

The Best of Rutland's Wildlife

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Arrive Rutland
Day 2	Rutland Water
Day 3	Frampton Marsh
Day 4	Rutland Water

Departs

August

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code GBR235)

Grading

A. Easy day walks

Focus

Birds

Highlights

- Chance to watch Ospreys, including at the nest and potentially fishing over the reservoir.
- Thousands of roosting waders in breeding plumage including Knot and Black-tailed Godwits
- Evening talk by and a day at Rutland Water with Tim Appleton MBE – founder of the Bird Fair and the man who created Rutland Water Nature Reserve.



Images from top: Osprey, Black-tailed Godwit & Little Egret



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Introduction

Rutland will need no introduction to the many thousands of nature enthusiasts who visit Bird Fair every year. It is the smallest of the historical English counties but there is so much more to the area than just Rutland Water. This gentle rolling landscape in the heart of England is largely dominated by Jurassic limestones and this has a significant influence on the habitats and associated species.

On this short break, we will explore some of the area's best nature reserves from our base, close to the north shore of Rutland Water. The Barnsdale Lodge Hotel is steeped in over 250 years of history and individually-furnished rooms overlook either the beautiful Rutland landscape or the picturesque courtyard. The hotel provides fine dining, using many ingredients sourced from produce found in the local area and their own vegetable and herb gardens. Rutland may have recently lost its status as the last English County to not have a McDonalds restaurant, but rest assured, we will be steering well clear on this trip!

In August, many species of birds will be busy feeding youngsters at Rutland Water and autumn migration should be underway. Anything may turn up at this time of year with species such as Black Tern, Wood Sandpiper and Garganey almost expected. All being well, the famous Osprey nest at Manton Bay will still be the centre of attention for the adult Ospreys with fledged chicks! If not at the nest, the Osprey family (families!) should still be much in evidence around the reserve.

Frampton is one of the newest reserves in the RSPB's diverse and varied portfolio, which is fast becoming one of Britain's favourite birdwatching destinations. It has been designed and is managed in a new and exciting way, allowing wet parts to become dry and dry parts to be wet, all in the name of increasing breeding and wintering bird numbers. Being next to The Wash, it is a wader magnet with best days recording over 25 different wader species! These counts often occur on the peak tides of late August but high tides between April and September can record over 20 species. In the 12 years since opening 45 different waders have been recorded here.

Itinerary

The programme for the tour will be kept flexible, in order to make best use of the prevailing weather conditions and to maximise our chances of seeing key species. Our leaders will make decisions on the day as to exactly where we will go. However, the itinerary below offers an illustration of our planned programme of excursions

Day 1

Arrive Barnsdale

Your tour leaders will meet you at the lovely Barnsdale Lodge Hotel in the early evening for a short introductory chat outlining the programme for the coming three days, information about the area and some of the wildlife that we will hope to see. There are options for a pick up and drop off at Oakham Railway Station if you wish to coordinate with us - please let us know at the time of booking. Before dinner, we will enjoy an illustrated talk on the History of Rutland Water by Tim

Appleton MBE, founder of the Bird Fair and the man who oversaw the creation of the reserve and its management for many years.

Day 2

Rutland Water

Rutland Water is without doubt, one of the premier birding sites in the whole of the UK. The wide range of habitats, alongside the pull of the UK's largest reservoir, means that a large range of species can be expected today. Today will be led by Tim Appleton MBE and we will keep things flexible in order to react to sightings and news through the day.

Depending on sightings, it is likely that we will head to the Eggleton Reserve and spend the day exploring the various hides and trails that the reserve has to offer. There will be plenty to see and the sound of the gull and tern colony will be a constant backdrop. Wildfowl will be busy breeding and there may be a smart Garganey in amongst the many ducks or possibly a passage Common Scoter out on the main lake. Black Tern are often present, waders may include Ruff or Wood Sandpiper and there might be a Hobby or two hawking for dragonflies over one of the lagoons. We should find more than enough to occupy us on the main reserve but if not, there are plenty of other spots around the reservoir and we might pop round to the North Arm to eat our lunch or have a cup of tea later in the afternoon. Here we may bump into one of the scarcer heron species such as a Great Egret in amongst the Little Egrets and Grey Herons.

We will head back to the hotel to freshen up before dinner.

