



## Norfolk Swallowtail Weekend

4th - 7th June 2021

Led by Alice Hunter & Terry Goble



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## Friday 4th June

Having checked in at our respective hotels, Wayford Bridge and Sutton Staithe, our band of butterfly enthusiasts gathered at the Sutton Staithe Hotel in the late afternoon. After taking a little time for introductions, we ventured out into the fresh air for a short walk along the moorings. Pink Campion flowered beside the path and Yellow Flag Irises were just coming into bloom in the damp patches beneath the Alder trees at the far end. We spent a little time listening to Blackbird, Robin and Reed Bunting singing while Mayflies danced over the water and a Common Tern flew up river. A slightly distant Marsh Harrier put in an appearance before we turned back to settle in and have a hearty dinner in anticipation of the weekend ahead.



© Polly Mair

## Saturday 5th June

After breakfast the following morning we set out for the short drive to Hickling Broad, the largest of the broads. Here we were greeted by the Visitor Centre Coordinator, Rachel, who welcomed us with maps of the reserve and a brief history as well as a run down of what we might see. We thanked her and got on our way to the boat launching staithe. On our way we had lovely views of both Willow Warbler and a male Reed Bunting singing from the tops of nearby Willow trees. A few Four-spotted Chasers were seen among the reeds and a profusion of foaming white Climbing Corydalis, punctuated by the odd pink splash of Ragged Robin, wound its way through the base of the reeds beside the path.



© Alice Hunter

An unfortunate problem with one of the boats meant that owing to reduced space, Terry and Alice took the unusual decision to send all guests on the boat trip without them. Instead they were in the capable hands of Skipper, John, who would take them to across the broad to Swimcoots, one of the boat access only hides and then up a 60ft high tower in the a patch of Oak woodland which gives fantastic views over the reserve and beyond.

The group returned with tales of Tufted Duck and non-breeding Mute Swans on the open broad, Mallards and Egyptian Geese with young on the scrape at Swimcoots along

with Lapwing and Avocets, tantalisingly fleeting glimpses of Bearded Tits and lots more besides.

Back on dry land we continued on round the reserve towards the Observation Tower. Helen spotted a beautiful hairy caterpillar of the Drinker moth among the reeds and Hairy Dragonflies zipped past at head height. A Sedge Warbler was spotted singing from the top of a reed before launching into a short upwards sing flight and diving back into the cover of the reed bed. Several Ox-Eye Daisies beside the path yielded interesting insects including a Thick-legged Flower beetle and an Avocet made on overhead fly-past.

Beyond the Cadbury Lodge we finally had our first glimpse of a Swallowtail which was nectaring on dandelions, never settling on one flower for long. It hung around for a while though allowing everyone to see it



Swallowtail © Helen Barker

before catching the breeze and disappearing off over the reeds.

A Common Gull chick in the middle of the path further round called for us to take a slight detour down the bank on to the gravel track to placate the anxious parents overhead and we had another glimpse of Bearded Tits flying over the track here too. We climbed the bank again to have a quick look at another scrape beyond where Lapwings wheeled and Greylags and their young wandered on the banks. A Red Admiral put in a brief appearance before we headed back towards the visitor centre where lunch awaited us.



© Helen Barker

Having eaten, we took another short drive to How Hill where Brimstone butterflies greeted us in the car park. We wandered across the short mown grass taking in the view of the River Ant and headed down the hill to the entrance of their Nature Trails. Passing through the gate and into the wet meadow we startled a Muntjac which bounded off into the undergrowth.

The meadow was a little muddy in places but we negotiated the wetter patches without too much difficulty and were soon on the path leading through the woods towards the first hide. There wasn't much to see from the hide itself but the small bridge on the way in proved an excellent spot for Dragonflies with

Four-spotted Chaser and a female Broad-bodied Chaser perched among the vegetation to either side. We had good views of our first Norfolk Hawker of the trip round the next bend and beyond that we found a lovely patch of Water Violet, a red data list plant with pretty pale pink flowers.

We continued our walk following one of the many smaller waterways which weave their way through the landscape. We spotted a couple of female Brimstones which appeared to be laying eggs on the Alders and increasing numbers of dragonflies and damselflies. A Peacock butterfly, albeit rather tatty was allowing us a game of Grandmother's footsteps as we followed it along and we were admiring the plethora of water plants including Watercress, Frogbit and Water Soldier.

