

The Yorkshire Coast & Moors

Naturetrek Tour Report

16th - 19th June 2025



Puffins



Razorbill



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Grey Seal

Tour report and photos by Alan Miller



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: Alan Miller (leader) with five Naturetrek clients

Summary

In stunning June weather, we enjoyed a productive and interesting few days in a variety of different habitats. On our first night we ventured into the forest to be rewarded with a roosting Nightjar and several others calling and in flight. We also saw Woodcock overhead. Our day at the coast was enjoyable as we watched adorable Puffins together with Razorbills, Guillemots, Gannets and much more. Red Grouse, Stonechat and Lapwing were on the moors, but the wealth and diversity of wildlife was wonderful with ten species of butterfly seen. Finishing in the forest we spotted Common Buzzards, Goshawks and Ravens. 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 16th June

East Ayton and Wykeham

With this tour providing arrival options, two group members were collected from Scarborough Railway Station at 3pm and transported to our tour hotel in the village of East Ayton, about four miles inland, whilst the remaining three group members had made their way directly to the hotel the day before and had spent an extra night there. The afternoon weather was hot and sunny with little wind.

We all met at 4pm and after introductions, set off on our first outing. We drove another couple of miles inland to Wykeham Lakes and first visited the wildlife area. We had to walk through an overgrown and 'wild' area to get to a hide. An area of mainly nettles and brambles was surrounded by trees and bushes, making a perfect environment for insects. We were delighted to watch a perched male Beautiful Demoiselle with the sun glinting on its iridescent wings. There were lots of blue damselflies and we discussed their features as we identified Azure Bluet and Blue-tailed Damsel. Speckled Wood and Red Admiral butterflies were also on the wing.

At the hide and viewing screens overlooking the wildlife lagoons we started to identify the birds. There were lots of Greylag Geese and gulls, which were mainly Herring Gulls but on closer inspection we found both Great and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Sand Martins were very active over the water. On a dryer, sandy area we found a pair of Stock Doves and were able to compare them to nearby Wood Pigeons. There was also Oystercatcher at the water's edge and Little Egret in the shallows. Heavily disguised but found by movement were an adult and two juvenile Little Ringed Plovers which we enjoyed watching.

We walked back to the minibus and drove past some fishing and activity lakes to the visitor centre beside the main lake. Here we were pleased to add Great Egret to our growing list. After a pleasant hour and productive start to the tour, we returned to our hotel.

We met again at 6.15pm for the formal tour welcome and briefing before talking over plans for the forthcoming days. We then drove into East Ayton for dinner, after which we returned briefly to our hotel before heading to Wykeham forest. Shortly after leaving Wykeham two obliging Red-legged Partridges were sat on a roadside wall, and we stopped at North Moor to look at birds coming and going to roadside power lines. Most were Tree

Sparrows but we also had excellent views of a male Yellowhammer which flew onto the road near us, Greenfinch and a fleeting Garden Warbler.

We were heading into the forest but armed with some information from another birder, we made a detour to the nearby Raptor Watchpoint and near the seating area were delighted to discover a roosting Nightjar. It took one group member a little longer to see it sat on a log due to its excellent camouflage. Next we drove along a logging track into the forest to an open area and we didn't have to wait long before we heard Nightjar churring. We were able to hear and see in flight at least two birds. As we watched the sky, we saw Woodcock make three passes. It was probably the same bird following its nightly circuit. By this time the midges were being a nuisance so, delighted with our sightings, we returned to our hotel and retired to bed.

Day 2

Tuesday 17th June

Yorkshire Coast – Bempton, Flamborough and Filey; and Forge Valley

After breakfast we loaded our minibus and set off for Bempton Cliffs. The weather was fine and dry with some cloud and a light wind. Upon arrival we walked towards the sea cliffs. We enjoyed the Tree Sparrows, mainly around the RSPB Visitor Centre, and noted Swallow, House Martin, Linnet and a singing Whitethroat. Once at the cliffs we were immediately into seabird action. On the cliffs, on the sea and flying between were thousands of birds. We marvelled at the Razorbills, Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Gannets. There were lesser numbers of Puffins but these are the iconic species at the reserve and we enjoyed views of several through telescopes. Behind us and over the agricultural land we watched Reed Buntings and Skylarks. Not to be outdone, there was lots of insect activity with several species of butterflies and ladybirds, and a lovely Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet moth looking iridescent in the sunshine.

