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Tour Report
Somerset Levels in Spring with Mike Dilger
29 April – 3 May 2026

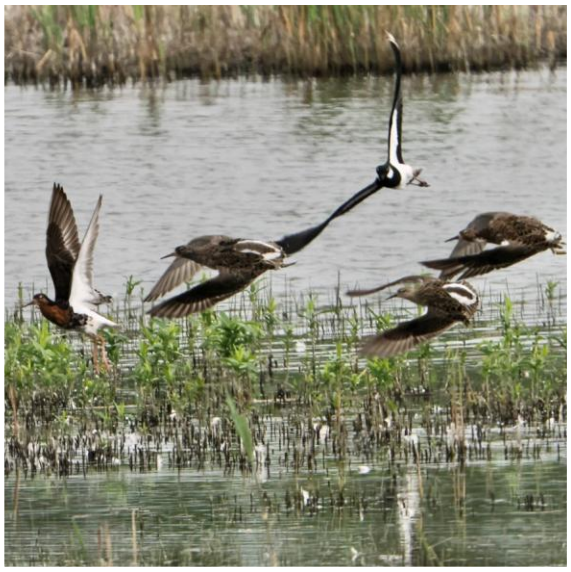
Crane



Bearded tit



Ruff & lapwing



Gadwall



Compiled by Mike Dilger

Wednesday 29 April 2026

Day 1:
Shapwick NNR - east end & Noah's Hide and Tealham Moor

The full complement of seven guests met up around lunch at the warm and hospitable home of Sarah, the owner of Worth House Hotel. Situated just west of the city of Wells, our accommodation for the duration of the trip is perfectly positioned for visiting a whole host of wonderful wildlife sites across the Levels and, for the first time, the Quantock Hills close by. With the weather sunny but windy, we all sat outside as Mike Dilger (MD) conducted the welcome and introductory chat about the hotel and the up-and-coming itinerary. During the welcome, we managed to pick up a couple of swallows flying over the garden too. Once everyone had been suitably briefed, we were ready to hit the Levels for a few hours' birding.

Driving westwards towards Godney Moor, our next bird proved to be a magpie crossing the road, followed by a posse of jackdaws and rooks while dropping down onto the Levels. And while driving along North Chine Drove, one of the guests picked up three little egrets feeding in one of the pasture fields adjacent to the road.

Parking up at the eastern end of Shapwick, we slowly walked through the woodland, noting a few plants on the way, such as garlic mustard, cow parsley and the yellow crucifer wild turnip - otherwise known as 'Bargeman's cabbage'. While walking through, we picked up the calls of a noisy chiffchaff and a single willow warbler, and upon reaching the reedbed a quick glance up told us the hobbies had arrived! In no time we picked up at least three or four, while they hawked for insects above the reedbed, with terrific views of a couple of individuals that flew particularly close. Also higher in the sky, we managed to pick up the season's first swifts, with these 'mini-anchors' having patently arrived overnight as well. Here too, we obtained distant views of at least three marsh harriers quartering above the reedbeds.

Despite being quite windy, we did manage to find a banded demoiselle dragonfly along the main rhyne, in addition to a male orange-tip butterfly. Here too we also noted the trip's first great white egret, while the open water provided us with a couple of great crested grebe parties, a pair of gadwall and a few coots. Walking onwards in the direction of the Tower Hide, both long-tailed tits and a great tit were noted, while a blue tit was additionally heard singing. On the way, MD also talked about the importance of the alder/willow carr wet woodland as a valuable habitat on the Levels. Here too, the warm weather had brought out a red admiral butterfly onto the wing.

Taking up our position in the Tower Hide, we looked across Noah's Lake and immediately noticed a number of tufted ducks, in addition to the presence of both herring and lesser black-backed gulls. It was also interesting to see the cormorant colony to the south (or left) of the hide, with quite large youngsters already present in their flimsy stick nests. MD then spotted a flock of around 20 cattle egrets flying in, which proceeded to land on 'Cormorant Island', giving everyone the opportunity to see this Somerset Levels' speciality, with many in full breeding plumage. This sighting also represented our third species of egret within the hour!

