The Isle of Wight in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Report

22nd - 25th May 2023





Grizzled Skipper







The Needles

Red Squirrel

Tour report and images by Jim Andrews



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

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Tour participants: Jim Andrews (leader) with five Naturetrek clients

Day 1 Monday 22nd May

Southampton, Newtown Marsh, Parkhurst Forest and Ventnor

10-21 degrees

Meeting at the ferry terminal, we all loaded on the van and onto the ferry as we started our adventure to the Isle of Wight. The journey over was calm and on arrival we headed to Shalfleet for a spot of lunch before heading to Newtown Marsh where we walked down to the marsh through the elms where we saw Holly Blue and Speckled Wood flitting around. Reaching the hide, we scanned noting Mediterranean Gulls out on the breakwater feeding, while a stunning Black-tailed Godwit fed in front of the Black-headed Gull colony. Behind on the creek, we saw both Harbour Seals on the mud and Grey Seals floating in the water. We headed along the road to the reserve where the next meadow had hundreds of Green-winged Orchids and a few Common spotted Orchids.

We walked out onto the saltmarsh where several Oystercatcher were feeding as well as a group of Sandwich Tern resting out on the promontories. Moving around to the next meadow, we found Dyers Greenweed and Small Heath butterfly. Once we reached the van, we headed down the road a little way where we stopped and had a look for Adders Tongue Fern finding several plants.

We moved on towards Parkhurst Forest spotting a Red Kite on route. On arrival we found a Red Admiral and then a Red Squirrel feeding just off the track. We carried on around the woods before heading to the hotel. On the walk down for dinner in the town we had a Fulmar fly through.

Day 2 Tuesday 23rd May

St Lawrence, Needles Alum Bay, Freshwater, Compton Chime, Brook Down and Strawberry Lane

10-19 degrees

We started the morning at the hotel where the group saw Wall Lizard before we headed off to St Lawrence where there was a lot of Crosswort in flower as well as Crested Cow Wheat just coming into flower. We scanned across the fields we spotted ten Hares.

We moved on to the Needles and Alum Bay. We got off to a slow start with only a singing Willow Warbler as we walked up to the point, but we managed to see Raven and two Peregrines circling around. As we got closer to the top, species such as Painted Ladies and Grizzled Skipper appeared. Going on to look at the Needles, the smell was strong with the flowers with lots of Horseshoe Vetch, while a Rock Pipit put in an appearance with a Wall Butterfly flitting around. We walked back down enjoying the stunning views of Hurst Castle. Reaching the van, we headed to Freshwater for lunch before heading to Compton Chime.

We arrived and looked around, soon finding Small Blue, Grizzled and Dingy Skipper as well as a very showy Green Hairstreak. After a little searching, we also found Glanville Fritillary. Walking along the track we found Hoary Stock in full flower as well as lots of Yellow Rattle.

We headed on to Brook Common for a look where we found both the skippers and Small Blue as well as a Hobby over, as well as some great Green winged Orchids.

We headed over to Strawberry Lane which was quite quiet but with lots of Common Blue, Small Copper and Brown Argus, good numbers of Linnets as well as another Hare which soon ran up the hill. There was also lots of Horehound. We finally left and went for dinner at Brightstone and then home to bed for the night.

Day 3

Wednesday 24th May

Bempton and Brading Marsh, St Helen Sea view, Arraton, Atherstone Mead, Compton Chime

11-21 degrees sunny

After breakfast we headed out with most of the group seeing the Wall Lizard - giving its forecast for the day as it sunbathed on the wall. We headed to Bembridge Bay and walked along the sea edge of Brading Marsh. For some, the first Cuckoo of the year was heard. We were serenaded by Sedge, Reed and Cetti's warbler, we soon picked up a Marsh Harrier drifting across. We found Blue-tailed Damselfly drifting round the brambles. We soon picked up on something not quite right or to be honest, just big and making the other birds agitated! It was a White-tailed Eagle up in the dead trees! We moved on keeping an eye on it, and on reaching the bridge, we realised both birds were there. As we watched, we saw the occasional fishing attempt, showing the maturity of these birds with the lovely flash of the white tail.

