

Norfolk in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

- Day 1** Meet in the evening, after dinner excursion.
- Day 2** Cley Marshes and Titchwell reserve.
- Day 3** Breckland and Lakenheath. Depart for home mid-afternoon.

Departs

May

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



From top to bottom: Bittern, Avocet and Bearded Tit



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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, will meet you at our hotel base in Old Hunstanton. Please be there in time for an afternoon excursion starting at 3pm. In the evening, your leader will give you a short introductory talk outlining the programme for the rest of the holiday some of the birds we will hope to see. After dinner, he may also take you for a walk locally.

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.

Day 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. Walks will be on mostly flat terrain on good footpaths. There are some times where you will be walking along the beach for a short time on the shingle. You can expect to walk 6 – 8 miles per day in total. This will be at a slow pace as you will be stopping frequently to look at the wildlife. The days will be quite long with optional pre-breakfast and evening walks.

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

Accommodation, breakfasts and dinners are included in the cost. Lunches (either in the form of a pub lunch or a picnic) and drinks are not included.

Reserve entry

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

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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