Retracing our steps back towards the main path, we were in the process of admiring some flowering ground ivy before suddenly hearing our first bittern 'boom' of the trip. Now back in the car park, one of the guests then picked up a single goldfinch and a few swallows on the telephone wires. Nestled up, we popped across to RSPB Ham Wall to use the facilities, before MD then took the group over to Tealham Moor to see if we could track down any yellow wagtails. No sooner had we parked up on Godney Drove than our first male yellow wagtail made an appearance, before proceeding to strut around a small wet area out in the field. Also present here were a pair of lapwings, and in no time our 'wagtail count' had quickly leapt to that of three yellows and three pieds!

Taking a closer look at one of the yellow wagtails with a blue-grey head, MD declared this to be the individual from from the purported 'Channel wagtail' race which had caused much discussion among the local birding community. The views of this decidedly scarce summer visitor were nonetheless excellent, with the yellow wagtail additionally representing a new bird for many in the group. Also, while scanning the surrounding

fields, we noted a single male linnet, which looked resplendent in its full breeding plumage.
By 5.30 pm, MD next took the group back to Worth House, before everyone took the opportunity to refresh. Back in the lounge, we then took a moment to compile the afternoon's checklist. A fabulous first dinner of risotto and pavlova then followed, which was washed down by a glass or two of wine, while everyone happily chatted until bedtime, in preparation for our first full day on the Levels!

Thursday 30 April 2026

Day 2:
RSPB Greylake, Bridge at Oath, RSPB Swell Wood, WWT Steart Marshes, Wall Common & Huntspill

After our usual 7.45 am breakfast, we all then reconvened for an 8.30 am departure with both the southern part of the Levels and the coast on the agenda for our first full day of the tour. The weather looked, once again, to be wall-to-wall sunshine, but still windy as we dropped down onto Godney Moor.

Along the drove we could see plenty of feeding mute swans alongside the feral duo of Canada and greylag geese. Driving next down Westhay Moor Drove we also spotted a pair of roe deer out in the fields - the buck's antlers being in full velvet. Crossing the low-lying Polden Hills, via the village of Shapwick, our first stop of the day was to be at RSPB Greylake. Walking through the reedbed, a couple of Cetti's warblers blasted out their loud and distinctive song to welcome us, while reed warblers had patently arrived in abundance from their wintering quarters in sub-Saharan Africa. Resident chaffinch and great tit were also noted, while we took a moment to appreciate the cuckooflower growing along the side of the path.

Upon reaching the hide, the activity was relatively low, presumably due to the breeding season being in full flow, but we were still able to pick up a few teal resting on the bank, along with a couple of mallards and gadwall. Moorhens and coots were also present on the water, with the star being a wren singing away in full view and along the fence-line close to the hide. While scanning out to see what else could be seen, we also heard a single sedge warbler, but on this occasion were unable to locate its precise position.

Further back we could also see a pair of displaying lapwings, a single great white egret, a couple of little egrets and a few cormorants, before a pair of marsh harriers thrilled everyone by giving much closer views as they flew right past the hide. Next up, one of the guests then found a male shoveler, while a distant female yellow wagtail was located on a post. MD then spotted three curlews on the wing, which he declared may well have been a large percentage of the tiny lowland breeding population remaining on the Levels.

Moving over to the adjacent top hide, we were immediately shown a drake garganey by a couple of other birders, which then proceeded to delight everyone by showing so well, despite wanting to spend most of the time asleep. This individual bird also appeared to have stayed at the reserve all winter, with many local birders additionally claiming it to be one half of a breeding pair. While scanning from our slightly more elevated position, we also picked up a male reed bunting atop one of the reedmace heads, before everyone had a final good view of the garganey when it was rudely awoken by a much larger mallard.

Just before leaving the hide, we then spotted the trip's first grey heron too. Following the loop trail back through the reedbed, the group were next treated to super views of a Cetti's warbler singing unusually in full view from a bush on the edge of the reeds. Having warmed up too, we also delighted in the trio of a male orange-tip, a red admiral butterfly and a female brimstone.

