# Alderney in Style – Wildlife & History

# Naturetrek Tour Report

6th - 20th May 2025





Esperia sulphurella

Glyphipterix simplicella



Lackey moth caterpillars



Wall Brown

Tour report and photos by Matt Scragg



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn

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Tour participants: Matt Scragg (leader) with nine Naturetrek clients

#### Day 1

## **Tuesday 6th May**

The group arrived late afternoon, collected from the airport by Michelle's taxis. After checking into the hotel, the group met for a drink on the terrace. Although it was breezy, it was pleasant and sunny. We saw Oystercatcher and Dunlin on the beach, also observing Rock pipit and White Wagtail on the Douglas quay.

One of the features in the hotel is a cinema and the group uses this facility to log the sightings for the day. While in the cinema we discussed the activities that were scheduled for the week and the limitations a windy forecast might impose, then we had our evening meal at the hotel.

#### Day 2

### Wednesday 7th May

An early start for some of the group with a moth trap before breakfast, the highlights being Least Black Arches, Broad Barred White and Dark Swordgrass. After Breakfast we collected our sandwiches from PJ's Cafe in town and we headed out to Kiln Farm. From this high vantage point on the east cliffs we could see the French coast and the other Channel Islands. Amongst the grazing cows that produce the milk and butter that we enjoyed at the hotel, were six Yellow Wagtail. Although they were initially partially concealed by the long grass they did wander into the path giving the group excellent views.

There were a small number of Barn Swallows visibly migrating through while we were walking north along the cliff path, then suddenly a large group of c.260 individuals came over, feeding and chattering as they passed by.

There had been an emergence of Lacky caterpillars in the bushes along the coast, seen on their web nurseries and ready to disperse amongst the vegetation. The group was also treated to Cocksfoot moth, an intricately marked 3mm micro moth, in abundance feeding on the Ox-eye Daisies. Continuing along the coast path we came to Telegraph House, now used as the Alderney Bird Observatory base, where we stopped for lunch.

We descended from Essex Castle overlooking Longis Baye at the top of the hill towards the Nunnery, entering into the German Tunnel when we got to the bottom of the hill. We discussed the history and purpose of the tunnel, observing Bloxworth Snout and Herald moths as we made our way inside.

The group had time to explore the Roman Fort and the Nunnery and view the timeline of events displayed on the information boards in the German bunkers within. From here we made our way to the Naturetrek sponsored bird hide on Longis Common, Reed Warblers were reeling near the hide and the Coot family was actively feeding.

Following the footpath we made our way to the Odeon, a German range finding station. On our way we enjoyed Green-winged Orchids, still holding on at the end of their flowering season. Our walk finished in the disused quarry under the Odeon. Here there were Changing Forget-me-not, Hairy Bird's-foot Trefoil and Orange Bird's-foot Trefoil.

Our day did not end there however; there was a break in the wind that had been forecast and we were able to get our boat trip in the early evening. Setting off from the harbour, we went south to Les Etacs visiting the Gannet

colony and then coming back to Burhou to see the Puffins. A spectacular finish to an action-packed day, topped off with a relaxing meal in the Quarterdeck, overlooking the inner harbour.

#### Day 3

## **Thursday 8th May**

The second moth trap of the trip to start the day, *Esperia sulphurella* being the highlight of the catch. Usually a day flier, it had come to rest on the external collar of the trap and remained steady for viewing. Following breakfast at the hotel we set off to town to collect sandwiches from PJ's Cafe, following an alternative route via the Alderney peace garden. Firecrest was heard calling in the spruce trees but remained elusive to sight.

Following the track we joined the coast path and made our way to Val Du Saou where there was a fine display of Bluebells. From here we continued south following the Standing Stone walk along the cliff path. In testing conditions there were brief views of Dartford Warbler. We found a sheltered spot to stop for lunch where there was a carpet of flowers, including Common Ramping-fumitory, Foxglove, Sheep's-bit and Thrift. While we were stationary a pheromone lure was opened to attract Emperor Moth and a few males came to investigate.

We stopped at the gates to the WW2 concentration camp, SS Lager Sylt, to pay our respects. After we moved on from the gates there was discussion detailing the German occupation of Alderney during the war.

