

## **Birding in the Southern U.K.—June-July 2010**

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During the period early June to mid-July 2010, we were introduced to the birds of the southern U.K. in three areas: mid-Wales, south-eastern (Greater London), England and Norfolkshire, England. The first four-day trip under the guidance of John Davis of Mid-Wales Birding Holidays was in early June. Lodingbirding.co.uk with Jack Fearnside provided bird guiding for two single-day trips out of London in late June and early July, and then with Gary Elton, also of Lodingbirding.co.uk provided the guidance in Norfolkshire for four days in mid-July. We also had a “do-it-yourself day” at the London Wetland Centre. Although we have been birding in many locations around the globe, having competent guides is essential for the best use of a limited timeframe. No amount of preparation on the Internet can compare with the local knowledge of the birding locations and regional species provided by local birding guides. Although we were just slightly “late” for some of the migratory species, we felt we had an excellent introduction to a wide range of U.K. species.

We traveled to Aberystwyth, Wales on 5 June 2010 via train on our Brit Rail passes. (If you are planning a number of train transitions in the U.K., these passes are an excellent, cost-effective, way of getting around.) We were picked up at the rail platform by John Davis and transported to the George Barrow Hotel, our accommodation for the next four nights. The George Barrow Hotel at the edge of the village of Pontervyd, is a very comfortable small hotel, with a lovely dining area overlooking a number of bird-feeding stations. It has a number of pathways and small roads radiating to provide additional birding time in the early morning and evening. For the next 3-½ days, from about 8:30am until about 5:30pm we traveled in the Mid-Wales Birding Holidays Land Rover to a wide range of birding locations. In addition to the 86 species we counted as “positive sightings”, we had the chance to become comfortable with many of the more common of the species, much to the amusement of John, as we delighted in seeing our first Coal Tits and Chiffchaffs. Also of value to us was John’s patience in helping us separate the many Corvids of the area. On our first day we were able to see Eurasian Jackdaws, Carrion Crows, Rooks, Ravens and Red-billed Choughs close-up and mostly through the spotting scope to tease-out the fine differences for identification. Perseverance also was needed for us to sort out differences between Garden Warblers, Willow Warblers and Sedge Warblers, between Cormorants and Shags between the Meadow, Tree and Rock Pipits and between House Martins and Sand Martins. John’s knowledge of the location of nesting Guillemots, Razorbills, Choughs, Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Ringed Plovers, Spotted Flycatchers and Peregrine Falcons was especially appreciated. We saw so many Red Kites that it was hard to appreciate that these birds were almost extinct in the U.K. thirty years ago. Our time with John Davis and Mid-Wales Birding Holidays was an enjoyable and well-spent “vacation”, and we would recommend them to you whether you are an “amateur” or “expert” birder.

### Mid-Wales June 5-9, 2010 Bird List

1 Eurasian Jackdaw

36 Meadow Pipit

71 Greylag Goose

2 Rock Dove	37 Fulmar	72 Common Sandpiper
3 Red Kite	38 Common Whitethroat	73 Common Pheasant
4 Barn Swallow	39 Common Buzzard	74 Spotted Flycatcher
5 Great Tit	40 Green Finch	75 Peregrine Falcon
6 Eurasian Blackbird	41 Gold Finch	76 Common Chiffchaff
7 Herring Gull	42 Collared Dove	77 Lesser Redpoll
8 Chaffinch	43 Song Thrush	78 Northern Wheatear
9 Black-billed Magpie	44 Ringed Plover	79 Whinchat
10 Carrion Crow	45 Dunlin	80 Golden Eagle
11 European Robin	46 Sand Martin	81 Eurasian Curlew
12 Blue Tit	47 Starling	82 Northern Lapwing
13 Wood Pigeon	48 Sky Lark	83 Tufted Duck
14 Pied Wagtail	49 Raven	84 Greylag Goose
15 Grey Wagtail	50 Garden Warbler	85 Tree Pipit
16 Mallard	51 Coal Tit	86 White-breasted Dipper
17 Common Swift	52 Manx Shearwater	
18 Pied Flycatcher	53 Common Shelduck	
19 Rook	54 Siskin	
20 House Sparrow	55 Great Spotted Woodpecker	
21 House Martin	56 Nuthatch	
22 Chiffchaff	57 Eurasian Teal	
23 Wren	58 Mute Swan	
24 Razorbill	59 Grey Heron	
25 Linnet	60 Eurasian Coot	
26 Raven	61 Willow Warbler	
27 Greater Black-backed Gull	62 Reed Bunting	
28 Oystercatcher	63 Sedge Warbler	
29 Great Cormorant	64 Tree Creeper	
30 Dunnock	65 Red Start	
31 Black-legged Kittiwake	66 Canada Goose	
32 Red-billed Chough	67 Common Moorhen	
33 Stonechat	68 Common Redshank	
34 Guillemot	69 Little Egret	
35 Shag	70 Eurasian Jay	

