthatch were some of the woodland birds providing a contrast to the wetland birds.

The undoubted highlight came on the afternoon of 4/9 while we were in a hide on the edge of Morecambe Bay. A juvenile female Peregrine had been causing mayhem by repeatedly attempting to take one of the many ducks, waders and Little Egrets. After each unsuccessful attempt it took a breather by either sitting on a post or on the saltmarsh. While the Peregrine was having one of its rest periods all two hundred Redshanks on one of the pools took off when a Sparrowhawk swooped in looking for a meal, but the "safety in numbers" strategy of the waders succeeded in survival for them but time for a rethink for the hawk and so it also took a rest on the saltmarsh. However, a few minutes later the predator almost became the prey when the Peregrine chased the Sparrowhawk looking for a kill. The two raptors raced over the pool in full view of us and we feared the worst for the hawk as the faster Peregrine rapidly closed in to less than two metres before the wily Sparrowhawk did a smart move to one side and put increased distance between the two predators. It was enough for the Peregrine to abandon the chase so it veered off and flew over the roof of the hide just above our heads. Two superb agile avian predators proving that nature provides unexpected drama that makes you feel fortunate to experience it. A privilege moment!

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Green Sandpiper



Marsh Harrier