Our walk continued past the Alderney pig farm where Oxford sandy and black pigs are reared. A family group of piglets were sunning next to the fence for an up close encounter for the group. Joining the Zig-zag path there were views over Fort Clonque and out to Burhou; the Gorse is exceptional at this time of year and the scent filled the air. The walk continued from Fort Clonque to Fort Torgis. Ragged Robin and Water Figwort were the botany highlights on this stretch of the walk.

After the day's log was completed we went to Saye Beach Campsite for our evening meal. It was a lovely sunny evening and Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel were seen in Saye Baye. This was all a prelude to another Alderney highlight, as the light fell away the search for the blonde hedgehogs commenced! The group was successful in their mission with both brown and blonde hedgehogs found.

## Day 4 Friday 9th May

After breakfast, Day 4 started outside the hotel with a brief history of the Douglas Quay and observing the plants growing there. After a short walk to Fort Doyle and on to Platte Saline there were seven Ringed Plover on the beach. The botany included a few sand and shingle specialists such as Sea Holly, Sea Kale, Sea Spurge and Yellow-horned Poppy. As we arrived at Fort Torgis Small Flowered Catchfly and Hare-tailed Grass were on the bank by the sea. Following exploration of Fort Torgis the group returned to the Hotel for lunch.

An afternoon walk to the north-east coast passed through Longis Nature Reserve. Male Stonechat were singing and showing well as we crossed the grassy scrub and as we got to the reedbed there were a few hirundines passing overhead giving a chance to compare House Martin, Sand Martin and Swallow. As we were viewing the hirundines there was a strong repetitive call, which would normally be accompanied by a flight display but as it was quite breezy the call was coming from a fixed point. We were able to locate the call to a clump of brambles and perched

on a prominent hoop of dead bramble there was a male Fan-tailed Warbler (Zitting Cisticola). The group had great views.

The walk continued on to the coast towards Houmet Herbe, where we were lucky to find some Alderney Sea Lavender in flower alongside Rock Sea Lavender. Along this stretch of coast there were plenty of Butterflies, Common Blue and Wall Brown being the most abundant and a few Painted Ladies too visiting the Thrift flowers.

The day's log was followed by an evening meal at the hotel.

#### Day 5

## Saturday 10th May

A later start to the day to allow time for departure preparations. When everyone was checked out and baggage stowed we made our way into town to visit the museum. There is a lot of Alderney history on display in the museum, bringing everything seen during the week together. We then went into the town, via St Anne's Church and stopped at Jack's for Lunch.

It was soon time to meet Michelle's Taxis at the hotel and set off to the airport; what an action packed few days!



Small-flowered Catchfly

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# **Species lists**

Birds (H = Heard only)

I=Introduced			May 2025				
Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	
Common Shelduck	Tadorna tadorna		1				
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Pheasant - I	Phasianus colchicus		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Swift	Apus apus		2	6	2		
Rock Dove	Columba livia		✓	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	✓	
Stock Dove	Columba oenas		1	2			
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus		✓	✓	<b>√</b>		
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto			1			
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus		2	1	1		
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra		6				
Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis		1				
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Common Ringed Plover	Charadrius hiaticula				7		
Eurasian Whimbrel	Numenius phaeopus			4	2		
Bar-tailed Godwit	Limosa lapponica			2			
Dunlin	Calidris alpina	1					
Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus		4	2	2		
European Herring Gull	Larus argentatus		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus		<b>√</b>	√	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge		\ \ \	· ✓		<u> </u>	
Razorbill	Alca torda		1	80			
Atlantic Puffin	Fratercula arctica		180				
Northern Gannet	Morus bassanus		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo		<b>-</b>	•	3	-	
European Shag	Gulosus aristotelis		<b>/</b>	<b>√</b>	✓		
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea		\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	V	1		
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta			1			
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus		1			-	
Common Buzzard	Buteo buteo		· /	1		-	
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus			2		-	
Western Jackdaw	Coloeus monedula		<b>/</b>				
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone		✓ ✓	/	<b>√</b>	<b>/</b>	
Northern Raven	Corvus corax		1	1	V	V	
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus		1	'		-	
Great Tit	Parus major		\ \ \	<b>√</b>	2	-	
Sand Martin	Riparia riparia	1	V	<b>V</b>	4	-	
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	· ·	280	40	-	-	
Common House Martin	Delichon urbicum		1	2	2	-	
Firecrest	Regulus ignicapilla		'				
	Cisticola juncidis		,	<b>√</b>	,	-	
Zitting Cisticola  Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>		
			√ 	✓	√ 6	-	
Eurasian Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus		4		6	<u> </u>	
Eurasian Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Common Whitethroat	Curruca communis		<b>√</b>	√ 0	✓	-	
Dartford Warbler	Curruca undata			2		<u> </u>	
Eurasian Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes		✓	✓	✓	✓	

