

# BOC Trip to Suffolk & Norfolk February 2013



## 7th February – Suffolk & South Norfolk

We met around 8:30 in the Tesco's at Ipswich, at the junction between the A12 and A14, known as the Copdock Interchange (Postcode IP83TS), most of us having set off from Berkshire between 5.00am and 6.00am, and with one group having already seen the first significant bird of the trip, a **Woodcock** from the car somewhere in Oxfordshire. There were 16 of us in 5 vehicles. Colin had organized a full itinerary for the trip, which we all more or less followed, but not always together.

First stop for most of us was Woodbridge where there had been a report of Waxwings the previous day in a housing estate. We scanned the estate for 20 minutes finding common garden birds for the trip list, but no Waxwings.

Next stop was Minsmere. We arrived in bright sunshine quickly making our way through the new visitor centre to spend around 2 ½ hours at the reserve. On the sea there were lots of **Red Throated Divers** with as many as 12(?) being seen and lots of **Cormorants**. There were common birds on the scrape, but the sun and flooded paths prevented us fully exploring this part of the reserve. In the woodland there was a **Marsh Tit** and at Island Mere hide one lucky person saw the only **Bittern** of the trip.

From here we headed north to Ness Point, Gas Works Road (TM556937) at Lowestoft, located just north of the harbour behind an industrial site and wind turbine. The advance party arrived around 2:00pm and almost immediately 3 **Purple Sandpipers** flew in to the short jetty in front of the parking area giving great views to those people present. We also found three **Turnstone**. Colin had had a report of a **Great Northern Diver** in the harbour so we walked the ½ km or so down the sea wall finding the diver as soon as we arrived, cruising around between the moored boats diving and catching fish. Whilst we were watching this bird Sarah also spotted a winter **Guillemot** that had also taken up residence, amongst the boats.

Next stop was just a short drive to north Lowestoft following up another report of Waxwings, however once again they had moved on before we got there.

The last stop of the day was Horsey and Stubb Mill (TG428222). We made our way separately to Stubb Mill, with some of us going the long way around through Horsey, finding Red Legged Partridge, Pinkfeet, Brent Geese, Golden Plover and 5 Barn Owls. We arrived at Stubb Mill around 4.00pm, the lane was flooded and the weather cold and overcast. We didn't see any Cranes (although some in the Group did) but we did see plenty of **Marsh Harriers** and at least one **Hen Harrier**, Merlin and Sparrowhawk.

After dark we returned to Great Yarmouth and the Comfort Hotel (NR30 3JH). Colin had got us a really great deal here, we paid £36 for dinner, bed and breakfast, and the staff made a great effort to look after us since we comprised the bulk of the residents and as we are now regular visitors.

## 8th February – Suffolk & South Norfolk

After a cooked breakfast at the hotel we checked out and headed for the beach. The morning was frosty but bright and sunny. On the beach were small collections of gulls with the closest groups being mostly **Mediterranean Gulls**, a mixture of adults and juveniles. Sarah had the inspired idea to bring some bread, which brought the gulls closer and kept the photographers amused for 10 minutes.



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A five minute drive brought us to the Asda car park at Lowestoft and, in icy conditions, a short slippery walk gave us spectacular views of Breydon Water teeming with ducks and waders in the morning sun. Most of the ducks were **Wigeon**, but there were also **Teal**, **Mallard**, **Shelduck** and **Pintail** present. There were also sizeable flocks of **Black Tailed Godwit**, **Avocet** & **Dunlin**, with smaller numbers of **Curlew**, **Golden Plover**, **Grey Plover**, **Knot**, **Bar Tailed Godwit**, **Redshank** and **Ringed Plover**, **Meadow pipits** and **Skylarks**.



