

Tour Report UK – Wild Pembrokeshire 14 – 18 June 2021

Puffin



Grasshopper warbler



Gannet



Ivy broomrape



Compiled by Barry Embling

Day 1: Monday 14 June 2021

Weather: sunny, 16°C

After meeting in the vibrant city of St David's, our only choice was to head for one of the best and deserted hinterlands in this corner of west Wales, Dowrog Common. We spent a most wonderful three hours watching a variety of birds feeding young, including willow warblers fledging before our very eyes by the trackside – a truly remarkable event to witness. A variety of warblers, reed bunting, cuckoos, complimented by a freshly emerged four-spotted chaser and an emperor dragonfly were on show, together with a variety of orchids and other interesting wet-heath flora. A good start to our trip in perfect sun, quietness and, unusually, no wind at all.

Day 2: Tuesday 15 June 2021

Weather: sunny 19°C

After checking-in before our crossing, we had a wander around The Deer Park at Martin's Haven with linnets in profusion and heard a grasshopper warbler, which we all got superb views of. At noon we boarded the Dale Princess and arrived at North Haven in beautiful sun after a calm crossing was a sheer delight, as we were met by puffins, guillemots and razorbills floating in clear turquoise water. After alighting, we were briefed by the Wildlife Trust, then all admired and photographed puffins – as if these might be our last of the day. We embarked on the whole island trail and made our way through the middle, through the farm, to emerge at the most northern point, overlooking the Garland Stone. Wheatear, grey seal and harbour porpoise were observed, and views of Ramsay and all of St Brides Bay. Amid the clamour of breeding gulls with chicks and the pink haze of thrift and red campion we eventually made our way to The Wick with its huge colony of auks and kittiwakes, and more importantly, more puffins with their courtship displays, burrowing and general curious and even quite baffling antics. Dragging ourselves away we made haste back to North Haven via the farm for a quick scan for any owls – which we saw, and though distant displayed very well for us. Queuing for the boat was made easy as we were accompanied by a close-feeding chough – this rounded off a most memorable day. Once back on the mainland and after a cup of tea, we headed for The Gann, a nearby estuary, where we saw black-tailed godwit, curlew, shelduck with ducklings and distant little egrets.

Day 3: Wednesday 16 June 2021

Weather: mostly cloudy 18°C

Our short boat crossing to Ramsay Island was smooth, and on arrival we were given a short talk before starting out heading north. Sheep and rabbit-grazed grass was perfect feeding habitat for chough and wheatear, and we saw many young of the latter, giving close-up views. An electric fenced-off exclusion area indicated where the nest of a peregrine might be and we saw two quite mobile chicks on the nesting ledge, though no adults to be seen. Taking the track further south past Garlic Bay we looked into the Ogof Colomennod with its nesting auks, kittiwakes and fulmars. As before, time was becoming ever more precious, and we decided to head back for the farm and spend time looking for the little owls. On route, three red deer were seen well as they gracefully retreated from us. Next on the agenda was looking for the owls. Searching revealed a rounded dark shape on the top of a wall, that, not without our patience revealed itself as a little owl. A walk to the farm and a welcome rest before boarding the boat going back to St Justinian's was not without anxiety, as we pondered a possible cancellation of our Grassholm trip. Our fears were unfounded, and we were soon west bound on our way to the half-white island that had been giving us tantalising views all day. Approaching the gannet colony more closely, the half-iced cake island became patterned and textured, as birds were evenly

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spaced, and with the comings and goings, noise and smell rendered the senses numbed by so much to take in. A circumnavigation of Grassholm went too quickly and it was time to return. Our hour's return trip brought many more Manx shearwaters, as they assembled at sea waiting for the safety of darkness. Another full day that ended in the Bishop's Arms and a fine meal was had by all.

Day 4: Thursday 17 June 2021

Weather: Sunny 18°C

A slightly more leisurely start and then a day in the south of Pembrokeshire at Bosherton Lakes was a perfect contrast to the last two island days. We walked from the northern end all the way to Broad Haven West beach. Various dragonflies were seen, also fish, that included a superb green 'jack' pike and we even saw a great-crested newt on the bottom. Birds included some more now familiar warblers, with the addition of a burst of song from a Cetti's warbler – encouragingly recognised by all as something new! Refreshment was taken in the pub at Stackpole before we drove on the nearby West Williamston nature reserve alongside the Cresswell River. A short walk around the reserve was all there was time for as a visit to St David's Cathedral was made before dinner.

Day 5: Friday 18 June 2021

Weather: Sunny and cloudy 16°C

A short and final trip to Llangloffan Fen on breezy morning provided a chance to assess whether our team had learnt some birds by sight and sound - mixed results, but a generally a huge improvement! Whitethroats were seen well as was a male reed bunting. After a tea and coffee refreshment we returned to the hotel to go our separate ways, concluding a trip that had good weather, lots of laughs and was a superb tonic post-Covid for us all.