Reaching a broader section we were delighted by a high pitched call and a flash of blue as a Kingfisher shot past. A Green Woodpecker was calling too and we spotted it flying into an ash tree on the other side of the channel. We paused to admire a splendid Royal Fern and the White Water Lilies on one of the larger open water pools.

In a shallower, weedier spot next to a pond-dipping platform a Grass Snake was seen lurking among the water plants and in the Beech wood beyond we were astonished to find Bluebells still clinging on in bloom, an indicator of the lateness of the season this year. As we made our way back to the vehicles we were delighted by a very obliging Norfolk Hawker right beside them plus a Holly Blue and a Comma bringing the day's butterfly tally to six species. We returned to the Sutton Staithe for another pleasant dinner before retiring for the night.



Norfolk Hawker © Terry Goble

## Sunday 6th June

The following morning we headed out for a slightly longer journey to Strumpshaw Fen. We walked down the track pausing briefly to listen to Bullfinches calling nearby before proceeding to the "Doctor's garden", former home of Dr Martin George, an ecologist who wrote a definitive account

of the Broads and helped persuade the RSPB to purchase and protect Strumpshaw Fen. His widow, Barbara, still lives in their house and maintains a floral garden with plentiful supplies of nectar in June deliberately for the Swallowtails. It was here that we hoped to find a Swallowtail flitting amongst the flowers but sadly despite waiting a while we were unlucky on this occasion.



Brown Argus on Field Pansy  
© Helen Barker

Instead we headed up the hill beyond to what was once a large open meadow. Alice was quite astonished to see how the Sallow had encroached in the 2 years since her last visit but thankfully there was still some meadow habitat at the top of the hill and a field beyond held a number of now less common "arable weeds" including Poppies, Field Pansy, Scarlet Pimpernel, Bugloss and Common Cudweed. The meadow area also had some lovely flowers including a golden sea of Hawkbits, hot pink Bloody Cranesbill, orange Fox and Cubs and the diminutive vetch known as Hairy Tare. Among them we found quite a number of Brown Argus flitting about and an obliging Hairy Dragonfly in the grass.

As we descended towards the railway line again the first Swallowtail of the day was spotted flitting over the Sallows at high speed and on the other side a male Orange Tip fluttered by. We took a small detour onto a short boardwalk where we were able to get a good look at some of the specialist plants here including Marsh Stitchwort, Bog Myrtle and Milk Parsley, food plant of the Swallowtail. Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies were spotted before we moved on and after rounding a bend we had another Swallowtail sighting as one flew past at head height.

There were Guelder Rose bushes beside the path here and these seemed most enticing to the butterflies that we were seeing, including a couple more Swallowtails, a Brimstone and a Holly Blue which flew over our heads and settled to nectar on one. Male and female Banded Demoiselles were showing beautifully on the other side of the path where the males displayed their beautiful wing patterns in blinking flights over the reeds. Meanwhile a Cuckoo was heard calling from somewhere close by and eventually made itself visible to us as it flew from the Willow in which it had been perched.

Further on, a Cetti's warbler made us aware of its presence in the shrubs beside the path but as is so often the case, despite its apparent proximity, refused to show its face. Some smaller species were of interest along the way too, including Wasp Beetle, a variety of Ladybirds including 2-spot, 7-spot and Harlequin, Scorpion flies and a Click Beetle.

We ventured briefly into the tower hide and beyond some had nice views of a Hobby while most of the group were able to watch a pair of Marsh Harriers completing a food pass. A little further on, Alice was delighted to hear a Grasshopper Warbler reeling in its "usual spot" and a few minutes later David spotted a juvenile Common Lizard basking on the wooden boarding beside the path.



Juvenile Common Lizard © David Gaunt

We found a shady spot on the edge of the woods for our lunch and, having eaten, moved on to Sutton Fen for the afternoon. This special reserve is owned by the RSPB but not normally open to the public and so we were privileged to be able to visit under the expert guidance of Site Manager, Dan and Warden, Ben.

