

Pembrokeshire in Early Summer

Naturetrek Tour Report

11 - 14 June 2018



Red-billed Chough



Bee Orchid



Common Twayblade



St David's Cathedral

Report and images by Andrew Bray



Naturetrek

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Tour participants: Andrew Bray (Leader) and eight Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Monday 11th June

Most of the group met up for a walk before dinner. The wind had got up so it was very blowy down the lane. There were only a few birds calling but there were plenty of Speckled Wood butterflies. At the end of the walk was a pond but the vegetation was so high around it we did not find any uncommon plants. Along the road there was Navelwort *Umbilcus rupestris* as well as Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber* and Foxgloves *Digitalis purpurea*. Back at the hotel we met up with the other two members of the group as well as watching the Swallows. That night as we had dinner a fox wandered into view and a Buzzard sat on the lawn.

Day 2

Tuesday 12th June

We headed for Skomer and bought some lunch in the local Nisa Store at Johnstone. On the way there at about 08:05 Andrew rang the boat operators and was very disappointed to hear that there were no sailings that day as the wind direction was too risky. As an alternative we then headed for Minwear Wood where everyone heard various Wood Warblers but only a few saw them fly or perch. At the Slebech Estate by Blackpool Mill we stood on the bridge, which was built in about 1830, and saw Grey Wagtail and Dipper. It was then onto Rosebush and we walked besides the old Rosebush and Bellstone Quarries where they worked the slate. It took a long time to walk along the track as there were so many birds about. In a hole in one wall you could see the gaping mouths of young Blue Tits and a bird recently out of the nest hopped around in front of us. There were Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Whitethroat and Goldcrest to name a few. There were plenty of bees and several plants including Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*. We did not have lunch at the car park as the whole place smelt of creosote due to some logs being painted. Instead we had lunch on the top of the hills where the road crosses a ridge and where there were Skylarks singing.

We then drove further north to the Welsh Wildlife Centre at Teifi Marshes and after parking the minibus we walked to the centre which is on three floors. On the top we bought some refreshments and then sat on the hill looking over the marsh. We walked to a few hides and heard quite a lot. At the Curlew Hide a Red-breasted Merganser flew in and on the walk back the Reed and Sedge Warblers were singing, along with a single Cetti's Warbler. There were froglets all over the path near the vehicle. It was then time to head back to the hotel where the wind had died down and the low cloud had gone making for a lovely evening, although unfortunately two of the group headed home as they were feeling unwell.

Day 3

Wednesday 13th June

Once again we departed at 7:30am and bought some lunch at the NISA store. We arrived at Martin's Haven at about 8:25 where the car park was practically full and we joined a long queue for tickets. Eventually a lady came out saying that all the landing tickets had been sold and that there were organised sailings to see the birds, but from the sea. There were at least 50 people in front of us, so we pottered around the headland and saw Stonechat, Wheatear, Rock Pipit and lots of Choughs with their red bills and legs. There were plenty of Devils-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Thrift *Armeria maritime ssp maritime* and Kidney Vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*.

We then went on the boat ride where we had close views of Puffins as well as other sea birds including Razorbill and Guillemot. A Peregrine was perched on a rock face and a Honey Buzzard was circling mobbed by the gulls over the sea. At sea there was also a Gannet but no shearwaters as the sea was so calm. After an hour we landed back at the quay and there were large spider crabs visible in the bay.

The minibus collected people from the buildings near the boat launch and we drove back to the National Trust Car Park for lunch. There was Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* nearby.

After lunch we visited Dale for a comfort stop and then parked just out of the village and saw lots of Oystercatchers and a few Curlew. It was then an hour's drive to Gupton Burrows where there is a wide sandy beach with sand dunes behind it. There were Dunlin on the shore line and a couple of the more adventurous members of the group went for a paddle. There was some exploring of rock pools as well. On the dunes there was Pyramidal Orchid as well as lot of Alexanders *Smyrnium olusatrum* by the car park cafe trailer. It did not take too long to get back to the hotel for tea and cake.

Day 4

Thursday 14th June

The early morning bird walk was very productive despite the strong winds. There were good views of Linnet as some horses came over to us.