We had lunch at the Visitor Centre café before moving to the feeder area where we watched more Tree Sparrows, Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Jackdaw. Next we checked the Dell which was very quiet so we returned to the minibus and headed towards Flamborough. The village was holding a Flowerpot Festival and there were various constructions made out of Flower pots around the village including the King and Queen, three pigs, and a police officer with a radar gun. As we approached the lighthouse car park, we stopped to look at the 17th century Chalk Tower, an early lighthouse designed for a fire to be lit on the flat top. We parked and set off towards the cliffs, lower here than at Bempton. We stopped to look at stands of Spotted and Northern Marsh Orchids before arriving at the top of the cliffs. The tide was low and to our delight there were hundreds (we stopped counting at 230) of Grey Seals. Most were hauled out on rocks, but a few were swimming in the sea. We also found a couple of active Puffin burrows with adults coming and going, watched a Meadow Pipit rise in the sky then balloon down, and had excellent telescope views of Corn Bunting, a target species for some.

After an enjoyable walk around Flamborough Lighthouse we returned north and stopped at Filey Dams Reserve. Here we visited the hides where we could sit and watch the pools and surrounding areas. This gave us a different range of sightings which included Teal, Gadwall, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Shelduck, Kestrel and Lapwing. We also heard Cetti's Warbler.

For our last stop of the day, we drove to Forge Valley and stopped at the Birdwatchers Car Park. With stocked feeders around the perimeter there were plenty of woodland birds present including Marsh, Great and Blue Tits,

Nuthatch, Chaffinch and Treecreeper. The feeders had also attracted numerous Grey Squirrels and a Brown Rat. As our outing had come to an end, we returned to the tour hotel.

We met before dinner to talk over the day, do the checklist and plans for tomorrow were outlined. We then drove to East Ayton for dinner.

Day 3

Wednesday 18th June

North York Moors

It was a lovely bright morning and forecast to be fine and dry all day. There was only one taker for a pre-breakfast outing, so we took the vehicle up Forge Valley. At Birdwatchers car park we watched the Grey Squirrels and birds included Coal, Great, Blue and Marsh Tits. At Old Man's Mouth car park, we headed to the river but access was restricted due to recent storm damage. We then drove further up the valley and added Grey Heron to our growing bird 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 on slowly, looking and listening, and sightings included Yellowhammer, Kestrel, Magpie, and Pied Wagtail. We continued towards Wheeldale Moor and made a stop where the road descended steeply to cross Keys Beck. The area was very productive, and findings included Common Newt, Large Red Damselfly and Slow Worm, together with lots of very showy butterflies: Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Common Blue, Ringlet, Large Skipper and Red Admiral.

Further on the road crosses Rutmoor Beck, where it is more open. We stopped to see what we could find. Sightings included Grey Wagtail, Mistle Thrush, Stonechat, Meadow Pipit, Small Heath butterfly, Green Tiger Beetle and many tadpoles. We then continued and started to climb up onto open heather-covered moorland. We constantly scanned the moor but our target birds were proving hard to find.

At the next crossing over Wheeldale Gill we stopped for our picnic lunch. Once we had eaten, we explored the area. We enjoyed views of Whitethroat and Willow Warbler. A Buzzard passed overhead. An addition to our growing butterfly list was a Small Copper, and some caught sight of an Adder before it disappeared into vegetation.

Next we continued over the moor, again scanning all around. It wasn't long before a Red Grouse was spotted in the open close to the road. We then saw a young, fluffy chick and eventually the family party of two adults and two chicks was enjoyed by all. We spotted more Red Grouse as we progressed and the final tally was fourteen birds; eight adults and six young. Eventually we arrived at 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 then continued our journey. At the edge of Goathland we passed the railway station which featured as Hogsmeade in the Harry Potter films. There was a steam train in the station and we stopped to watch another, perhaps the 'Hogwarts Express' (well just a steam train actually) arriving in full steam. We then continued on through the last section of moorland before joining the main road to take us south.

Our next stop was at Fen Bog nature reserve where we took the path which crosses the bog and to the adjacent North York Moors railway. Birding was quiet but we heard Willow Warblers and a Curlew, however butterflies were again very abundant. One person spotted a small lizard but it disappeared from view before an identification could be made. As we walked back to the vehicle another steam train passed by. As it was now late afternoon we returned to the minibus for the drive back to our hotel.

We met again before dinner to do our checklist and talk over plans for our last day. Then we drove to East Ayton where we had an enjoyable dinner before returning to the hotel and retiring for the night.

Day 4

Thursday 19th June

Wykeham area

After breakfast we finished our packing and by 9am had checked out of the hotel. We headed to Wykeham Forest to visit the raptor watchpoint. Whilst it was our intention to invest some time scanning over the valley and forest for raptors, an Ortolan Bunting had been reported near the watchpoint car park so we decided to see if it appeared, although it had only been seen every couple of hours or so and then mainly fleetingly. There were plenty of birders present and we settled in to see if we were to be in luck. We had excellent views of Yellowhammer, Linnet and Goldfinch and other sightings included Chiffchaff and a displaying Tree Pipit but alas, the bunting didn't show. We gave it 45 minutes then collectively decided our time was best spent at the viewpoint itself. We were there till lunchtime and the whole time a Willow Warbler was singing in the bushes in front of us. Ten Common Buzzards and a couple of Goshawks were in flight over the valley and beyond. Two Ravens passed close by making their distinctive 'korrp' call. A Crossbill flew over our heads calling and a Siskin landed in the bushes in front.

