

Norfolk Coast

Autumn Migration

Fri 15th-Mon 18th September 2017



Golden Plover are a regular feature of Norfolk's coastal marshes in autumn and winter © Brian Small/Limosa Holidays

**Report compiled by tour leader:
David Fairhurst**

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Day 1

The group arrived in the evening and over dinner we discussed our plans for the next three days

Day 2

There was a particularly strong (and cold) north-westerly blowing but it was dry so after a fantastic breakfast we headed to Holme golf course and dunes. Here we enjoyed a pleasant short walk and our first of many young Bar-tailed Godwits and a selection of birds offshore including many Gannet and Fulmars, the highlight here though was a couple of Short-eared Owls. We were able to watch the birds hunting back and forth across the dunes and getting excellent views. Next we had a stroll at Burnham Overy and were surprised with the large numbers (c1000) of Pink-footed Geese already returned for the winter. It was the birds of prey that stole the show here with Peregrine, Hobby and Red Kite all seen within a short space of time. The weather had deteriorated so we had our lunch inside the minibus in the Titchwell car park with the rain hammering down. As we ate our sandwiches news came through that a Red-necked Phalarope had just been found on the fresh-marsh here at Titchwell, superb! The rain soon cleared and we spent the whole afternoon at Titchwell. The phalarope performed superbly and other highlights during the afternoon included good numbers of Little Stints, Knot, Grey and Golden Plover, Great Egret and a juvenile Purple Sandpiper acting like a Water Rail!

Day 3

Our first stop after breakfast was at Holkham and a walk through the pines to view the freshmarsh. The pines were rather quiet with just Treecreepers and Chiffchaffs amongst the tit-flocks but from the Washington Hide were good numbers of wildfowl including Wigeon and Pintail. Here we spotted another Great Egret and several hundred Pink-footed Geese roosted on the grazing marsh. As we returned to the minibus, news came through of an Arctic Warbler just round the corner at Wells Woods. We were there within a few minutes and after a short wait the bird performed superbly. After an hour with the bird, we returned to the minibus and a well-deserved bite to eat.

By the time we had lunch and travelled to Cley it was mid-afternoon so the rest of the day was spent pottering along the East Bank and looking on the sea. The marsh to the east of the East Bank was heaving with birds and it was great to spend time sifting through the wildfowl and waders. Highlights here included a feeding Spoonbill, good numbers of Pintail, Little Ringed Plover, some very smart young Ruff and, offshore, some wonderfully close Gannets.

Day 4

As we had spent so much time on the East Bank at Cley yesterday we returned today to this fabulous reserve and spent time in the hides there. Similar species to yesterday were seen including another Little Ringed Plover, but after a little while we located at least three cracking young Curlew Sandpipers amongst the Dunlin and Little Stints. Heading back towards the hotel, we popped in to Stiffkey Fen and were amazed at the numbers of wildfowl and waders there, mainly Teal, Greylag Geese and Black-tailed Godwits we did find at least nine Spoonbills. All too soon it was time to head back to the hotel, say our goodbyes and reflect on what had been a very bird-filled few days!

**Annotated List of Species Recorded
(108 species)**

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Noted daily, at several sites

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Noted at several sites, many hundreds at Stiffkey Fen

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*Much to our surprise large (ish) numbers were already back from Iceland to winter on the Norfolk coast with over 1000 recorded on 16th and well over 8000 on 17th in stubble fields and the Freshmarsh at Holkham**Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

Recorded daily.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Recorded daily

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Small numbers at Titchwell, and Cley.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Easily seen at all water bodies visited.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Noted at both Titchwell and Cley.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Two at Holkham Freshmarsh and at least 30 at Cley

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common, seen at all wetland sites visited.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Noted at four wetland sites

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Easily seen again at water bodies visited, particularly numerous at Titchwell.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

At least 20 seen at Titchwell

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Several were noted at Titchwell

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Roadside coveys were noted on two days.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Recorded daily.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Three seen flying north off Cley on 17th

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Several offshore on 2 dates

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Noted at several sites

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

A single recorded close inshore off Cley on 17th

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

A single briefly at Titchwell, one was watched feeding along the East Bank at Cley and 9 at Stiffkey Fen.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Ones and twos were noted daily.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

