

BIRDING NEWSLETTER

Ely & District U3A Birdwatching Group



Planning Team

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Forthcoming Events

8th June

RSPB Ouse Fen (morning)

(Babs & Graham)

12th July

Rutland Water

(Tony & Nigel)

24th August

Frampton Marsh

(Babs & Nigel)

15th September

Minsmere

(John & Mavis)

Farne Isle Special!

25th May

Dear Birdwatchers,

On Sunday, 15th May, thirteen of our birdwatching group met in Seahouses for what turned out to be a splendid birdwatching event. Most travelled up there on the Sunday, but others had arrived earlier to do some private birdwatching, before the main group arrived.



The original plan was to visit the Farne Isles on Monday morning with a landing on Inner Farne. Unfortunately the weather was very wet and cold with a strong wind blowing onshore, so the boat company cancelled the trip. Plan B was to go to the Long Nanny reserve just South of Seahouses to look at nesting Arctic and little terns. The weather was still wet and cold, but didn't deter our enthusiasm for a good walk through the dunes and bird spotting. We were not disappointed with views of Arctic terns displaying and preparing nesting spots no more than a couple of meters from the viewing point. The real bonus was a rare American black tern that had been spotted almost daily in the area. It wasn't there on arrival at the viewing point, but on the return journey we were flagged down by the wardens who had spotted it. The late afternoon was spent drying out - so called - waterproofs and getting warm again, before an evening meal at the local chippy.

Due to the boat cancellation on Monday the group split on Tuesday, with three members rescheduling the boat trip to the Farne Isles and the others following the original planned visit to Harthorpe Burn near Wooler. Both groups were not disappointed with excellent birding, although somewhat different. After an early dinner, the whole group joined together for a sunset cruise around the islands. Not sure

about the sunset, but we did get a brief glimpse of the sun for a few minutes. Some were on the same boat as the trip earlier in the day, but instead of 80 people on board, our sunset cruise had just us thirteen plus one extra passenger. It was just as well as the seas swells rose and the wind blew. It was a bitter cold trip, but so good to get close up to guillemots, razorbills, puffins, fulmars and grey seals.

On Wednesday part of the group went South to visit RSPB Saltholme reserve, while others stopped in the Seahouses area for more birdwatching and sightseeing. In total during the trip 113 different species of birds were listed. An excellent result giving many new birds for their year list, as well as lifetime lists as well.

We have to say a big thank you to Babs York who organised the Seahouses part of the event and John & Mavis Middleton for organising the RSPB Saltholme reserve and Hartlepool stopover.

Here are some highlights of the trip quoted as by participants:

“This is a difficult ask, pinpointing my highlight of our trip away, so I won't! I just loved it all. Good company, new landscapes, habitats, changeable weather; boat trip; puffins to dippers; the terns, including the American Black Tern; song of the wood warbler; red grouse in the heather; the red eye of the black necked grebe. So much to see, hear and learn - Sue Greenway”

“My bird of the trip has to be the American black tern, despite the rain! I don't often get to see a completely new bird these days and when it shows at such close quarters it is special. Sally and I both really enjoyed the evening boat trip. The views of the sea birds were special and the space we had on the vessel made viewing easy - Graham Cole”

“My highlights were seeing at close quarters the beautiful head colouring of the male Eider. Hearing and seeing a cuckoo for the first time this year. Seeing red grouse and also red legged partridges of which I would rather like one as a hat! - Jane Wicks”

“My highlights included seeing hundreds of arctic terns at Long Nanny, well worth the walk in the rain! Also landing on Inner Farne to be able to walk among many bird species and see close up the beautiful dark green feathers of a shag incubating 3 eggs Richard Wicks”

“I hadn't known exactly what to expect from our Birdwatching Trip, and having never been to that part of Northumberland before, everything for me was a new discovery. The morning Boat trip to the Inner Farne Island and then being able to spend an hour on the island gave the opportunity to see so many birds at close quarters, such as Guillemots, Razor bills, Eider ducks, Shags, Terns and the Puffins of course. That was unexpected and a real highlight of the trip - Jackie Price”

“Difficult to pick out a single thing, but I think seeing the puffins was the high point for me. They seemed unique amongst the rest of the birds, a great experience - Sean Greenway”

“I had hoped to see an Eider while up in Northumberland, but was pleasantly surprised to find them everywhere - even in the harbour at Seahouses. In fact, there is a group in the harbour that will come up and take food from your hand. Will never forget the lovely “a-oob-e” call of the Eider - Nigel”

The picture gallery

From Jackie Price



Female Eider



Puffin

From Marilyn Peterkin



On the boat



Common Seal



Avocet



Little Tern

Fom Nigel



Great Reed Tern over Lindisfarne



Puffin



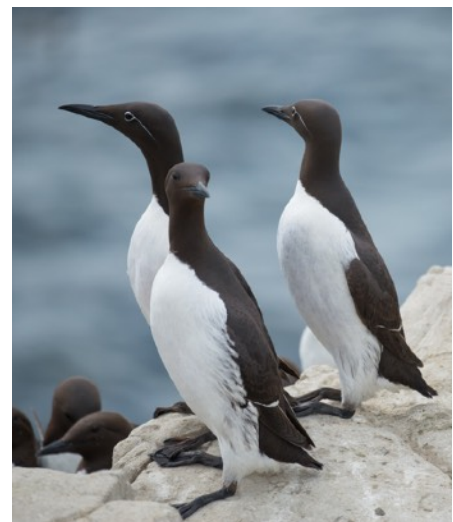
Arctic Tern



Razorbill



Shag



2 Bridled Guillemots

From Sean Greenway



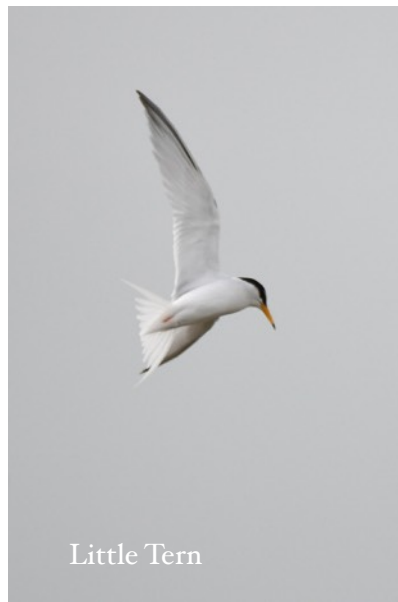
Puffins



Seabird cliffs



Sandwich Tern



Little Tern



American Black Tern



Puffin



Ringed Plover



Fulmar

On the boat



Eider