

SEPTEMBER CHALLENGE

GO TO A MIGRATION HOTSPOT

Return migration really gets into full swing in late summer, and by September there will be common migrants and rare birds aplenty on the move. Now is one of the peak times to head to a migration hotspot, such as Spurn, East Yorkshire, Dungeness, Kent, or large areas of Cornwall and North Norfolk. Treat yourself to a day or a weekend (or longer) at a migration hotspot, enjoying the delights of watching birds on the move. At this time, virtually anything can turn up.



Lighthouse at Spurn Point

Paul Thompson / Alamy Stock Photo

CELESTRON RECOMMENDS...

The Trailseeker 80mm scope, out in January, boasts a 20-60x zoom eyepiece – perfect for scanning for waders and wildfowl in autumn.

celestron.com



Black Tern

“By September, I’m in total migration mode. So off I head to Wormwood Scrubs. There are Ring Ouzels awaiting!”
David Lindo, BW columnist

Christopher Cook / Alamy

TARGET BIRD BLACK TERN

Finding Black Terns usually means carefully checking reservoirs, lakes and pools during passage periods – they often stop off at the same sites year after year. And remember that in autumn, they won’t be nearly as strikingly obvious as in spring, as both juveniles and adults can look much lighter than you’d expect. Their small size and behaviour – hawking for insects – should help them stand out from our commoner terns.

This is a species that seems to have it in for our man Paul, as he explains: “It just hasn’t happened for me and Black Tern, yet. There were some around in the summer and early autumn, and I went to each of the places they’d been reported – but never when they were there. This was another bird I hoped I might find at Spurn; failing that, I had a RSPB Skua cruise booked the following weekend. While not a seabird, might I be lucky enough to have a Black Tern pass by? No. The cruise was cancelled due to rough seas.”

MORE SEPTEMBER BIRDS

Little Gull – its buoyant, tern-like flight is distinctive, as it passes through inland water bodies.

Green Sandpiper – can look like a large Common Sandpiper, so beware.

Whinchat – look out for these on passage; hay bales in stubble fields are often favourite perches

BIRDING BLUNDERS!

Back in the days when Little Egrets were rare visitors to Britain, many a distant white plastic bag set hearts racing, at least momentarily. And Walkers’ cheese and onion crisp packets have been known to do good impressions of Kingfishers when stuck in riverside vegetation. You’d be surprised how easily the eye can be fooled.

Calum Dickson / Alamy

- Rook
- Carrion Crow
- Hooded Crow
- Raven
- Goldcrest
- Firecrest
- Penduline Tit
- Blue Tit

- Great Tit
- Crested Tit
- Coal Tit
- Willow Tit
- Marsh Tit
- Bearded Tit
- Wood Lark
- Sky Lark

- Shore Lark
- Short-toed Lark
- Sand Martin
- Crag Martin
- Swallow
- House Martin
- Red-rumped Swallow
- Cetti’s Warbler

- Long-tailed Tit
- Greenish Warbler
- Arctic Warbler
- Pallas’s Warbler
- Yellow-browed Warbler
- Hume’s Leaf Warbler
- Radde’s Warbler
- Dusky Warbler