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Tour Report
Norfolk in Early Summer
12 – 16 June 2026

Eurasian curlew



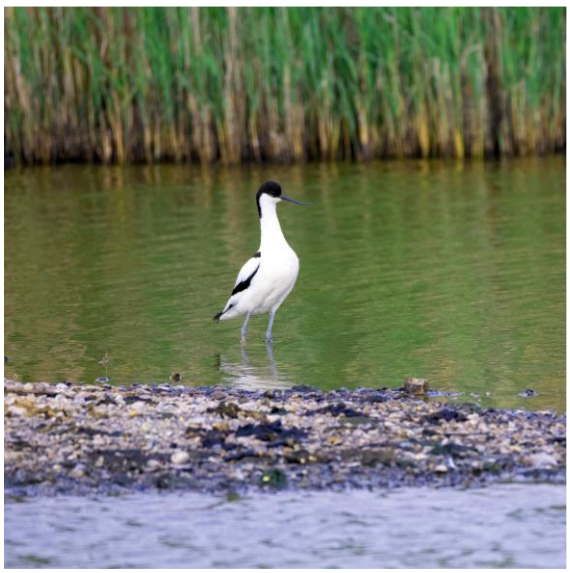
European turtle dove



Eurasian hobby



Avocet



Compiled by Nick Acheson

Friday 12 June 2026

Day 1:

Having met at our hotel in the early afternoon, we soon headed to Snettisham Coastal Park, not far away. Unfortunately, a strong wind put paid to our hopes of seeing one of the turtle doves that nest here. However, there was plenty to see on the marshes inland of the seawall, including young spoonbills (two of which obligingly flew low over our heads), marsh harriers hunting to feed their chicks, post-breeding lapwings and singing reed buntings.

Having walked some distance along the seawall, with swifts flying low around us, we went down into the coastal shingle. Here we admired stonechats and linnets and were particularly taken with a hoary mullein in bloom (one of four hoary plants we saw this afternoon: mullein, cinquefoil, ragwort and cress).

After dinner we made our first attempt at seeing the local nightjars. We heard four singing males, including one which was really very close to us. Exceptionally, however, they proved impossible to see. On the bright side, we saw multiple roding woodcock, including a bird which flew right over us.

Saturday 13 June 2026

Day 2:

Today we headed east along the coast and slowly worked our way westwards in the afternoon. Our first port of call was Kelling Heath. The cold wind was still blowing throughout the day, which didn't make for easy birding. Nonetheless, on the walk onto the heath we saw a singing woodlark, circling in the cloud above us.

After considerable patience (and a great deal of happy time spent with stonechats), most of us managed reasonable (if brief, wind-blown) views of Dartford warblers. Nature is endlessly surprising, and almost everyone's favourite sight here was in fact an *Escallonia* by the railway cottage that was positively laden with insects, including white-tailed (group), buff-tailed, common carder, tree and early bumblebees. Also of interest here were heath milkwort, heath bedstraw, bell heather and a patch of the invasive New Zealand pirri-pirri burr.

From Kelling we went downhill to NWT Cley Marshes where we spent the rest of the morning happily admiring the birds visible from Bishop's Hide. As always, there was plenty to see here. Probably the scarcest bird was a summer-plumaged greenshank, but we were equally delighted by avocets, redshank, black-tailed godwits, little ringed plovers, shoveler, gadwall, teal and shelduck.

After lunch in NWT's excellent visitor centre, we briefly visited the beach car park to see Sandwich and little terns, both of which nest on Blakeney Point. With a strong wind still blowing, we decided we would move inland in the early afternoon, to Warham Camp, both for its archaeological interest and for its dazzling chalk grassland wildflowers. Probably most impressive were the many hundreds of common spotted orchids (among which were plenty of pyramidal orchids). Also here we admired horseshoe vetch, rough hawkbit, common rockrose and the exquisite squinancywort. Not to mention the great banks of the best-preserved Iceni fort and some very handsome fairy-ring longhorn beetles on oxeye daisies.

We decided we would spend the rest of the afternoon walking on NWT Roydon Common, which is very close to our hotel. Here we enjoyed talking to the Dartmoor ponies whose job it is to manage the vegetation for rare wildlife. We also saw lapwing and redshank, and heard Eurasian curlew, all of which nest in the area. Most photographed here was a common dor beetle, trundling peaceably across the sandy track.