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We spent a productive 40 minutes scanning all these birds before departing for our next destination around ½ an hour away at Fritton (Leave the A143 at Fritton head north up New Road to the layby at the top, or park in the public car park a bit further back. (TG458010)). After parking we walked south west through the conifer plantation before arriving at a look out point on the edge of the woodland (known as Waveney Forest Mound) which gave us good views over Fritton Marshes, enclosed by a loop in the river Waveney to the west. By the time we arrived the advance party had already found our target bird, two **Rough Legged Buzzards**. These birds perched up on fences in the marsh for long periods with occasional short flights. On the closer bird we got excellent views of the white tail and black terminal band, with the tail being clearer visible even at rest as the bird shuffled its wings. The head on the nearest bird was also very pale, so I think this was a juvenile bird.

Also present on the marshes was a **Little Egret** and a **Sparrowhawk**, and rather ominously a very large flock of grey geese rose up from the direction of Cantley which was to be our next destination, and disappeared to the north. (Some of the group had visited Cantley the previous day and had picked up **Bean Geese** and **White-fronted Geese**)

On the way back through the woods we found **Coal Tit** and **Goldcrest**. At a little cottage in the woods the owner had built a surreal model palace which doubled as a bird feeding station, and here we saw as well as many tits, thrushes and robins, the first **Blackcap** of the trip.

We made our separate ways to Cantley, some of us braving the efficient little chain ferry across the river Yare at Reedham (£4 and a **Little Grebe**), and some driving down the A47 with the bonus of some **Whooper Swans** from the car. We all arrived around the same time to park just south of the railway line by the old station. We walked out to the Reedcutter pub on the banks of the river Yare picking up more **Wigeon**, **Teal** and a **Snipe**. Just past the pub we had a good view of the marshes to the west and were quickly able to see there were no geese there, although we did see **Redwing**, **Fieldfare** and a **Little Egret**. By this time it was cold and overcast with a little sleet in the air so we didn't linger and we set off to walk around the Sugar factory to check out the settling ponds where birds had been seen in the past. The factory site is extensive with a series of rather unattractive settling ponds used for liquid waste from the sugar refining process. Here we saw lots of **Teal**, our first **Wren** of the trip and on the marsh beyond, a few **Pinkfeet** and a **Merlin**.

Next stop was Buckenham just a few miles to the west. We scanned the marshes here finding a few **Canada Geese** and **Greylags**, lots of **Wigeon** and **Teal** plus a close **Barn Owl**. However we didn't stay long here, because we were booked in to the Burleigh for dinner in Hunstanton and had one other stop to do on the way.

Just south of Norwich we stopped at Colney, walking north on to the Tollgate bridge to survey the upper Yare river valley looking for a **Great White Egret**. We had difficulty locating this bird until Brian Bennett turned up and spotted the bird in the distance to the west. There were also **Little Egret** and **Mute Swan** present.

An hour and a half's drive in the dark and sleet brought us to the welcoming Burleigh guest house in Hunstanton where we were to stay for the next two nights (£97 bed and breakfast for two nights plus one evening meal). On the first night we ate at the guest house and most people turned in early to get an early night.

## 9th February – North Norfolk

We were all up early and down to Hunstanton cliffs before it was even fully light, picking up new birds for the year including **Fulmars**, **Red Breasted Mergansers**, a **Peregrine**, a **Yellow Legged Gull** spotted by Ken on the beach, as well as a noisy flock of **Brent Geese** in the waves below. After breakfast at the Burleigh the sun had come out and the weather turned bright and sunny which was to last all day. We drove the short distance to Holme beach and walked east through the dunes looking for winter passerines, finding **Peregrine**, **Linnet**, **Skylark** and a couple of **Twite** for a lucky two people.

Next stop was Titchwell which we worked for 2 ½ hours finding a good list of birds. On the feeders by the centre were several **Brambling** showing well and close enough to photograph. In the ditch by centre we were lucky to see the resident **Water Rail** (normally gone by the time people arrive in any numbers). From the path we saw **Marsh Harrier** and on the scrapes were **Avocet**, **Dunlin**, **Redshank**, **Ruff** and a **Spotted Redshank**. Resting on a pool on Thornham Marsh was a female **Long Tailed Duck**

From the beach we saw huge flocks of **Scoter** in the distance, with smaller numbers closer in. Also present were **Velvet Scoter**, **Eider**, and a good collection of waders including **Grey Plover**, **Sanderling**, **Oystercatcher**.