We moved to St Helens for a spot of lunch before heading to Arreton to look for Purple Broomrape - sadly not up yet. We moved on to Atherstone where we set out for a walk. We stopped at a viewpoint where we were joined by a photographer and also joined by a Red Squirrel that showed well.

Moving on, we got great views of Greater Spotted Woodpecker at the nest. Wandering further, we headed out the woods onto the old railway track, back to the van and then off to Compton Chime where lots of Small Blue showed well in the evening light, before we headed to Hulverstone for dinner.

Day 4

Thursday 25th May

Brading Marsh, Firestone Copse and Southampton

12-23 degrees sunny

We had our last breakfast as a group and said our farewells to our hosts at the Eversley, before getting underway and heading over to Brading village and a walk at Brading Marsh. Heading out over the railway track, we headed to Laundry Lane for a walk where a few Holly Blue and Speckled Woods flitted along the hedgerow. We soon

picked up a singing Firecrest that put on a small show for the group. Wandering further along, we soon were welcomed with the song of Reed Warblers with a few Lapwings in the fields. After a scan we picked up on the White-tailed Eagles watching over the reedbeds while a Lesser Whitethroat sang from a nearby hedge. As we wandered back along the lane, the damselflies sprung to life with Common, Blue-tailed, Azure and Large Red all putting in an appearance as well as a Broad-bodied Chaser moving round over the marsh. We heard another Cuckoo teasing the group calling from further out on the marsh. Reaching the vehicle, we headed off to our last stop on the island at Firestone Copse where we went for a walk through the strange mix of pine and broad leaved trees including Wild Service Tree and Narrow-leaved Lungwort in the ditches. We also recorded Common Cow Wheat and Butchers Broom. After a lovely wander, we headed for lunch at a nearby farm shop and café before heading for the boat.

Once loaded on the boat, we started scanning the water noticing large group of gulls feeding with some Sandwich and a couple of Common Terns mixed in. After this, most of the trip was quite quiet apart from a Grey Seal putting in a quick appearance. On disembarking from the boat, we headed to the train station where we said our farewells and headed on our way after a fantastic few days on the Isle Wight.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only, I = Introduced)

			May 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	23 24		
Common Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus		✓	✓	✓	
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	✓		✓	✓	
Mute Swan	Cygnus olor	✓		✓	✓	
Black Swan - I	Cygnus atratus			1		
Gadwall	Mareca strepera			√		
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	✓		√	✓	
Common Shelduck	Tadorna tadorna	✓			√	
Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula			√		
Great Crested Grebe	Podiceps cristatus			√		
Fulmar	Fuimarus glacialis	1	√			
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea			√	√	
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta			√	√	
Great White Egret	Casmerodius albus			√		
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo	√	√	√	√	
White-tailed Eagle	Haliaeetus albicilla	•		2	2	
Red Kite	Milvus milvus	1				
Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus			√		
Common Buzzard	Buteo buteo	√	√	√	√	
Honey Buzzard	Pernis apivorus		V	1		
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	√	√	·	√	
Eurasian Hobby	Falco subbuteo	V	1	V		
Peregrine Falcon			2			
Water Rail	Falco peregrinus Rallus aquaticus			Н		
				√	√	
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus			✓	✓ ✓	
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	1		V		
Black tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa					
Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus	✓		,		
Northern Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus			√	√	
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	√		✓	✓	
Mediterranean Gull	Larus melanocephalus	√				
Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus	√	√	√	√	
European Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	√	√	✓	✓	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	√			✓	
Common Tern	Sterna hirundo				✓	
Sandwich Tern	Sterna sandvicensis	✓			✓	
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	Columba livia 'feral'	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Stock Dove	Columba oenas					
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	✓	✓	✓	✓	
European Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur					
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus			Н	Н	
Common Swift	Apus apus	✓	✓	H√	✓	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major		Н	✓	Н	
European Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis		✓	Н	Н	
Eurasian Jay	Garrulus glandarius	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Magpie	Pica pica	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Western Jackdaw	Coloeus monedula	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Rook	Corvus frugilegus	✓	√	√	✓	

