

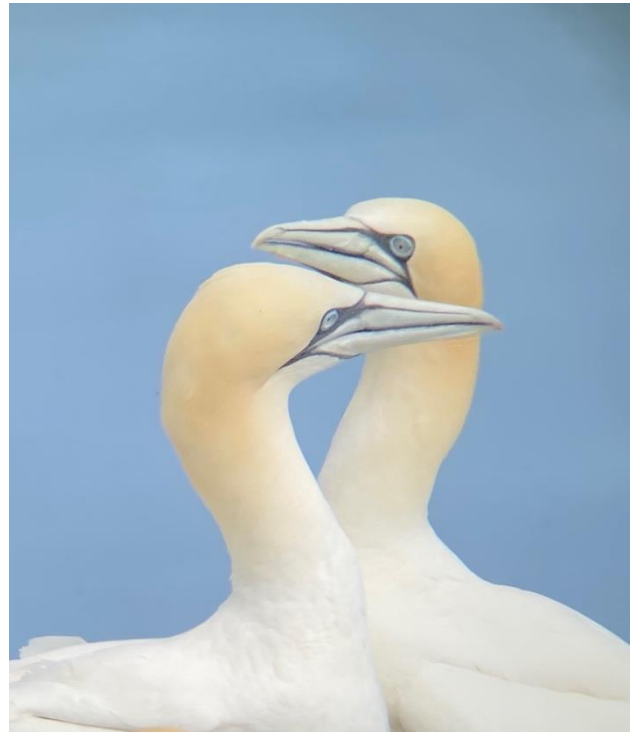
# The Yorkshire Coast & Moors

Naturetrek Tour Report

13th – 16th June 2022



Puffin, Bempton



Gannets, Bempton



Whinchat, Wheeldale Moor



Common Seals, Flamborough

Tour report and images by Alan Miller



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Tour participants: Alan Miller (leader) with seven Naturetrek clients

## Summary

We were blessed with excellent weather for our four-day tour. It remained dry, warm and mainly still throughout with long periods of sunshine, so visibility was excellent for spotting. On our first night we ventured into the forest to be rewarded with several Woodcocks and an obliging Nightjar which perched and churred and flew over our heads in enough light for us to properly enjoy. Our day at the coast was enjoyable as we watched adorable Puffins together with Razorbills and Guillemots. Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Curlew and Whinchat were some of the stars on the moors. Thanks must go to all 'Group' members for working together to make it a productive, enjoyable and rewarding tour in a lovely part of England.

## Day 1

**Monday 13th June**

### Wykeham

The tour started at The Downe Arms hotel in the North Yorkshire village of Wykeham, about five miles west of Scarborough. Whilst most of the group made their own way to the hotel by car, Yasuko and Anne arrived by train at Scarborough Railway Station where they were met by Alan and transported to the hotel. It was cloudy but the weather was fine and still and the forecast was good for the four days of the tour. The early arrivals met Alan at 4pm for a walk in the area around the hotel. We walked past the Ice House, a Millennium project, along an old railway track and back through woodland to make a circular walk during which we watched Chiffchaff singing and fly-catching, Swallows hawking very low over a field containing horses, a distant Skylark singing in flight and a Wren ticking loudly with another singing nearby. Other sightings included Robin, Jackdaw and Wood Pigeon whilst Blackcap and Chaffinch were heard.

We had all arrived by late afternoon so met in the bar at 6pm where we properly introduced ourselves and talked over plans for the next few days before retiring to the dining room for our first evening meal. After dinner we reconvened at 9pm and drove into Wykeham forest. On the way we passed three and then a further two Red-legged Partridges on the roadside. Once in the forest we parked up, got out of the vehicle and waited. Thankfully we had used insect repellent as the midges were out in force! As we waited we heard a distant Song Thrush and the barking of Muntjac deer. Just before 10pm we started to see Woodcock roding overhead. We had several good views and estimate there were three or more individuals. Then came the magical sound of Nightjar. We changed position to another clearing and were mesmerised as a Nightjar churred as it perched in a tree before flying low overhead. We were thrilled with the experience. Nearing 10.30pm we returned to our hotel, very happy with our evening outing.

## Day 2

**Tuesday 14th June**

### Yorkshire Coast – Bempton, Flamborough and Filey

Some of us met before breakfast for a bird walk behind our hotel. It was a lovely morning with the sun shining and little wind. It was quiet till we found a couple of productive areas along the old railway line which were alive

with birds and we added Goldcrest, Bullfinch, Great Tit and Treecreeper to our list of birds seen and Coal Tit was heard.

