

Tour Report Norfolk in Late Summer 8 – 12 September 2025

Knots & black tailed godwits



Oystercatchers & Knots



Spoonbill



Knots Murmuration



Compiled by Nick Acheson

Our *Norfolk in Late Summer* was once again a joy, with two early mornings spent admiring vast, wheeling flocks of knot and other waders over The Wash and visits to several of Norfolk's most popular coastal nature reserves. Avian highlights – beyond the spectacular knot fireworks – included a wood sandpiper, a little stint, a pied flycatcher, several beautiful juvenile curlew sandpipers and a gorgeous red-necked phalarope.

Monday 8 September 2025

Day 1:

Having met early this afternoon at our comfortable hotel outside King's Lynn, we later drove the short distance to Dersingham Bog National Nature Reserve for a gentle afternoon walk. Here we met plenty of stonechat families. While we heard about their impressive breeding success from warden Nathan, a sparrowhawk put on an acrobatic display overhead as it attempted to catch one of them! There were plenty more birds of prey to see here, as red kite, buzzard and marsh harrier all made appearances.

Having admired round-leaved sundews and tasted cranberries from the edge of the boardwalk, and mindful of the two very early starts later in the week, we opted to head back to our hotel for a gentle evening and our first dinner together.

Tuesday 9 September 2025

Day 2:

Most of the scarce birds in Norfolk today were at the RSPB's legendary Titchwell Marsh reserve, so it was here that we headed after breakfast. Since it was a perfectly still, warm morning, we had high hopes of seeing bearded tits. However, despite walking every inch of trail through Titchwell's reeds, we failed to find one.

We did, however, see plenty of wonderful wildlife. Insects came first. There were many wall brown butterflies along the sea wall and common darter dragonflies were still very much in evidence. Willow emerald damselflies were rather scarcer but eventually we had great views of a mating pair.

On the freshwater scrape we could see all the typical ducks and waders of late summer and early autumn, including shelduck, shoveler, teal, avocet, a large flock of olden plovers and an even larger flock of black-tailed godwits. By the time we reached the sea, the light was quite harsh but with persistence we managed good views of great crested grebes and some lovely red-throated divers in summer plumage.

As the light was far kinder from the east bank of the reserve, we took the lovely walk through reedbed and light woodland to get there. This was a great decision as we were able to compare juvenile dunlins and curlew sandpiper at close quarters, beside an exquisite juvenile wood sandpiper and a more distant little stint. A pectoral sandpiper put in only a brief appearance and a knot was seen at some distance (a mere *amuse bouche* before the following morning's knot storm). However, the star here was a juvenile red-necked phalarope, which we saw wonderfully well.

Following lunch at Titchwell visitor centre, we went back to our hotel for a short break. Later this afternoon, we popped to Snettisham Coastal Park. A brisk wind kept the birds down for the most part, but we had great looks at a lesser whitethroat and a juvenile willow warbler and we heard Cetti's warblers singing from the reedbeds. There was also an active family of kestrels here.

Wednesday 10 September 2025

Day 3:

We got up irresponsibly early this morning, to be at the RSPB's magnificent Snettisham reserve well ahead of high tide. It is impossible to adequately describe the spectacle of a high tide wader roost at Snettisham: the birds are too numerous and too diverse, their flocking behaviour too dramatic, and the whole experience

too remarkable. Suffice to say that we saw lots of spoonbills, common terns and Sandwich terns and a huge number of black-tailed godwits on the pits; that they were joined at the high point of the tide by tens of thousands of knot (once they had swirled over our heads); and that they were joined by dunlin, oystercatchers, bar-tailed godwits, turnstones, greenshank and plenty of ringed plovers. It was, as it always is, both thrilling and humbling and we walked back to the car park elated.

After a long siesta, we headed out in the afternoon on a specific mission to find hares. We saw huge numbers of recently released red-legged partridges and a smattering of Chinese water deer, but it took a while to find hares, even in some of my best spots. In the end, however, the hares gave in and allowed us to see into their wild lives.

Thursday 11 September 2025

Day 4:

This morning's early start was an hour less early, thanks to the later tide. We always go twice to Snettisham on this tour, for the simple reason that the wader spectacle is completely different each time you go. You really have to see it twice to appreciate just how extraordinarily different it can be from day to day.

This morning there was far less cloud than the day before, meaning the birds shone as they flew above the mud and water of The Wash. What's more, from as soon as we arrived, the knot were highly agitated and mobile, swirling and making dramatic shapes as they flew. I intuited that a peregrine was harrying them and soon enough we saw one hurling itself at them, albeit at considerable distance.

We once again stood entranced by these huge flocks of birds visiting from the far reaches of the American and European Arctic. As yesterday, the sheer range of species overhead was marvellous, though many could only be easily picked out with a knowledge of their calls.

Once our appetite for knot and other shorebirds was sated, we once again took a break through the late morning, leaving at lunchtime for Norfolk Wildlife Trust's beautiful Holme Dunes reserve. After lunch from the visitor centre here, we walked through the dunes. As on our first afternoon at Snettisham Coastal Park, a brisk wind kept the birds down and largely out of view. We nonetheless saw plenty of plants and insects and stopped for a long chat with the British white cows who help manage the vegetation for wildlife, whose movements are controlled by the GPS collars they wear.