At midday we set off to descend to Bolli's Tea Rooms in Wykeham for a welcome tea/coffee and lunch, enroute calling at the bunting twitch, but there was still no sign of the bird. Over lunch we completed our last checklist and sadly, another Naturetrek adventure had come to an end. We returned to our hotel for one member to collect her car for the return journey home and the rest collected their bags which had been stored at the hotel. We then drove to Scarborough Railway Station and arrived in time for everyone to catch their train. 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 2025			
		16	17	18	19
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓		
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	12			
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	8			
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		3		
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		✓		
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	4	✓		
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓		
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	4	✓		
Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>			14	
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	2			
Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	1		2	6
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓		
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	3			
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			1	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1			
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1			
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		✓		
European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>		✓		
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓		
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>				2
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>			1	10
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1	✓	2	
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	2	1		
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		3	✓	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	3			
Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	1			
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			1+H	
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>		✓		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		1	4	
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	1			
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	12	1		
Common Guillemot (Murre)	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓		
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>		✓		
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		✓		
Feral Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia (feral)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2	2	2	
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓		✓	
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	3			
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		2	3	1
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		2	1	
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	1	2		
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>				2

Common name	Scientific name	June 2025			
		16	17	18	19
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>			2	
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		1	1	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1	✓	✓	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		4	2	3
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	12	✓		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	2	✓	✓	✓
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	H		✓	✓
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	H	H		✓
Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	H			
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H		
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	H	H	H	H
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	1			
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>		1	2	
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	3		1	H
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H	✓	✓	H
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		2		
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		1		
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	H	H	
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			5	
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2			2
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			1	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	6	✓		
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1	1		2
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			1	
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrelli</i>	1	2	4	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		1	6	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				1
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				1
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	1			H
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	4	8		6
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				1
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				1
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		2		
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	2	2	2	2
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		6	H	

Others

		June 2025			
Common name	Scientific name	16	17	18	19
Mammals					
European Hare	<i>Lepus europeae</i>			✓	
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>		230+		

Common name	Scientific name	June 2025			
		16	17	18	19
Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>		✓	✓	✓
Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>		✓		
Bat sp.		✓			
Reptiles & Amphibians					
Slow Worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>			✓	
Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>			✓	
Tadpoles				✓	
Common Newt	<i>Triturus vulgaris</i>			✓	
Lizard sp.				✓	✓
Butterflies					
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓	✓	
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		✓		
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		✓	✓	✓
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>		✓		✓
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes venata</i>			✓	
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>			✓	
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>			✓	
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>			✓	
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>		✓		
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>			✓	
Moths					
Common Carpet	<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>		✓		
Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena lonicerae</i>		✓		
Pale Straw Pearl	<i>Udea lutealis</i>			✓	
Garden Grass Moth	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>			✓	
Buff Ermine	<i>Spilosoma lutea</i>				✓
Dragonflies & Damselflies					
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	✓			
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	✓			
Azure Blue Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	✓			
Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	✓			
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>		✓		
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>			✓	
Orchids					
Northern Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>		✓	✓	
Common/Heath Spotted Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii/maculata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other Insects					
White-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus lucorum</i>		✓	✓	
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus terrestris</i>			✓	
Bilberry Bumblebee	<i>Bombus monticola</i>		✓		
Common Carder Bee	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>			✓	
Banded Snail	<i>Capaea hortensis/nemoralis</i>	✓			
Black Slug	<i>Arion ater</i>			✓	

Common name	Scientific name	June 2025			
		16	17	18	19
Green Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela campestris</i>			✓	
Bluebottle	<i>Calliphora vomitoria</i>			✓	
Water Boatman	<i>Notonecta glauca</i>			✓	
Red & Black Frog hopper	<i>Cercopis vulnerata</i>			✓	
2-Spot Ladybird	<i>Adalia bipunctata</i>		✓	✓	
7-Spot Ladybird	<i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>		✓		
Harlequin Ladybird	<i>Harmandia axyridis</i>		✓		
Alder Fly	<i>Sialis lutaria</i>			✓	
Scorpion Fly	<i>Panorpa communis</i>			✓	
Yellow-faced Fly	<i>Tachina grossa</i>			✓	
Pond Skater	<i>Gerris lacustris</i>			✓	
Golden-bloomed Longhorn Beetle	<i>Agapanthia villosa viridescens</i>			✓	
Other flora					
Smooth Bedstraw	<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>			✓	
Bog Myrtle	<i>Myrica gale</i>			✓	



Fen Bog Nature Reserve