After breakfast we headed across the toll bridge again and ventured to Bosherton where we walked around the lily ponds clockwise. There were few birds but the vistas were superb. There were Common Twayblades *Listeria ovata*, Pyramidal *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* as well as White Water-Lilies *Nymphaea alba*. At Broad Haven beach there were Choughs galore and though still windy there were people walking on the beach.

Lunch was in the cafe at Bosherton and afterwards we drove to Stackpole Quay for the cliff top walk to Barafundle Bay where people were swimming in the sheltered water out of the wind. On the cliffs we saw a Herring Gull nest with an egg plus the closest we are going to get to Rock Dove. There was Fulmar, Razorbill nesting and a Gannet flew past. After an ice cream at the National Trust cafe we drove to Stackpole Court and visited the Eight Arch Bridge and the Walled Gardens. A Song Thrush sang as we walked back to the minibus before a return to the hotel for tea and cake. The wind gradually eased off through the day but it still remained blowy and of course the sun shone all day.

Day 5

Friday 15th June

There was an early morning bird walk once again down the lane. There were lots of species about including Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Linnet and Mistle Thrush.

After breakfast we packed our cars and departed by minibus plus a car for St David's where we parked in the Merrivale Car Park near the cathedral. We found Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymalaria muralis* on the walls before a tour of the cathedral and town where we had a coffee.

Our final stop that morning was at the National Trust common just outside town with the name Waun Fawr. Here there were lots of Marsh Orchids *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*. The highlight was a Cuckoo sitting on the wire just before we left and returned to our cars at the hotel.

It was disappointing that we could not get onto Skomer but queuing from 6am was not an option for us on the day the boat could put people ashore. We did get to have very close views of the seabirds, especially Puffins, and we did see lots of Chough around the coast. Bosherton was delightful, as was the day of birds from Minwear Wood to the National Wildlife Centre. The weather held out for us despite some strong winds. The hotel was excellent and the food exquisite. Even though there were 77 species of bird seen or heard it was the Puffins on the water that stole the show.

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The Naturetrek Group

Species Lists

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

	Common name	Scientific name	June				
			11	12	13	14	15
1	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>			✓	✓	
2	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			✓	✓	
3	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓	✓	✓	□
4	Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>			✓	✓	
5	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓	✓	✓	
6	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓	✓	✓	□
7	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		✓		✓	□
8	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓	□
9	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		✓			
10	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		✓			
11	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	□
12	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>			✓	□	
13	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓	✓	
14	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			✓	□	
15	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				✓	✓
16	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓		✓	□
17	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		✓	□
18	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>			✓	□	□
19	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			✓	□	
20	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			✓	□	
21	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓			
22	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		✓	✓	✓	□
24	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>		✓	✓	✓	
25	Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>			✓	□	
26	Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>			✓	□	
27	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>			✓	□	
28	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>			✓	✓	
29	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓	□	✓
31	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>					✓
32	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>		✓		✓	
33	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		✓		✓	
34	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	
35	Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
36	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>			✓	✓	✓
38	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓		✓
39	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓			
41	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>		✓			
42	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
44	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
45	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			✓		
46	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			✓		
47	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			✓		✓

	Common name	Scientific name	June				
			11	12	13	14	15
48	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓		✓	✓
49	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
50	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		✓		✓	✓
52	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		✓			
53	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		✓			
54	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		✓			
55	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		✓			
56	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>		✓			
57	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
58	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		✓			
59	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓		✓	✓
60	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>		✓			
61	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓		✓	✓
62	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		✓		✓	✓
63	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓			
65	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
66	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>			✓	✓	
67	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓		✓	✓
68	Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
69	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓		✓	□	
70	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>				□	✓
71	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			✓	✓	✓
72	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
73	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
74	Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>		✓			
75	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>				✓	✓
76	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		✓		□	✓
77	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		✓			