They gave us a quick introduction to the reserve in the farmyard before leading us out through the meadow. Our first sighting of the afternoon from the track between pastures was a Chinese Water Deer which initially gave us reasonable views before bounding away into the undergrowth upon sensing our presence.



Fen Orchid © Polly Mair

Crossing the far meadow we reached an area which was getting progressively wetter underfoot. We paused beside a gate to admire a huge area of Water Violet before making our way onto the area known as the hover at the Northern end of the reserve. This is a dense mat of floating vegetation which supports roughly 99% of the UK population of the rare Fen Orchid and a whole host of other red data book plant species at extraordinarily high densities. Of course, plants aren't the only thing here as there are a great number of invertebrates which also benefit from this area of pristine habitat, the Swallowtail being one. Indeed the reserve also boasts the greatest density of the butterfly anywhere in the Broads according to transect surveys. Sadly the weather was against us and it was damp so there were none to be seen but we had plenty to entertain us regardless.

Out on the hover we admired Southern Marsh Orchid, the parasitic Marsh Lousewort, Marsh Stitchwort, Royal Fern and Crested Buckler Fern as well as rosettes of the Fen Orchid, a couple of which were just beginning to flower. A Cuckoo called as we wobbled our way out onto a board walk by the exit and headed round into the main part of the reserve.

Owing to the recent wet weather we had to take a slight detour from the normal route here as the bridge was underwater, but we were still able to get a good look at some more of the special plants that constitute this remarkable habitat. Among them, the deliciously scented Bog Myrtle, poisonous Greater Water Parsnip and carnivorous Bladderwort. A few damselflies were braving the weather too including several Variable Damsels which were the first we'd seen for the trip.

After a thoroughly enjoyable day we returned to the hotels to change in time for dinner at the Station Smokehouse in Hoveton.

## Monday 7th June

Thankfully the weather overnight had been kind and Alice had been able to set up a moth trap in local author, Patrick Barkham's garden. Having thrown a towel over it as dawn broke around 4am, Alice was just as intrigued as the rest of the group as to what delights lay within when they returned to empty it after breakfast.

The trap yielded a total of 8 species including Cockchafers of which there were 7 bumbling around in typical clumsy fashion. The most numerous moth was Treble Lines with 18 in the trap and highlights included a beautiful Pebble Prominent and a furry legged Pale Tussock. Terry delighted in explaining to the group how the Peppered moth had evolved to become darker in cities where pollution was bad, especially during the industrial revolution, while its countryside counterparts remained much paler.

Eventually it was time for us to part ways after a lovely weekend in a wonderfully wild landscape. While the numbers of Swallowtail sightings was not high, we had been afforded good views by the few individuals we had seen and a good time was had by all.



Pale Tussock Moth  
© Alice Hunter

Norfolk Swallowtail Weekend 2021 species checklist			Saturday 5th June	Sunday 6th June	Monday 7th June
Butterflies			day 2	day 3	day 4
	<b>Apollos &amp; Swallowtails</b>	Family <b>Papilionidae</b>			
1	Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon britannicus</i>	✓ x1	✓ x4	
	<b>Whites &amp; Yellows</b>	Family <b>Pieridae</b>			
2	Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>		✓	
3	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	✓	✓	
	<b>Blues, Coppers &amp; Hairstreaks</b>	Family <b>Lycaenidae</b>			
4	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	✓	✓	
5	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>		✓	
	<b>Aristocrats &amp; Browns</b>	Family <b>Nymphalidae</b>			
6	Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>	✓	✓	
7	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	✓	✓	
8	Comma	<i>Polygona c-album</i>	✓	✓	

Norfolk Swallowtail Weekend 2021 species checklist			Saturday 5th June	Sunday 6th June	Monday 7th June
Moths			day 2	day 3	day 4
1	Drinker	<i>Euthrix potatoria</i>	Caterpillar		
2	Beaded Chestnut	<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>		Caterpillar	
3	Treble Bar	<i>Aplocera plagiata</i>		✓	
4	Lime Speck Pug	<i>Eupithecia centaureata</i>			✓
5	Peppered	<i>Biston betularia</i>			✓
6	Heart and Dart	<i>Agrotis exclamatoris</i>			✓
7	Shuttle-shaped Dart	<i>Agrotis puta</i>			✓
8	Treble Lines	<i>Charanyca trigrammica</i>			✓ x18
9	Pebble Prominent	<i>Notodonta ziczac</i>			✓
10	Pale Tussock	<i>Calliteara pudibunda</i>			✓

