

## East Yorkshire in Autumn

### 1-5 October 2025

**Leader:** Dan Rouse

### **Tour Summary**

Autumn is one of the most intriguing times to be birding in East Yorkshire – it's a season when we are unsure of what may turn up next. During our stay at the Cave Castle Hotel, we were greeted each morning with skeins of Pink-footed Geese gracing the skies overhead. The grounds also provided some lovely morning birds as people went on a post-breakfast stroll, with Grey Wagtails, Moorhens, calling Tawny Owls and groups of passerines feeding among the conifers.

We managed to see some fantastic autumn migrants with Barred Warbler, Garganey, Black Redstart, Curlew Sandpiper and Caspian Gull all seen. The autumnal delight that is Yellow-browed Warbler was a welcome addition too.

### **Day 1: Arrival and North Cave Wetlands**

We arrived at the hotel for midday before meeting each other and discussing the arrangements for checking in. Katherine from BirdGuides also joined us on our birding excursion. The van was then filled with our equipment before driving the 10-minute journey to North Cave Wetlands. This was the first time our group had met and we got to know each other through our first stop at the initial viewpoint where we saw **Eurasian Teal**, **Tufted Duck**, **Little Grebe** and **Moorhen**. Venturing further round the reserve to the Turret Hide, our group was treated to fantastic views of **Common Snipe** and **Curlew** as they foraged in the waters below. We had a very brief view of a **Water Rail** as it ran towards the back reeds. Continuing our walk to the reedbeds, there were **Chiffchaffs** calling in the hedgerows and we noted some **Evening Primrose** with their bright yellow flowers adorning the sides of the path. Our final look over the back pools resulted in an impressive **Red Kite** flying overhead, and a **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** diving into a bush out of view. We then boarded the van and made our way back to the hotel to settle and unpack before our evening meal.

*Day checklist: 42 species*



## Day 2: Spurn Peninsula

Day two was upon us, and this time we were joined by Josh Jones from BirdGuides. We made our way to Spurn where our first stop was Sammy's Point to look for the Barred Warbler that had been seen previously. As we arrived at the paddocks where the Barred was meant to be, we flushed a large-looking warbler which we concluded could well have been the bird. After spending time looking without further sightings, we decided to move on. On the walk back to the van we noted **Redpolls** and **Meadow Pipits** migrating overhead and a lovely immature male **Common Redstart** feeding in the first paddock, which was enjoyed by the group.

Pulling in at the Bluebell car park, we strolled to the churchyard where flycatchers had been seen previously, but unfortunately none were to be seen – though we did note **Chiffchaff** and **Goldcrests** feeding in the trees. Deciding luck was not on our side, the Crown & Anchor car park was our next point of call, where a single **Common Crossbill** flew south overhead. Deciding that landbird migrants were going to be tricky in the wind, we turned our attention to the Humber Estuary instead. Our group's target was to see Curlew Sandpiper – this was duly delivered! We had a group of very close **Dunlin** and within them were two very showy juvenile **Curlew Sandpipers**. It was then decided that lunch was in order to take a break from the chilly autumn wind.

Our after-lunch walk was along the main Kilnsea road towards Kilnsea Wetlands. On our route passed the Crown & Anchor pub, an unmistakable chat perched up on the seawall – a lovely **Black Redstart**! Our group was able to have great views of the bird before we continued our walk towards the wetlands.



A quick pit-stop at Grange Farm awarded us with a **Little Owl** sitting in the hay bales. The water situation at Kilnsea Wetlands had not improved despite the rain in recent days so we decided to bypass the wetland hide and head straight up the path to Beacon Ponds. Walking up the pathways, we noted **Yellowhammer** sitting on top of the neighbouring hedge. A quick peak at the feeders as we passed saw **Goldfinch**, **Greenfinch**, **Great Tit**, **Dunnock** and **Tree Sparrows** battling the wind for a quick bite. Setting ourselves up overlooking the pond, we began looking for anything of interest. Josh found a first-winter **Caspian Gull** sitting on a bund; with its yellow ring and bearing a code beginning with 'P', we knew it was a bird born in Poland earlier in the summer. I then picked up the female **Garganey** as it swam around feeding and roosting, while **Pintail** also gave good views.