We had a short stop at the café to regroup and have lunch, and then a quick visit up to Choseley Barns where some obliging person had been putting down niger seed, which had brought in spectacular flocks of brightly coloured **Yellowhammers** with a few **Corn Buntings** thrown in. There were also several **Grey Partridge** here lurking around the hedges and many Red-legged Partridge in the fields.

By this time it was getting on for 14:00 so we hurried off east heading for Holkham and Salthouse.

Just before Holkham we stopped at a pull off to join other birders looking for a Rough-Legged Buzzard. We didn't see this bird but did see **Common Buzzard** and lots of geese including **Pinkfeet**, **Greylag**, **Canada Geese**, a couple of **Barnacle Geese** plus some **Golden Plover** and a **Marsh Harrier**.

After this productive stop we continued on to the beach at Salthouse where we heard that Snow Buntings had been feeding around a van serving coffee. We didn't find Snow Buntings here, but did find a remarkably tame flock of **Turnstone** feeding within twelve feet of the car park. We wandered up the beach looking for more winter birds, eventually being rewarded with close views of a little flock of **Snow Bunting**, as usual it was the call that alerted us to their presence.



©Ray Reedman

After this satisfying end to the day's bird watching we headed back home, calling in at the cosy Lifeboat pub at Thornham for a couple of pints before heading to the Ancient Mariner's Bar at the Best Western Le Strange Arms in Old Hunstanton for supper.



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## 10th February - Trip home with stops

In the morning we split up with one party heading for the harbour at Thornham and one party heading for Dersingham bog. It was sleeting fairly persistently at the latter site, and consequently we saw little other than a **Treecreeper** to add to the trip list, not finding the hoped for Golden Pheasant, although some of the party had picked up one earlier in the weekend. The group at Thornham did better, with **Kingfisher**, **Spotted Redshank** and other birds seen before we regrouped at the Burleigh for breakfast.

We decided not to linger in Norfolk, partly owing to the sleet that was falling and partly due to the forecast of some snow later in the day, so we set off south, driving to Mundford to visit Lyndford Arboretum. It was cold and overcast when we arrived and split up. Some lucky people found a **Jack Snipe** and an **Otter** on the north lakes, whilst we all failed to find the hoped for Hawfinches, finding instead **Lesser Redpoll**, **Siskin**, **Treecreeper**, **Nuthatch** and **Marsh Tit** and Great Spotted Woodpecker.

Last stop of the trip was Thetford where we nearly failed to find the long staying **Black Bellied Dipper**, locating it at the last minute just 100m from the Nuns Bridges. This bird showed incredibly close, allowing people to approach within 15ft. We watched the bird swimming, feeding and perched for a happy 20 minutes.



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We also saw **Green Woodpecker**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Muntjac** and another **Otter** before heading back to the cars for the drive south. We drove through sleet and snow on the drive home but arrived safely back in Berkshire without incident around 18:00.

#### **Attendees were**

Ken Bradley, Gray Burfoot, John Hard, Peter Hickman, Dot Lincoln, Joan Pearson, Andy Horscroft, Ray Reedman, Richard Stansfield, Roger Stansfield, Andy Tomczynski, Sally Wearing, Ken and Sarah White, Colin Wilson and Doug Wilson. Thanks to Colin for all his hard work in organizing a great trip and to the drivers (Doug, Ken, Sally, John and Pete) for bringing their cars and doing all the driving. Thanks to Doug also for compiling the trip list.

**BOC Norfolk Trip****7-10 February 2013**

Birds Seen: (Order of RSPB Field List)