			May	2023	
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	√	√	✓	√
Northern Raven	Corvus corax		1	✓	√
Coal Tit	Periparus ater				Н
Great Tit	Parus major	√	√	✓	√
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	√	✓	✓	√
Eurasian Skylark	Alauda arvensis	√	√	√	√
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	✓	√	✓	√
Common House Martin	Delichon urbicum	✓	✓	✓	√
Long-tailed Tit	Aegithalos caudatus	√	✓	√	√
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus		Н		
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	Н	Н	√	√
Sedge Warbler	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus			Н	Н
Eurasian Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus			Н	Н
Eurasian Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	Н	√	√	√
Lesser Whitethroat	Sylvia curruca				Н
Common Whitethroat	Sylvia communis	Н	√	√	√
Goldcrest	Regulus regulus	√		Н	Н
Firecrest	Regulus ignicpilla		Н	Н	1
Eurasian Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	√	✓	√	√
Eurasian Treecreeper	Certhia familiaris				Н
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	√	✓	√	√
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula	√	√	√	√
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	√			√
Mistle Thrush	Turdus viscivorus			√	
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	√	✓	√	√
European Stonechat	Saxicola rubicola		✓		
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	√	√	√	√
Dunnock	Prunella modularis	✓	✓	✓	√
Pied Wagtail	Motacilla alba yarrellii	√			√
Meadow Pipit	Anthus pratensis		√	✓	√
Rock Pipit	Anthus petrosus		1		
Common Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	✓	✓	√	√
European Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	√	✓	√	√
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	√	√	√	√
Common Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	√			
Eurasian Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula		Н		
Common Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	√			

Other vertebrates

			May 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	
Reptiles & Amphibians:						
Wall Lizard	Podarcis muralis			1	1	
Common Lizard	Zootoca vivipara		1			
Mammals:						
Harbour Seal	Phoca vitulina	1				
Grey Seal	Halichoerus grypus	1			1	
Red Squirrel	Sciurus vulgaris		1	1		

		May 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25
Rabbit	Oryctolagus cuniculus			4	
Hare	Leporidae europaeus		11	1	
Bank Vole	Myodes glareolus				1

Invertebrates

			May 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	
Butterflies:						
	Hesperiidae					
Dingy Skipper	Erynnis tages		✓			
Grizzled Skipper	Pyrgus malvae		√			
	Pieridae					
Brimstone	Gonepteryx rhamni				√	
Large White	Pieris brassicae		√	✓	√	
Small White	Pieris rapae		√	✓	√	
Green-veined White	Pieris napi			✓	√	
	Lycaenidae					
Orange-tip	Anthocharis cardamines		√		√	
Green Hairstreak	Callophrys rubi		√			
Small Blue	Cupido minimus		√	√		
Small Copper	Lycaena phlaeas		√			
Brown Argus	Aricia agestis		√			
Common Blue	Polyommatus icarus	✓	√	✓	√	
Holly Blue	Celastrina argiolus	✓		√	√	
	Nymphalidae					
Glanville Fritillary	Melitaea cinxia		2			
Red Admiral	Vanessa atalanta	✓	√	√	√	
Painted Lady	Vanessa cardui		√			
	Satyrinae					
Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria	√		√	√	
Small Heath	Ceononympha pamphilus	√	√		√	
Wall Brown	Lasiommata megera		√	√		
Moths:						
Cinnabar	Tyria jacobaeae		√			
Dragonflies:						
Azure Damselfly	Coenagrion puella				√	
Common Blue Damselfly	Enallagma cyathigerum			✓	√	
Blue tailed Damselfly	Ischnura elegans			✓	√	
Large Red Damselfly	Pyrrhosoma nymphula			✓	√	
Beautiful Demoiselle	Calopteryx virgo			✓		
Broad bodied Chaser	Libellula depressa				/	