*Day checklist: 64 species*



### Day 3: Flamborough Head

We awoke to the news that heavy rain and wind was due later in the day, which would dampen the birding somewhat. Despite this, we continued to Flamborough Head where we arrived at South Landing to look for autumn migrants. With the wind gusts moving the trees continuously, looking for songbirds was a challenge. But a tit flock gave us hope and sharp-eyed Yvana managed to locate a **Yellow-browed Warbler** – a fantastic find! The bird showed enough times for the whole group to get a view, with a supporting cast of **Treecreeper**, **Chiffchaffs** and **Goldcrests** enjoyed among the dense cover. We continued down the path to the lifeboat station where we saw **Great Black-backed Gulls** and **European Shags** feeding.

We then headed out to Flamborough Head. The wind was picking up with a few spots of rain, so we chose to visit the Fog Station to do some seawatching. **Guillemots**, **Red-throated Divers** and a fly-by **Red Knot** allowed us some birding through the rain but as it increased, we made the decision to head to the seawatching shelter. Sitting out of the rain, we managed to locate **Guillemots** and **Razorbills** on the water below, with further sightings of **European Shags** and **Red-throated Divers** noted along with bobbing heads of **Grey Seals** popping up among the waves. After deciding we were rather cold and in need of some food, we ventured towards the clifftop restaurant for our lunch stop. After lunch, we assessed the weather and with the wind and rain increasing and the bird-life dwindling, decided to call it a day.

*Day checklist: 30 species*

### Day 4: Blacktoft Sands RSPB and Far Ings NNR

Arriving at Blacktoft Sands RSPB, we were pleased to find that the rain was holding off. We headed towards Ousefleet Hide, where we counted through the **Shoveler**, **Gadwall**, **Wigeon**, **Mallard** and **Teal** which were on the islands. Waders included great comparisons of the subtle differences between **Spotted** and **Common Redshanks**, as well as the delightful **Ruff** in their various plumages offering us great views.

We then walked to the rear hide to look at the deeper pool where ducks often linger. As it was not high tide the wildfowl numbers were relatively low, but a **Marsh Harrier** offered fantastic views. For our lunch break, we headed to a café for a bit of respite before heading to Far Ings.

Unfortunately, the bitter wind was getting stronger, making birding hard work at Far Ings. Hearing two **Water Rails** was the early highlight, although plenty of passerines including **Long-tailed Tit**, **Chaffinch**, **Goldfinch** and **Goldcrest** were noted in the various feeding groups encountered. We had a fleeting glimpse of a **Water Rail** as it ran into the reeds before the piercing call of a **Kingfisher** helped us to spot the male hovering above the nearby reeds. Helpfully, he then posed in the swaying reeds, giving everyone in the group a great view.

After the Kingfisher departed, we continued our own battle with the wind as we walked the seawall on our return route – **Bar-tailed Godwits** flew past and **Common Redshank** were sat on the edge of the estuary, but it was a group of passing **Dunlin** that caught our eye as one bird was notably smaller in size, had a paler belly and gave a sharp ‘peep’ call and the birds flew past us.



*Day checklist: 40 species*

### **Day 5: Spurn Peninsula**

Our final morning had arrived, and we decided as a group to head back down to Spurn to attempt to see the Barred Warbler. It was a nervous drive down as we waited for a BirdGuides message to say that the bird had been seen. Halfway through the drive and the long-awaited message pinged up on the dashboard – we were in luck!

Pulling up in the car park at Sammy's Point, we made our way to the third paddock and headed down towards the rear of the hedges where birders had gathered – there was a large warbler feeding in the willow but once we looked it was confirmed to be a **Garden Warbler** giving us lovely views in the sunshine. Some of the group then took a seat and waited while the others joined the other waiting birders to look in the hedges. Then a quick shout was given and the **Barred Warbler** was on view! For a bird that is known to be tricky to spot due to its skulking nature, the brute of a Barred sat on top of the elder bush munching away, giving both the guests and the tour leader their best views of this scarce migrant. It was a great way to end the trip!