After breakfast we loaded our minibus and set off for Bempton Cliffs where we spent a spectacular morning watching thousands of Gannets, Razorbills and Guillemots with lesser numbers, though more appreciated, of Puffins. We watched the birds sitting on cliff ledges, on the sea and in flight and it was hugely enjoyable. We also saw good numbers of Tree Sparrows, mainly around the RSPB Visitor Centre, Common Whitethroat in display flight then sitting out for us to admire, Linnet in the hedgerow and on the cliffs and in flight were lovely Kittiwakes and Fulmars.

We had lunch at the Visitor Centre café which was busy and the people appeared unnoticed by the Swallows nesting above the door. After lunch we drove the short distance to Flamborough and parked near the lighthouse before walking to the sea cliffs, which here were lower than those at Bempton. On the grassy slope were dozens of Northern Marsh Orchids and once at the sea we enjoyed watching lots of seals, some of which hauled out onto rocks. Those out of the water were Common Seals adopting their 'banana' pose, whilst in the sea were also a few Grey Seals. As we walked back to the car park we enjoyed watching a Barn Owl hunting in the daytime, undoubtedly having young mouths to feed. Whilst at Flamborough other new sightings included Shag, Cormorant, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat and Goldfinch.

We finished the day at Filey. First we stopped at Filey Dams Reserve and visited the hides where we could sit and watch the pools. This gave us a different range of sightings which included Greylag and Canada Geese, Teal, Mallard, Lapwing, Shelduck, Oystercatcher and Little Grebe. A Grey Heron flew to a post in the water and sat in the sunshine, which was very photogenic. After leaving the dams we did a tourist circle along the seafront and around the Country Park where we admired the Brigg, before setting off back to our hotel.

We met before dinner to talk over the day, do the checklist and plans for tomorrow were outlined. We then moved to our table and enjoyed the evening meal. With the prospect of a pre-breakfast walk, most then retired to their rooms.

## Day 3

Wednesday 15th June

### Yorkshire Moors

It was another lovely morning as some of us met behind the hotel for a pre-breakfast walk. Whilst bird sightings were nice, nothing was new for the tour but we did well with mammals adding Hedgehog and Roe Deer to our list.

After breakfast we set off for a day in the North York Moors. First we travelled west to Pickering where we made a brief stop for picnic provisions before turning north past the North York Moors Railway station. We drove slowly looking and listening, and stopped when a Yellowhammer was heard. On checking the adjoining field we were delighted to find eight Curlew. We were so intent on them that we forgot about looking for the Yellowhammer and didn't hear it again.

We continued north towards Wheeldale Moor and made a stop where the road descended steeply to cross a stream. The area was very productive as findings included Common Spotted and Northern Marsh Orchids, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Large Skipper and Dingy Skipper butterflies, Pond Skaters and a Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly.

At our next stop over a more open stream crossing we saw Jay, Grey Wagtail, Black-headed Gull, Small Heath butterfly, Latticed Heath moth, Large Red Damselflies, Green Tiger Beetle and many tadpoles. We then continued and started to climb up onto open heather-covered moorland. We stopped to look at a Curlew and found our first Red Grouse which we watched through the telescope. Also there was a Green-veined White butterfly and a 7-spot Ladybird.

At the next stream crossing the sun was shining and the views were lovely so we stopped for our picnic lunch. We kept seeing birds in the bushes around us and as people finished eating they set out to explore. Interesting finds included Stonechat, Coal Tit, Willow Warbler, Tree Pipit and Whitethroat. We all walked a short way to an area where trees had been cut down and others newly planted and we found a Whinchat that sat for quite some time in the sun on a dead tree stump for us all to enjoy.

After lunch we continued on over the moor and close to the road watched a family party of Red Grouse with two adults and six chicks. Next we left the moor and entered Goathland, perhaps better known as Aidensfield from the TV series Heartbeat. Aidensfield Stores and Aidensfield Garage (now a café) were both busy with many tourists in the village. We used the public conveniences, made another pass through the village and then headed on. At the edge of Goathland we passed the railway station which featured as Hogsmeade in the Harry Potter films. Our timing was perfect because as we passed the 'Hogwarts Express' (well just a steam train actually) was leaving the station in full steam. We then continued on through the last section of moorland before joining the main road and were pleased to find a Golden Plover close by the road.

Our next stop was at Fen Bog nature reserve where we walked on the path across the bog but even though it was warm there was no sun and insects were in short supply. We did see Stonechat, Whinchat, Meadow Pipit and Reed Bunting and added an obliging Four-banded Longhorn Beetle and a Garden Grass-veneer moth to our growing list of sightings.