Flora

Scientific Name	Common Name	
FERNS		
Ophioglossum vulgatum	Adders Tongue Fern	
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male Fern	
Dryopteris dilatata	Buckler Fern	
Asplenium scolopendrium	Harts Tongue Fern	
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PINOPSIDA (GYMNOSPERMS)	CONIFERS	
Curvenance	Juniper Family	
Cupressaceae		
Juniperus communis	Juniper	
Pinaceae	Pine Family	
Larix decidua	European Larch	
Picea abies ssp. abies	Spruce	
Pinus sylvestris	Scots Pine	
Timae syrvesine		
Taxaceae	Yew Family	
Taxus baccata	Yew	
MAGNOLIOPSIDA (ANGIOSPERMS)	FLOWERING PLANTS	
MAGNOLIOI OIDA (ANOIGGI ERMIO)	I LOWEIGING I LANTO	
Aceraceae	Maple Family	
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	
Acer capestreius	Field Maple	
Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)	Carrot Family	
Aegipodium podagaria	Ground Elder	
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley	
Heracleum sphondyllium	Hogweed	
Aquifoliaceae	Holly Family	
llex aquifolia	Holly	
Araliaceae	Ivy Family	
Hedera helix agg	lvy	
Asteraceae (Compositae)	Daisy Family	
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	
Bellis perennis	Daisy	
Carduus nutans		
Carduus tenuiflorus	Slender Thistle	
Carlina vulgaris Carline Thistle		
Centaurea nigra	Knapweed	
Cirsium arvense Creeping Thistle		
Cirsium palustre	Marsh Thistle	
Cirsium vulgare	Spear Thistle	
Leucanthimum vulgare	Ox-eye Daisy	
Senecio jacobae	Common Ragwort	
Sonchus asper	Prickly Sow-thistle	

Scientific Name	Common Name
Taraxacum agg	Dandelion
D (1)	D: 15 ::
Betulaceae (Corylaceae)	Birch Family
Betula pendula	Silver Birch
Ulmus procera	English Elm
Boraginaceae	Forget-me-not Family
Anchusa arvensis	Bugloss
Cynoglossum officinale	Hound's-tongue
Oxalis articulata	Pink Sorrel
Myosotis arvensis	Field Forget-me-not
Myosotis sylvatica	Wood Forget-me-not
Pulmonaria longifolia	Narrow-leaved Lungwort
Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)	Cabbage Family
Alliaria petiolata	Garlic Mustard
Arabidopsis thaliana	Thale Cress
Brassica oleracea	Wild Cabbage
Capsella bursa-pastoris	Shepherd's Purse
Lobularia maritima	Sweet Alison
Matthiola incana	Hoary Stock
Sinapis arvensis	Charlock
Sisymbrium officinale	Hedge Mustard
Oenanthe crocata	Hemlock water dropwort
Smyrnium olusatrum	Alexanders
Allium roseum	Rosy Garlic
Allium roseum	Nosy Game
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle Family
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle
Sambucus nigra	Elder
Viburnum lantana	Wayfaring Tree
Viburnum opulus	Guelder Rose
Caryophyllaceae	Pink Family
Cerastium diffusum	Sea Mouse-ear
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear
Cerastium glomeratum	Sticky Mouse-ear
Lychnis flos-cuculi	Ragged Robin
Silene dioica	Red Campion
Silene latifolia (S.alba)	White Campion
Stellaria holostea	Greater Stitchwort
Stellaria media	Common Chickweed
Gionana modia	Common Chickweed
Celastraceae	Spindle-tree Family
Euonymus europaeus	Spindle-tree
Cistaceae	Rock-rose Family
Helianthimum nummularium	Common Rockrose
	The state of the s
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family
Convolvulaceae Calystegia sepium	Bindweed Family Hedge Bindweed

