

Yorkshire Coast and Moors

Naturetrek Tour Report

2 – 5 July 2013



Red Grouse by Peter Dunn



Gannets by Lynn Pickles



Beautiful Yellow Underwing by Peter Dunn



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary by Lynn Pickles

Report & images compiled by Peter Dunn
Other images courtesy of Lynn Pickles



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	Stephen Cox	
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	Lynn Pickles	
	David Pickles	

Day 1

Tuesday 2nd July

Arrival at Wykeham

Four clients arrived in the early afternoon so a visit was made to the raptor viewpoint in Wykeham Forest. Initially it seemed quiet under greying skies with just Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Chaffinch singing from the surrounding pines. However John spotted two birds on the opposite site of the valley which turned out to be a Carrion Crow chasing a large female Goshawk. Although the Goshawk could easily kill and eat the crow, it persisted in chasing it all the way down the valley – a good case of keep you friends close and enemies' closer! A short time after that a Common Buzzard appeared over the trees and did some characteristic hovering and at around 5.20pm a pale Honey Buzzard travelled down the valley. This bird was different to the dark bird seen on the tour the previous week, indicating at least two birds in the area.

Having been successful with the raptors at this viewpoint we returned to the hotel to freshen up before dinner and meet the three other guests. After an excellent meal, Peter gave a short illustrated talk on the areas we were to visit in the next few days and some of the species we were likely to see. As rain was forecast overnight and during the first part of the morning, we decided not to do a pre-breakfast walk and meet up for breakfast at 8am.

Day 2

Wednesday 3rd July

Bempton, Flamborough, Filey, Scarborough and Wykeham Forest

Cloudy start with occasional light shower, gradually brightening during the day. No Wind

Following our breakfast we loaded up and headed east for the coast following the line of the chalk edge of the Yorkshire Wolds. Arriving at Bempton, it was overcast but still and relatively mild. We headed straight for the cliffs only pausing for the newly fledged Tree Sparrows on the feeders. At the cliffs, the noise first hit us, followed by the smell and then the magnificent sight of thousands of seabirds. Every part of the cliff was taken up with Razorbills, Guillemots, Kittiwakes and huge Gannets. Unfortunately not all had had a successful breeding season, but those that had were tending to chicks of various ages. Kittiwakes for example had some juveniles on the wing, many had young without feathers and one had an egg which was just hatching as we could see the hole made by the chick inside, using the 'egg tooth'. The Gannets had young not yet feathered and looking very reptilian.

It was difficult as first to find a Puffin on the cliffs although many were flying over the sea but eventually we saw one with a beak full of fish trying to get into its nest hole which was blocked by a Razorbill. We saw a few more especially at Jubilee Point and also found nesting Fulmar here and a party of young Gannets displaying on top of the cliffs, in the grass.

Time crept on and eventually we had to drag ourselves away, pausing for a swift drink and comfort stop before heading out to Flamborough Head and the twin lighthouses. We walked to the cliffs where there was a 'flush' of Northern Marsh Orchids and scanned the sea, alive with auks and Shag. Here we also bought our lunch at the café.

After lunch we headed back north and called in at Filey Dams. Many of the local birds now had young, Greenfinches, Coot, Moorhen and Mallard. A Barn Owl roosted in the bush next to its' nest box which contained two healthy young that had been ringed the day before and a Sparrowhawk whipped across the reserve. We visited the 'East Pool' hide to get a better view of the Owl and also discovered a new colony of Tree Bees, nesting in an open fronted bird nest box. Out in the marsh a Sedge Warbler was gathering food but the cooler overcast weather prevented us finding any dragonflies or Water Voles, therefore we continued up to Filey Country Park where we walked along Carr Naze to view Filey Brigg. Eider and Common Scoter loafed off the Brigg and two young Common (Harbour) Seals laid on the rocks in their typical 'banana' pose. Peter explained about the geology and history of the area, including the nature reserves in the area.

Our final stop was at Seacliff Avenue in Scarborough, looking for gulls but it was very quiet, however this was the site of the Holbeck Hall Hotel which collapsed down the cliff in 1993 and was covered in huge stands of Common Spotted Orchids. This place also gives a fantastic view of Scarborough, the castle and harbour.

We made our way back to our hotel by driving round both the south and north bays of Scarborough and enjoyed another fine three course meal. After dinner, Peter took the group back into Wykeham Forest where we first saw bulky Woodcock, roding over the trees giving out grunts and whistles and later just before it got dark, two male Nightjars started churring. The nearest one flew round for a few seconds, in front of us and we could see the 'floppy' flight of this long winged/long tailed night bird, before we headed back to the hotel for the night.

Day 3

Thursday 4th July

North York Moors National Park

Dry day, humid and warm in the sun and windy

Some of the group met up with Peter for a pre-breakfast visit to Wykeham Forest but the wind had got up overnight and locating wildlife was difficult as the trees swayed. We did however hear (and see at a distance) Crossbills and also good views of Tree Pipits.

After breakfast we headed west towards Pickering and then turned north towards Stape. Following the line of the North York Moors Railway we crossed an area of farmland before we came to the start of the heather and a stream crossing the road. Here we found a nice Grey Wagtail and also briefly saw a Beautiful Yellow Underwing moth on the Bell Heather.

As we drove up onto Wheeldale Moor we saw a commotion ahead of us with Curlew and Golden Plover in the air. Suddenly a huge female Goshawk flew close past us from the moor towards the forest and she was carrying a Red Grouse! We could almost see the 'red' of her eye as she went past, scowling! Continuing on we came across Lapwing with chicks, Red Grouse with chicks at various stages of growth and a nice adult Golden Plover with two very yellow spangled large juveniles. We spent a bit of time on the heather moors watching these species and marvelling on the denseness of the cotton grass blowing in the strong wind and then started to head towards Goathland for lunch. Just before we left the moor we saw a Common Goldenring dragonfly 'hawking' the road and as we slowed down to watch this, a Beautiful Yellow Underwing moth flew into the minibus, so it was 'potted-up' for close examination and photos, to be released back into the heather later.