Sunday 14 June 2026

Day 3:

We headed south today, to the boundary between the Brecks and the Fens, which is one of the richest landscapes for wildlife in England. We first stopped at NWT Weeting Heath, where our first sighting was of Elle Kaye and Harry Read, two fantastic young Wildlife Worldwide leaders who were joining us for the day. The breeding waders at Weeting could simply not have been more obliging. As soon as we opened the slats of the west hide, we saw a pair of stone curlews and not long thereafter we saw another adult to the east, with two half-grown chicks. On the far side of the road we admired an adult common curlew, at close quarters, with two well-grown young, and yet another stone curlew. Our first mistle thrushes were here too. We all agreed the site had been fantastic.

Next we visited the RSPB's magnificent Lakenheath Fen, just over the River Little Ouse and the county border with Suffolk. On Hockwold Wash, on the Norfolk side, we saw plenty of black-tailed godwits, avocets, redshank, lapwing, gadwall and shelduck and the odd teal. We were also delighted to see a hobby hunting overhead.

But it was on the first area of restored reedbed that things really got interesting. In the space of around 45 minutes, we had four sightings of bitterns here, as adults flew to feed and then to take food back to their hungry chicks in the nest. A cuckoo also flew by. In the reed here we found a very fresh scarce chaser and looked carefully to find a few variable damselflies among plenty of azure damselflies (and the many common blue damselflies that were largely along the riverbank). Longhorn beetles continued to entertain us, for here we saw both a golden-bloomed grey longhorn (I genuinely believe the scientific names are simpler) and a very obliging spotted longhorn.

On the walk back to the visitor centre, the highlight was a small cloud of scarlet tiger moths, though there were also bumblebees (including several vestal cuckoo-bees), butterflies, a singing cuckoo or two, and plenty of singing sedge and reed warblers and reed buntings.

Our final visit this afternoon was to NWT Thompson Common, where some of the reintroduced northern pool frogs have spread into the pingos which can be visited by the public. As it was a muggy, warm afternoon, we thought we might be in with a chance of hearing one. The frogs, however, had other ideas. We did see Norfolk hawker dragonflies here and two very fresh emerald damselflies. And around the edges of the pingos both common spotted and southern marsh orchids were in flower. Also here we heard our only garden warbler of the week.

Monday 15 June 2026

Day 4:

Today we visited the Broads, calling first at Sea Palling, where the UK's first black-winged kite has been in residence for several weeks. This bird is often very underwhelming, spending long periods perched in very distant scrub. But our luck was in and we saw the kite hunting over the fields at length, coming remarkably close to us.

Our day got even better at NWT Hickling Broad. No sooner had we checked in at the visitor centre than I frog-marched you to the warm, sheltered bank of brambles where I most reliably see swallowtails in June. The bramble flowers were heaving with insects, including plenty of bumblebees and hoverflies and several extremely handsome four-banded longhorn beetles. All these were quickly forgotten when a crisp swallowtail appeared and fed at length on bramble blooms right in front of us.

From here we went up onto the bank around Brendan's Marsh. The Caspian tern, which had appeared the previous evening, had sadly flown off just as we parked (though it reappeared in the evening). However, there were great and little egrets here, plenty of ducks and post-breeding lapwings, hunting marsh harriers and, in the distance, nesting spoonbills. From here we walked along the bank, looking at four-spotted

chasers, black-tailed skimmers and Norfolk hawkers.

On the walk down to Whiteslea Lodge, we briefly saw bitterns and several times encountered bearded tits over the reed. There were hobbies everywhere we looked, as there would be for the rest of our visit to Hickling. We next walked past the scrapes and hides to the edge of Hickling Broad, seeing a few passing swallowtails, hunting marsh harriers and tons of hobbies, and hearing singing willow warblers.

After lunch at the visitor centre, we went back to Brendan's Marsh and partway along the track to Stubb Mill, hoping we might see a crane: the last major target which remained unseen. Sadly for us, the cranes had other ideas, and we had to make do with great egrets, a singing lesser whitethroat, and all the ducks and waders which spend the summer at Hickling.

It is a long drive from the Broads to our hotel, so many of you chose not to go out again after dinner, for a last shot at nightjars. Those who did go out heard plenty of nightjars and a singing stonechat, while several woodcock shot past.

Tuesday 16 June 2026

Day 5:

On our final morning we opted to go back to Snettisham Coastal Park. We heard a turtle dove before we had even got out of the vehicle. It was the first of three males constantly singing here (plus a fourth we heard singing on the RSPB reserve next door). After quite a search, we had sustained, wonderful views of one turtle dove as it fed on the ground. Also here we heard plenty of singing warblers, including a lesser whitethroat.

