Trip Report: 28th September 2025.

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We all met as arranged at Cley Norfolk Wildlife Trust Visitors Centre and after asking the Norfolk Wildlife Trust staff to open their facilities early we made use of them before we set off on the walk.

We first walked West to the beach road and almost immediately came across a singing Cetti’s Warbler. Walking down the sea wall to Cley beach we had the constant reminder Winter was almost upon us with the continuous calls of Pink-footed Geese. A good number were arriving and settling on the marsh. Their squeaky call was a constant companion throughout the whole day.

Also form the sea wall we had a number of Meadow Pipits and a pair of Stonechat put on an impressive display as a Cattle Egret flew over.

Upon reaching the beach we walked East along the shingle having a view inland as well as out to sea. Walking among the Sea Poppies a couple of large bull Grey Seals kept attracting our attention, but we also picked up on a number of seabirds. The best of the bunch was a juvenile Gannet that flew by at close range and a Red throated Diver that popped up into view.

As we walked on a few passerines attracted our attention on the shingle; we saw at least 3 Wheatears, a good number of Teal some of which were flying ‘in off’ the sea having just arriving from Scandinavia. Also, on this part of the walk the small pools held Wigeon, Shoveller and Gadwall.

On arriving at East Bank we took cover under the Richard Richardson shelter as a shower passed over. From the comfort of the shelter we were able to watch Arnold’s Marsh and all the Redshanks, Shelducks and assortment of ducks it held. Many being disturbed by overflying Marsh Harriers. We also had an opportunity to watch Black tailed Godwits and discuss how to identify them from their near relatives the Bar tailed Godwits. After the rain had passed we walked South and watched several Bearded Tits in the Reedbed at close range. As we got closer to the Southern end of the bank we were ‘buzzed’ by a Hobby which quickly disappeared South.

Continuing West we arrived back at the car park where we had left our vehicles. Once again making use of the reserve facilities. We then moved our vehicles West to a small car park at the South end of the Iron Road at Salthouse. It was a tight squeeze, but we managed to get all the vehicles in safely and proceeded to take our well-earned lunches.

After lunch we walked a little way North to some small pools which up until that morning at held a pair of Pectoral Sandpipers. We scanned the marshes for some time but could find nothing more than some obliging Dunlin, Ringed Plover and Snipe.

We did however watch some obliging Cattle Egrets among the herd of cattle. These egrets now breed locally. Perhaps another indication of climate change.

A male Kingfisher put in an appearance on one of the ditches and everyone managed a view before it was flushed by others. We thought we would walk back to the cars and have another look on the marsh for the Pectoral Sandpipers along the way. We again had no luck but as we were looking we were surprised to see a Glossy Ibis flying in from the distance. We were even more surprised when it landed in front of us. Everyone managed good telescope views of the bird; formerly known as the ‘Black Curlew’. This bird is undoubtably part of the recent influx of continental birds from Spain and Iberia; pushed North by escalating temperatures and drought. The influx into the UK has seen some impressive flocks with one flock of over 90 birds seen in Cornwall. The influx has led many to speculate the species may hang around to breed next Spring.

We made it back to the cars and moved the West by around a half mile to the car park at Walsey Hills. Here Tania made everyone a cup of hot tea or coffee and chocolate biscuits were the order of the day.

We walked the public footpath at the edge of Snipes Marsh and almost immediately heard a distant but unmistakable Yellow browed Warbler. A tape lure was played but all it attracted was a pair of Chiffchaffs but we did hear the warbler in the distance once again.

A walk onto the ridge above the coast road at the edge of the pine copse gave some impressive views out over the Saltmarsh. We then made our way back to the vehicles and said our goodbyes. This was all perfectly timed because no sooner had everyone got back to their vehicles the heavens opened.

A good day was enjoyed by all.