Day 3

RSPB Frampton Marsh

This morning we set off in a north-easterly direction, heading for RSPB Frampton Marsh on the Lincolnshire coast. The marsh and pools here in the summer are buzzing with activity, as many species of wader use the reserve to roost and feed at various times of the day. High tide sees birds stream in from The Wash to roost: thousands of Knot and Black-tailed Godwits join the breeding waders such as Little Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Avocet and Redshank on the scrapes on the reserve. At this time of year, a selection of returning migrants such as Little Stint, Spotted Redshank, Curlew Sandpiper and Wood and Green Sandpipers should be present.

However, it is not all about waders. Frampton is one of a few sites that can see over 100 birds recorded in a day. A variety of farmland, wetland and coastland provides a good diversity of habitat, hosting rare breeders like Turtle Dove, Bearded Tit, Corn Bunting, Black-necked Grebe, Little Ringed Plover and Marsh Harrier. It is also the site of the first ever nesting attempt by Glossy Ibis in the UK.

Black-necked Grebes bred at Frampton in 2020 and should still be on site in August. A handful of Spoonbills are usually loafing about on the pools and we should also be alert for a hunting raptor such as Peregrine or Sparrowhawk putting up the huge flocks of waders. The trick is to try and pick one out amongst the swirling maelstrom of birds! Of course, at this time of year anything might turn up: recent years have seen Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Squacco Heron, two White-rumped Sandpipers, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper and a Caspian Tern!

Day 4

Rutland Water

Today we will head for the Lyndon nature reserve on the south side of Rutland Water or if the weather is favourable, we may visit nearby Ketton Quarry to see what butterflies are still on the wing including, possibly, Marbled White. At Lyndon, we will scan for the Osprey family in Manton Bay and also pick our way through the various species of wildfowl. Reed and Sedge Warblers will be busily feeding youngsters in the reedbeds and the woodland and hedgerows will be alive with the strange squeaks and squawks of young Chiffchaffs, Blackcaps, tits and Garden Warblers.

After an action-packed few days, the tour will conclude back at the hotel in time for people to make their return journeys home. There will also be the option to make a return drop for those who arranged it to nearby Oakham Railway Station.

Tour Grading

A. There will be easy walking on this holiday, covering between three and five miles per day, at a slow birdwatching pace, on largely flat ground, interspersed with some time spent in hides. Some areas may be muddy underfoot. We will spend the majority of our time during the day birdwatching and as we do so we will be on the lookout for any interesting wildlife along with appreciating the views and beauty of the area. This tour is suitable for birdwatchers of all abilities.

Accommodation & Food

We will be staying at the Barnsdale Lodge Hotel, a 3-star historic hotel situated just to the north of Rutland Water. All the rooms are en-suite and the hotel boasts a superb restaurant that sources local, seasonal ingredients.

The holiday cost includes accommodation on a half board basis (breakfast and evening meals), starting with dinner on Day 1 and finishing with breakfast on Day 4. Lunches are not included, but there will be opportunities on each day to purchase sandwiches, etc from local shops or cafes. Please bring with you any snacks or drinks that you want during the rest of the day.

Weather

August is generally a kind month for weather but participants should be prepared for all eventualities from heavy rain to warm summer sunshine! We hope for the latter, but cold, wet conditions can occur.

Clothing & Equipment

Warm and waterproof clothing and footwear are essential. Waterproof jacket and trousers should be brought with you. Several thinner layers, as opposed to one thick layer, are the best way to keep warm, and can be removed if the temperature increases.

We would recommend that all tour participants bring a pair of binoculars with them (and a scope would be useful as well). A day pack for carrying items and a re-fillable water bottle should be brought with you.

Joining the Tour

You can arrive at Barnsdale Lodge at any time from 2pm and your leader will meet you at 6pm in the bar area for an introduction and talk, followed by dinner at 7.30pm. If you wish to join the tour by train, we can pick you up at Oakham train station at 3pm and drop you there again at no later than 5pm on the final day. Please let us know if you are intending to arrive by train and would like to be picked up.

Inclusions / Exclusions

The following costs are included in the price of the holiday:

- Accommodation on half board basis
- Minibus transportation to locations visited
- All guiding
- Excursion costs or entrance fees associated with planned activities

The following costs are **not** included and should be budgeted for:

- Lunches
- Drinks
- Any other personal spending e.g. souvenirs
- Activities not included in the tour

Extending Your Holiday

If you wish to extend your stay in the area, we would be very happy to book extra nights at the hotel for you. The nearby towns of Stamford, Oakham and Uppingham are all full of historic charm. Stamford, in particular, has long being regarded as one of England's finest towns with 17th and 18th century stone buildings, old timber-framed buildings and five medieval parish churches. It has over 600 listed buildings, representing around half of all the listed buildings in Lincolnshire.

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 if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests, at the time of booking.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.