Scientific Name	Common Name	
Cornaceae	Dogwood Family	
Cornus sanguinea	Dogwood	
Corylaceae	Hazel Family	
Corylus avellana	Hazel	
Cucurbitaceae	Cucumber Family	
Bryonia dioica	White Bryony	
Dipsacaceae	Teasel Family	
Dipsacus fullonum	Teasel	
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family	
Euphorbia amygdaloides	Wood Spurge	
Euphorbia peplus	Petty Spurge	
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's Mercury	
Fabaceae (Leguminosae)	Pea Family	
Anthyllis vulneraria	Kidney Vetch	
Hippocrepis comosa	Horseshoe Vetch	
Lotus corniculatus	Bird's-foot Trefoil	
Lotus uliginosa	Large Bird's-foot Trefoil	
Medicago arabica	Spotted Medick	
Medicago lupulina	Black Medick	
Trifolium campestris	Hop Trefoil	
Trifolium dubium	Lesser Yellow Trefoil	
Symphytum sp	Comfrey	
Trifolium pratense	Red Clover	
Trifolium repens	White Clover	
Ceratocapnos claviculata	Creeping Corydalis	
Vicia cracca	Tufted Vetch	
Vicia sativa ssp. segetalis	Common Vetch	
Vicia sepium	Bush Vetch	
Blackstonia perfoliata	Yellow wort	
Fagaceae	Oak & Beech Family	
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	
Quercus robor	Pedunculate Oak	
Quercus ilex	Holm Oak	
Geraniaceae	Geranium Family	
Erodium cicutarium	Common Stork's-bill	
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert	
Lamiaceae (Labiatae)	Dead-nettle Family	
Glechoma hederacea	Ground-ivy	
Lamium album	White Deadnettle	
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge Woundwort	
Thymus polytrichis	Wild Thyme	

Scientific Name	Common Name	
Oleaceae	Olive Family	
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash	
Ligustrum vulgare	Wild Privet	
Onagraceae	Willowherb Family	
Chamerion angustifolium	Rosebay Willowherb	
Epilobium hirsutum	Great Willowherb	
Orobanchaceae	Broomrape Family	
Melampyrum cristatum	Crested Cow-Wheat	
Melampyrum arvense	Field Cow-wheat	
Papaveraceae	Poppy Family	
Papaver rhoaes	Corn Poppy	
Plumbaginaceae	Thrift family	
Armeria maritima	Thrift	
Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family	
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	
Plantago majus	Greater Plantain	
Plantago media	Hoary Plantain	
Polygalaceae	Milkwort Family	
Polygala vulgaris	Common Milkwort	
Polygonaceae	Knotweed Family	
Rumex acetosa	Sorrel	
Rumex crispus	Curled Dock	
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock	
Rumex acetosella	Sheep's Sorrel	
Primulaceae	Primrose Family	
Primula veris	Cowslip	
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family	
Ranunculus acris	Meadow Buttercup	
Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup	
Resedaceae	Mignonette Family	
Reseda lutea	Wild Mignonette	
Rhamnaceae	Buckthorn Family	
Rhamnus catharticus	Buckthorn	
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	
Fragaria vesca	Wild Strawberry	
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet	
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens or Herb Bennet	
Potentilla anserina	Silverweed	
Potentilla reptans	Creeping Cinquefoil	

Scientific Name	Common Name	
Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	
Rosa canina agg	Dog Rose	
Rubus fruticosus agg	Bramble	
Sanguisorba minor agg	Salad Burnet	
Sorbus torminalis	Wild Service	
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family	
Cruciata laevipes	Crosswort	
Galium aparine	Cleevers	
Galium mollugo	Hedge Bedstraw	
Sheradia arvensis	Field Madder	
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort Family	
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove	
Linaria vulgaris	Common Toadflax	
Rhinanthus minor agg	Hay Rattle	
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell	
Fumaria capreolata	Ramping fumitiry	
Urticacae	Nettle Family	
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle	
Valerianaceae	Valerian Family	
Centranthus ruber	Red Valerian	
Violaceae	Violet Family	
Viola odorata	Sweet Violet	
Araceae	Arum Family	
Arum maculatum	Lords and Ladies	
Asparagaceae	Bluebell Family	
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
Iris psuedocorus	Yellow Flag	
Liliaceae	Lily Family	
Ruscus aculeatus	Butcher's-broom	
Orchidaceae	Orchid Family	
Anacamptis morio	Green-winged Orchid	