

# Tour Report

## UK – The Farnes and Northumberland

13 – 18 June 2022

Grey seal



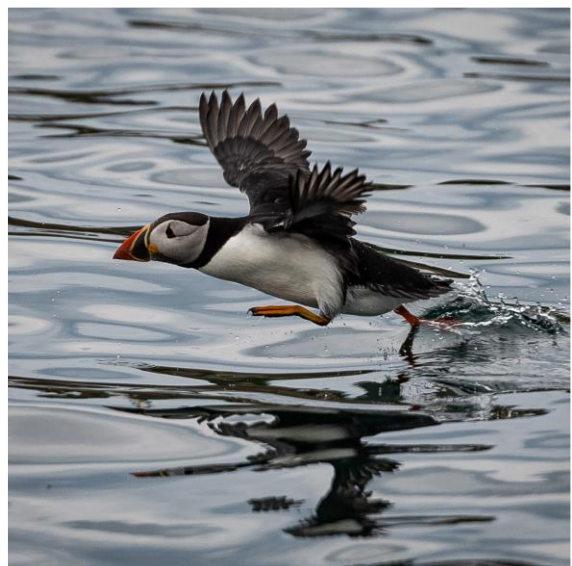
Pyramidal orchid



Azure damselfly



Atlantic puffin



Compiled by Martin Kitching

Tour Leader: Martin Kitching

**Day 1: Newton Links and the Long Nanny**

**Monday 13 June 2022**

*Weather: Sunny intervals, 16°C, 9mph WSW*

After gathering in the hotel, we headed south to High Newton to visit the National Trust reserve at the Long Nanny estuary where little terns breed in the strandline on the beach and Arctic terns breed in the dunes. Small white and orange-tip butterflies were active in the afternoon warmth in the dunes where we found northern marsh, common spotted and pyramidal orchids. Arctic terns gave spectacularly close views as they returned to their nests with fish and flew close overhead, and little terns were on their fishbox nest platforms and flying out to sea, and back, with their characteristic rapid wingbeats as skylarks and meadow pipits song-flighted.

**Day 2: Beadnell, Howick, Boulmer and Coquet Island**

**Tuesday 14 June 2022**

*Weather: Sunny intervals, 17°C, 9mph SW*

We started the day with a short drive south to Beadnell, where distant 'scope views of the Long Nanny tern colony revealed the presence of an American black tern, returning for its third consecutive summer, roosting among Arctic terns on the beach and viewable through binoculars each time the birds flushed. A walk along the clifftops at Howick produced the hoped-for close views of fulmar and kittiwake on their cliff face nests and prompted some observations about habitat partitioning from sharp-eyed guests. As stonechats played their usual game of hide-and-seek with us, a common cuckoo flew inland from the clifftop – an unexpected addition to the day list!

Howick Haven was our next port of call, with the prospect of waders along undisturbed stretches of the beach, and bar-tailed godwit and sanderling were both unusual for Northumberland in mid-June. After lunch, we boarded a boat in Amble for a sailing around Coquet Island with its internationally important colony of roseate terns. Arctic, Sandwich and roseate terns were all picked out from the throng of birds on and around the island, Atlantic puffins were rafting, flying and just sitting on the clifftops and some very inquisitive grey seals popped their heads up out of the water next to our boat. On our return journey, the BTO ringer who had been out on the island passed us in their small RIB and we had an up-to-date roseate tern count – 145 pairs nesting on the island!

**Day 3: Holy Island and the Farne Islands**

**Wednesday 15 June 2022**

*Weather: Sunny intervals, 17°C, 7mph E*

Today's first destination was one of the two islands in Northumberland that are linked to the mainland by tidal causeways. Walking along the dune slacks opened up a remarkable opportunity to explore the flora of the island, with northern marsh, early marsh, common spotted and pyramidal orchids, marsh helleborine and common twayblade, alongside viper's bugloss, mouse-eared hawkweed, common restharrow, yellow rattle, bird's-foot trefoil, ladies bedstraw and butterwort. Linnets, meadow pipits, skylarks and stonechats were all found as we made our way through the dunes and the moaning cries of grey seal carried eerily across the island from their low tide haul-out on the sandbars of Fenham Flats.

After returning to Seahouses for an early dinner we boarded a boat for a sunset cruise around the 'Galapagos of the North'. Leaving the harbour there's no real indication of what the experience is going to be like but as we neared the inner group of islands, the density of Atlantic puffins, common guillemots and razorbills flying to and from the islands gradually increased until we were surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smell of a mixed seabird colony – a multi-sensory assault that isn't easily forgotten – and the setting sun broke through the cloud, silhouetting birds returning to the islands as dusk approached.

**Day 4: South-east Northumberland**

**Thursday 16 June 2022**

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*Weather: Sunny, 23°C, 4mph W*

Today we headed south to explore the post-industrial landscape of south-east Northumberland. Choppington Woods is on the site of three former deep mines and is now a 76-hectare mixed woodland with a small pond and boardwalk/dipping platform. The pond proved to be a good hunting ground for dragonflies and damselflies, with mating pairs of azure, and large red, damselflies both giving obliging views. The Northumberland Wildlife Trust reserves just inland of the dunes along Druridge Bay are a mix of former surface mine sites and subsidence.

Cresswell is one of the furthest north sites for breeding avocets and held a small number of non-breeding little gulls.