Our final visit was to the RSPB Snettisham reserve, which was characteristically excellent. Our main targets (as we had not seen them previously) were Mediterranean gull and ringed plover. An adult Mediterranean gull was very obliging, landing next to the second colony of black-headed gulls, at the far end of the first long pit. We then quickly found ringed plovers nesting among the shingle and shells of the shoreline, where oystercatchers were nesting too.

Our next new bird was a bar-tailed godwit, which was also, unusually, on the vegetated shingle. Almost the whole time we walked by the pits we could hear a cuckoo singing and common terns frequently flew overhead. We also stopped to enjoy coastal plants including yellow horned poppy, sea campion, English stonecrop and shrubby sea-blite.

With trains to catch or long road journeys ahead, by late morning we decided our wonderful week together had come to an end. It was a real pleasure sharing Norfolk's summer wildlife with you. Thank you for all the energy, enthusiasm and humour you brought. I hope to see you again soon on a Wildlife Worldwide tour.

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Checklist for Norfolk in Early Summer

	Common Name	*Scientific Name*	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
	BIRDS						
1	Canada goose (introduced)	*Branta canadensis*	✓			✓	
2	Greylag goose	*Anser anser*	✓		✓	✓	✓
3	Mute swan	*Cygnus olor*		✓	✓	✓	
4	Egyptian goose (introduced)	*Alopochen aegyptiaca*			✓		✓
5	Common shelduck	*Tadorna tadorna*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Northern shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*		✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*		✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Eurasian teal	*Anas crecca*		✓	✓	✓	
10	Tufted duck	*Aythya fuligula*			✓		✓
11	Red-legged partridge (introduced)	*Alectoris rufa*		✓			
12	Common quail	*Coturnix coturnix*					✓
13	Pheasant (introduced)	*Phasianus colchicus*	✓	✓		✓	
14	Little grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*			✓		
15	Great crested grebe	*Podiceps cristatus*			✓		
16	Eurasian bittern	*Botaurus stellaris*			✓	✓	
17	Eurasian spoonbill	*Platalea leucorodia*	✓	✓		✓	✓
18	Grey heron	*Ardea cinerea*		✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Great egret	*Ardea alba*		✓		✓	
20	Little egret	*Egretta garzetta*		✓	✓	✓	
21	Great cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	✓		✓	✓	
22	Western marsh harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	✓		✓	✓	✓
23	Common buzzard	*Buteo buteo*		✓	✓	✓	
24	Red kite	*Milvus milvus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
25	Water rail	*Rallus aquaticus*				H	
26	Common moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*			✓		

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27	Eurasian coot	*Fulica atra*			✓	✓	✓
28	Eurasian oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	✓		✓		✓
29	Pied avocet	*Recurvirostra avosetta*		✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Eurasian stone-curlew (thick-knee)	*Burhinus oedicnemus*			✓		
31	Northern lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
32	Common ringed plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*					✓
33	Little ringed plover	*Charadrius dubius*		✓			
34	Eurasian curlew	*Numenius arquata*		H	✓	✓	
35	Bar-tailed godwit	*Limosa lapponica*					✓
36	Black-tailed godwit	*Limosa limosa*		✓	✓	✓	
37	Eurasian woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*	✓			✓	
38	Common redshank	*Tringa totanus*	H	✓	✓	✓	✓
39	Common greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*		✓			
40	Black-headed gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
41	Mediterranean gull	*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*					✓
42	European herring gull	*Larus argentatus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Lesser black-backed gull	*Larus fuscus*	✓		✓	✓	
44	Sandwich tern	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	✓	✓			✓
45	Little tern	*Sternula albifrons*		✓			
46	Common tern	*Sterna hirundo*	✓			✓	✓
47	Rock dove / feral pigeon	*Columba livia*		✓			
48	Stock dove	*Columba oenas*		✓	✓	✓	
49	Common woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
50	Eurasian collared dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	European turtle dove	*Streptopelia turtur*					✓
52	Common cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	H		✓		H
53	European nightjar	*Caprimulgus europaeus*	H			H	
54	Common swift	*Apus apus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
55	Great spotted woodpecker	*Dendrocopos major*			H	✓	
56	Common kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*			✓	✓	
57	Eurasian hobby	*Falco subbuteo*			✓	✓	
58	Eurasian jay	*Garrulus glandarius*			✓		
59	Eurasian magpie	*Pica pica*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Western jackdaw	*Coloeus monedula*	✓	✓	✓	✓	