No	Species (Common Name)	21/2/2010	20/2/2011	19/2/2012	10/2/2013
1.	Red-Throated Diver	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.	Black-Throated Diver	Y			Y
3.	Great Northern Diver			Y	Y
4.	Little Grebe	Y	Y	Y	Y
5.	Great Crested Grebe	Y	Y	Y	Y
6.	Red-Necked Grebe	Y	Y		
7.	Slavonian Grebe	Y	Y		Y
8.	Black-Necked Grebe			Y	
9.	Fulmar	Y	Y	Y	Y
10.	Cory's Shearwater				
11.	Great Shearwater				
12.	Sooty Shearwater				
13.	Manx Shearwater				
14.	Mediterranean Shearwater				
15.	Storm Petrel				
16.	Leach's Petrel				
17.	Gannet	Y	Y	Y	Y
18.	Cormorant	Y	Y	Y	Y
19.	Shag				
20.	Bittern	Y	Y	Y	Y
21.	Little Egret	Y	Y	Y	Y
22.	Grey Heron	Y	Y	Y	Y
23.	Purple Heron				
24.	White Stork				
25.	Spoonbill		Y		
26.	Mute Swan	Y	Y	Y	Y
27.	Bewick's Swan			Y	Y
28.	Whooper Swan	Y		Y	Y
29.	Bean Goose		Y	Y	Y
30.	Pink-Footed Goose	Y	Y	Y	Y
31.	White-Fronted Goose	Y	Y	Y	Y
32.	Greylag Goose	Y	Y	Y	Y
33.	Snow Goose	Y			
34.	Canada Goose	Y	Y	Y	Y
35.	Barnacle Goose	Y		Y	Y
36.	Brent Goose	Y	Y	Y	Y
37.	Egyptian Goose	Y	Y	Y	Y
38.	Ruddy Shelduck				
39.	Shelduck	Y	Y	Y	Y



40.	Mandarin		Y		
41.	Wigeon	Y	Y	Y	Y
42.	Gadwall	Y	Y	Y	Y
43.	Teal	Y	Y	Y	Y
44.	Mallard	Y	Y	Y	Y
45.	Pintail	Y	Y	Y	Y
46.	Garganey				
47.	Shoveler	Y	Y	Y	Y
48.	Red-Crested Pochard		Y		
49.	Pochard	Y	Y	Y	Y
50.	Ring-Necked Duck				
51.	Ferruginous Duck				
52.	Tufted Duck	Y	Y	Y	Y
53.	Scaup	Y	Y	Y	Y
54.	Eider	Y	Y	Y	Y
55.	Long-Tailed Duck	Y		Y	Y
56.	Common Scoter	Y	Y	Y	Y
57.	Surf Scoter				
58.	Velvet Scoter	Y	Y	Y	Y
59.	Goldeneye	Y	Y	Y	Y
60.	Smew	Y	Y	Y	Y
61.	Red-Breasted Merganser	Y	Y	Y	Y
62.	Goosander	Y		Y	
63.	Ruddy Duck	Y			
64.	Honey Buzzard				
65.	Red Kite		Y	Y	Y
66.	Marsh Harrier	Y	Y	Y	Y
67.	Hen Harrier	Y	Y	Y	Y
68.	Montagu's Harrier				
69.	Goshawk				
70.	Sparrow Hawk	Y	Y	Y	Y
71.	Buzzard	Y	Y	Y	Y
72.	Rough-Legged Buzzard	Y		Y	Y
73.	Golden Eagle				
74.	Osprey				
75.	Kestrel	Y	Y	Y	Y
76.	Merlin	Y	Y	Y	Y
77.	Hobby				
78.	Peregrine	Y		Y	Y
79.	Red Grouse				
80.	Ptarmigan				
81.	Black Grouse				
82.	Capercaillie				