Back at the car park, we then popped in briefly to Langport to use the facilities, whereupon we noted starlings, house sparrows and a number of swifts, before heading back onto the Levels and in the direction of Oath. Walking up to the bridge over the railway, which also gives a great view over both Aller Moor and West Sedgemoor, we proceeded to scan the grazing marshes for any cranes. Eventually MD managed to pick out a distant bird in the middle of West Sedgemoor RSPB Reserve, before then spotting a white stork as it flew in a southwesterly direction right over our position on top of the bridge! The current consensus was that any white storks observed on the Levels appear to have emanated from the reintroduction project at Coombeshead in Devon. Notwithstanding the crane's dubious origins, it was still a great find and even

represented a new Levels' bird for MD. Following hot on the trail of stork, we were then treated to a fly-by from five cranes heading towards West Sedgemoor, with MD telling the group that when cranes are observed in the air they tend to look like 'a plank crossed with a pool cue'!

Walking back down off the bridge, we also picked up a whitethroat singing in the scrub at the bottom, but only a few members of the group managed to obtain half-decent views despite the bird's clear song. Continuing our journey further south, MD then drove up to RSPB Swell Wood, whereupon we took out some time to enjoy our lunch and a hot drink in the Heronry Hide. Birding as we ate, we then proceeded to pick up an array of woodland birds, such as blue grey and coal tit, before the sought-after duo of nuthatch and treecreeper also made an appearance. Despite not revealing its position, we also heard the explosive 'tschick!' call of a great spotted woodpecker, alongside the 'whoomp!' of stock doves. Above our heads, the grey herons and little egrets were also busily rearing their chicks in their nests, while one of the guests also had the briefest of views of a single marsh tit.

All suitably refreshed and replete, we then took a walk down to the viewpoint, where MD pointed out some of the plants on the way, including goldilocks buttercup, sweet woodruff, yellow archangel and wood sedge. At the viewpoint, looking down over West Sedgemoor below, we could also see plenty of mute swans and feral geese, before MD located a very distant hobby in a tree. Taking the return journey through the woods, MD showed the group the ancient woodland indicator grass of wood-melic before a goldcrest was heard singing briefly. Having heard them earlier, the group then had a good sighting of a pair of stock doves in a tree, as a great spotted woodpecker was heard to drum briefly.

Back at the minibus, we then headed for the coast, by way of the village of Fivehead, where we picked up the trip's first sighting of a buzzard. Passing next through Bridgwater, we then parked up at WWT Steart's main car park, in order to avail ourselves of the facilities. Swallows were seemingly everywhere, with a pair even spotted breeding in the portico of the toilet block. We were then distracted by a red kite over the Otterhampton Scrape being mobbed by a pair of oystercatchers and a single lapwing as we set off towards the Quantocks Hide. On the way, MD pointed out a male stonechat, before a male reed bunting also showed well for the group.

Arriving at the hide, which looks over an extensive brackish scrape, we immediately began spotting plenty of avocets, with a few pairs patently incubating clutches on the shingle islands. Plenty of shelducks were roosting at the back of the scrape too, before MD eventually managed to locate a single little ringed plover on the closest island, along with two incubating oystercatchers. Further away to the west, we then spotted both a pair of pied and a pair of yellow wagtails, with MD additionally locating a single greenshank and a male wheatear with the help of his scope. Also on the saltmarsh, singles of goldfinch and linnet were also noted, before the red kite then caused a second bout of pandemonium when it drifted back over the scrape.

Taking in the view from the Quantocks Hide, we also spotted another pair of roe deer. Here too, MD was able to show the key difference between male and female shelduck when pointing out the distinctive frontal shields of the males. When checking out the shelduck, we also noted three stock doves as they flew past. Back at the carpark, we followed on towards Steart Point, noting a colony of house sparrows and the lagomorph duo of rabbit and (a single) brown hare on the way. The brown hare was a particularly good find, as MD declared this to be the first time he could recall ever having seen the latter species on the peninsula. Stopping at the Wall Common Carpark, we then crossed the saltmarsh to the shingle ridge which afforded a terrific view across Bridgwater Bay, with Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station to the south and Burnham-on-Sea to the north. However, with the tide still a long way out, we could only see incredibly distant views of a few ringed plovers and what appeared to be whimbrel, with the sole passerines represented by a couple of linnets.

