

An exceptional morning for goose-watching. I had nipped along to Overy to see a Taiga Bean Goose that had been found the previous afternoon. It had been associating with a large flock of Pinkfeet and Greylags which were feeding on wheat stubble. The Grey-bellied Brant dropped in briefly before heading off west and a couple of Barnacles were present.

After an hour Kayn Forbes arrived to have a look at the Taiga Bean. It had gone out of view but after a quarter of an hour Kayn picked it up feeding in a wide strip of uncut wheat. The geese were great to watch in this situation as they had to force themselves through the standing crop then reach their necks up to strip the ears of corn. There was lots of antagonism and squabbling which added to the enjoyable viewing. Suddenly Kayn said with some urgency 'What's this dark goose?!' I got onto it pretty much straight away - its dark plumage stood out obviously but wasn't a great deal bigger than many of the juvenile Pinkfeet. It was largely obscured but I could see the typical covert

markings of a young Whitefront. It lifted its head and I blurted out 'Wow it's a Greenland!' and Kayn added 'Well that was my thinking'. A classic moment of chancing upon a rare bird - totally unexpected and very exciting and a great find for Kayn.

The bird walked forward revealing a lovely all-dark tail with just dirty-white tips to the feathers. The bird was in complete juvenile plumage with not a hint of moult - a new plumage for me so I was especially pleased. The bill was quite stubby so clearly had a bit of growing to do and was typically pale dull yellow-orange in colour with a slightly darker nail.

It stayed in this location for a few days so was well seen by many people. By the year's end I only saw it on one other occasion at Burnham Market on 18th November, by this date it had replaced some of its rear flanks with adult-type feathers and showed some more white on the forehead.



Juvenile, 14th Oct, Burnham Overy

(JRMCC)



1st winter, 18th Nov, Burnham Market

(JRMCC)