I=Introduced			N	1ay 202	25	
Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos		1	2	1	
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
European Stonechat	Saxicola rubicola		2	<b>√</b>	6	
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
Dunnock	Prunella modularis		1	5	4	2
Western Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava		6			
White Wagtail	Motacilla alba		4	3	3	
Meadow Pipit	Anthus pratensis		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	2	
European Rock Pipit	Anthus petrosus	2	2	2	2	2
Common Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
European Greenfinch	Chloris chloris				1	
Common Linnet	Linaria cannabina		2		2	
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis		6	4	2	

#### Butterflies

C = Caterpillar			25			
Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10
Large White	Pieris brassicae		1		1	
Small White	Artogeia (Pieris) rapae		2	2	5	
Holly Blue	Celastrinas argiolus					1
Common Blue	Polyommatus icarus		10	3	25	
Peacock	Inachis io		1	1	1	
Red Admiral	Vanessa atalanta		6	6	2	
Painted Lady	Cynthia cardui				1	
Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria		2	3	2	2
Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus		2		2	
Wall Brown	Lasiommata megera		10	4	15	
Glanville Fritillary	Melitaea cinxia		С			

#### Moths

			N	1ay 202	25	
Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10
Bloxworth Snout	Hypena obsitalis		8			
Brimstone Moth	Opisthograptis luteolata		3			
Broad-barred White	Hecatera bicolorata		1			
Brown Silver-line	Petrophora chlorosata		1	3		
Broken-barred Carpet	Electrophaes corylata		1			
Brown-tail	Euproctis chrysorrhoea		С			
Buff Ermine	Spilarctia luteum		1			
Cocksfoot Moth	Glyphipterix simplicella		<b>√</b>			
Common Pug	Eupithecia vulgata		1			
Common Quaker	Orthosia cerasi		3	1		
Dark Swordgrass	Agrotis ipsilon		2			
Diamond-back Moth	Plutella xylostella		3	1		
Drinker	Euthrix potatoria		С	С	С	
Emperor Moth	Saturnia pavonia		6	2		
Hebrew Character	Oethosia gothica		1			

			N	1ay 202	25	
Common name	Scientific name	6	6 7 8		9	10
Herald	Scoliopteryx libatrix		4			
Lackey	Malacosoma neustria		С	С		
Least Black Arches	Nola confusalis		1			
Muslin	Diaphora mendica		3	5		
Peppered Moth	Biston betularia		1			
Rusty-dot Pearl	Udea ferrugalis		1	1		
Scarlet Tiger	Callimorpha dominula			1		
Shuttle-shaped Dart	Agrotis puta		4	1		
Sulphur Bark Moth	Esperia sulphurella			1		
Swallow Prominent	Pheosia tremula		1			
Tawny Shears	Hadena perplexa		1	2		
Willow Beauty	Peribatodes rhomboidaria			2		