Suggesting that the rising tide could work in our favour elsewhere, MD then set off for Huntspill - on the other side of the peninsula - and, upon driving along the road running adjacent to the Huntspill River, we picked up a singing lesser whitethroat in the scrub near the sluice. Quickly parking up, we all then proceeded to get terrific, if brief, views of this shy and retiring summer visitor when it sang from the top of an elder tree. This was also, for many in the group, the first-ever sighting of this skulking summer visitor. Driving

onwards to the parking area close to both the point and the sea wall, we then proceeded to cross over the saltmarsh and onto the sea wall path, where the tide had already come in incredibly quickly. With conditions now far more favourable than had been the case at Bridgwater Bay, we easily picked up at least three of four whimbrel, plus enjoyed the bonus of hearing a few calling as they passed northwards along the shoreline. Also while here, a number of much closer ringed plovers were noted, while a flock of around 20 dunlin in full summer plumage also flew past our position. Looking back across the saltmarsh, at this point, we could also see and hear a pair of skylarks.

Heading back to Worth House after an action-packed day, we had a little time to refresh before heading off for our evening in the pub. Enjoying a delightful meal at the Burcott Inn, we were able to look back on all the day's sightings with a good deal of satisfaction before heading back to Worth House for a well-deserved night's rest.

Friday 1 May 2026

Day 3:
RSPB Ham Wall, Quantocks NL, Holford village, Hodder's Combe, Bicknoller's Post, Slaughterhouse Combe, Tealham Moor Drove

Before heading for our big day out at the Quantocks, we had pre-arranged for one guest to spend the day at RSPB Ham Wall, due to their physical limitations. Heading along North Chine Drove after breakfast, we noted six little egrets and a single cattle egret in the usual 'Egret Field'. Also, in a change in the weather, the wind had mercifully dropped, only to be replaced by overcast conditions, with the threat of light rain later on.

Parking up at RSPB Ham Wall, we all walked over to Viewing Platform 1 (VP1) and conducted a short birding session at this exceptional spot. Plenty of wildfowl were present, including gadwall, pochard and shoveler, while black-headed gulls and cormorants were also added to the week's list. Most folk, however, were keenest to enjoy the ruff present, with at least five of the nine individuals in full breeding plumage, which is a rarely seen sight anywhere in the UK. Here the breeding plumage of the males can differ vastly between each individual, and this was the first time that many in the group had seen this species looking so resplendent.

While watching the ruff, a bittern then made a quick fly-past, while great white egrets continued to be an almost constant presence. Leaving the one guest to enjoy this phenomenal spot, the rest of the group then headed back to the minibus for the 50-minute drive across to the Quantocks and more specifically Hodder's Combe, with the hope of spotting some rarely seen woodland summer visitors.

By the time of arrival at Holford car park, the weather was looking decidedly misty - with the threat of rain - but unperturbed, the group set off for what we hoped would be an exciting adventure to this new location and addition to the Somerset spring tour. Almost immediately we picked up the beautiful and penetrating song of a song thrush, while two grey wagtails were picked up on the roof of a nearby house situated close to the stream running down the valley.

Here too, a goldcrest was also noted in a patch of holly close to the car park as we set off up the valley. It was not long before we started noting excellent birds in this old-growth oak woodland either. Stopping to enjoy the call of a stock dove, MD then noted both a male pied and spotted flycatcher in the same tree! Unfortunately, only the pied was picked up by the guests.

While trying to catch this flycatcher duo, we could also hear the plaintive song of a mistle thrush from further up the valley. A little further on, the call of a nuthatch was also heard, as we located the day's second pied flycatcher flitting around the canopy of an oak tree. At this point the distinctive song of a redstart was heard, but on this occasion remained unseen by all in the group. Steadily rising up the valley, the trees began to thin out as hawthorn, bracken, gorse and heather started to take over from the continuous woodland canopy. At this boundary of these two habitats, we also suddenly started hearing the lilting song of willow

warblers on both sides of the valley.

While listening to the willow warblers, we also heard the delightful sound of a cuckoo calling in the distance, before then enjoying views of both a linnet and willow warbler perched in hawthorn bushes. Continuing further upwards towards the ridge at Bicknoller's Post, a whitethroat was next to come under the group's collective gaze while conducting its distinctive song flight from the top of a gorse bush. Despite the threat of rain, the weather, if anything, had marginally improved out in the open, but the views were still underwhelming down in the misty valleys due to a temperature inversion.

While taking our lunch, the call of a cuckoo could be heard from further down the valley, but a view of this charismatic bird continued to elude us while tucking into our sandwiches. Stonechats appeared super-abundant here too, with at least three pairs noted, while skylarks could also be heard singing from their lofty positions high in the sky.