The pines were alive with chiffchaffs and on Broadwater more than a dozen little grebes were fishing together. However, with a heavy band of rain clearly approaching over the sea, we decided to call it a day and head back to our hotel before being soaked.

Friday 12 September 2025

Day 5:

This morning's early start was an hour less early, thanks to the later tide. We always go twice to Snettisham on this tour, for the simple reason that the wader spectacle is completely different each time you go. You really have to see it twice to appreciate just how extraordinarily different it can be from day to day.

This morning there was far less cloud than the day before, meaning the birds shone as they flew above the mud and water of The Wash. What's more, from as soon as we arrived, the knot were highly agitated and mobile, swirling and making dramatic shapes as they flew. I intuited that a peregrine was harrying them and soon enough we saw one hurling itself at them, albeit at considerable distance.

We once again stood entranced by these huge flocks of birds visiting from the far reaches of the American and European Arctic. As yesterday, the sheer range of species overhead was marvellous, though many could only be easily picked out with a knowledge of their calls.

Once our appetite for knot and other shorebirds was sated, we once again took a break through the late morning, leaving at lunchtime for Norfolk Wildlife Trust's beautiful Holme Dunes reserve. After lunch from the visitor centre here, we walked through the dunes. As on our first afternoon at Snettisham Coastal Park, a brisk wind kept the birds down and largely out of view. We nonetheless saw plenty of plants and insects and stopped for a long chat with the British white cows who help manage the vegetation for wildlife, whose movements are controlled by the GPS collars they wear.

The pines were alive with chiffchaffs and on Broadwater, more than a dozen little grebes were fishing together. However, with a heavy band of rain clearly approaching over the sea, we decided to call it a day and head back to our hotel before being soaked.

Cover Images provided by John Belchamber

Sign up to our e-news

Sign up to our e-news to find out more about our tours, events, late availability, offers and tour reports at <https://www.wildlifeworldwide.com/subscribe>

Checklist for Norfolk in Late Summer



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
	BIRDS						
1	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>					✓
2	Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		✓			
4	Egyptian goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>		✓		✓	✓
8	Northern shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>		✓	✓		✓
9	Eurasian wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>			✓	✓	
10	Eurasian teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		✓			
12	Red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			✓		
13	Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		✓		✓	✓
15	Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓		✓	
16	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Great egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>		✓			
19	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓			✓
20	Eurasian spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Red kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Western marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
23	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓				
25	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓			✓
26	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			✓		
27	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓		✓	✓

Find out more about our [Norfolk in Late Summer](#) trip or [contact us](#)
 01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

28	Eurasian coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		✓	✓
29	Eurasian oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Pied avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		✓	✓		✓
31	Common ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		✓	✓	✓	
32	European golden plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		✓			
33	Northern lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓			✓
34	Red knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		✓	✓	✓	
35	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		✓	✓	✓	
36	Little stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		✓			
37	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
38	Curlew sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		✓			✓
39	Pectoral sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>		✓			
40	Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		✓	✓		
41	Red-necked phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		✓			
42	Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Spotted redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			H		
44	Common greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		✓	✓		✓
45	Wood sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		✓			
46	Black-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Bar-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		✓	✓	✓	
48	Eurasian curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
49	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		✓		✓	✓
50	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		✓			✓
51	Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
52	Mediterranean gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			✓		
53	Common gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		✓	✓		
54	Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>			✓	✓	✓
55	Great black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>		✓		✓	
56	Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			✓		
57	Sandwich tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	H
58	Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		✓	✓	✓	
59	Feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>			✓		
60	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
61	Eurasian collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓		
62	European turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>				✓	

Find out more about our [Norfolk in Late Summer](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

63	Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓		✓	
65	Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	H	H	✓		✓
66	Pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
67	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓			
68	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	H	✓	
69	Common stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	✓	✓		✓	
70	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓			
71	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓			
72	Lesser whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		✓			
73	Cetti's warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H			H
74	Sedge warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		✓			
75	Common chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	H	H	
76	Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		✓			
77	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	H		✓		
78	Pied flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		✓			
79	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H	✓		H	
80	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓			
81	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	H			✓	
82	Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	✓	
83	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	✓		✓	
84	Eurasian nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	H				
85	Eurasian treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		H			
86	Common magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
87	Western jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
88	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓			✓
89	Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>			✓		✓
90	Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
91	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>				H	
92	Common linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
93	European goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
94	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		✓			
95	Common reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		✓			✓
	MAMMALS						

1	European rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓		✓	
2	brown hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>			✓		
3	Chinese water deer	<i>Hydropotes inermis</i>		✓	✓		
	REPTILES						
1	viviparous lizard	<i>Lacerta vivipara</i>				✓	
	INSECTS						
1	migrant hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>		✓		✓	
2	common darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		✓		✓	
3	western willow emerald damselfly	<i>Chalcolestes viridis</i>		✓			
4	specked wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		✓			
5	wall brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
6	small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>				✓	
7	peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>		✓			
8	red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓			
9	large white	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓			
10	small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		✓			
11	small copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>				✓	
12	common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓			