

East Lancashire Ornithologist Club

Field Trip Report

Spurn

Date: 24th October 2026

Participants: 12

Sunrise: 07:41

Hightide: 17:16

Weather: 08:00: Overcast clouds, 6.0 degC, Wind 15mph SW

15:00: Overcast rain, 11.0 degC, Wind 20mph SW

Species Count: 66

Spurn is an area in East Yorkshire on the north side of the Humber Estuary. It is famous for attracting a wide range of birds both common and rare, due to its position on the east coast. An east wind is best for bringing rarer species, which had happened on the Monday before our trip. Unfortunately, in the subsequent days the easterly wind disappeared, and the birds started to clear out.

Under grey skies, the Club met at 08:30 in the Bluebell car park. It was decided to check the area around Kilnsea by walking up the road towards Spurn Bird Observatory. There were few birds about except for notable numbers of Blackbird and Redwing (presumably recently arrived from the continent). We checked an area known as Corner Field where a Bluethroat had been present the previous day, but unfortunately, it had gone.

Arriving at the Observatory Garden the group spent some time searching for a Dusky Warbler that had been ringed on the 20th October and was still present in the area but very elusive. Eventually some of the group managed to get brief views of the bird as it moved through the bushes. At this point a member of the Observatory staff radioed that a single Waxwing had overflown the Garden. Some of the group climbed the Observatory Garden Tower and located the Waxwing in some nearby trees. The bird was then seen flying and calling between the trees, which afforded better views for everyone. We left the garden via the ringing area, where we saw a Goldcrest in the Heligoland trap which was subsequently ringed.

We now returned to our cars to travel 10 minutes north to Out Newton, where an Isabelline Shrike (Daurian) had been seen. Parking on the roadside, we located the Shrike which could be seen distantly on a hedge by the side of the farm. While we watched, it flew towards us into the hedge by the road, before flying over the road into the hedge behind us. Here it gave excellent close views for everyone. A special moment for all and a ‘lifer’ for many.

With the wind increasing and the weather becoming more threatening, we drove to an area called Sammy’s Point to view the bushes there and to have lunch. More Redwing and Fieldfare flew over, and, after some diligent searching, a male Ring Ouzel was found perched and briefly seen in flight by some of the group.

We now drove to Kilnsea Wetlands to view Beacon Ponds, where Shore Lark had been present the previous day. On the walk up to the Ponds we passed a hedge containing Reed Bunting and Yellowhammer. Sadly, the Shore Lark could not be found but there was a range of species including Brent Geese, Wigeon, Little Grebe, Grey Plover, Dunlin, Ringed Plover and a single Avocet. In the field nearby there were 7 White-fronted Geese.

The rain had now arrived and some of the group decided to head home, while the rest made their way to the shelter of the Canal Scrape Hide, next to the visitor centre. There was little on the scrape except a Moorhen, 3 Redshank and 3 Black-tailed Godwit, and these flew off as a Sparrowhawk flew over. In the field next to the scrape a lone Barnacle Goose was seen.

The weather had really become poor now, with rain and strong winds, so we decided to end the trip. As we were leaving the hide we met some birders who had been watching a couple of Snow Bunting by the Sea-watching Hide. Five of us decided to go and see if we could find them. Again, we failed to locate the hoped-for birds, but we did see a Woodcock as it flew past us. With the weather very bad now, it was finally time to head home.

Spurn can be a challenging place to visit, and you can never be certain what you will see. However, we did see a wide range of birds: some rare and some unexpected.

As always, the success of these trips is down to the planning of Nigel and Glen and the company of the people in the group. Despite the weather, we had a very enjoyable day out, in this special bird-watching area.

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Species List

Mute Swan
Brent Goose
Barnacle Goose
White-fronted Goose
Shelduck
Shoveler
Wigeon
Mallard
Teal
Pheasant
Little Grebe
Collared Dove
Woodpigeon
Stock Dove
Moorhen
Avocet
Grey Plover
Ringed Plover
Lapwing
Curlew
Bar-tailed Godwit
Black-tailed Godwit
Woodcock
Snipe
Redshank
Sanderling
Dunlin
Black-headed Gull
Common Gull
Herring Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Cormorant
Little Egret

Sparrowhawk
Kestrel
Isabelline (Daurian) Shrike
Jay
Magpie
Carrion Crow
Blue Tit
Great Tit
Long-tailed Tit
Cetti's Warbler
Dusky Warbler
Chiffchaff
Blackcap
Waxwing
Goldcrest
Wren
Starling
Song Thrush
Redwing
Blackbird
Fieldfare
Ring Ouzel
Robin
Dunnock
House Sparrow
Pied Wagtail
Meadow Pipit
Chaffinch
Greenfinch
Linnet
Goldfinch
Reed Bunting
Yellowhammer