

The Best of Dorset

Naturetrek Tour Report

1st – 4th June 2021

Tour report and images by Byron Palacios



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Tour participants: Byron Palacios & Josh Phangurha (leaders) with ten Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Tuesday 1st June

Lodmoor Marshes – Bovington

After all the participants arrived in Dorset from different parts of the UK, the group gathered together after lunch time at the lodge in Broadmayne. After a brief welcoming chat, we set off to our first destination, Lodmoor Marshes. The 15-minute drive was filled by a good chat while enjoying the sites passing by, especially the views of Weymouth Bay and the Island of Portland, all under sunny skies. We parked near to the marshes and started our walk following the track that surrounds the main reedbeds where some species such as Common Whitethroat, Blackcaps, House Sparrow, Common Swift, Sand and House Martins and Barn Swallows were seen. The banks amongst the water were full of Common Terns, Herring, Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Black-tailed Godwits, Canada Geese with a single pair of Barnacle Geese among them. Sandwich Terns were also seen flying about, as well as Greater Black-backed Gull, Mediterranean Gull and Great Cormorant. The bushes nearby produced great views of Greenfinch and Lesser Whitethroat. European Reed Warblers we're also seen.

After having a good time walking here, we started to make our way back to our lodge in order to take a break before dinner, followed by our evening excursion to the area of Bovington, where we managed to have fantastic views of a couple of European Nightjars just before dusk!

Day 2

Wednesday 2nd June

Arne Reserve – Durlston Cliffs - Ridgeway

After an early breakfast, we drove east towards the Purbeck Peninsula where we joined volunteers from the RSPB who took us for a stroll along one of the conservation areas. Here, some great reptiles were found: the rare Smooth Snake which we all managed to see very well; we also found a Grass Snake and the very scarce Sand Lizard, a female, that we all enjoyed watching! We also had fantastic views of an adult male Dartford Warbler perched right on top of a gorse bush!

After this very interesting visit, we escaped from some light showers in the area, making a stop in Swanage to grab some lunch and continuing on to Durlston Cliffs. Here, a nice walk along the reserve's various trails and paths produced a great array of butterflies such as Adonis, Common, Holly and Little Blues, Speckled Wood, Painted Lady, Small Copper, Small Heath, Dingy Skipper, amongst others. We then reached the coastal path where plenty of Linnets, Meadow Pipits, Skylarks and Stonechats were seen around. We had also great views of Razorbills, Common Guillemots, Fulmar, European Shag and a few Rock Pipits. We also enjoyed the stunning views of the sea, the Old Harry rock and the Isle of White in the distance.

After an enjoyable time, we drove back to our lodge in order to enjoy a delicious dinner followed by an evening excursion to the Ridgeway.

Day 3

Thursday 3rd June

Lodmoor Marshes – Portland Bill - Ridgeway

After breakfast, we started our drive towards the Isle of Portland making a stop at Lodmoor Marshes along the way. The weather was overcast and not as sunny and warm as it was a couple of days ago. This allowed us to catch up with other species such as Marsh Harrier of which we had fantastic views of five different individuals, some of the views were really close! We also had great views of Sedge Warbler and more views of Common and Lesser Whitethroats, European Reed Warbler, Cetti's Warbler (heard lots and seen twice!) and Bearded Reedlings. There was plenty of other birds such as Gadwall, Shelduck, Tufted Duck, Mallard, Eurasian Teal, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Sparrowhawk, amongst others.

After an enjoyable time at Lodmoor, we continued our drive to Portland Bill, taking a nice stroll by the lighthouse which produced very close views of Razorbills, Common Guillemots, European Shag and others. We also had Northern Gannets fishing in the distance amongst gulls and Fulmars. We took a lunch break nearby, and we took another stroll around the bird observatory which produced very interesting flowers and butterflies, and a pair of very obliging Little Owls which we all enjoyed watching! We also spotted several Linnets, Western Jackdaw and Northern Raven.

After spending quality time here, we started to drive back to our lodge making a stop on the way in order to enjoy the breathtaking views of Chesil Beach and Weymouth Old Harbour! We then arrived back at our lodge to get ready for dinner at a restaurant nearby which we all enjoyed very much! We then we set off to an evening excursion to the Ridgeway which produced Roe Deer, Common Pipistrelle, Common Noctule and a beautiful family group of Red Fox.

Day 4

Friday 4th June

Affpuddle Forest - Hardy's Monument

Our last day dawned with a nice warm and sunny start as we set off towards Affpuddle Forest, spotting a nice European Hare in one of the fields as we were leaving Broadmayne. After the short drive we were soon walking amongst conifers and clearings. This produced a great array of birds such as Tree Pipit, Eurasian Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Siskin, amongst others. The clearings amongst the woodland offered great views of Woodlark, Common Buzzard and Green Woodpecker. Down towards the moors, more wildlife was spotted such as Viviparous Lizard, plenty of butterflies, Tree Pipit, Stonechat, Linnet, Spotted Flycatcher, Blackcap, Mistle Thrush, Nuthatch and many others.