Our last stop was at Forge Valley National Nature Reserve. We called at the Birdwatcher's car park where food is put out for the birds. Upon arrival we found that two Grey Squirrels were taking most of the nuts but soon a Jay joined them. There were lots of Chaffinches and Great Tits and we added Marsh Tit as a new sighting. Moving on to Old Man's Mouth car park we walked along the boardwalk that runs alongside the River Derwent, which is just a stream here. We had good views of Grey Wagtail and Blackcap but the hoped-for Dipper which had been seen by Alan a few days earlier was nowhere to be found. We returned to the minibus and then made our way back to our hotel.

We met again before dinner to do our checklist and talk over plans for our last day. We then enjoyed our last evening meal together.

## Day 4

Thursday 16th June

### Wykeham area

Another pre-breakfast walk was on offer and most joined in on another fine morning. We had been very lucky with the weather and today was to be hotter than ever, reaching the low 20's on a still day. Our walk added two new species to the trip list as a Lesser Black-backed Gull flew overhead and we spent some time watching a Spotted Flycatcher making forays around a small grassy area with returns to prominent visible perches. We had spotted the flycatcher after watching a Roe Deer stood in the same grassy area watching us watching it!

After breakfast we packed our bags and checked out of the hotel. Before boarding the minibus we said our goodbyes to Yasuko and Anne who were not joining us on our last outing as they had a train to catch back to London. The rest of us drove into Wykeham Forest and visited the raptor watchpoint. It was our intention to invest some time scanning over the valley and forest in front of us to see if we could spot a Honey Buzzard. Unfortunately none put in an appearance in the 2.5 hours we were there but we did identify at least eight Common Buzzards and a Goshawk. Due to the slope in front of us we could easily watch the tops of trees surrounding our viewpoint and we had good views of Siskin, Willow Warbler and Long-tailed Tit.

At midday we descended to Bolli's Tea Rooms in Wykeham for a welcome tea/coffee and cake/scone before moving to Wykeham Lakes for our last stop of the tour. We checked the main lake where we found two Egyptian Geese before moving to a hide and viewing screen at the back of the lakes and away from the commercial areas. There were lots of gulls and geese and we added Mute Swan, Tufted Duck and Sand Martin to our trip list. Walking through the vegetation to the hide we stopped to discuss the identification of 'blue' damselflies and spotted Blue-tailed and Common Blue Damselflies.

All too soon it was time to retrace our steps back to the minibus and then return to the hotel car park for people to collect their cars. We said our farewells and another Naturetrek adventure came to an end. Thank you for your companionship during a lovely four days exploring the coast and moors of Yorkshire.

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## Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

