

The New Forest (Day Trip)

Naturetrek Tour Report

13th April 2026



Tree Creeper



Marsh Tit



Dartford Warbler



Redstart

Tour report by Simon Woolley



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: Simon Woolley (leader) with seven Naturetrek clients

We met at Bolderwood car park on a chilly morning, with bird song filling the air. We very quickly located a singing Firecrest and had decent views (we would have at least two more later in the day), and enjoyed the local Pied Wagtails and Chaffinches. We quickly refamiliarized ourselves with common bird songs (Blackbird, Song Thrush, Robin, Wren and so on), and then set off for our morning's walk.

While our primary focus was birds, everyone enjoyed learning more about the history and management of the New Forest, and we made sure to identify as many trees and plants as we could. While the woods were dominated by Beech and (less numerous) Oak, we also saw lots of Holly, along with Rowan, Silver Birch, Scots Pine, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Yew, various exotic conifers and (later on) Hazel and Whitebeam. We enjoyed taste-testing some very young leaves of Beech, and also the astringent lemon-flavour leaves of Wood Sorrel. Among other wild flowers, we saw Dog Violet, Ground Ivy, Wood Spurge, Bluebells, Tormentil and Arum Lily, and saw both Butcher's Broom and Honeysuckle too. In heathy areas, we identified all three species of heather: Bell Heather, Ling and Cross-leaved Heath. We didn't forget the lichens either, but in this case it was all about appreciation, rather than identification!

Birds appeared steadily along our walk: Stock Doves sang distantly, Coal Tits were quite common (and we found a nest site), Blackcaps sang at intervals, along with both Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers, and we found a very smart male Redstart. The fact that it was *not* singing suggested that it had arrived overnight, and was intent on feeding before thinking about establishing a territory. A Crossbill or two called overhead, unseen. On reaching a large clearing, we quickly found a pair of Tree Pipits, which gave decent views, and shortly locked on to a Woodlark singing high above against the blue sky. A Buzzard was perched in a distant tree and later flew about a bit, and we found a rather unusual Kestrel, too. A female Stonechat gave us the run around on the edge of the heath.

We walked back towards Bolderwood via an extensive area of rather decrepit Holly woodland, much favoured by Hawfinches in winter. Frustratingly, one flew over, but just too distantly and quickly for clients to get onto it! However, we were rewarded here by quick views of a Fox, and rather prolonged and close views of a young Wood Mouse. About four Swallows zipped through, heading north as one might expect.

We enjoyed lunch at Bolderwood, and then set off for our afternoon location at Telegraph Hill. En route, some saw a Raven, while others saw a Red Kite: *everyone* saw and much enjoyed some of the local free-range donkeys! At Telegraph Hill, we started by exploring a good area of gorse-rich heath, which soon produced at least two fine male Stonechats, one in song. Just as Simon was explaining that Dartford Warblers sometimes follow Stonechats, and that we should keep our eyes open, a Dartford appeared mere inches from the Stonechat we were watching! This female was quickly followed by a superb male, and we enjoyed excellent views of both. Also here were a couple more Tree Pipits and a Meadow Pipit, two distant Buzzards and more singing Willow Warblers.

We finished off with an exploration of the woodland edge and inclosure to the south, which held Great Spotted Woodpecker, more Marsh Tits, Blackcaps and at least two more male Redstarts, these ones in song. And thus ended a really enjoyable early spring day trip in the northern New Forest!

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Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

		April 2026
Common name	Scientific name	13
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	H
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	H
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	H
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	✓
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	✓
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	✓
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	✓
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓
Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>	✓
Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	✓
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	✓
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	H
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	H
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	✓
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	✓

Mammals

		April 2026
Common name	Scientific name	13
I = introduced		
Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	✓
Eastern Grey Squirrel - I	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	✓
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	✓