We lunched at Goathland and had a break to use the rest rooms and visit the memorabilia that surrounds the village, because of the TV 'Heartbeat' program before heading east past Goathland Station (Hogwarts Station in the Harry Potter movie) and onto Fen Bog Nature Reserve. One of the specialities here are butterflies and it was not long before we found a good number of Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries flying on the sheltered bank above the stream. Common Goldenring are usually found here but the stiff breeze and clouds made them difficult to find (although Peter did see one around the trees but it was quickly lost from view). We sat overlooking the heath and woods in glorious warm sunshine and within a few minutes had both Peregrine and Kestrel directly over us. It was comfortable here and difficult to drag ourselves away but time was ticking on.

We continued south towards Pickering and diverted through Dalby Forest with a comfort stop before exiting back into Langdale. We made our final stop here to look over Troutdale and back towards the raptor view point we had visited on the first day. Very shortly after settling down on the verge we had an adult Hobby whip up the valley towards Langdale and then a pale Common Buzzard came up out of the valley and drifted toward Troutdale. Behind us was a noisy commotion of Jackdaws and this led us to watch a male Goshawk being pursued down the valley and eventually away south shortly followed afterwards by a huge female Goshawk, which was given the same treatment by the corvids. Add to this a Kestrel, and this was a productive 45 minutes of raptor watching.

We finished the day by visiting the birdwatchers car park in Forge Valley National Nature Reserve but apart from a few Chaffinch and Great Tits, the feeders were infested with Brown Rats of all ages. We returned to the hotel to freshen up for our last evening meal after a long but interesting day in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park.

Day 4

Friday 5th July

Filey & Departure

The day dawned bright and warm from the start but the group opted for a casual breakfast before some departed as they had a distance to drive. Peter took Stephen, Lynn and David back to Wykeham Forest to look for Crossbill but only succeeded in seeing a 'red' male fly over calling. After this all then headed for home after a successful tour with a good total of birds, especially raptor sightings and of course some glorious Yorkshire hospitality, food and weather.

Species Lists

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

	Common name	Scientific name	July			
			2	3	4	5
1	Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>			20+	
2	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	1			
3	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1	✓	
4	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		1		
5	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		1		
6	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		2		
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓	
8	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		1		
9	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>		6		
10	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>		3		
11	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓		
12	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		2		
13	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		✓		
14	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>		✓		
15	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓		
16	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1			
17	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		2		
18	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	1		3	
19	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1		2	
20	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			4	
21	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			1	
22	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			1	
23	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓		
24	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		
25	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			✓	
26	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>			3	
27	Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>		1		
28	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			1	
29	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		1	2	
30	Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>		✓		
31	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		2		
32	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		✓	✓	
33	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		1		✓
34	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>		8		
35	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓		
36	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>		✓		
37	Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		✓		
38	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>		✓		
39	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			2	
40	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓
41	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓		
42	Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>		1		
43	Egyptian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus aegyptius</i>		1		
44	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		✓	✓	
45	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		✓	✓	
46	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		✓	✓	✓
47	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓	✓	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	July			
			2	3	4	5
48	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		✓	✓	
49	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	1		H	2
50	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>			✓	✓
51	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		2		
52	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓	✓	
53	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		✓		
54	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	2	✓	✓	✓
55	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		3	✓	
56	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2		2	2
57	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1	H		1
58	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		1		
59	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	1		H	1
60	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		2	2	
61	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H	H	
62	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓	
63	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓
64	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		H	✓	H
65	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			1	
66	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		H		
67	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			3	
68	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	
69	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		✓		
70	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		2		
71	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			1	
72	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>		2	4	1
73	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓	
74	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			2	
75	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2		✓	✓
76	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>			H	
77	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		3	1	
78	Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>				H
79	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		6	✓	
80	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>			2	1
81	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		4	✓	
82	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>			1	
83	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		1	2	

Mammals

European Rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Brown Rat, *Rattus norvegicus*

Butterflies

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, *Clossiana selene*

Meadow Brown, *Maniola jurtina*

Small Heath, *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Large Skipper, *Ochlodes sylvanus*

Moths

Silver-ground Carpet, *Xanthorhoe montanata*

The Rivulet, *Perizoma affinitata*

Beautiful Yellow Underwing, *Anarta myrtilli*

Dragonflies

Common Bluet, *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Common Goldenring, *Cordulegaster boltonii*

Large Red Damsel, *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*

Plants of note

Bracken, *Pteridium aquilinum*

Thrift, *Armeria maritima*

Bell Heather, *Erica cinerea*

Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*

Lady's Bedstraw, *Galium verum*

Common Fragrant Orchid, *Gymnadenia conopsea*

Northern Marsh Orchid, *Dactylorhiza purpurella*

Celery-leaved Buttercup, *Ranunculus sceleratus*

Cuckooflower, *Cardamine pratensis*

Bird's-foot Trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus*

Yellow Rattle, *Rhinanthus minor*

Common Cotton-grass, *Eriophorum angustifolium*

Common Spotted Orchid, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*

Other taxa

Tree Bee, *Bombus hypnorum*

Common Frog (tadpoles), *Rana temporaria*

Smooth Newt, *Lissotriton vulgaris*



Raptor watching in Troutdale by Peter Dunn



Guillemot & Razorbill by Lynn Pickles

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