|    | Common name              | Scientific name                   | June 2022 |    |     |    |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----|-----|----|
|    |                          |                                   | 13        | 14 | 15  | 16 |
| 1  | Greylag Goose            | <i>Anser anser</i>                |           | ✓  |     | ✓  |
| 2  | Canada Goose             | <i>Branta canadensis</i>          |           | ✓  |     | ✓  |
| 3  | Egyptian Goose           | <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>       |           |    |     | 2  |
| 4  | Mute Swan                | <i>Cygnus olor</i>                |           |    |     | 2  |
| 5  | Common Shelduck          | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>            |           | 3  |     |    |
| 6  | Mallard                  | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>         |           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 7  | Eurasian Teal            | <i>Anas crecca</i>                |           | 2  |     |    |
| 8  | Tufted Duck              | <i>Aythya fuligula</i>            |           |    |     | ✓  |
| 9  | Red Grouse               | <i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>    |           |    | 9   |    |
| 10 | Red-legged Partridge     | <i>Alectoris rufa</i>             | 5         |    | 3   | 2  |
| 11 | Common Pheasant          | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>        |           | H  | 1+H | H  |
| 12 | Northern Fulmar          | <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>         |           | ✓  |     |    |
| 13 | Little Grebe             | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>     |           | 3  |     |    |
| 14 | Great Crested Grebe      | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>         |           |    |     | 2  |
| 15 | Grey Heron               | <i>Ardea cinerea</i>              |           | 1  |     | 2  |
| 16 | Northern Gannet          | <i>Morus bassanus</i>             |           | ✓  |     |    |
| 17 | European Shag            | <i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>        |           | 3  |     |    |
| 18 | Great Cormorant          | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>        |           | 2  |     | 4  |
| 19 | Northern Goshawk         | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>         |           |    |     | 1  |
| 20 | Common Buzzard           | <i>Buteo buteo</i>                |           |    | 1   | 8  |
| 21 | Common Moorhen           | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>        |           | ✓  |     | ✓  |
| 22 | Eurasian Coot            | <i>Fulica atra</i>                |           | ✓  |     | ✓  |
| 23 | Eurasian Oystercatcher   | <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>      |           | 5  |     |    |
| 24 | Northern Lapwing         | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>          |           | 2  | ✓   |    |
| 25 | European Golden Plover   | <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>        |           |    | 1   |    |
| 26 | Eurasian Woodcock        | <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>         | 3         |    |     |    |
| 27 | Eurasian Curlew          | <i>Numenius arquata</i>           |           |    | 9+H |    |
| 28 | Black-legged Kittiwake   | <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>           |           | ✓  |     |    |
| 29 | Black-headed Gull        | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> |           |    | 1   | 1  |
| 30 | European Herring Gull    | <i>Larus argentatus</i>           | 1         | ✓  |     | ✓  |
| 31 | Lesser Black-backed Gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i>               |           |    |     | ✓  |
| 32 | Common Guillemot (Murre) | <i>Uria aalge</i>                 |           | ✓  |     |    |
| 33 | Razorbill                | <i>Alca torda</i>                 |           | ✓  |     |    |
| 34 | Atlantic Puffin          | <i>Fratercula arctica</i>         |           | ✓  |     |    |
| 35 | Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) | <i>Columba livia</i>              |           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 36 | Stock Dove               | <i>Columba oenas</i>              |           | 3  |     |    |
| 37 | Common Wood Pigeon       | <i>Columba palumbus</i>           | ✓         | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 38 | Eurasian Collared Dove   | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>      |           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 39 | Western Barn Owl         | <i>Tyto alba</i>                  |           | 1  |     |    |
| 40 | European Nightjar        | <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>      | 1         |    |     |    |
| 41 | Common Swift             | <i>Apus apus</i>                  |           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 42 | Common Kestrel           | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>          |           | 1  |     |    |
| 43 | Eurasian Jay             | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>        |           |    | 2   |    |
| 44 | Eurasian Magpie          | <i>Pica pica</i>                  |           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 45 | Western Jackdaw          | <i>Coloeus monedula</i>           | 2         | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 46 | Rook                     | <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>          |           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |
| 47 | Carrion Crow             | <i>Corvus corone</i>              | 2         | ✓  | ✓   | ✓  |

|    | Common name           | Scientific name                | June 2022 |     |     |     |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|
|    |                       |                                | 13        | 14  | 15  | 16  |
| 48 | Coal Tit              | <i>Periparus ater</i>          |           | H   | 1   | H   |
| 49 | Marsh Tit             | <i>Poecile palustris</i>       |           |     | 1   |     |
| 50 | Eurasian Blue Tit     | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>     |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 51 | Great Tit             | <i>Parus major</i>             |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 52 | Eurasian Skylark      | <i>Alauda arvensis</i>         | 1         | ✓   | ✓   |     |
| 53 | Sand Martin           | <i>Riparia riparia</i>         |           |     |     | ✓   |
| 54 | Barn Swallow          | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>         | ✓         | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 55 | Common House Martin   | <i>Delichon urbicum</i>        |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 56 | Long-tailed Tit       | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>     |           |     |     | ✓   |
| 57 | Willow Warbler        | <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>  | H         | H   | 1+H | 1+H |
| 58 | Common Chiffchaff     | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>  | 1+H       | 1+H | H   | H   |
| 59 | Eurasian Blackcap     | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>      | H         | 1+H | 2+H | 1+H |
| 60 | Common Whitethroat    | <i>Curruca communis</i>        |           | 2   | 1   | H   |
| 61 | Goldcrest             | <i>Regulus regulus</i>         |           | 1   |     |     |
| 62 | Eurasian Wren         | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> | ✓         | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 63 | Eurasian Treecreeper  | <i>Certhia familiaris</i>      |           | 1   |     |     |
| 64 | Common Starling       | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>        |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 65 | Common Blackbird      | <i>Turdus merula</i>           | ✓         | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 66 | Song Thrush           | <i>Turdus philomelos</i>       | H         | H   | 2+H | 3+H |
| 67 | Spotted Flycatcher    | <i>Muscicapa striata</i>       |           |     |     | 1   |
| 68 | European Robin        | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>      | ✓         | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 69 | Whinchat              | <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>        |           |     | 2   |     |
| 70 | European Stonechat    | <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>       |           | 1   | 5   |     |
| 71 | House Sparrow         | <i>Passer domesticus</i>       |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 72 | Eurasian Tree Sparrow | <i>Passer montanus</i>         |           | ✓   | H   | ✓   |
| 73 | Dunnock               | <i>Prunella modularis</i>      |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 74 | Grey Wagtail          | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>       |           |     | ✓   |     |
| 75 | Pied Wagtail          | <i>Motacilla alba yarrelli</i> |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 76 | Meadow Pipit          | <i>Anthus pratensis</i>        |           | ✓   | ✓   |     |
| 77 | Tree Pipit            | <i>Anthus trivialis</i>        |           |     | 1   |     |
| 78 | Common Chaffinch      | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>       | H         | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 79 | Eurasian Bullfinch    | <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>       |           | 2   | H   | 1   |
| 80 | Common Linnet         | <i>Linaria cannabina</i>       |           | ✓   | ✓   |     |
| 81 | European Goldfinch    | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>     |           | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| 82 | Eurasian Siskin       | <i>Spinus spinus</i>           |           |     |     | 2   |
| 83 | Yellowhammer          | <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>     |           |     | H   | 1   |
| 84 | Common Reed Bunting   | <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>    |           |     | 1   |     |

