

The Yorkshire Coast & Moors

Naturetrek Tour Report

15th – 18th June 2026



Gannet



Fulmar



Kittiwake



Puffin

Tour report by Alan Miller
Photos by Alan Miller and Neil Stafford



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 three Naturetrek clients

Summary

This four-day tour provided a productive and interesting variety of sightings, in very different habitats. On our first night, we ventured into the forest to be rewarded with a spectacular display by several Nightjars, which we heard loudly churring, watched in flight making their distinctive flight call, and perched. We also saw Woodcock overhead. Our day at the coast was enjoyable: we watched adorable Puffins together with Razorbills, Guillemots, Gannets, Kittiwakes and much more. Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Whinchat, Stonechat and Lapwing were on the moors, where the wealth and diversity of wildlife was wonderful, with nine species of butterfly seen. Finishing in the forest, we spotted Common Buzzards, Ravens and Siskin, and were delighted when a Common Goldenring dragonfly spent some time perched in front of us. Thanks must go to everyone for working together to make this a productive, enjoyable and rewarding tour in a lovely part of England.

Day 1

Monday 15th June

East Ayton – Wykeham

Alan collected Anthony from Scarborough Railway Station at 3.00pm and transported him to our tour hotel in the village of East Ayton, about four miles inland. Meanwhile, Teresa and Neil had both made their ways directly to the hotel. The afternoon weather was overcast, but warm, bright and dry with a little wind.

We all met at 4.00pm, and after introductions, we set off on our first outing. We drove another couple of miles inland to Wykeham Lakes. From the parking area we noted two Stock Doves on overhead wires in the company of Wood and Feral Pigeons, and Rooks. Nearby, there was a Chiffchaff singing from the top of a tree, which we captured in the telescope. We had to walk through an overgrown and 'wild' area to get to a hide. This area of mainly nettles and brambles was surrounded by trees and bushes, making a perfect environment for insects. There were lots of blue damselflies, and we discussed their features as we identified Azure Bluet and Common Bluetail. The striking hoverfly *Volucella pellucens* was briefly on a flower head.

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 Herrings, with a few Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Sand Martins were very active over the water. On a drier, sandy area, we found both Pied and Yellow Wagtails, and a Little Ringed Plover. The Mute Swans had cygnets, and a surprise was a single Wigeon. A Little Egret was feeding in the shallows, and two Great Crested Grebes were seen.

Walking back through the meadow, we found a splendid Yellow-barred Long-horn moth, with antennae four times the length of its body, and a patch of Giant Puffball fungi. We drove past some fishing and activity lakes to the visitor centre beside the main lake, where we added Canada Geese, before returning to our hotel after spending a pleasant hour's introduction to local wildlife.

We met again at 6.15pm for the formal tour welcome and briefing, before talking over plans for the forthcoming days. We then had a leisurely dinner, before reconvening at 9.00pm for an excursion to Wykeham Forest. Shortly after we left, an obliging Red-legged Partridge was seen on the roadside verge. North Moor was quiet, so we

continued into the forest and along a logging track, where we stopped to watch a Roe Deer before it wandered into the undergrowth. We continued to an open area, where we set up camp and waited. The sky was overcast, and a few spots of rain started to fall: we feared the worst, but soon the light rainfall stopped, and we saw our first Woodcock as it roded overhead. Next, there was the distinctive flight call of a Nightjar as one circled the nearby trees and landed on an open branch. Then churring started behind us. For the next half an hour, we were mesmerised by at least three Nightjars flying around and over our heads, calling and churring, while at least two Woodcocks kept passing overhead, and in the distance we could hear a Tawny Owl. It was so enjoyable we almost forgot about the midgies! After this special encounter, we returned to our hotel and went happily to bed.

Day 2

Tuesday 16th June

Yorkshire Coast: Bempton – Flamborough – Filey

After breakfast, we set off for Bempton Cliffs. The weather was overcast, but fine and dry, visibility was good, and there was a light southerly wind. As we neared Bempton, we encountered a little drizzle, but it was fine on arrival, and so it stayed throughout the day. We moved to the path to the cliffs, noting Wren and Tree Sparrow, but our progress was halted when a Barn Owl flew overhead to an adjacent field and began quartering the area. It landed on a fence, which allowed us all to have great scope views. We saw the owl several times, including when it visited a nestbox.

We then progressed to the cliff top, and were immediately struck by the cacophony of sound and the sheer number of birds on the cliffs, on the sea and in flight. There were birds everywhere, and we recorded Razorbills, Guillemots, Puffins, Gannets and Fulmars, together with the more prosaic Feral Pigeons and Jackdaws. Checking the land behind us, we connected with Linnet, Whitethroat, Meadow Pipit, Corn and Reed Buntings, and several Skylarks in song flight. Insect activity increased as the morning progressed, and we found several species of butterfly and moth, including Red Admiral, Painted Lady and the micro moth Swan-feather Dwarf. It had been a spectacular couple of hours, and at midday we went to the visitor centre café for some well-deserved refreshments.