After an enjoyable time walking in this great area, lunchtime was around the corner so we made a quick stop in Dorchester in order to grab some good for our lunch and drove to Hardy's Monument where we all enjoyed the fantastic views of the Jurassic Coast and Chesil Beach while eating our yummy food! After lunch, we explored some of the trails around the monument which produced interesting wildlife despite the breezy and warm sunny weather.

By mid-afternoon, it was unfortunately time for the tour to finish after a few days in the superb county of Dorset! We started our drive back to our lodge in Broadmayne in order to finish the tour, wishing to all our participants all the best and a safe journey home. Our final farewell after enjoying the gorgeous Dorset countryside...

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Checklist

Birds

	I = Introduced species, h = heard		June 21			
	Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4
1	Canada Goose - I	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓		✓	
2	Barnacle Goose - I	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	✓			
3	Greylag Goose - I	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓			
4	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓	✓	✓	
5	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓		✓	
6	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	✓		✓	
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓		✓	
9	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	✓		✓	
10	Common Pheasant - I	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		✓	✓	✓
11	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓		
12	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓			
13	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓		✓	
14	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓		✓	
15	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>			✓	
16	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

	I = Introduced species, h = heard		June 21			
	Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4
17	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			✓	
18	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>		✓	✓	
19	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓		✓	✓
20	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
21	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			✓	
22	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	h		h	
24	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
25	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓	✓	
26	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓		✓	
27	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓			
28	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓			
29	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓		✓	
30	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	✓			
31	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			✓	
32	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓			
33	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓		✓	
34	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyiaetus melanocephalus</i>	✓		✓	
36	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
37	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
38	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓			
39	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			✓	
40	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	✓		✓	
41	Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓	✓	
42	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>		✓	✓	
43	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>		✓	✓	
44	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		✓		✓
45	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
46	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		✓		✓
48	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	h		h	
49	Little Owl - I	<i>Athene noctua</i>			✓	
50	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	✓			
51	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
52	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓			
53	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	h	✓		✓
54	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	✓	✓		✓
55	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓		✓	
56	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	✓			
57	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		✓		✓
58	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓		✓

	I = Introduced species, h = heard		June 21			
	Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4
59	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
61	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓	✓	✓
62	Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
63	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				✓
65	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
66	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
67	Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>			✓	
68	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>				✓
69	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓		✓
70	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	✓		✓	
71	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
72	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
73	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓		✓	
74	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	✓		✓
75	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				✓
76	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
77	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			✓	
78	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	✓		✓	
79	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓		✓
80	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	✓		✓	
81	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
82	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>		✓		
83	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		✓		✓
84	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
85	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		✓		✓
86	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		✓		✓
87	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
88	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓		✓
90	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓		
91	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		✓		✓
92	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
93	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
94	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
95	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
96	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			✓	
97	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
98	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
99	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				✓
100	Eurasian Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>		✓	✓	

	I = Introduced species, h = heard		June 21			
	Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4
101	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
102	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	✓			✓
103	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
104	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓			✓
105	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
106	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>				✓
107	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>				✓
108	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓		✓	

			June 21			
	Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4
	Mammals					
1	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>				1
2	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		2	2	
3	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>			4	
4	European Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>			2	
5	Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>		4		
6	Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>		✓		
7	Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>				
8	Common Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>			✓	
	Reptiles					
1	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>		1		
2	Smooth Snake	<i>Coronella austriaca</i>		1		
3	Slow worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>		2		
4	Sand Lizard	<i>Lacerta agilis</i>		1		
5	Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>				1

Dragonflies and Damselflies

Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>
Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>
Downy Emerald	<i>Cordulia aenea</i>
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>

Large Red Damselfly

Pyrrhosoma nymphula

Small Red Damselfly

*Ceriagrion tenellum***Butterflies**

Orange Tip

Anthocharis cardamines

Brimstone

Gonepteryx rhamni

Holly Blue

Celastrina argiolus

Common Blue

Polyommatus icarus

Adonis Blue

Polyommatus bellargus

Peacock

Inachis io

Small Tortoiseshell

Aglais urticae

Speckled Wood

Pararge aegeria

Large White

Pieris brassicae

Little Blue

Cupido minimus

Painted Lady

Vanessa cardui

Red Admiral

Vanessa atalanta

Small Copper

Lycaena phlaeas

Small Heath

Coenonympha pamphilus

Meadow Brown

Maniola jurtina

Wall

Lasiommata megera

Dingy Skipper

Erynnis tages