Norfolk Swallowtail Weekend 2021 species checklist			Saturday 5th June	Sunday 6th June	Monday 7th June
Dragonflies and Damselflies			day 2	day 3	day 4
1	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>		✓	
2	Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	✓		
3	Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	✓		
4	Variable Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>		✓	
5	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	✓	✓	
6	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	✓		
7	Hairy Dragonfly	<i>Bracytron pratense</i>	✓	✓	
8	Norfolk Hawker	<i>Aeschna isosceles</i>	✓	✓	
9	Four-Spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	✓		
10	Broad-Bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	✓		

### Other Notable Invertebrates

Thick-Legged Flower Beetle *Oedemera nobilis*

Click Beetle *Athous haemorrhoidalis*

Common Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha*

Red-Headed Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa serraticornis*

Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum*

Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*

Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*

Early Bumblebee *Bombus pratorum*

Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*

Dark Bush Cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*

Garden Chafer *Phyllopertha horticola*

Alderfly *Sialis lutaria*

Wasp Beetle *Clytus arietis*

Scorpionfly *Panorpa communis*

2 Spot Ladybird *Adalia bipunctata*

7 Spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*

Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*

Mayfly *Ephemera vulgata*

Violet Black-legged Robberfly *Dioctria atricapilla*

Black and Red Frog hopper *Cercopis vulnerata*

Norfolk Swallowtail Weekend 2021 species checklist			Friday 4th June	Saturday 5th June	Sunday 6th June	Monday 7th June
Birds			day 1	day 2	day 3	day 4
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓	✓	
2	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		✓		
3	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓		
4	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		✓		
5	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓		
6	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		✓		
7	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓		
8	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓		
9	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
10	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓		
11	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓		
12	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			✓	
13	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		
14	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			✓	
15	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		✓		
16	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>				✓
17	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓		
18	Lesser Black Backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		✓		
19	Black-Headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓		
20	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	✓	✓		
21	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓		✓
22	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓		✓
23	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			✓	
24	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓		
25	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		✓		
26	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		✓	✓	
27	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓	
28	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	✓
29	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓		

Norfolk Swallowtail Weekend 2021 species checklist			Friday 4th June	Saturday 5th June	Sunday 6th June	Monday 7th June
Birds			day 1	day 2	day 3	day 4
30	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	♪	✓	✓	✓
31	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	♪	✓	✓	✓
32	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			♪	
33	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		✓	✓	
34	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		♪	♪	
35	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		✓	✓	
36	Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>			♪	
37	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		✓	✓	
38	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	
39	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		♪	♪	
40	Bearded Tit/Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>		✓		
41	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓		
42	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	
43	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	
44	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓
45	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			✓	
46	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>			✓	
47	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	♪	✓	✓	



Black Headed Gull © Helen Barker



Reed Bunting © David Gaunt

## Notable Plants

Bulrush *Scirpus lacustris*  
Common Reed *Phragmites australis*  
Fibrous Tussock Sedge *Carex appropinquata*  
Greater Reedmace *Typha latifolia*  
Lesser Reedmace *Typha angustifolia*  
Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*  
Saw Sedge *Gahnia aspera*

Crested Buckler Fern *Dryopteris cristata*  
Marsh Fern *Thelypteris palustris*  
Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis*