83.	Red-Legged Partridge	Y	Y	Y	Y
84.	Grey Partridge	Y	Y	Y	Y
85.	Quail				
86.	Pheasant	Y	Y	Y	Y
87.	Golden Pheasant		Y		Y
88.	Lady Amherst's Pheasant				
89.	Water Rail	Y	Y	Y	Y
90.	Spotted Crake				
91.	Corncrake				
92.	Moorhen	Y	Y	Y	Y
93.	Coot	Y	Y	Y	Y
94.	Crane	Y	Y	Y	Y
95.	Oystercatcher	Y	Y	Y	Y
96.	Avocet	Y	Y	Y	Y
97.	Stone Curlew				
98.	Little Ringed Plover				
99.	Ringed Plover	Y	Y	Y	Y
100.	Kentish Plover				
101.	Dotterel				
102.	Golden Plover	Y	Y	Y	Y
103.	Grey Plover	Y	Y	Y	Y
104.	Lapwing	Y	Y	Y	Y
105.	Knot	Y	Y	Y	Y
106.	Sanderling	Y	Y	Y	Y
107.	Little Stint			Y	
108.	Temminck's Stint				
109.	Pectoral Sandpiper				
110.	Curlew Sandpiper				
111.	Purple Sandpiper	Y	Y	Y	Y
112.	Dunlin	Y	Y	Y	Y
113.	Buff-Breasted Sandpiper				
114.	Ruff	Y	Y	Y	Y
115.	Jack Snipe	Y			Y
116.	Snipe	Y	Y	Y	Y
117.	Woodcock	Y		Y	Y
118.	Black-Tailed Godwit	Y	Y	Y	Y
119.	Bar-Tailed Godwit	Y	Y	Y	Y
120.	Whimbrel				
121.	Curlew	Y	Y	Y	Y
122.	Spotted Redshank	Y	Y	Y	Y
123.	Redshank	Y	Y	Y	Y
124.	Greenshank				
125.	Green Sandpiper				

126.	Wood Sandpiper				
127.	Common Sandpiper				
128.	Turnstone	Y	Y	Y	Y
129.	Red-Necked Phalarope				
130.	Grey Phalarope				
131.	Pomarine Skua				
132.	Arctic Skua				
133.	Long-Tailed Skua				
134.	Great Skua				
135.	Mediterranean Gull	Y	Y	Y	Y
136.	Little Gull				
137.	Sabine's Gull				
138.	Black-Headed Gull	Y	Y	Y	Y
139.	Ring-Billed Gull				
140.	Common Gull	Y	Y	Y	Y
141.	Lesser Black-Backed Gull	Y	Y	Y	Y
142.	Herring Gull	Y	Y	Y	Y
143.	Iceland Gull		Y		
144.	Glaucous Gull				
145.	Great Black-Headed Gull	Y	Y	Y	Y
146.	Kittiwake	Y	Y		Y
147.	Sandwich Tern				
148.	Roseate Tern				
149.	Common Tern				
150.	Arctic Tern				
151.	Little Tern				
152.	Black Tern				
153.	Guillemot	Y		Y	Y
154.	Razorbill				
155.	Black Guillemot				
156.	Little Auk				
157.	Puffin				
158.	Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	Y	Y	Y	Y
159.	Stock Dove	Y	Y	Y	Y
160.	Woodpigeon	Y	Y	Y	Y
161.	Collard Dove	Y	Y	Y	Y
162.	Turtle Dove				
163.	Ring-Necked Parakeet				
164.	Cuckoo				
165.	Barn Owl	Y	Y	Y	Y
166.	Little Owl			Y	Y
167.	Tawny Owl	Y	Y	Y	
168.	Long-Eared Owl		Y		

169.	Short-Eared Owl			Y	Y
170.	Nightjar				
171.	Swift				
172.	Kingfisher	Y			Y
173.	Bee-Eater				
174.	Hoopoe				
175.	Wryneck				
176.	Green Woodpecker	Y	Y	Y	Y
177.	Greater Spotted Woodpecker	Y	Y	Y	
178.	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker				
179.	Short-Toed Lark				
180.	Woodlark				
181.	Skylark	Y	Y	Y	Y
182.	Shorelark		Y	Y	
183.	Sand Martin				
184.	Swallow				
185.	House Martin				
186.	Richard's Pipit				
187.	Tawny Pipit				
188.	Tree Pipit				
189.	Meadow Pipit	Y	Y	Y	Y
190.	Rock Pipit	Y	Y		
191.	Water Pipit	Y	Y		
192.	Yellow Wagtail				
193.	Grey Wagtail				Y
194.	Pied/White Wagtail	Y	Y	Y	Y
195.	Waxwing	Y			
196.	Dipper (2013-Black Bellied)				Y
197.	Wren	Y	Y	Y	Y
198.	Dunnock	Y	Y	Y	Y
199.	Robin	Y	Y	Y	Y
200.	Nightingale				
201.	Bluethroat				
202.	Black Redstart				
203.	Redstart				
204.	Whinchat				
205.	Stonechat	Y	Y	Y	Y
206.	Wheatear				
207.	Ring Ouzel				
208.	Blackbird	Y	Y	Y	Y
209.	Fieldfare	Y	Y	Y	Y
210.	Song Thrush	Y	Y	Y	Y
211.	Redwing	Y	Y	Y	Y