After lunch, we went to the feeder area, where we watched more Tree Sparrows, Great Tits, Jackdaws and Wood Pigeons, and added Dunnock to our growing species list. Next, we checked The Dell, which was quite sheltered and warm, and spotted several Red Admiral and Painted Lady butterflies. It was soon time to set off towards Flamborough. As we drove back along the access road, we were discussing the decline in the Greenfinch population due to trichomonosis, when we stopped to check a bird on a roadside wire and guess what: it was a Greenfinch! As we approached Flamborough lighthouse car park we stopped to look at the seventeenth-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, which are lower than at Bempton. The tide was well out, and to our delight there were hundreds of seals, mostly hauled out on rocks, but a few swimming in the sea. They were mainly Grey Seals, but we noted a small number of Harbour (formerly Common) Seals, which were smaller, with a gentler face and adopting a 'banana' shape on their sides. We moved around the headland and watched a number of photogenic Puffins around their burrows. It was good watching the movement of dozens upon dozens of seabirds from a gentler angle than at Bempton as they moved both northwards and southwards past us. We also chanced upon a flock of twenty Eiders (eighteen splendid males and two females) flying north. As we returned to the vehicle, we found a Common Blue butterfly, a Silver Y moth, and a large patch of Broad-leaved Marsh Orchids.

After an enjoyable walk around Flamborough Lighthouse, we returned north and stopped at Filey Dams Reserve. Unfortunately, work had begun to replace a boardwalk prior to some redesign work, so part of the reserve was not accessible. The bird population was reduced by the disturbance, but we did add Coot, Gadwall and Tufted Duck to our bird list. Back at the car, we were discussing options when the workmen finished for the day. We were approached by Mike, a member of FBOG (Filey Brigg Ornithological Group). As access had been restricted, he offered to show us around the group's nearby private reserve. He was very proud of it and rightly so. We spent the next hour looking around, and added Lapwing, Shelduck, Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover to our sightings, and we heard Reed Warbler and Chiffchaff. As we walked back along the access path, we were amazed to see ten Magpies on an overhead line. This brought a very pleasant and memorable day to a close, and after thanking Mike we headed back to our hotel.

We met in the evening for dinner, after which we compiled our checklist and talked about tomorrow's plans, before retiring.

Day 3

Wednesday 17th June

North York Moors – Fen Bog Nature Reserve – Forge Valley Nature Reserve

After breakfast, we set off for a day in the North York Moors. It was drizzling and overcast, but thankfully when we got to our action zone the rain had stopped, and it got clearer and hotter as the day progressed. The only problem was the strong south-westerly wind. 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, Pied Wagtail, Whitethroat and our first Collared Doves. We continued towards Wheeldale Moor and made a stop where the road descends steeply to cross Keys Beck. The area was very productive, and findings included Common Newt, Large Red Damsel, Tree Bumblebee and spotted orchids, together with lots of very showy butterflies: Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Heath, Common Blue, Large and Small Skippers, and Painted Lady.

Further on the road crossed Rutmoor Beck, where it was more open. We stopped to see what we could find. In a sheltered, shallow pool next to the bridge, we found more newts and lots of tadpoles. After some research, the newts here were identified as Palmate Newts. Other sightings included Grey Wagtail, Stonechat, Meadow Pipit, Common Buzzard and Linnet, and we heard our first Curlew. Green Tiger Beetles were found mating. We then started to climb up onto open, heather-covered moorland. We constantly scanned the moor, and noted mainly Lapwing and Skylarks. 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 Stonechat, Whinchat and Pied Wagtail. A Willow Warbler was singing and a Green Carpet moth was found.

Next, we returned a short distance to scan some fields for a reported plover, but could only find Lapwing, Skylark and Curlew, so we continued our route over the moor, again scanning all around. It wasn't long before a Red Grouse was spotted close to the road. In the end we saw four birds in total as we journeyed over the moor. At one point, we stopped next to a photographer, to discover she was trying to photograph one of our target species: Golden Plover. We got out and enjoyed watching the bird, albeit at a moderate distance. Eventually we arrived at Goathland, perhaps better known as the fictional Aidensfield from the TV series 'Heartbeat'. Aidensfield Stores

and Aidensfield Garage (now a café) were both busy, with many tourists in the village. At the edge of Goathland, we passed the railway station which featured as Hogsmeade in the Harry Potter films.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Willow Warbler



Razorbill



Green Tiger Beetles

Our next stop was at Fen Bog Nature Reserve, where we took the path which crossed the bog to the adjacent North York Moors railway. Birding was quiet, but we spotted several species of butterfly, and managed to get a look at the ‘pearly’ underwing of a Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. At the railway line, we heard the distinctive sound of a steam engine, so we waited and watched a steam locomotive with Pullman carriages passing by.

From Fen Bog, we made our return journey toward Ayton. Before going to our hotel, we visited Forge Valley Nature Reserve. First, we stopped at birdwatchers’ car park, where people put out food to attract birds (only fat balls at this time of year, due to recent new guidance not to put out seed in the summer). We watched a busy collection of birds coming in from the surrounding trees to feed, including Blue, Great, Coal and Marsh Tits, Nuthatch, and for a lucky couple a Great Spotted Woodpecker. A Grey Squirrel and a Brown Rat were also making the most of the feeding opportunity. We also called at Old Man’s Mouth car park, but following 2025 storm damage the area was neglected and the boardwalk was still closed, so we headed back to our hotel.