On 19 June, 2010, we were picked up at our Sussex Gardens' area hotel for the first of our two London area birding days by Jack Fearnside of Birding London ([www.birdinglondon.co.uk](http://www.birdinglondon.co.uk)). Our second, single-day birding excursion was on 2 July 2010. The late June and early July days were well into "summer", but we were especially pleased by the number of species that we were able to identify with Jack's help. Picking us up at 6:30am in downtown London is an accomplishment in itself and returning us through the rush hour traffic of early evening meant a long day, but the range of sites Jack provided were well chosen to see a range of species, so the time went quickly. We spent time in the Royal Estates' Windsor Great Park, Cobham Common, Stocker's Farm and Lake and Rye Meads on the first day's outing and Stodmarsh National Nature

Reserve and Oare Marshes in Kent on the second day's outing. The first day concentrated on forest, woodland and heathland habitats and the second more exposure to marshes, both freshwater areas and coastal, saltwater habitats. After each trip, Jack provided us with a trip report, including a listing of the birds we'd seen and their scientific nomenclature. The leisurely pace suited us and we had extended time sorting out the Tits (Great, Long-tailed, Blue, Bearded and Coal), which gave us confidence in identifying these common species. Jack also helped us with separating a number of gull species: Herring, Mediterranean, Black-headed, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. We also had "good looks" at Mistle and Song Thrushes, Little Owls, Black Caps, Reed Warblers, Western Marsh Harriers (both male and female), Bearded Tits and Greater-spotted and Green Woodpeckers. If you have only a short time passing through London, a day with Jack Fearnside of Birding London is excellent value. A day at the wetlands of the London Wetland Centre on the Thames River is also well worth a stop. The hides are well located and there are often knowledgeable local birders in attendance to help you identify difficult species.

#### Birding London (19 Jun 2010) Tour Bird List

1 Eurasian Jay	36 Green Woodpecker	71 Herring Gull
2 Dunnock	37 Stone Chat	
3 Eurasian Blackbird	38 Common Linnet	
4 Great Tit	39 Common Swift	
5 Jackdaw	40 Common White Throat	
6 Black-headed Gull	41 Common Buzzard	
7 Crested Grebe	42 Mistle Thrush	
8 Mallard	43 Chaff Finch	
9 Mute Swan	44 Eurasian Sparrow Hawk	
10 Common Tern	45 Feral Pigeon	
11 Rose-ringed Parakeet	46 Common Kestrel	
12 Collared Dove	47 Barn Swallow	
13 European Robin	48 Northern Lapwing	
14 Black Cormorant	49 Little Owl	
15 Wood Pigeon	50 House Martin	
16 Goldfinch	51 Starling	
17 Long-tail Tit	52 Pied Wagtail	
18 Blue Tit	53 House Sparrow	
19 Stock Dove	54 Winter Wren	
20 Carrion Crow	55 Ruddy Duck	
21 Grey Heron	56 Lesser Black-backed Gull	
22 Chiffchaff	57 Common Moorhen	
23 Coal Tit	58 Eurasian Reed Warbler	
24 Gold Crest	59 Sedge Warbler	
25 Canada Goose	60 Eurasian Oystercatcher	
26 Greylag Goose	61 Common Ringed Plover	
27 Mandarin Duck	62 Common Pheasant	
28 Greater Spotted Woodpecker	63 Common Polchard	
29 Black Cap	64 Gadwall	

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|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 30 Eurasian Nuthatch | 65 Little Ringed Plover |
| 31 Green Finch       | 66 Common Shelduck      |
| 32 Bull Finch        | 67 Little Grebe         |
| 33 Common Magpie     | 68 Northern Shoveler    |
| 34 Eurasian Coot     | 69 Egyptian Goose       |
| 35 Tufted Duck       | 70 Song Thrush          |

