

The New Forest (Day Trip) – Yateley U3A

Naturetrek Tour Report

14th October 2026



Dartford Warbler



Skylark

Tour report by Simon Woolley



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Tour participants: Byron Palacios and Simon Woolley (leaders) with 15 Naturetrek clients

The group met up successfully at Bolderwood car park for a 9.00am start, and quickly saw Mistle Thrush, Pied Wagtail and Chaffinches on and around the open lawn, caught sight of a couple of the autumn's first Redwings, fresh in from Scandinavia, and the first of several Ravens.

We soon set off on a gentle walk through an ancient Holly grove, learning about forest management and herbivore pressure, and seeing a splendid female Great Spotted Woodpecker in the warm morning light; unfortunately, a flyover Hawfinch was too quick and/or distant for most people to catch sight of it! We emerged into an area of typical New Forest heathland, and very swiftly located a pair of Dartford Warblers, which were frustrating at first, but eventually gave themselves up for most. Another pair a bit further on was much more cooperative! We also enjoyed several Stonechats, and a splendid Fallow Deer hart with his small harem of hinds.

We crossed the road and headed along the edge of the Bolderwood woodlands, before turning in and exploring the mixed forest and some large, open glades. Bird activity was a little quiet, but we heard or saw Siskins, Coal Tits, Treecreeper, Marsh Tit and best of all a superb Goshawk soaring with a Buzzard! We also found some lovely fungi, including a striking *Russula* species, False Deathcap (*Amanita citrina*) and some earthballs, as well as Tormential, Cross-leaved Heath and some tricky ferns. We also brushed up on our tree identification skills! Just before the car park, we succeeded in locating both Goldcrest and Firecrest in short order; both species gave brief but decent views.

We took a break for lunch and drove independently to Keyhaven, convening in the car park for a 2.00pm restart. We enjoyed a bracing walk along in increasingly blustery but sunny weather along the sea wall. The tide was high, so a lot of waders were roosting on vegetated islands offshore, waiting for the mudflats to be uncovered for them to feed. We saw scores of Curlews, a couple of them remarkably close-up, plus Redshanks, both Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Grey Plovers, Oystercatchers and Snipes. On the largely dry 'lagoons' behind the wall, small numbers of Turnstones, Ringed Plovers and a Dunlin were to be found too. Ducks comprised Pintail, Wigeon, Shoveler, Teal and Mallard, and a Great Crested Grebe bobbed about on the sea too. Little Egrets, various gulls (including an adult Mediterranean Gull) and Cormorants added to the variety.

Among the passerines, we all had good views of Meadow Pipits, Linnets, a fifth Dartford Warbler for the day, Pied Wagtails, and some saw a Wheatear, and Skylarks, one of which landed right on the path and froze, allowing a photo to be taken with a mobile phone from about a metre! A big highlight was a young male Marsh Harrier, which flushed almost all the birds for a few moments, and then settled down out of sight on an island. Further along, we could see it feeding there on a prey item.

Back near the car-park, we noted a very small but apparently purposeful movement of Jays (just three of them!) towards the west, and finished in real style when a pair of Peregrine Falcons appeared, hunting in tandem (one high, one low). They missed out on a pigeon meal, but it was a spectacular sight, and gave us a great chance to see the size difference between the sexes. It marked the end of a lovely, relaxed day out in the varied habitats of the New Forest.

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Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

Common name	Scientific name	
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	✓
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	✓
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	✓
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	✓
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	✓
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓
Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>	✓
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	✓
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	✓
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	✓
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	H
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	H
Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>	✓
Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	✓
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	✓
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	H

Common name	Scientific name	
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	H
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	✓
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	✓
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>	✓