We met in the evening, and over dinner we talked about tomorrow's plans. We then compiled our checklist before retiring.

Day 4

Thursday 18th June

Wykeham Forest

After breakfast we finished our packing, and by 9.15am had checked out of the hotel. We headed to Wykeham Forest to visit the raptor watchpoint, to invest some time scanning over the valley and forest for birds of prey. En route, we added Starling, which we were surprised to have missed so far. We also had two Common Buzzards displaying over our heads, which gave fabulous views. It was a little confusing at first as there was an obvious size difference, but with good views we could see that they were both Common Buzzards, and not Honey Buzzards. We were there until lunchtime: the whole time, a Willow Warbler was singing in the bushes in front of us, and we had excellent views of Siskin. Nine Common Buzzards were seen at a distance, but alas no Goshawks or Honey Buzzards. Three Ravens displayed well across the valley. An unexpected find was a Common Goldenring dragonfly, which landed in front of us and was very obliging for the photographers.

At midday, we set off to descend to Forge Valley Roasters Tea Rooms in Wykeham for a welcome drink and snack lunch. Over lunch, we completed our last checklist and sadly, another Naturetrek adventure had come to an end. We returned to our hotel for Teresa and Neil to collect their cars for their return journeys home, and Anthony was taken to Scarborough railway station. Thank you all for your companionship during a lovely four days exploring the coast and moors of Yorkshire.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek email list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers.

naturetrek.co.uk/e-newsletter-signup

Scan to
sign up!



Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky and X and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers, exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



[instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays](https://www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays)



[facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays](https://www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays)



[naturetrek.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/naturetrek.social)



x.com/naturetrektours (formerly Twitter)

Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026			
		15	16	17	18
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓	✓		
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓		
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓			
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓		
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		2		
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	1			
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓		
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		1		
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>		20		
Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>			4	
Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1		H
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	1			
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	3			
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		✓		✓
Feral Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia (feral)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2	2		
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			✓	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓		
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	2			
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		2		
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>			1	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		1		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	1			
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		4	✓	
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			✓	
Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	2			
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>		✓		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>			✓	
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓			
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		✓		
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>		✓		
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓		
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓		
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		✓		
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	3			
European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>		6		
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1			
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>			1	12
Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>		1		
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	H			
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			1	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			3	
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		✓		
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026			
		15	16	17	18
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>				3
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>			✓	✓
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>			✓	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓	✓	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	✓			
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓	✓
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			✓	✓
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1	H	H	
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		H		
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	H	H	✓	H
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>		1	1	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		2	H	H
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			3	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>				7
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	H	1	2	3
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓	✓
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			1	
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			3	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		✓		
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓		✓
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	1			
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			2	
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrelli</i>	2	2	4	3
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓	
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	H	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				2
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		1		
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		1	4	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		4		
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				1
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		1		
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		H	2	3
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		1		

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026			
		15	16	17	18
D=dead					
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	✓			
European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	✓			
Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	✓		✓	
Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>		✓	✓	
Western Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	✓			✓
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>		✓		

D=dead		June 2026			
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18
Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>		✓		
European Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>			D	

Amphibians & reptiles

T=tadpoles		June 2026			
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18
Smooth Newt	<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>			✓	
Palmate Newt	<i>Lissotriton helveticus</i>			✓	
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>			T	

Butterflies

		June 2026			
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>			✓	
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>			✓	
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>			✓	
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			✓	
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓	✓	✓
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>			✓	
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		✓	✓	✓
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓	✓	✓
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>			✓	

Moths

		June 2026			
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18
Yellow-barred Long-horn	<i>Nemophora degeerella</i>	✓	✓		
Swan-feather Dwarf	<i>Elachista argentella</i>		✓		
Garden Grass-veneer	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>			✓	
Green Carpet	<i>Colostygia pectinataria</i>			✓	
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>		✓		

Damselflies & dragonflies

		June 2026			
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18
Common Bluetail	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	✓			
Azure Bluet	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	✓			
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>			✓	
Common Goldenring	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>				✓

Other invertebrates

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026			
		15	16	17	18
Water Boatman	<i>Notonecta glauca</i>			✓	
Scorpion Fly	<i>Panorpa communis</i>			✓	
Banded General (Soldier-fly)	<i>Stratiomys potamida</i>			✓	
a hoverfly	<i>Volucella pellucens</i>	✓			
White-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus lucorum</i>			✓	✓
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus terrestris</i>		✓		✓
Tree Bumblebee	<i>Bombus hypnorum</i>			✓	
Green Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela campestris</i>			✓	
Banded Snail	<i>Capaea hortensis/nemoralis</i>	✓	✓		

Fungi

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026			
		15	16	17	18
Giant Puffball	<i>Calvatia gigantea</i>	✓			

Orchids

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026			
		15	16	17	18
Northern Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>			✓	
Common/Heath Spotted Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii/maculata</i>	✓		✓	✓
Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i>		✓		