London and Southeastern U.K. (2 July 2010) Birding Tour List

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|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Starling                 | 36 Mallard                   | 71 Ruff                 |
| 2 Carrion Crow             | 37 Common Moorhen            | 72 Common Teal          |
| 3 Wood Pigeon              | 38 Bearded Tit               | 73 Eurasian Widgeon     |
| 4 Lesser Black-backed Gull | 39 Black-headed Gull         | 74 Little Ringed Plover |
| 5 Rock Dove                | 40 Common Tern               |                         |
| 6 Common Magpie            | 41 Northern Shoveller        |                         |
| 7 Rook                     | 42 Great Crested Grebe       |                         |
| 8 Little Owl               | 43 Herring Gull              |                         |
| 9 House Sparrow            | 44 Great Tit                 |                         |
| 10 Barn Swallow            | 45 Chaffinch                 |                         |
| 11 Winter Wren             | 46 Tree Creeper              |                         |
| 12 Dunnock                 | 47 Common Cuckoo             |                         |
| 13 Garden Warbler          | 48 Long-tailed Tit           |                         |
| 14 Bullfinch               | 49 Mute Swan                 |                         |
| 15 Blackcap                | 50 Eurasian Hobby            |                         |
| 16 Great Cormorant         | 51 Tufted Duck               |                         |
| 17 Sedge Warbler           | 52 Gadwall                   |                         |
| 18 Common Whitethroat      | 53 Goldfinch                 |                         |
| 19 Chiffchaff              | 54 Common Swift              |                         |
| 20 Common Blackbird        | 55 House Martin              |                         |
| 21 Blue Tit                | 56 Mediterranean Gull        |                         |
| 22 Song Thrush             | 57 Meadow Pipit              |                         |
| 23 European Robin          | 58 Pied Wagtail              |                         |
| 24 Reed Warbler            | 59 Eurasian Oystercatcher    |                         |
| 25 Turtle Dove             | 60 Greater Black-backed Gull |                         |
| 26 Grey Heron              | 61 Common Shelduck           |                         |
| 27 Reed Bunting            | 62 Black-tailed Godwit       |                         |
| 28 Green Woodpecker        | 63 Common Polchard           |                         |
| 29 Sky Lark                | 64 Common Redshank           |                         |
| 30 Western Marsh Harrier   | 65 Sand Martin               |                         |
| 31 Stock Dove              | 66 Little Grebe              |                         |
| 32 Eurasian Coot           | 67 Greenfinch                |                         |
| 33 Northern Lapwing        | 68 Common Linnet             |                         |
| 34 Little Egret            | 69 Grey Wagtail              |                         |
| 35 Graylag Goose           | 70 Pied Avocet               |                         |

London Wetland Centre (4 July 2010) Birding List

- 1 Feral Pigeon (Rock Dove)

- 2 Rose-ringed Parakeet
- 3 Common Moorhen
- 4 Eurasian Coot
- 5 Black-headed Gull
- 6 Herring Gull
- 7 Mallard
- 8 Northern Lapwing
- 9 Canada Goose
- 10 Grey Heron
- 11 Starling
- 12 Great Cormorant
- 13 Little Grebe
- 14 Green Shank
- 15 Eurasian Widgeon
- 16 Carrion Crow
- 17 House Martin
- 18 Common Tern
- 19 Little Ringed Plover
- 20 Wood Pigeon
- 21 Sand Martin
- 22 Common Swift
- 23 Mute Swan
- 24 Great Crested Grebe
- 25 Stock Pigeon
- 26 Lesser Black-backed Gull
- 27 Great Tit
- 28 Common Polchard
- 29 Eurasian Jackdaw
- 30 Blue Tit
- 31 Greenfinch
- 32 Graylag Goose
- 33 Common Magpie

Our last region of southern England birding was in Norfolkshire. We traveled to Norwich on 7 July 2010 to spend 4 days with Gary Elton, also of Birding London. We stayed at Spring View B&B in Sculthorpe, owned and operated by Mrs. Kay Cox. The property is a converted petrol station, but now is a beautiful house, with a comfortable room and ensuite bathroom over the garage for guests. Among the many B & Bs and small Inns we stayed in during our two months in the U.K., Spring View was the most pleasant. Also it is good value for money. Each morning, Gary Elton would pick us up promptly at 8:30am and the birding day usually lasted until about 5:30pm or 6:00pm. Norfolkshire provides a wide range of habitats and with Gary Elton's excellent guidance we were able to identify 127 species, fittingly ending with a feral Australian Black Swan as our last species on our U.K. birding adventures. Other Norfolkshire memorable species included: Eurasian Hobby, Green Sandpiper, Corn Bunting, Grey and Red-legged Partridges, Dartford's Warbler, Montague's Harrier, Greater Bittern, Goldcrest, Sparrow

Hawk, European Golden Plover, Eurasian Stone Curlew, Little and Common Gull, Buff-breasted and Pectoral Sandpipers and Eurasian Nightjar. All three U.K. guides provided us with an email report on the birdwatching highlights and the places visited during our visits. All three guides are highly recommended.