One at Titchwell and another at Holkham Fresh Marsh

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*One with roadside cattle at Stiffkey on 17th and 18th was found by the group!**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Easily seen and noted at all wetland sites visited.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Noted daily, though some more distant than others.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Noted daily.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Noted daily

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Two-three seen daily

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Seen daily

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

A juvenile was watched hunting over stubble fields at Burham Overy on 16th.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Noted daily

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Noted daily

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Common, seen daily.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Around 30 were noted at Titchwell.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Recorded daily in small numbers.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Several hundred noted at Titchwell

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Noted daily with some particularly smart breeding plumaged birds seen at Titchwell

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Seen on 2 dates

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

A single juvenile seen at Cley along the East Bank on 17th and another from Daukes Hide on 18th

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Noted at 5 wetland sites we visited

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Seen at Titchwell, Cley, and Stiffkey Fen, particularly numerous at the latter site.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Many seen at Titchwell and Holme beach, mostly juveniles, it appears to have being an excellent breeding season for them!

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A superb juvenile gave superb close views on the saltmarsh at Titchwell

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Noted daily.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Common, recorded daily.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Recorded at Cley and Titchwell.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Noted daily, along the shoreline at various sites.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Noted in small numbers at Titchwell were one juvenile gave very close views

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A single recored at Cley

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

A very unusual sighting at Titchwell involved a juvenile coming in and out of the reed edge like a Water Rail as we watched the Red-necked Phalarope!!

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Seen in small numbers, primarily at Titchwell and Cley

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Twelve juveniles performed superbly at Titchwell and seven were seen at Cley

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Three juveniles at Cley on 18th

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Easily seen on the freshmarsh at Titchwell ,with smaller numbers also noted at Cley and Stiffkey Fen

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

A cracking juvenile was discovered just as we arrived at Titchwell, what timing!

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common, noted daily.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Again seen daily.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Noted daily at all coastal sites visited.

European Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

As above noted daily.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Seen at Titchwell and Cley.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

A smart adult was watched at close quarters at Titchwell on 16th. It was great to be able to compare it was Herring and Lesser-black backs alongside

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

A large group (c100) of mixed Sandwich and Common Terns was roosting on the beach in front of the hotel on the morning of 17th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

See above comment

Great Skua

A couple seen distantly offshore at Cley

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

An adult and a juvenile were offshore at Cley on 17th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Two were watched hunting over the Holme dunes, wonderful birds!

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Seen daily, primarily around the hotel building and during our travels.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Noted on two dates.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Common, seen daily

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Several seen on both our dry days, generally single hunting birds.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

A single at Burnham Overy on 16th was our only sighting

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

An adult (large, so perhaps a female) was standing on the mud at Burnham Overy before powering off inland.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Noted on two dates

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Seen daily in small numbers

Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Seen daily in both fields and around village roof tops

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Several flocks were noted at Cley.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Small numbers were noted throughout the trip at various sites.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Heard and seen in the conifer belt near the hotel and also at Holkham

Great Tit *Parus major*

Noted daily, in small numbers

European Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Noted daily, in small numbers

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*

Seen well at Titchwell on 16th

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Noted on just one date

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

A handful seen on two dates

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Seen daily.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Noted daily, in small numbers

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Heard daily at various suitable sites and one showed well in brambles and Hawthorns at Burnham Overy

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Small noisy flocks were encountered daily, with some nice views had by all.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

The highlight of the trip was a showy individual in birches at Wells Woods. It performed superbly in the autumn sunshine. Once again we happened to be in the right place at the right time as we were just a mile away in Holkham Pines when the news broke!

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus colybita*

Noted at several sites

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Just one noted at Burnham Overy on 16th.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Heard daily in the conifer belt by the hotel, and quite a few seen in the pines at Holkham

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Recorded daily at various sites

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Several seen at Holkham

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Seen daily in small flocks.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Noted daily, easily seen around the hotel grounds.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Seen and heard daily

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

One at Holkham Fresh Marsh on 17th

European Stonchat *Saxicola rubicola*

A pair along the trail at Titchwell shwed very well

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Noted daily.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

As above, noted daily.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Recorded daily

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Noted daily

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common, recorded daily.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Noted in small numbers daily

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Noted daily at various sites.

Common Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Noted daily

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Noted daily.