

Field Trip Report

Cockersands Abbey & Eagland Hill

Date: 11th January 2025 08:00 to 15:30
Attendees: 12
Sunrise: 08:25
Hightide: 08:29
Weather: (08:00): Few clouds, Temp -2 deg C, Wind 3mph ESE
(12:00): High clouds, Temp 2 degC, Wind 4mph SE

Species Count: 69

Part I

The group met at the carpark near Cockersands Country Park Caravan site on Moss Lane, where they were treated to a spectacular sunrise over the Fylde coast. A Short-Eared Owl was seen to fly over the coastal moss, as Whooper Swans flew in off the sea to the fields behind Cockersand Abbey. We then watched a Barn Owl (probable male), hunting in the fields next to the caravan site.

With the light improving the group set off on the path towards Plover Scar. In the fields to the right there was a second sighting of a hunting Barn Owl, which was seen to disturb a Snipe; the Barn Owl was probably a different bird to the first one. On the coast we were treated to the sight of thousands of duck close in to the shore, with large numbers of Shelduck, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Eider and a smaller number of Pintail. On the fore shore we watched Redshank and Turnstone feeding. Slightly further out were hightide roosts of Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Black-Tailed Godwit, Knot* and Dunlin with smaller numbers of Grey Plover and Curlew; in particular the Golden Plover looked glorious in the early morning light. Further out on the sea was a group of Common Gull.

*One of the Knot was seen to be ringed (orange flag above a green ring). Subsequent research showed that this was a second winter bird which had been ringed near Southport in May 2024, as part of the Red Knot Project.

As we retraced our route back to the carpark a Barn Owl was still hunting in the fields, and smaller birds were now becoming more active with a pair of Stonechat being seen in the scrub.

We now drove back along Moss Lane to Slack Lane, to check out the flocks of Whooper Swan in the fields and it was here we found two Bewick Swans. There was also a stubble field behind the Lighthouse Cottage which held Fieldfare, Meadow Pipit

and Song Thrush. We then travelled to Glasson Dock for lunch and a quick viewing of the pool at Conder. We then departed to Eagland Hill.

Part II

At Eagland Hill we parked near the church and went to check out the feeding stations maintained by Fylde Bird Club. At the first station there were many Tree Sparrow along with the usual garden birds, but nothing else of note. We then walked to the second feeding station where we were treated to views of the hoped for species of Corn Bunting and Yellow Hammer, along with more Tree Sparrow.

To finish the day, we drove to Knott End-on-Sea, where we hoped to see Twite and a reported Black Redstart. On arrival we scanned the muddy Wyre estuary where we saw, rather improbably, a Peregrine Falcon sat on a rock; it remained there for the whole of our stay. Sadly we did not find any Twite near the Slipway, just a lone Turnstone, so we then went round the corner to check an area where, on a previous outing two years ago, we had seen a female type Black Redstart. Incredibly, in the same spot as last time, we found the reported Black Redstart, this time it was a first-year male.

This concluded the fieldtrip, with a total species count of sixty-nine being recorded. Many thanks go to Nigel and Glenn for their work in preparing and leading the trip.

Species List

Canada Goose	Grey Plover	Great Tit
Greylag Goose	Curlew	Skylark
Pink-footed Goose	Black-tailed Godwit	Long-tailed Tit
Mute Swan	Turnstone	Wren
Bewicks Swan	Knot	Song Thrush
Whooper Swan	Dunlin	Redwing
Shelduck	Snipe	Blackbird
Shoveler	Redshank	Fieldfare
Wigeon	Common Gull	Robin
Mallard	Great Black-backed Gull	Black Redstart
Pintail	Cormorant	Stonechat
Teal	Grey Heron	Tree Sparrow
Eider	Little Egret	House Sparrow
Pheasant	Buzzard	Dunnock
Red-legged Partridge	Barn Owl	Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)
Stock Dove	Short-eared Owl	Meadow Pipit
Woodpigeon	Kestrel	Chaffinch
Collared Dove	Peregrine	Goldfinch
Moorhen	Jay	Corn Bunting
Little Grebe	Magpie	Yellowhammer
Great Crested Grebe	Jackdaw	Reed Bunting
Oystercatcher	Rook	
Lapwing	Carrion Crow	
Golden Plover	Blue Tit	