Walking a little further back along the ridge, we then dropped down into Slaughterhouse Combe, where a tree pipit sang beautifully from an oak tree. Despite being tricky to track down, all were nevertheless able to enjoy the distinctive song produced by this scarce summer visitor. Dropping back down into the woodland, we then heard one of our most sought-after targets as a wood warbler rolled off its 'piew, piew, piew' call. Unfortunately, the bird was only calling intermittently and refused to reveal its whereabouts. Recompense was provided here by another pied flycatcher, while chaffinch, wren and robin were all added to our daily total.

Further down, and near where the two trails from both valleys unite, we also picked up a singing goldcrest, in addition to good views of a female pied flycatcher, while the call of both green and great spotted woodpeckers were represented, more welcome additions to what was turning out to be a most productive day's birding. Returning to the minibus after a scintillating walk, we then headed straight back to Ham Wall, where the guest who had stayed behind had managed to secure some excellent photos of the ruff, and an assortment of other birds, including jay, a snipe and song thrush.

Hearing that a pair of whinchat had recently been noted on Tealham Moor, MD quickly took the group over to look for this rarely seen summer visitor. But despite searching in vain, we did manage to secure yet more good views of yellow wagtails and a pair of wheatears. Driving back along the drove, three skylarks flashed in front of the minibus, along with the sighting of a very close grey heron in a roadside rhyne.

Arriving back at Worth House after a mammoth day's birding, all took the opportunity to relax before the compilation of the day's checklist and another fine meal, courtesy of Sarah and her team. With an early dawn chorus planned for the following day, we all turned in early to make sure we would gain our statutory eight hours before the rude awakening of the alarm clock would ruin the fun the following morning!

Saturday 2 May 2026

Day 4:
RSPB Ham Wall - VP1, Shapwick NNR - Main drain & Noah's Hide, Westhay Moor NNR & Catcott SWT Complex

Meeting at the ridiculously early hour of 5.15 am for the Levels' dawn chorus, we all hopped into the minibus for the short trip across to Ham Wall. The weather looked fairly cold, clear and still, with the threat of rain later in the day. Dropping down, once again, onto Godney Moor, we noted a grey heron along the roadside rhyne and a few blackbirds and mallards were picked up flying around in the early light.

Arriving at the Ham Wall car park, we were greeted by a beautiful red sky, with a number quoting the 'red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning' line! Walking up to the main drove, which also represents the line of the old railway, we heard a very loud song thrush sighing from the top of an alder tree, along with the jazzy song of a blackcap and the onomatopoeic call of a chiffchaff. With the breeding season already well underway for the resident birds, it was no surprise to note a robin carrying food back to chicks hidden

somewhere in the undergrowth too.

The noise of the dawn chorus was, by now, deafening as we picked out the song of a wren and a little further along we could hear two garden warblers singing against each other on opposite sides of the path. As the garden warbler's song is considered very similar to that of the blackcap, we took our time to appreciate the subtle differences here, with the former's song often considered finer, quieter and of a longer duration. It was also good to clinch identification with a good look at the bird when it appeared high in a willow, showing its plain face, with the obvious absence of any coloured cap.

Arriving at VP1, there appeared plenty of activity out on the scrape with most attention immediately focussed on a pair of summer-plumaged black-tailed godwits which patently hadn't left for Iceland yet. Egrets were represented by both great white and little, while wildfowl were also noted in the form of gadwall, shoveler, mallard and pochard. We also took a moment to enjoy the splendid great crested grebes here, before MD then picked out the whinnying call of little grebe away in the distance.

As the morning began to warm up, we noted our first marsh harrier, as a female took to the wing and then settled on top of a bush, allowing us all to get good views through the scope. While watching the harrier, we then heard a cuckoo calling from the tree-line at the back, but on this occasion could not pick out the bird despite a search of all the tree-tops. Meanwhile another birder pointed out a single snipe at the back of the scrape, which also incremented our trip list by a further species.

Still cold at this stage, a grey heron flew past the group, as we then enjoyed the fine sight of a male marsh harrier patently making its first flight of the morning. In order to warm up, MD suggested a brisk walk along to VP2. Arriving here, we were delighted to find it in full sun and took in a pair of little grebes, which we'd heard earlier. While watching a pair of blackcaps, we then turned back around to get brief views of a bittern flying away from us!