#### Others

			N	/lay 202	25		
Common name	Scientific name	6	7 8		9	10	
OTHER INSECTS				<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>		
Field Grasshopper	Chorthippus brunneus						
Great Green Bush-cricket	Tettigonia viridissima		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Common Cockchaffer	Melolontha melonontha		2	9			
Yellow Dung Fly	Scathophaga stercoraria		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>		
St Marks Fly	Bibio marci		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Carrion Beetle	Silpha tristis				1		
Batman Hoverfly	Myathropa florea			1			
Yellow-legged Nomad Bee	Nomada succincta		4				
Gooden's Nomad Bee	Nomada goodeniana				6		
Orange-tailed Mining Bee	Andrena haemorrhoa		2				
White-tailed Bumblebee	Bombus lucorum		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Red-tailed Bumblebee	Bombus lapidarius		✓	✓	✓	✓	
MAMMALS							
Atlantic Grey Seal	Halichoerus grypus				1		
Western Hedgehog	Erinaceus europaeus			7			
Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus			6			
European Rabbit	Oryctolagus cuniculus		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	

#### Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name
LEPTOSPORANGIATE FERNS	TRUE FERNS
Asplenium scolopendrium	Hart's-tongue Fern
Asplenium trichomanes	Maidenhair Spleenwort
Polypodium vulgare	Polypody
Dennstaeditiaceae	Bracken Family
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken
DICOTS	DICOTYLEDONS
Aizoaceae	Dewplant Family

Scientific Name	Common Name
Carpobrotus edulis	Hottentot-fig
Anionaga	Carrot Family
Apiaceae Crambe maritima	Sea-kale
Crithmum maritimum	Rock Samphire
Inula crithmoides	Golden-samphire
Daucus carota	Wild Carrot
Eryngium maritimum	Sea-holly
Foeniculum vulgare	Fennel
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed
Araliaceae	Ivy Family
Hedera helix	Common Ivy
Asteraceae	Daisy Family
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow
Arctium lappa	Greater Burdock
Bellis perennis	Daisy
Hypochoeris radicata	Common Cat's-ear
Leucanthemum vulgare	Ox-eye Daisy
Senecio jacobaea	Common Ragwort
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel
Sonchus oleraceus	Smooth Sow-thistle
Taraxacum agg.	Dandelion group
Boraginaceae	Borage Family
Anchusa arvensis	Borage
Myosotis discolor	Changing Forget-me-not
Myosotis ramosissima	Early Forget-me-not
<b>D</b>	Oakhana Familia
Brassicaceae	Cabbage Family
Cakile maritima	Sea Rocket
Cochlearia danica	Danish Scurvygrass
Lobularia maritima	Sweet Alison
Raphanus raphanistrum ssp. maritimum	Sea Radish
Campanulaceae	Bellflower Family
Jasione montana	Sheep's-bit
Canvifaliana	Heneyayakla Femily
Caprifoliacae	Honeysuckle Family
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle
Caryophyllaceae	Pink Family
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear
Silene dioica	Red Campion
Silene latifolia	White Campion
Silene uniflora (vulgare ssp maritima)	Sea Campion
Spergularia rubicola	Rock Spurrey
Silene flos-cuculi	Ragged Robin
Chamanadiasas	Fot how Fourity
Chenopodiaceae Beta vulgaris subsp. maritima	Fat-hen Family Sea Beet

Scientific Name	Common Name
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family
Calystegia sepium	Hedge Bindweed
Calystegia soldanella	Sea Bindweed
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop Family
Umbilicus rupestris	Navelwort
•	
Ericaceae	Heather Family
Calluna vulgaris	Heather
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family
Euphorbia portlandica	Portland Spurge
Euphorbia paralias	Sea Spurge
Euphorbia paranas	Oca opange
Fabaceae	Pea Family
Lotus corniculatus	Bird's-foot Trefoil
Medicago arabica	Spotted Medick
Medicago sativa	Lucerne
Melilotus officinalis	Ribbed Melilot
Trifolium pratense	Red Clover
Trifolium repens	White Clover
Ulex europaeus	Gorse
Vicia sativa	Common Vetch
Ornithopus pinnatus	Orange Bird's-foot Trefoil
Lotus subbiflorus	Hairy Bird's-foot Trefoil
Anthyllis vulneraria	Kidney Vetch
Fagaceae	Beech Family
Castanea sativa	Sweet-Chestnut
Geraniaceae	Geranium Family
Erodium cicutarium	Common Stork's-bill
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
Geranium molle	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert
Laminonna	Dood nottle Femilie
Lamiaceae Glechoma hederacea	Dead-nettle Family
Mentha suaveolens	Ground Ivy  Round-leaved Mint
Teucrium scorodonia	Wood Sage
Teachan Scoroachla	wood Sage
Malvaceae	Mallow Family
Lavatera arborea	Tree Mallow
Oleaceae	Olive Family
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Ligustrum vulgare	Wild Privet
Orobnachaceae	Broomrape Family
Orobanche minor	Common Broomrape