61	Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	✓	✓	✓		
62	Carrion crow	*Corvus corone*			✓	✓	
63	Coal tit	*Periparus ater*			H		
64	Eurasian blue tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus*		H			
65	Great tit	*Parus major*	H	H	✓		
66	Eurasian skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	H	H	H	H	H
67	Woodlark	*Lullula arborea*		✓			
68	Sand martin	*Riparia riparia*		✓			
69	Barn swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
70	House martin	*Delichon urbicum*		✓			
71	Cetti's warbler	*Cettia cetti*	H		H	H	H
72	Long-tailed tit	*Aegithalos caudatus*			✓		
73	Bearded reedling	*Panurus biarmicus*				✓	
74	Willow warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*				H	
75	Sedge warbler	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	H
76	Eurasian reed warbler	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*			✓	✓	H
77	Grasshopper warbler	*Locustella naevia*			H		
78	Eurasian blackcap	*Sylvia atricapilla*	H	H	H	H	H
79	Garden warbler	*Sylvia borin*			H		
80	Lesser whitethroat	*Sylvia curruca*				H	H
81	Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*	✓	H	✓	✓	✓
82	Dartford warbler	*Sylvia undata*		✓			
83	Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*			H		
84	Eurasian wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	H	H	H	✓	H
85	Treecreeper	*Certhia familiaris*				✓	
86	Common starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	✓	✓			✓
87	Common blackbird	*Turdus merula*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
88	Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*			H	H	
89	Mistle thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*			✓		
90	European robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	✓		H	✓	
91	European stonechat	*Saxicola rubicola*	✓	✓	✓	H	
92	House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	H	✓		✓	
93	Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	✓	H		H	✓
94	Pied wagtail	*Motacilla alba*		✓		✓	

95	Meadow pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	✓				
96	Common chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*	H	✓	H		
97	European greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	✓	H		H	✓
98	Common linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
99	European goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
100	Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*		H		H	
101	Common reed bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	H	H	✓	✓	✓
102	Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*	✓	H	✓	✓	✓
103	Black-winged kite	*Elanus caeruleus*				✓	
	MAMMALS						
1	Roe deer	*Capreolus capreolus*		✓			
2	Fallow deer	*Dama dama*	✓				
3	Reeve's muntjac	*Muntiacus reevesi*	✓		✓		
4	Brown hare	*Lepus europaeus*	✓	✓	✓		
5	European rabbit	*Oryctolagus cuniculus*	✓		✓		
6	Grey squirrel	*Sciurus carolinensis*		✓			
7	Bank vole	*Myodes glareolus*			✓		
	BUTTERFLIES						
1	Large skipper	*Ochlodes sylvanus*			✓	✓	
2	Large white	*Pieris brassicae*					✓
3	Holly blue	*Celastrina argiolus*				✓	
4	Red admiral	*Vanessa atalanta*		✓	✓	✓	
5	Painted lady	*Vanessa cardui*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Small tortoiseshell	*Aglais urticae*				✓	
7	Comma	*Polygonia c-album*			✓		
8	Swallowtail	*Papilio machaon britannicus*				✓	
9	Small heath	*Coenonympha pamphilus*					✓
	DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES						
1	Banded demoiselle	*Calopteryx splendens*			✓		
2	Azure damselfly	*Coenagrion puella*	✓		✓	✓	
3	Variable damselfly	*Coenagrion pulchellum*			✓	✓	

4	Common blue damselfly	*Enallagma cyathigerum*			✓		
5	Blue-tailed damselfly	*Ischnura elegans*			✓	✓	
6	Hairy dragonfly	*Brachytron pratense*				✓	
7	Norfolk hawker	*Aeshna isoceles*			✓	✓	
8	Emperor dragonfly	*Anax imperator*			✓		
9	Four-spotted chaser	*Libellula quadrimaculata*			✓	✓	
10	Scarce chaser	*Libellula fulva*			✓		
11	Emerald damselfly	*Lestes sponsa*			✓		
12	Meadow brown	*Molina jurtina*		✓	✓		
13	Black-tailed skimmer	*Orthetrum cancellatum*				✓	
	REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS						
1	Common lizard	*Zootoca vivipara*			✓		
2	Common frog	*Rana temporaria*			✓		