212.	Mistle Thrush	Y	Y	Y	Y
213.	Cetti's Warbler	Y	Y	Y	
214.	Grasshopper Warbler				
215.	Savi's Warbler				
216.	Aquatic Warbler				
217.	Sedge Warbler				
218.	Marsh Warbler				
219.	Reed Warbler				
220.	Icterine Warbler				
221.	Melodious Warbler				
222.	Dartford Warbler				
223.	Barred Warbler				
224.	Lesser Whitethroat				
225.	Whitethroat				
226.	Garden Warbler				
227.	Blackcap				
228.	Pallas's Warbler				
229.	Yellow-Browed Warbler				
230.	Wood Warbler				
231.	Chiffchaff				
232.	Willow Warbler				
233.	Goldcrest	Y	Y	Y	Y
234.	Firecrest				
235.	Spotted Flycatcher				
236.	Red-Breasted Flycatcher				
237.	Pied Flycatcher				
238.	Bearded Tit	Y		Y	
239.	Long-Tailed Tit	Y	Y	Y	Y
240.	March Tit	Y	Y	Y	Y
241.	Willow Tit				
242.	Crested Tit				
243.	Coal Tit	Y	Y	Y	Y
244.	Blue Tit	Y	Y	Y	Y
245.	Great Tit	Y	Y	Y	Y
246.	Nuthatch	Y		Y	Y
247.	Treecreeper	Y	Y	Y	Y
248.	Golden Oriole				
249.	Red-Backed Shrike				
250.	Great Grey Shrike			Y	
251.	Woodchat Shrike				
252.	Jay	Y	Y	Y	Y
253.	Magpie	Y	Y	Y	Y
254.	Chough				

255.	Jackdaw	Y	Y	Y	Y
256.	Rook	Y	Y	Y	Y
257.	Carrion Crow	Y	Y	Y	Y
258.	Hooded Crow				
259.	Raven				
260.	Starling	Y	Y	Y	Y
261.	House Sparrow	Y	Y	Y	Y
262.	Tree Sparrow	Y	Y	Y	Y
263.	Chaffinch	Y	Y	Y	Y
264.	Brambling	Y	Y		Y
265.	Serin				
266.	Greenfinch	Y	Y	Y	Y
267.	Goldfinch	Y	Y	Y	Y
268.	Siskin	Y	Y	Y	Y
269.	Linnet	Y	Y	Y	Y
270.	Twite	Y	Y	Y	
271.	Lesser Redpoll			Y	Y
272.	Mealy Redpoll	Y		Y	
273.	Crossbill	Y			
274.	Scottish Crossbill				
275.	Common Rosefinch				
276.	Bullfinch			Y	Y
277.	Hawfinch	Y		Y	
278.	Lapland Bunting		Y		
279.	Snow Bunting	Y	Y	Y	Y
280.	Yellowhammer	Y	Y	Y	Y
281.	Cirl Bunting				
282.	Ortolan Bunting				
283.	Little Bunting				
284.	Reed Bunting	Y	Y	Y	Y
285.	Corn Bunting	Y	Y	Y	Y
286.					
287.					
288.					
289.					
	<b>Not Specified In RSPB Field List</b>				
	Lesser Yellowlegs	Y			
	Black Brant	Y			
	Great White Egret		Y		Y
	Caspian Gull		Y		
	Northern Harrier		Y		
	Peacock		Y		
	Black Swan			Y	

	Arctic Redpoll			Y	
	Lesser White-fronted Goose			Y	
	Red Breasted Goose			Y	
	Two Barred Crossbill			Y	
	Pale Bellied Brent Goose	Y		Y	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Excluding Variants Above</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>137</b>