Norfolk in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1
Meet in the evening, after dinner excursion.

Day 2
Cley Marshes and Holkham reserve.

Day 3
Weyland Wood and Breckland. Depart for home mid-afternoon.

Departs
May

Cost
£295 per person

Single room supplement
£55 per person

Focus
A birdwatching weekend in Norfolk.

Grading
Grade A – easy day walks.

Dates and Prices
Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk (tour code GBR03)

Highlights:
- Avocet, Little Gull and Spotted Redshank at Cley
- Woodlark, Tree Pipit, Crossbill, at Breckland
- Bittern, Bearded Tit, Ruff, Garganey
- Woodland Flora in Weyland Wood
- Led by an expert naturalist

From top to bottom: Bittern, Avocet and Bearded Tit
Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Friday

Your tour leader, Toby Collett, will meet you at our hotel base in Hunstanton, the Le Strange Arms, in time for dinner. After you settle in, Toby will give you a short introductory talk outlining the programme for the weekend and some of the birds we will hope to see. After dinner, he will take you for a walk locally to stretch your legs.

Day 2

Saturday

Our optional pre-breakfast walk sets the scene for day one. A quick 10 minute drive to Holme National Nature Reserve allows us a glimpse into the habitats and geography that make the North Norfolk coast so special. Sea, beach, saltmarsh, dunes, wet grassland and then scrub into farmland give us a lot of habitat and a lot of species to get stuck into to work up an appetite. Natterjack Toad is also a possibility in the dune slacks.

After breakfast we head to Cley Marshes (approximately 50 minutes to the east), the premier reserve of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and one of the most famous in Britain. Cley holds a wide range of breeding wetland birds, including Marsh Harrier, Bearded Tit and Avocet. At this time of year it is also an excellent locality for migrant waders. Little Stint, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit and Curlew Sandpiper are all spring regulars, while Garganey, Little Gull, Spoonbill and Great White Egret are becoming more frequent. The coastal location combined with the time of year means something more unusual is always possible. In addition to the waders and water birds, Cley is also a magnet for migrating passerines with the surrounding scrub and wet fields regularly holding migrant, warblers, chats and flycatchers.

After lunch at Cley we will drive back west, keeping an ear to the bird news services in case anything unusual arrives en-route to our next destination. RSPB Titchwell has long attracted some of the best birds to the Norfolk Coast. Recent work on the scrapes has seen a big increase in their breeding colony making it one of the best sites to see the very handsome Mediterranean Gull. Little Tern often feed just offshore with both Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers displaying in front of the hide. Barn and Short-eared Owl often hunt over the saltmarsh while Cuckoo and Turtle Dove can be heard in the car park. We will also get the chance to work on our bird song with up to 9 different warbler species singing across the reserve. We will return to our hotel at about 6.00 p.m for a breather and to enjoy an evening meal.

An optional evening excursion for Nightjars at nearby Dersingham Bog may also pick us up Barn and Little Owl on the way.
Days 3

Sunday

Today will offer a complete contrast to the teeming wetlands of the north coast. In keeping with Day 2 there will be an optional pre-breakfast trip. We will drive out to Chosely Barns, a regular coastal arrival site for Dotterel. Here we may also see farmland species like Yellowhammer, Grey Partridge, Corn Bunting, Turtle Dove and lolloping Brown Hares.

After breakfast our destination will be the dry sandy heaths of south Norfolk, known as the Breckland, and now planted with large tracts of Forestry Commission conifer plantation. Our first port of call will be Weeting Heath, the best place to reliably see Stone Curlew as well as a host of Nationally scarce plants that can only be found at a handful of sites. Spotted Flycatcher, Firecrest, Tree Pipit and Woodlark are all possible in the woodland walk around the hides. After lunch we will head to Lakenheath where Bittern and Crane will be on our radar to finish with a flourish. In recent visits we have also been lucky enough to see up to 50 Hobby’s circling over the reeds feeding on dragonflies.

As always we will leave space and gaps for the unexpected which if unfilled, will give us more time to enjoy the above locations and take our time with some of these scarcer species.

Tour grading

Grade A. Gentle walks on mostly flat terrain.

Clothing and equipment

Binoculars are essential and bring telescopes if you have them. Walking boots or sturdy trainers will be adequate footwear.

Food & accommodation included in the price

Breakfasts and dinners are included in the cost. Pub lunches and drinks are not included.

Additional Information

Unless you are a Norfolk Naturalists Trust member, you will have to purchase permits at Cley and Weeting Heath.

Transport

We use 9-seat minibuses for this tour. Please assist our tour leaders in ensuring that there is a rotation of seats around the tour vehicle to allow each tour member to enjoy approximately equal time in the front. In order to be fair to all participants, we regret that we are unable to guarantee a perpetual front seat to those who might suffer from motion sickness or other concerns.
How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements in full if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website.

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