Norfolkshire Birding Break (July 7-11, 2010) List

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Common Magpie            | 36 Reed Warbler           | 71 Greater Black-backed Gull  |
| 2 Starling                 | 37 Winter Wren            | 72 Sandwich Tern              |
| 3 Rock Dove                | 38 Mute Swan              | 73 Meadow Pipit               |
| 4 Wood Pigeon              | 39 Common Polchard        | 74 Eurasian Curlew            |
| 5 Collared Dove            | 40 Eurasian Coot          | 75 Blackcap                   |
| 6 Common Swift             | 41 Mallard                | 76 Common Gull                |
| 7 Eurasian Jay             | 42 Tufted Duck            | 77 Corn Bunting               |
| 8 Yellowhammer             | 43 Gadwall                | 78 Spotted Flycatcher         |
| 9 Common Pheasant          | 44 Ruddy Duck             | 79 Coal Tit                   |
| 10 Common Blackbird        | 45 Great Crested Grebe    | 80 Grey Wagtail               |
| 11 Common Whitethroat      | 46 Sand Martin            | 81 Dunnock                    |
| 12 Chaffinch               | 47 Little Grebe           | 82 Sparrow Hawk               |
| 13 Barn Swallow            | 48 Northern Lapwing       | 83 Barn Owl                   |
| 14 House Martin            | 49 Common Shelduck        | 84 Eurasian Jackdaw           |
| 15 Goldfinch               | 50 Ruff                   | 85 Rook                       |
| 16 Common Buzzard          | 51 Black-tailed Godwit    | 86 Red-legged Partridge       |
| 17 Sky Lark                | 52 Northern Shoveller     | 87 Marsh Tit                  |
| 18 Green Finch             | 53 Common Redshank        | 88 Goldcrest                  |
| 19 Common Kestrel          | 54 Red Knot               | 89 Woodlark                   |
| 20 House Sparrow           | 55 Pied Avocet            | 90 Garden Warbler             |
| 21 Turtle Dove             | 56 Dunlin                 | 91 Long-tailed Tit            |
| 22 Tree Sparrow            | 57 Bar-tailed Godwit      | 92 Greater Spotted Woodpecker |
| 23 Black-headed Gull       | 58 Canada Goose           | 93 Common Treecreeper         |
| 24 Eurasian Oystercatcher  | 59 Great Cormorant        | 94 Common Siskin              |
| 25 Common Tern             | 60 Little Tern            | 95 Tree Pipit                 |
| 26 Little Egret            | 61 Grey Heron             | 96 Green Woodpecker           |
| 27 Hobby                   | 62 Eurasian Teal          | 97 Common Cuckoo              |
| 28 Stock Dove              | 63 Green Sandpiper        | 98 Sedge Warbler              |
| 29 European Robin          | 64 Ringed Plover          | 99 Greater Bittern            |
| 30 Blue Tit                | 65 Herring Gull           | 100 Egyptian Goose            |
| 31 Great Tit               | 66 Pied Wagtail           | 101 Mistle Thrush             |
| 32 Common Moorhen          | 67 Spotted Redshank       | 102 Montague's Harrier        |
| 33 Reed Bunting            | 68 Greenshank             | 103 Song Thrush               |
| 34 Bearded Tit             | 69 Common Linnet          | 104 Dartford's Warbler        |
| 35 Northern Marsh Harrier  | 70 Common Eider           | 105 Stone Chat                |
| 106 Willow Warbler         | 117 European Nuthatch     |                               |
| 107 European Golden Plover | 118 Eurasian Stone Curlew |                               |
| 108 Graylag Goose          | 119 Common Crossbill      |                               |
| 109 Eurasian Spoonbill     | 120 Pectoral Sandpiper    |                               |

110 Little Ringed Plover	121 Little Gull
111 Lesser Black-backed Gull	122 Buff-breasted Sandpiper
112 Whimbrel	123 Common Snipe
113 Common Sandpiper	124 Chiffchaff
114 Mediterranean Gull	125 European Nightjar
115 Carrion Crow	126 Grey Partridge
116 Common Bullfinch	127 Black Swan

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