Scientific Name	Common Name
Oxalidaceae	Wood-sorrel Family
Oxalis articulata	Pink-sorrel
Papaveraceae	Poppy Family
Fumaria muralis	Common Ramping-fumitory
Glaucium flavum	Yellow Horned-poppy
Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family
Plantago coronopus	Buck's-horn Plantain
Plantago lanecolata	Ribwort Plantain
Cymbalaria muralis	Ivy-leaved Toadflax
Plumbaginaceae	Sea-lavender Family
Armeria maritima	Thrift
Limonium normannicum	Alderney Sea-lavender
Limonium binervosum	Rock Sea-lavender
Polygalaceae	Milkwort Family
Polygala vulgaris	Common Milkwort
Polygonaceae	Knotweed Family
Persicaria amphibia	Amphibious Bistort
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrel
Primulaceae	Primrose Family
Anagallis arvensis	Scarlet Pimpernel
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family
Ranunculus bulbosus	Bulbous Buttercup
Ranunculus bulbosus	Bulbous Bullercup
Rosaceae	Rose Family
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn
Potentilla anserina	Silverweed
Potentilla erecta	Tormentil
Potentilla reptans	Creeping Cinqufoil
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn
Rubus fruticosus	Bramble
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family
Galium aparine	Cleavers
Salicaceae	Willow Family
Populus alba	White Poplar
Sapindaceae (Aceraceae)	Maple Family
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore
Aesculus hippocastanum	Horse-chestnut
Solanaceae	Potato Family
Lycium barbarum	Duke of Argyll's Teaplant
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet

Scientific Name	Common Name	
Urticaceae	Nettle Family	
Parietaria judaica	Pellitory-of-the-wall	
Urtica dioica	Stinging Nettle	
	Cunging Notice	
Valerianaceae	Valerian Family	
Centranthus ruber	Red Valerian	
Veronicaceae	Speedwell Family	
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell	
Veronica persica	Common Field Speedwell	
MONOCOTS	MONOCOTYLEDONS	
Amaryllidaceae	Allium Family	
•	Three-cornered Leek	
Allium triquetrum	Three-connered Leek	
Araceae	Arum Family	
Arum maculatum	Lord's-and-Ladies	
Asparagaceae	Asparagus Family	
Hyacinthoides hispanica	'Spanish' Bluebell	
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	
Ruscus aculeatus	Butcher's-broom	
Ruscus acuieatus	Dutcher S-broom	
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
Iris foetidissima	Stinking Iris	
Romulae columnae	Sand Crocus	
Orchidaceaae	Orchid Family	
Orchis morio	Green-winged Orchid	
	orser migra erems	
Poaceae	Grass Family	
Phragmites australis	Common Reed	
Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot Grass	
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire Fog	
Briza media	Quaking-grass	
cynosurus cristatus	Crested Dog's-tail	
Carex arenaria	Sand Sedge	
Lagurus ovatus	Hare's-tail Grass	
Sambuccus nigra	Elder	
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley	
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag Iris	
Sedium album	White Stonecrop	
Picris echioides	Bristley Ox-tongue	
Smyrnium olusatrum	Alexanders	
Gladiolus communis	Eastern Gladiolus	
Anchusa officinalis	Common Buglos	
Matricaria discoidea	Pineapple Weed	
Tamarix gallica	Tamerisk	
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove	

Scientific Name	Common Name
Scrophularia auriculata	Water Figwort
Silene gallica	Small-flowered Catchfly
Matthiola incana	Hoary Stock
Linum bienne	Pale Flax
Honckenya peploides	Sea Sandwort
Ornithogalum umbellatum	Garden Star-of-Bethlehem
Primula veris	Cowslip