## Others

|               |                              | June 2022 |    |    |    |
|---------------|------------------------------|-----------|----|----|----|
| Common name   | Scientific name              | 13        | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Mammals       |                              |           |    |    |    |
| Rabbit        | <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> | ✓         | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
| Muntjac       | <i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>     | H         |    |    |    |
| Common Seal   | <i>Phoca vitulina</i>        |           | ✓  |    |    |
| Grey Seal     | <i>Halichoerus grypus</i>    |           | ✓  |    |    |
| Grey Squirrel | <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>  |           | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
| Hedgehog      | <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>   |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Roe Deer      | <i>Capreolus capreolus</i>   |           |    | ✓  | ✓  |
|               |                              |           |    |    |    |

|                                 |                                   | June 2022 |    |    |    |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----|----|----|
| Common name                     | Scientific name                   | 13        | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Butterflies                     |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Red Admiral                     | <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>           |           | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
| Speckled Wood                   | <i>Pararge aegeria</i>            |           | ✓  |    | ✓  |
| Painted Lady                    | <i>Vanessa cardui</i>             |           | ✓  |    | ✓  |
| Orange-tip                      | <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>     |           | ✓  |    |    |
| Small Tortoiseshell             | <i>Aglais urticae</i>             |           | ✓  |    |    |
| Large Skipper                   | <i>Ochlodes venata</i>            |           |    | ✓  | ✓  |
| Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary | <i>Boloria selene</i>             |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Dingy Skipper                   | <i>Erynnis tages</i>              |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Small Heath                     | <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>      |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Green-veined White              | <i>Pieris napi</i>                |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Small White                     | <i>Pieris rapae</i>               |           |    | ✓  |    |
|                                 |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Moths                           |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Latticed Heath                  | <i>Chiasmia clathata</i>          |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Garden Grass-veneer             | <i>Chrusoteuchia culmella</i>     |           |    | ✓  |    |
|                                 |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Dragonflies and Damselflies     |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Large Red Damselfly             | <i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>        |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Blue-tailed Damselfly           | <i>Ischnura elegans</i>           |           |    |    | ✓  |
| Common Blue Damselfly           | <i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>      |           |    |    | ✓  |
| Broad-bodied Chaser             | <i>Libellula depressa</i>         |           |    | ✓  | ✓  |
|                                 |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Orchids                         |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Northern Marsh Orchid           | <i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>    |           | ✓  | ✓  |    |
| Common Spotted Orchid           | <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>       |           |    | ✓  |    |
|                                 |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Others                          |                                   |           |    |    |    |
| Red-tailed Bumblebee            | <i>Bombus lapidarius</i>          |           | ✓  | ✓  |    |
| Buff-tailed Bumblebee           | <i>Bombus terrestris</i>          |           | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
| Tree Bumblebee                  | <i>Bombus hypnorum</i>            |           |    |    | ✓  |
| Common Carder Bee               | <i>Bombus pascuorum</i>           |           |    | ✓  | ✓  |
| Banded Snail                    | <i>Capaea hortensis/nemoralis</i> |           | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
| Black Slug                      | <i>Arion ater</i>                 |           |    | ✓  | ✓  |
| Four-banded Longhorn Beetle     | <i>Leptura quadrifasciata</i>     |           |    | ✓  |    |
| 7-spot Ladybird                 | <i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>      |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Green Tiger Beetle              | <i>Cicindela campestris</i>       |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Tadpoles                        |                                   |           |    | ✓  |    |
| Pond Skater                     | <i>Gerris lacustris</i>           |           |    | ✓  |    |