Bladderwort *Utricularia sp.*  
Bloody Cranesbill *Geranium sanguineum*  
Bogbean (not in flower) *Menyanthes trifoliata*  
Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*  
Bugloss *Anchusa arvensis*  
Climbing Corydalis *Ceratocarpus claviculata*  
Common Cudweed *Filago vulgaris*  
Common Poppy *Papaver rhoeas*  
Cuckoo Flower *Cardamine pratensis*  
Dog Rose *Rosa canina*  
Fen Orchid *Liparis loesslii*  
Field Pansy *Viola arvensis*  
Fox-and-Cubs *Pilosella aurantiaca*  
Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*  
Great or Giant Water Dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*  
Greater Spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*  
Greater Water Parsnip *Sium latifolium*  
Green Alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens*  
Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*  
Hairy Tare *Vicia hirsuta*  
Hemlock *Conium maculatum*  
Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*  
Marsh Cinquefoil *Comarum palustre*  
Marsh Lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*  
Marsh Pea (not in flower) *Lathyrus palustris*  
Marsh Stitchwort *Stellaria palustris*  
Marsh Thistle *Cirsium palustre*  
Marsh Valerian *Valeriana dioica*  
Meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*  
Milk Parsley *Peucedanum palustre*  
Mouse-ear Hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*  
Ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*  
Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*  
Scarlet Pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis*  
Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*  
Tubular Water Dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*  
Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*  
Water Soldier *Stratiotes aloides*  
Water Violet *Hottonia palustris*  
White Water Lily *Nymphaea alba*  
Yellow Flag Iris *Iris pseudacorus*  
Yellow Water Lily *Nuphar lutea*



Avocet © David Gaunt



Norfolk Hawker © Helen Barker



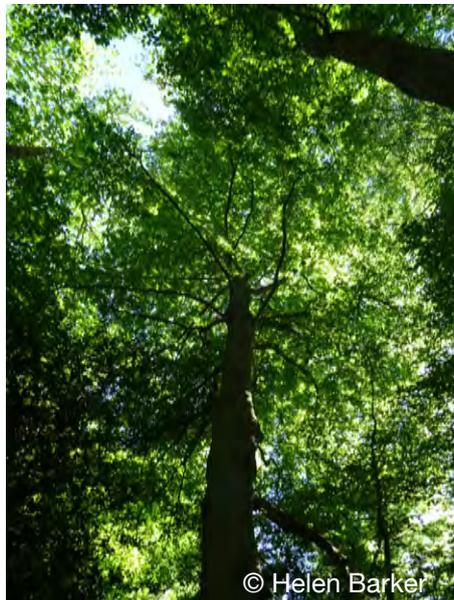
Swallowtail © David Gaunt



Large Red Damselflies  
© Helen Barker



Hairy Dragonfly © Terry Goble



© Helen Barker



Alderfly © Terry Goble

Large Red Damselfly © Terry Goble



Beaded Chestnut Caterpillar © David Gaunt



Norfolk Hawker © Helen Barker



Drinker Moth Caterpillar © David Gaunt

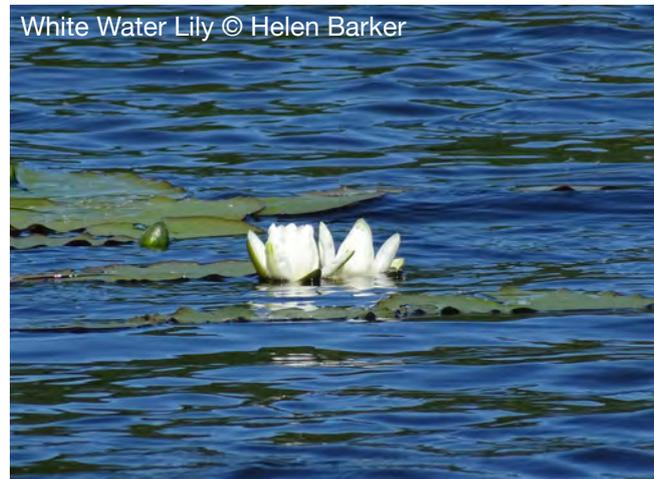
Violet Black-legged Robberfly © Alice Hunter



Brimstone © Terry Goble



White Water Lily © Helen Barker



Water Violet © Polly Mair



Fen Orchid © Helen Barker



Blue-tailed Damselfly © David Gaunt



Marsh Harrier © David Gaunt



Brimstone © David Gaunt

Red-headed Cardinal Beetle © David



Black and Red Froghopper © Terry Goble



Norfolk Hawker © Polly Mair



© Polly Mair

Swallowtail © David Gaunt





Swallowtail © Helen Barker



Four-spotted Chaser © David Gaunt



Juvenile Common Lizard © Helen Barker



Peacock © David Gaunt



Red Admiral © David Gaunt



Swallowtail © Polly Mair



Grey Heron © David Gaunt



Common Frog © David Gaunt



Treble Lines © David Gaunt