This course is designed to help you to find out more about bird identification and bird migration and the species likely to be encountered during migration periods. It is aimed equally at anyone who is a newcomer to birdwatching and those who wish to improve their skills in wild bird identification. It will also emphasise the adaptations of birds to their preferred habitats and lifestyles.

We will explore migration marking techniques including: ringing, colour marking, and radio and satellite tracking. Weather permitting, we will organise bird ringing demonstrations at the Flatford ringing site.

**Course Overview**

East Anglia is an ideal place to observe bird activities in autumn. The last week of October is known by Suffolk birdwatchers as ‘Siberian Week’. Migration will be in full swing, with birds that have bred in the high Arctic or that are escaping harsh weather in Eastern Europe and the continent making their way through the area or arriving to overwinter here.

There will be evening talks illustrated with slides and videos, while the days will be spent in the field at Suffolk’s best migration watch-points, so that a good variety of species are likely to be seen. We shall work as a group, but will try to give you as much individual help as possible.

Locations for our field excursions are to some extent weather and bird activity
dependent but will include some of the following sites:

- The Flatford area: woodland, farmland and freshwater marsh
- Minsmere RSPB Reserve: several woodland and wetland habitats including reedbeds
- Landguard Bird Observatory (if ringing is taking place)
- Trimley Marshes Nature Reserve
- Boyton and Hollesley RSPB Reserve
- The Stour and Orwell estuaries
- Hazlewood Marshes

### About the Tutor

Steve Piotrowski is one of the most experienced birders in the region and author of the recently published ‘Birds of Suffolk’. He founded Landguard Bird Observatory in 1982 and has been at the forefront of its development ever since. He specialises in bird migration and holds a BTO bird ringing ‘Trainer’ permit.

### What to Bring

The minimum requirement is to bring a pair of binoculars, 8x40 or 10x40 are recommended specifications - the first figure is the magnification and the second the diameter of the larger lens in mm. Don’t bring a pair with magnification over 10x - these are not suitable for birdwatching. Above all, check that you can see clearly and there is no distortion. If you have a telescope and tripod there will be plenty of opportunity to use these too, but the tutor will encourage those without to use his.

A notebook and pencil will be needed, and a field guide. It is useful if we can all go straight to a bird in a book via the page number, so please try to bring with you:

- **Pocket Guide to the Birds of Britain and North West Europe** by Chris Kightley, Steve Madge and Dave Nurney, (published by Pica Press/BTO, 1998)

Also recommended are:

- **The Birdwatchers’ Pocket Guide** (new edition) by Peter Hayman and Rob Hume, (published by Mitchell Beazley). The illustrations are good and it really is pocket-sized!
- **Collins Bird Guide (2nd Edition)** by Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom (Paperback £17.99 but may be less online)
- **RSPB Handbook of British Birds** by P Holden and T Cleeves, published by Christopher Helm, 2002
The course will involve some walking each day, but there will be nothing too strenuous. Strong, comfortable walking boots or shoes are therefore important, as is a good selection of warm and weatherproof clothing, including hats, scarves and gloves in natural colours please - greens and browns are preferable, no reds or yellows! Wellingtons may be needed at some sites. The Centre has a selection of waterproof tops, trousers and wellingtons, which may be hired if needed.

Please bring a medium-sized torch for going out in the evenings. A small rucksack will also be useful for carrying your equipment. If you are a member of the RSPB and/or Essex Wildlife Trust. Bring with you any appropriate membership cards that would allow free entry to local nature reserves. Please note that permit fees, applicable to any nature reserves visited during your stay, will be in addition to accommodation/tuition fees paid to FSC.

**Start and finish times**

Check in on Monday is available from 1600, but the first formal activity is dinner at 1830 (with the bar open from 1815) followed by an evening classroom session.

**Residents:** Please aim to arrive between 1600 and 1800 on Monday to allow us sufficient time to show you to your accommodation and around the communal areas.

**Non-residents:** You do not need to arrive quite so early but please can you be here by 1800 as we need to show you the communal areas as well. The course may involve early-morning ringing demonstrations, walks and excursions, so it might be better for you to book your breakfast at Flatford. Further details can be supplied at the time of booking.

The course ends at 1200 on Friday.

**Special Offer**

Bring a friend!

If you are attending a course at Flatford Mill at the sole occupancy price, we are offering a special rate for a friend or partner not enrolled on the course to also stay at £50 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast.
Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre; we are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends. Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: www.field-studies-council.org.