Druridge Pools was our next destination and black-tailed godwits were the star of the show here, along with some very obliging common snipe – although we were sure the snipe thought they were well hidden! East Chevington is another former surface mine site and has been a nature reserve for less than 30 years. It's a regular roost site for terns and waders and a whimbrel announced its arrival before very conveniently settling next to a curlew as a Cetti's warbler called from a concealed position.

#### **Day 5: The Cheviot Valleys**

**Friday 17 June 2022**

*Weather: Sunny intervals, 21°C, 19mph SW*

The day started with 18 bottlenose dolphins stampeding past Seahouses Harbour while we were eating breakfast. Competing with the Eggs Benedict at the Bamburgh Castle Inn takes some doing but breakfasts were cooling as we watched the dolphins.

Our destination for the day was the valleys of the Cheviot massif – an 815-metre-high extinct volcano in central north Northumberland. The riparian triumvirate of common sandpiper, grey wagtail and dipper were all found along the Harthope Burn and, as common buzzards soared high overhead, the alarm calls of curlew drew our attention to two ravens rising over a ridge on the skyline, and as we watched the scene unfolding above us a merlin flew through the field of view. Heading back towards 'civilisation' we called in at the disused gravel pits at Branton for something completely different from the wilder reaches of the hills.

#### **Day 6: Budle Bay and Monk's House Pool**

**Saturday 18 June 2022**

*Weather: Sunny intervals, 18°C, 15mph W*

Our final morning excursion saw us taking the short drive north to the mudflats of Budle Bay, and then a final stop at Monk's House Pool between Seahouses and Bamburgh, where Sandwich, common and Arctic terns delivered perched, flying and vocal comparisons to bid the guests a farewell from Northumberland.

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# Checklist



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
	<b>BIRDS</b>	<i>AVES</i>						
1	Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓			✓	✓	
2	Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
3	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				✓		
6	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			✓	✓		
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓		
9	Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>				✓	✓	
10	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Common goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>					✓	
12	Common merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>		✓				
13	Red-breasted merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		✓				

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14	Red grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>					✓	
15	Red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>					✓	
16	Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	✓					
17	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				✓	✓	
18	Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			✓	✓		
19	Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				✓		
20	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			✓	✓		
22	Northern gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		✓	✓			
23	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
24	European shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>		✓	✓			
25	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>					✓	
26	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			✓	✓	✓	
27	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			✓	✓	✓	
28	Eurasian oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Pied avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>				✓		
30	Northern lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
31	Common ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		

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32	Eurasian whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>				✓		
33	Eurasian curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
34	Bar-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		✓				
35	Black-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>				✓		
36	Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		✓	✓			✓
37	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		✓				
38	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				✓		
39	Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					✓	
40	Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		✓	✓	✓		
41	Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	✓	✓	✓			
42	Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Little gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	✓			✓		
44	Common gull	<i>Larus canus</i>				✓		
45	Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
46	Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Great black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
48	Sandwich tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49	Little tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	✓					

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50	Roseate tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>		✓					
51	Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		✓	✓	✓			
52	Arctic tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
53	American black tern	<i>Chlidonias niger surinamensis</i>		✓					
54	Common murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓	✓				
55	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>			✓				
56	Atlantic puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		✓	✓				
57	Northern fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓	✓				
58	Rock dove / feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>				✓			
60	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
61	Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
62	Common cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		✓					
63	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
64	Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			✓		✓		
65	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓			✓	✓		
66	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>					✓		
67	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓		✓			

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68	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
69	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
70	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
71	Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
72	Northern raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>						✓
73	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				✓		
74	Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>				✓	✓	
75	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>						
76	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
77	Sand martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
78	Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
79	Common house martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
80	Cetti's warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>				✓		
81	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>				✓	✓	
82	Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				✓	✓	
83	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>				✓	✓	
84	Sedge warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>				✓		
85	Eurasian reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				✓		

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86	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				✓	✓	
87	Garden warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>					✓	
88	Common whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
89	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				✓	✓	
90	Eurasian wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
91	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>					✓	
92	Eurasian treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>					✓	
93	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
94	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
95	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
96	Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>					✓	
97	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>				✓	✓	
98	European stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
99	White-throated dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>					✓	
100	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
101	Eurasian tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>				✓		
102	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
103	Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>					✓	

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104	Pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
105	Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
106	European rock pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>			✓			
107	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>				✓	✓	
108	Eurasian bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				✓		
109	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>					✓	
110	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
111	Lesser redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>					✓	
112	European goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
113	Eurasian siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>					✓	
114	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
115	Reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<b>MAMMALS</b>	<b>MAMMALIA</b>						
1	Grey seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>		✓	✓			
2	Bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>					✓	
	<b>BUTTERFLIES</b>	<b>LEPIDOPTERA</b>						
1	Large white	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>			✓	✓	✓	
2	Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	

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3	Green-veined white	<i>Pieris napi</i>		✓		✓	✓	
4	Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	✓			✓	✓	
5	Small copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>				✓		
6	Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	✓					
7	Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>					✓	
8	Small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>			✓		✓	
9	Speckled wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>				✓	✓	
10	Wall	<i>Lasiomatta megera</i>					✓	
	<b>DRAGONFLIES</b>	<b>ODONATA</b>						
1	Large red damselfly	<i>Pyrrosoma nymphula</i>				✓		
2	Azure damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>				✓		
3	Common blue damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>				✓		
4	Blue-tailed damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>				✓		
5	Common darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>				✓		

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