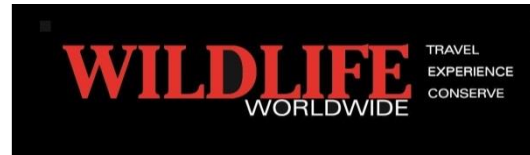
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Checklist



| | Common Name | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 |
|----|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | BIRDS | | | | | |
| 1 | Little grebe | | | | ✓ | |
| 2 | Northern fulmar | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 3 | Manx shearwater | | | ✓ | | |
| 4 | Gannet | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 5 | Cormorant | | | ✓ | | |
| 6 | Shag | | | ✓ | | |
| 7 | Little egret | | | ✓ | | |
| 8 | Grey heron | | | ✓ | | |
| 9 | Mute swan | | | | ✓ | |
| 10 | Canada goose | | ✓ | | | |
| 11 | Shelduck | | ✓ | | | |
| 12 | Mallard | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 13 | Red kite | | | | ✓ | |
| 14 | Buzzard | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 15 | Sparrowhawk | | | ✓ | | |
| 16 | Kestrel | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| 17 | Peregrine | | | | ✓ | |
| 18 | Moorhen | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 19 | Oystercatcher | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 20 | Black-tailed godwit | | ✓ | | | |
| 21 | Curlew | | ✓ | | | |
| 22 | Herring gull | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

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| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Lesser black-backed gull | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 24 | Great black-backed gull | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 25 | Kittiwake | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 26 | Puffin | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 27 | Guillemot | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 28 | Razorbill | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 29 | Woodpigeon | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 30 | Stock dove (heard) | | | | ✓ | |
| 31 | Cuckoo | ✓ | | | | |
| 32 | Short-eared owl | | ✓ | | | |
| 33 | Little owl | | ✓ | | | |
| 34 | Swift | | | | ✓ | |
| 35 | Great-spotted woodpecker | | | | ✓ | |
| 36 | Skylark | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 37 | Swallow | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 38 | House martin | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 39 | Meadow pipit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 40 | Rock pipit | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 41 | Pied wagtail | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 42 | Wren | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 43 | Dunnock | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 44 | Robin | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 45 | Wheatear | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 46 | Stonechat | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 47 | Song thrush | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 48 | Mistle thrush | ✓ | | | | |
| 49 | Blackbird | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 50 | Garden warbler | | | | | ✓ |

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| | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51 | Blackcap | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 52 | Whitethroat | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 53 | Sedge warbler | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 54 | Reed warbler | | | | ✓ | |
| 55 | Grasshopper warbler | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 56 | Cetti's warbler | | | | ✓ | |
| 57 | Willow warbler | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 58 | Chiffchaff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 59 | Goldcrest | | | | ✓ | |
| 60 | Great tit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 61 | Blue tit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 62 | Long-tailed tit | | | | ✓ | |
| 63 | Nuthatch | | | | ✓ | |
| 64 | Treecreeper | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| 65 | Magpie | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 66 | Carrion crow | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 67 | Rook | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 68 | Jackdaw | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 69 | Raven | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 70 | Chough | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 71 | Starling | | | | ✓ | |
| 72 | House sparrow | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| 73 | Chaffinch | | | | ✓ | |
| 74 | Linnet | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 75 | Goldfinch | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 76 | Bullfinch | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| 77 | Reed bunting | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| | MAMMALS | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rabbit | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 2 | Grey squirrel | | | | ✓ | |
| 3 | Harbour porpoise | | ✓ | | | |
| 4 | Fox | | | | ✓ | |
| 5 | Grey seal | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 6 | Red deer | | | | ✓ | |
| | AMPHIBIANS | | | | | |
| 1 | Great crested newt | | | | ✓ | |
| 2 | Common frog | | | | ✓ | |
| | SOME OBSERVED PLANTS | | | | | |
| 1 | Lesser spearwort | | | | | ✓ |
| 2 | Columbine | | | | ✓ | |
| 3 | Red campion | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4 | Sea campion | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 5 | Ragged robin | ✓ | | | | |
| 6 | Greater sea spurrey | | | | ✓ | |
| 7 | Tree mallow | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 8 | English stonecrop | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 9 | Kidney vetch | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 10 | Birds foot trefoil | | | | | |
| 11 | Great willowherb | | | | | ✓ |
| 12 | Hemlock water dropwort | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 13 | Wild carrot | | | | ✓ | |
| 14 | Hogweed | | | | ✓ | |
| 15 | Alexanders | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 16 | Sea bindweed | | | | ✓ | |
| 17 | Water forget me not | | | | | ✓ |
| 18 | Vipers bugloss | | | | ✓ | |

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| | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Ivy broomrape | | | | ✓ | |
| 20 | Ox-eye daisy | | | | ✓ | |
| 21 | Greater knapweed | | | | ✓ | |
| 22 | White water lily | | | | ✓ | |
| 23 | Yellow iris | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 24 | Southern marsh orchid | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 25 | Common spotted orchid | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| 26 | Fragrant orchid | | | | ✓ | |
| 27 | Lords and ladies | | | | ✓ | |

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