Mammals

Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*

Roe Deer, *Capreolus capreolus*

Grey Seal, *Halichoerus grypus*

Rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Amphibians

Common Frog, *Rana temporaria*

Common Toad, *Bufo bufo*

Butterflies

Green-veined White, *Artogeia napi*

Common Blue, *Polyommatus icarus*

Meadow Brown, *Maniola jurtina*

Large Skipper, *Ochlodes sylvanus*

Orange Tip, *Anthocharis cardamines*

Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta*

Speckled Wood, *Pararge aegeria aegeria*

Dragonflies,

Beautiful Demoiselle, *Calopteryx virgo*

Common blue Damselfly, *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Small Red Damselfly, *Ceriatagion tenellum*

Blue-tailed Damselfly, *Inchnura elegans*

Emperor Dragonfly, *Anax imperator*
Broad-bodied Chaser, *Libellula depressa*

Four-spotted Chaser, *Libellula quadrimaculata*
Keeled Skimmer, *Orthetrum coerulescens*

Moths,

Brown Silver-line, *Petrophora chlorosata*
Six-spot Burnet, *Zygaena filipendulae*

Cinnabar, *Tyria jacobaeae*

Miscellaneous Inverts,

Clytra arietis
Oedemera nobilis
Carder Bee, *Bombus pascuorum*
Red-tailed Bumblebee, *Bombus lapidarius*

Chrysis ignita
Violet Ground Beetle, *Carabus violaceus*
White-tailed Bumblebee, *Bombus lucorum*
Spider Crab, *Maja squinado*

Plants

White Water-lily, *Nymphaea alba*
Meadow Buttercup, *Ranunculus acris*
Common Meadow-Rue, *Thalictrum flavum*
Climbing Corydalis, *Ceratocarpus claviculata*
Red Campion, *Silene dioica*
Sea Campion, *Silene uniflora*
Common Sorrell, *Rumex acetosa*
Thrift, *Armeria maritima* ssp *maritima*
Navelwort, *Umbilicus rupestris*
Meadowsweet, *Filipendula ulmaria*
Kidney Vetch, *Anthyllis vulneraria*
Herb-Robert, *Geranium robertianum*
Upright Hedge-Parsley, *torilisjaponica*
Hogweed, *Heracleum sphondylium*
Alexanders, *Smyrniolum olusatrum*
Common Centaury, *Centaureum erythraea*
Viper's-bugloss, *Echium vulgare*
Wild Marjoram, *Origanum vulgare*
Purple Toadflax, *Linaria purpurea*
Germander Speedwell, *Veronica chamaedrys*
Yellow-rattle, *Rhinanthus minor*
Common Broomrape, *Orobancha minor*
Honeysuckle, *Lonicera periclymenum*
Devils-bit Scabious, *Succisa pratensis*
Sea Mayweed, *Triplurospermum maritimum*
Slender Thistle, *Carduus tenuiflorus*
Yellow Iris, *Iris pseudacorus*
Pyramidal Orchid, *Anacamptis pyramidalis*
Bee Orchid, *Ophrys apifera*

Creeping Buttercup, *Ranunculus repens*
Traveller's-joy, *Clematis vitalba*
Welsh Poppy, *Meconopsis cambrica*
Sea Beet, *Beta vulgaris*
Ragged-Robin, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*
Lesser Stitchwort, *Stellaria graminea*
Sheep's Sorrell, *Rumex acetosella*
English Stonecrop, *Sedum anglicum*
Dog-rose, *Rosa canina*
Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, *Loyus corniculatus*
Rosebay Willowherb, *Chamerion angustifolium*
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill, *Geranium molle*
Rough Chervil, *Chaerophyllum temulum*
Sanicle, *Sanicula europaea*
Hemlock Water-dropwort, *Oenanthe crocata*
Bittersweet, *Solanum dulcamara*
Basil Thyme, *Clinopodium vulgare*
Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*
Ivy-leaved Toadflax, *Cymbalaria muralis*
Common Eyebright, *Euphrasia nemorosa*
Ivy Broomrape, *Orobancha hederaceae*
Hedge Bedstraw, *Galium mollugo*
Red Valerian, *Centranthus ruber*
Oxeye Daisy, *Leucanthemum vulgare*
Spear Thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*
Greater Knapweed, *Centaurea scabiosa*
Common Twayblade, *Listera ovata*
Souther Marsh-Orchid, *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*