SPECIES	DAY ONE	DAY TWO	DAY THREE	DAY FOUR	DAY FIVE
Greylag Goose	✓				
Canada Goose					
Pink-footed Goose				✓	
Brent Goose					
Mute Swan	✓	✓		✓	
Common Shelduck		✓			
Garganey		✓			
Northern Shoveler	✓			✓	
Gadwall	✓	✓		✓	
Eurasian Wigeon	✓	✓	✓		
Mallard	✓	✓		✓	
Northern Pintail		✓			
Teal	✓	✓		✓	
Pochard					
Common Scoter					
Tufted Duck	✓			✓	
Goldeneye					
Pheasant					
Feral Pigeon	✓				
Stock Dove		✓			
Common Woodpigeon	✓	✓		✓	
Collared Dove			✓	✓	
Water Rail	✓			✓	
Moorhen	✓	✓		✓	
Coot	✓			✓	
Ruff				✓	
Grey Plover					
European Golden Plover		✓			
Ringed Plover		✓			
Oystercatcher		✓	✓		
Curlew	✓	✓			
Whimbrel		✓			
Bar-tailed Godwit				✓	
Black-tailed Godwit				✓	
Northern Lapwing	✓			✓	
Jack Snipe					
Common Snipe	✓			✓	
Green Sandpiper					
Common Redshank		✓	✓	✓	
Spotted Redshank				✓	
Turnstone			✓		
Red Knot		✓	✓		
Dunlin		✓		✓	
Arctic Skua					
Razorbill			✓		
Common Guillemot			✓		
Little Gull					
Kittiwake					
Black-headed Gull	✓	✓		✓	
Common Gull			✓		
Herring Gull	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Lesser Black-backed Gull		✓			
Greater Black-backed Gull		✓	✓		
Sandwich Tern					
Great Crested Grebe					
Little Grebe	✓	✓		✓	
Red-throated Diver			✓		
Fulmar					
Gannet	✓	✓	✓		
Cormorant			✓		
Shag			✓		
Eurasian Bittern					
Little Egret	✓	✓			
Grey Heron	✓	✓		✓	
Common Kestrel		✓			
Sparrowhawk	✓	✓		✓	
Marsh Harrier		✓		✓	
Hobby					
Common Buzzard					
Red Kite	✓		✓		
Peregrine Falcon		✓			
Tawny Owl					
Little Owl		✓			
Kingfisher				✓	
Great Spotted Woodpecker		✓			
Jay					
Magpie	✓	✓	✓		
Jackdaw	✓	✓			
Rook	✓				
Carrion Crow	✓	✓		✓	
Coal Tit			✓		
Blue Tit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Tit		✓			
Bearded Tit					
Barn Swallow					
House Martin					
Common Chiffchaff	✓		✓	✓	✓
Cetti's Warbler	✓				
Garden Warbler					✓
Goldcrest		✓			
Wren	✓	✓			
Long-tailed Tit	✓		✓	✓	
Treecreeper			✓		
Skylark		✓			
Starling		✓		✓	
Song Thrush					
Mistle Thrush			✓		
Redwing		✓			
Blackbird		✓			✓
Robin	✓	✓	✓		✓
Pied Flycatcher					
Common Redstart		✓			
Black Redstart		✓			
Northern Wheatear					

Stonechat		✓			
Duncock	✓	✓			✓
Tree Sparrow		✓		✓	
House Sparrow		✓			
Grey Wagtail			✓		
Pied/White Wagtail			✓	✓	
Meadow Pipit	✓	✓			✓
Rock Pipit					
Bullfinch			✓		
Chaffinch		✓		✓	
Greenfinch					
Common Linnet	✓	✓	✓		
Goldfinch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Redpoll		✓			
Common Crossbill		✓			
Reed Bunting		✓			
Yellowhammer		✓			

**NOTABLE SPECIES**

Caspian Gull		✓			
Yellow-browed Warbler			✓		
Curlew Sandpiper		✓			
Barred Warbler					✓
Little Stint				✓	

**Trip total:** 100 Species