Having been warmed by the sun, we then headed back to the car park, in the knowledge that a breakfast awaited us at Worth House. On the way back, MD also noticed a pair of Egyptian geese along Westhay Moor Drove, which represented yet another addition to our trip-list. Arriving back at our accommodation, we also noticed a goldcrest feeding on insects along one of the hotel's windows, while goldfinch and greenfinch were also picked up as we sat down for breakfast.

Leaving again at 10 am, we had to say goodbye to one of the guests who'd arranged to leave early for a prior commitment, but welcomed MD's son, Zachary, to the group, who, along with his scope and expertise, would be able to offer a young pair of eyes for our next session. Once again dropping down onto North Chine Drove, the usual flock of egrets was located, but this time comprised mostly of cattle egrets, with "a few 'littles'" dotted in amongst. Driving through the village of Meare, we also noted the urban trio of house sparrow, starling and collared dove.

Parking up at Shapwick NNR, MD had garnered some information about bearded tits showing well further down the Drove, and with the sun still out the group headed west through the woodland and out into the open. With the sun still out, a few dragons and damsels were on the wing, enabling MD to point out a single hairy dragonfly, along with azure, blue-tailed and large red damselflies in the vegetation alongside the North Drain. Here too, a peacock, a red admiral butterfly and a pair of orange-tips were next to be spotted, just before our first hobby of the morning was picked up feeding high in the sky, along with a red kite.

Walking past the turning for Noah's Hide, we immediately spotted a bearded tit when it flew over the path past us. We then proceeded to spend the next hour delighting in the most wonderful views of this rarely seen species, as up to five birds, including at least two males, a female and at least one juvenile, entertained us. The adults appeared to be collecting food for at least one juvenile as we saw them catch mayflies and other insects, before flying across to the path to feed the gingery youngster. It was the most wonderful behaviour, with all instantly voting it the best moment of the tour so far. MD also stated it was the best view of beardies that he's ever enjoyed on the Levels.

While here, Zachary also pointed out three black-necked grebes on Noah's Lake, so we tore ourselves away from the beardies for a quick walk around to Noah's Lake. Arriving at the hide, the three grebes were immediately located, with MD indicating that this was the second terrific sighting of the morning, with this species being considered a rare visitor to the Avalon Marshes. While here, we also took in the cormorants, lesser black-backed gulls, great crested grebes and a few tufted ducks.

Back at the minibus, MD then took the group on a short detour to the southeast corner of Ham Wall and around to the peat works, where we immediately picked up at least 20 sand martins flying around the peat mounds, with some appearing to have already made nest holes in a large pile of sand. A few swifts were also picked up here, while further back hobby could be seen chasing dragonflies on the wing.

By now it had begun to cloud over, but as it was still warm MD took the group to Westhay Moor NNR, before we all took lunch in the Viridor Hide, while watching moorhens, and coots. Coming back out of the hide, we then conducted a spot of dragonfly watching at 'Dragonfly Corner', with azure, variable, blue-tailed and large red damselfly all noted, while the star attraction was a single scarce chaser dragonfly, which was subsequently photographed by all the group.

Jumping back in the minibus, the much-threatened rain had finally arrived, so MD suggested a quick visit to the hide at Catcott. By the time we had arrived, it had begun to rain heavily, so we bundled both into the hide and into the dry to see what was around. A few of the commoner duck species were here, with the highlight provided by a singing sedge warbler in the car park, which was appreciated from underneath the tailgate of the minibus! As the rain became steadily heavier, we decided to head back to the hotel, especially given our early start.

Reconvening later for the compilation of the day's checklist, we all enjoyed a superb buffet meal prepared by Sarah and her team, washed down with plenty of wine as we headed to our respective rooms to prepare for the last morning of the tour.

Sunday 3 May 2026

Day 5:
Mendip Hills - Blackmoor Reserve & Cheddar Reservoir

For our final morning of the new, extended trip, MD rang the changes by taking the group up onto the Carboniferous Mendip Hills in the hope of catching up with both a special bird and a charismatic reptile. After the rainstorm from the previous afternoon, the weather had appeared to have cleared somewhat as we parked up at the car park at the Blackmoor Reserve, close to Charterhouse and Ubley Warren.

