

THE TRAVELLING NATURALIST

TRAVEL | EXPERIENCE | CONSERVE



Tour Report

UK - Lancashire in Autumn

3-6 October 2022

Black-tailed godwit



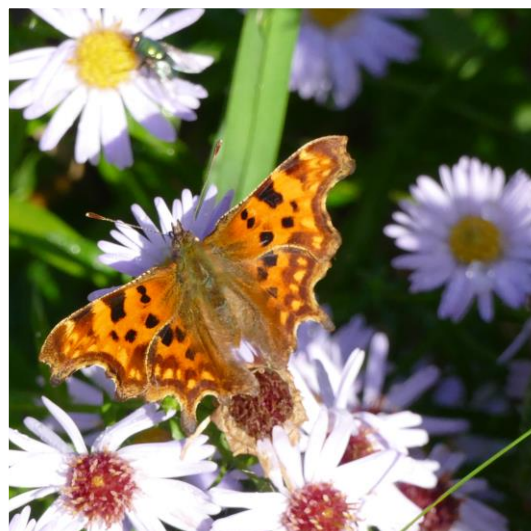
Leighton Moss



Martin Mere



Comma - Wigan Flashes



Compiled by Barry Embling

Day 1: Arrive Conder Green Mill Hotel**Monday 3 October 2022**

After arriving safely at the hotel, we went out for some birdwatching before dinner in the surrounding area, visiting the nearby screen overlooking the lake and River Conder. It was high tide and redshank, curlew, snipe and a couple of ruff were resting on the last available muddy areas and salt marsh. We counted five little grebe on the adjacent lake, and more curlew and a snipe. The evening light was quite exquisite, and we headed for the coast at Glasson Dock and looked across to Overton, Heysham nuclear power station and spotted the Blackpool Tower. Large numbers of gulls could be seen going into Morecambe Bay to roost as the sun set on a mild and still evening.

Day 2: Martin Mere**Tuesday 4 October 2022**

We first headed for the nearby screen at Conder Green and new species to the ones we had seen yesterday evening. These included an avocet and five greenshank, and our first pink-footed geese were seen flying south. A drive to Martin Mere drive via Preston was less than ideal in the heavy traffic, but the mild and dry weather more than made up for it once we'd arrived, especially as we were met in the car park by many pink-footed geese flying around in all directions. We started at the most distant westerly hide, and immediately started connecting with birds. Numerous kestrels, a female marsh harrier and a buzzard made up the raptors, whilst waders included a nice flock of 16 ruff, snipe, lapwing and a green sandpiper dropped in. Wildfowl abounded, with Canada, grey-lag and pink-footed geese and a lone shelduck. Moving on through the various hides, we overlooked the impressive Mere, where there were many hundreds, perhaps thousands of birds. Whooper swans and various other wildfowl were feeding on a huge pile of potatoes, viewed from the Hale Hide, rather incongruously dumped opposite us. Moving on to The Raines Hide, we had excellent views of the Mere, and we were treated to close-up views of a vast array of mainly wildfowl and waders. Highlights included a close pair of black-tailed godwits, close-up lapwings, shoveler and a cattle egret added further interest. Checking other hides, whilst unexpectedly the rain held off for us brought views of birds on the feeder, rats and a squirrel! At about 14:30 when in the United Utilities hide, the rains finally and decisively arrived, so we all considered that we had done well to have such a good day thus far. A walk back via the collection had us all admiring Japanese cranes, whilst we ended our day looking in the bookshop at the visitor centre. Unfortunately, opportunities in the field were ended by the weather for today.

Day 3: Leighton Moss**Wednesday 5 October 2022**

Another very unsettled day in the field awaited us, as we arrived in rain and strong wind at the RSPB hides by Morecambe Bay. We had good views at high tide of waders that included black-tailed godwit, greenshank, knot and a dunlin. Grey heron, great and little egrets were viewed well and as we walked back to the minibus, we watched a passing tit flock with a couple of chiffchaffs. After having a cuppa in the main car park, we headed onto the reserve, first exploring the southern section. A look across the reserve from the tower gave an idea of the sheer size of the reserve and from here a couple of us heard bearded reedling, though in the strong wind that was it for this species today. From the various hides we saw a variety of wildfowl, including shoveler, gadwall, great egret and a couple of female marsh harriers, and saw a distant male. We had a last look for the tower in the hope of seeing something new in slightly improved conditions, but in reality, it had been and thorough washout-out, and we had done well staying dry and seeing some birds in the challenging conditions.

Day 4: Wigan Flashes**Thursday 6 October 2022**

We woke up to a very windy day and a day away from the coast seemed appropriate, given how weather-beaten we all felt. Wigan Flashes was our destination, a well-known local nature reserve in the suburban Wigan area. The weather was bright and sunny with no wind, and with the aid of on-site maps, we walked a couple of loops on each side of the canal that bisected the reserve. The main bird species of the reserve is willow tit, and after adding jay to our trip list and seeing a range of woodland birds, we briefly saw a willow tit! Though not very easily identifiable on plumage alone with our poor views, we heard its characteristic call. We saw some more waterbirds on some of the flashes themselves, and eventually returned to the minibus

and had a cup of tea. This concluded our short tour, heavily affected by inclement weather. Nevertheless, we had all had a nice time and certainly had time to view birds in detail from hides and the hotel had been superb, even supplying views of kingfisher from the breakfast table!

Checklist

THE TRAVELLING
NATURALIST

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
	BIRDS	AVES			
1	Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓	✓	✓
2	Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓	
3	Pink-footed goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	✓	✓	
4	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓	✓	✓
5	Whooper swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		✓	
6	Common shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓	
7	Northern shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		✓	
8	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		✓	✓
9	Eurasian wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	✓	✓	
10	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓
11	Northern pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		✓	
12	Eurasian teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓	✓	
13	Common pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		✓	
14	Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	✓	✓	✓

15	Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		✓	
16	Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓	
17	Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓		
18	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓
19	Great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓	
20	Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓
21	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓		
22	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	
23	Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓		
24	Western marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓	
25	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓
26	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓	✓
27	Eurasian coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓	✓
28	Eurasian oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	
29	Northern lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓	✓
30	Eurasian curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	✓	
31	Black-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓	✓	
32	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	✓	✓	
33	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		✓	
34	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓	

35	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓	✓	
36	Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓	✓	
37	Common greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	✓	✓	
38	Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓
39	Great black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	
40	European herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓
41	Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓	
42	Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	
43	Common wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓
44	Eurasian collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓
45	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓	
46	Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		✓	
47	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓
48	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			✓
49	Eurasian magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓
50	Western jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓
51	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓
52	Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓
53	Northern raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	
54	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	✓	✓	✓

55	Marsh tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		✓	
56	Willow tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>			✓
57	Eurasian blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓
58	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓
59	Cetti's warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓	✓	✓
60	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	✓	✓
61	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	✓	✓	✓
62	Eurasian wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓
63	Eurasian treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		✓	✓
64	Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓
65	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓
66	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓	✓
67	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓
68	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓
69	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓	✓	✓
70	Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓	✓	
71	Pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	✓	✓	✓
72	Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	
73	Common chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓
74	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓		

75	Common linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	
76	European goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	
77	Common reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		✓	
	OTHER SPECIES				
1	Roe deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>		✓	
2	Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	✓		
3	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum stiolatum</i>			✓
4	Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>			✓
5	Comma	<i>Polygongonia c-album</i>			
6	Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			✓