

NATURETREK DAY WALK REPORT

Suffolk – Dunwich Beach & Westleton Heath

Thursday 7th March 2024



Snow Bunting on Dunwich Beach

Highlights

- **Singing Skylarks and Stonechats on the beach**
- **A good flock of over 30 Snow Buntings**
- **Five Spotted Redshank together on the shore pools**
- **Six White-fronted Geese and displaying Marsh Harriers**
- **Three early Stone-curlew sheltering from the stiff easterly**
- **Woodlarks and Dartford Warbler in the same binocular view**

A colder and breezier-than-expected day greeted us at Dunwich beach car park – with the wind coming in off the sea it was a question of how many layers can you get on at the same time! However, undaunted we walked north, using the bank as shelter as much as possible and getting our first views of Snipe, Redshank and Skylark. Out at sea a tight ‘floating mattress’ of over 200 Common Scoter came and went in the waves, often diving all at the same time then reappearing to perform their head-throwing action. A small herd of Red Deer sat among the reeds and on the nearby pools small gatherings of Gadwall, Teal and Wigeon swam watched over by stately Cormorants.

As we reached the footpath that cuts to Dingle Hills, we had some fine views of quartering Marsh Harriers, with more displaying over the reeds. Rather than head back we continued trudging on the shingle, first finding a blizzard of 32 Snow Buntings feeding and flying about then on the best pool between Walberswick and Dunwich we watched five Spotted Redshank together – a rare sight nowadays.

Heading back to Dunwich along the eastern edge of the forest proved rather quiet – the cool wind no doubt stifling a lot of spring activity. A pair of Treecreeper were admirably found in Sandymount Covert and on the nearby pool we saw six White-fronted Geese that spent more time asleep than awake; also here we watched and heard more Marsh Harrier and a distant Great Egret was seen

across Dingle Marshes. The woods yielded little: a Great Spotted Woodpecker on a feeder, Long-tailed Tits, a Redwing, but little else of note.

After lunch – luckily the tearoom had made a surprise opening so we could get a hot drink, we drove to Westleton Heath for a walk among the gorse and heather. Though bird activity was pretty subdued, we managed to get the ‘big three’: three well-camouflaged Stone-curlews sheltered among the bracken; a couple of Dartford Warblers followed Stonechats about the heather and saplings, showing nicely at times; and at one stage a pair of Woodlark flew in to join them giving ‘scope views. An extended walk among the woodland and newly managed areas was enjoyable, but the Lesser Redpolls and Siskins that flew over would not land.



Female Stonechat

Bird list (n=71)

Dunwich Beach

Greylag Goose	10	Common Snipe	5
Greater White-fronted Goose	6	Common Redshank	15
Canada Goose	3	Spotted Redshank	5
Mute Swan	4	Dunlin	1
Common Shelduck	3	Black-headed Gull	5
Gadwall	12	Common Gull	5
Eurasian Wigeon	25	Herring Gull	10
Mallard	5	Great Black-backed Gull	4
Eurasian Teal	20	Lesser Black-backed Gull	5
Common Scoter	200	Northern Gannet	5
Common Pheasant	5	Great Cormorant	300
Feral Pigeon	3	Little Egret	1
Stock Dove	5	Great White Egret	1
Common Woodpigeon	30	Grey Heron	5
Collared Dove	5	Western Marsh Harrier	8
Eurasian Oystercatcher	4	Common Buzzard	10
Common Ringed Plover	6	Great Spotted Woodpecker	2
Northern Lapwing	8	Eurasian Green Woodpecker	1
Eurasian Curlew	1	Common Kestrel	1

Common Magpie	6
Eurasian Jackdaw	25
Carrion Crow	10
Coal Tit	2
Eurasian Blue Tit	6
Great Tit	2
Eurasian Skylark	10
Bearded Tit	1 H
Long-tailed Tit	3
Eurasian Treecreeper	2
Eurasian Wren	3
Common Starling	120
Mistle Thrush	1

Redwing	1
Eurasian Blackbird	2
European Robin	3
European Stonechat	4
Duncock	2
Pied Wagtail	5
Meadow Pipit	5
Common Chaffinch	10
European Greenfinch	1
Common Linnet	5
European Goldfinch	5
Snow Bunting	32
Common Reed Bunting	15

Westleton Heath

Common Pheasant	1
Stock Dove	3
Common Woodpigeon	20
Stone-curlew	3
Common Gull	5
Herring Gull	2
Common Buzzard	2
Eurasian Green Woodpecker	1 H
Eurasian Jay	1
Common Magpie	4
Eurasian Jackdaw	20
Rook	30
Carrion Crow	5
Coal Tit	3
Eurasian Blue Tit	5
Great Tit	5

Woodlark	2
Eurasian Skylark	2
Long-tailed Tit	2
Dartford Warbler	2
Eurasian Wren	1
Eurasian Blackbird	1
European Robin	2
European Stonechat	4
Duncock	3
Pied Wagtail	2
Common Chaffinch	3
European Greenfinch	1
Lesser Redpoll	2
European Goldfinch	5
Eurasian Siskin	5



Skylark