Just beyond the car park, MD initially looked for basking adders in all the usual places, but to no avail, so the group carried on along the footpath, serenaded on the way by a couple of willow warblers, a single whitethroat and a garden warbler. Here too, a pair of mistle thrushes showed well while feeding in one of the areas of short, calcareous grassland. Then a little further on MD picked up the song of a redstart, and after a bit of searching we eventually managed stellar views of a superb male in the boughs of a sycamore tree. Spending most of its time either singing or feeding, the redstart provided many with their best-ever views of this scarce summer visitor.

In between watching the redstart, we also caught sight of a few green-veined whites, several painted lady butterflies, a single orange-tip and a brown argus. Walking back to the car park, MD then spotted two female adders basking, but they were only seen by a couple of guests before slithering out of sight and into the undergrowth. A little further on, we also picked up a male stonechat too.

With time against us, MD suggested the group make a quick stop at Cheddar Reservoir to see if the trip list could be added too. Parking at the southeast corner, it was busy with people watching a junior rugby tournament and, as a result, perhaps unsurprisingly quiet for birds. Scanning out from the reservoir edge, we picked up pied wagtails, the trio of common, herring and lesser black-backed gulls, great crested grebes,

mallards, coots, swallows and swifts. Driving back, via Wedmore, the Old Schoolhouse had plenty of house martins busy building nests under the eaves of the roof, but with time against us, we headed back to Worth House for lunch and compilation of the trip's final checklist.

Bidding farewell to each other, it had been another terrific Levels' trip, hugely aided, of course by everyone getting on famously and enjoying a plethora of wonderful wildlife sightings.

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Checklist for Somerset Levels in Spring with Mike Dilger

	Common Name	*Scientific Name*	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
	BIRDS						
1	Canada goose	*Branta canadensis*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Greylag goose	*Anser anser*		✓	✓	✓	
3	Mute swan	*Cygnus olor*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Egyptian goose	*Alopochen aegyptiaca*				✓	
5	Shelduck	*Tadorna tadorna*		✓			
6	Teal	*Anas crecca*		✓			
7	Garganey	*Spatula querquedula*		✓			
8	Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*		✓	✓	✓	
9	Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	✓		✓	✓	
12	Tufted duck	*Aythya fuligula*	✓			✓	✓
13	Pheasant	*Phasianus colchicus*		✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Great crested grebe	*Podiceps cristatus*	✓		✓	✓	✓
15	Little grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*				✓	H
16	Bittern	*Botaurus stellaris*	H		✓	✓	
17	Grey heron	*Ardea cinerea*		✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Little egret	*Egretta garzetta*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19	Great white egret	*Ardea alba*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
20	Cattle egret	*Ardea ibis*	✓		✓	✓	
21	Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Marsh harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
23	Red kite	*Milvus milvus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*		✓	✓	✓	
25	Water rail	*Rallus aquaticus*				H	
26	Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*		✓	✓	✓	

Find out more about our Somerset Levels in Spring with Mike Dilger trip or contact us

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27	Coot	*Fulica atra*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Crane	*Grus grus*		✓		✓	
29	Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*		✓			
30	Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
31	Avocet	*Recurvirostra avosetta*		✓			
32	Ringed plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*		✓			
33	Little ringed plover	*Charadrius dubius*		✓			
34	Curlew	*Numenius arquata*		✓			
35	Whimbrel	*Numenius phaeopus*		✓			
36	Black-tailed godwit	*Limosa limosa*				✓	
37	Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*		✓			
38	Ruff	*Calidris pugnax*			✓		
39	Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*		✓			
40	Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*			✓	✓	
41	Black-headed gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*		✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Lesser black-backed gull	*Larus fuscus*	✓	✓		✓	✓
43	Herring gull	*Larus argentatus*	✓	✓	✓		✓
44	Common gull	*Larus canus*		✓			✓
45	Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
46	Stock dove	*Columba oenas*		✓	H		H
47	Collared dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*		✓	✓	✓	✓
48	Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*			H	H	
49	Swift	*Apus apus*	✓	✓		✓	✓
50	Great spotted woodpecker	*Dendrocopos major*		H	H	✓	H
51	Green woodpecker	*Picus viridis*			H		
52	Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*					✓
53	Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*	✓	✓		✓	
54	Jay	*Garrulus glandarius*			✓	✓	
55	Magpie	*Pica pica*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Jackdaw	*Coloeus monedula*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
57	Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
58	Carrion crow	*Corvus corone*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Raven	*Corvus corax*					H
60	Bearded tit	*Panurus biarmicus*				✓	

61	Marsh tit	*Poecile palustris*		✓			
62	Great tit	*Parus major*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
63	Blue tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus*	H	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Coal tit	*Periparus ater*		✓	✓		✓
65	Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	H	✓	✓	✓	H
66	Sand martin	*Riparia riparia*				✓	✓
67	Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	House martin	*Delichon urbicum*	✓				✓
69	Long-tailed tit	*Aegithalos caudatus*	✓		✓	✓	✓
70	Cetti's warbler	*Cettia cetti*	H	✓	H	✓	H
71	Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*	H	✓	✓	H	✓
72	Willow warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	H	H	✓	H	✓
73	Wood warbler	*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*			H		
74	Sedge warbler	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*		H		✓	
75	Reed warbler	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	H	H	H	H	
76	Blackcap	*Sylvia atricapilla*	H	H	H	✓	
77	Garden warbler	*Sylvia borin*				✓	✓
78	Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*		✓	✓	✓	✓
79	Lesser whitethroat	*Sylvia curruca*		✓			
80	Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*		H	✓	✓	✓
81	Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	H		✓	✓	H
82	Nuthatch	*Sitta europaea*		✓	H		
83	Treecreeper	*Certhia familiaris*		✓			
84	Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*		✓		✓	
85	Blackbird	*Turdus merula*		✓	✓	✓	✓
86	Mistle thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*			H		✓
87	Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*			H	✓	H
88	Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Spotted flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*			✓ MD		
90	Pied flycatcher	*Ficedula hypoleuca*			✓		
91	Redstart	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*			H		✓
92	Stonechat	*Saxicola rubicola*		✓	✓	✓	✓
93	Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*		✓	✓		
94	House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*		✓		✓	✓

95	Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*			✓	✓	✓
96	Pied wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	✓	✓	✓		✓
97	Grey wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*			✓		
98	Yellow wagtail	*Motacilla flava*	✓	✓	✓		
99	Meadow pipit	*Anthus pratensis*			✓		
100	Tree pipit	*Anthus trivialis*			✓		
101	Water pipit	*Anthus spinoletta*			✓		
102	Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*	H	✓	✓	✓	✓
103	Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	✓	✓	✓		
104	Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*					✓ MD
105	Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
106	Reed bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*		✓		✓	
107	White stork	*Ciconia ciconia*		✓			
108	Black-necked grebe	*Podiceps nigricollis*				✓	
	MAMMALS						
1	Rabbit	*Oryctolagus cuniculus*		✓	✓	✓	
2	Brown hare	*Lepus europaeus*		✓			
3	Grey squirrel	*Sciurus carolinensis*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Roe deer	*Capreolus capreolus*		✓	✓	✓	✓
	REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS						
1	Marsh frog	*Pelophylax ridibundus*			H	H	
2	Common lizard	*Zootoca vivipara*					✓
3	Adder	*Vipera berus*					✓
	BUTTERFLIES						
1	Brimstone	*Gonepteryx rhamni*		✓		✓	
2	Large white	*Pieris brassicae*		✓		✓	
3	Green-veined white	*Pieris napi*			✓ MD		✓
4	Orange-tip	*Anthocharis cardamines*	✓	✓		✓	✓
5	Holly blue	*Celastrina argiolus*	✓	✓			
6	Red admiral	*Vanessa atalanta*	✓	✓		✓	
7	Painted lady	*Vanessa cardui*				✓	✓

8	Peacock	*Aglais io*				✓	✓
9	Speckled wood	*Pararge aegeria*		✓		✓	
10	Brown argus	*Aricia agestis*					✓
	DRAGONFLIES						
1	Banded demoiselle	*Calopteryx splendens*	✓				
2	Large red damselfly	*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*				✓	
3	Azure damselfly	*Coenagrion puella*				✓	
4	Variable damselfly	*Coenagrion pulchellum*				✓	
5	Blue-tailed damselfly	*Ischnura elegans*				✓	
6	Hairy dragonfly	*Brachytron pratense*				✓	
7	Scarce chaser	*Libellula fulva*				✓	