

Norfolk in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

2010

Dates

Friday 7th May – Sunday 9th May 2010

Cost

£265

Single room supplement

£55

Grading

A. Easy day walks

Focus

Birds

Leader

Tom McJannet



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NB. 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, Tom McJannet, will meet you at the guesthouse at Hunstanton in time for dinner. 'The Gingerbread House' is a large three-storey Victorian town house built from the local Norfolk Carstone (rooms with shared toilet and shower). This reddish sandstone, which can be seen in the cliffs along the shoreline, gives the house its name. After you settle in, Tom will give you a short introductory talk outlining the programme for the weekend and some of the birds we will hope to see.

Day 2

Saturday

Our first port of call will be Cley Marshes (approximately 50 minutes to the east), the premier reserve of the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust and one of the most famous in Britain. Cley holds a wide range of breeding wetland birds, including Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Bearded Tit and Avocet. At this time of year it is also an excellent locality for migrants. Little and Temminck's Stints, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Garganey and Little Gull are all spring regulars, although at this spot at this time of year almost anything is 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 such birds as Pied Flycatcher, Ring Ouzel, Whinchat and Wheatear.

After Cley we will drive the short distance to have a pub lunch at Holkham, one of the string of nature reserves on the north Norfolk coast. Holkham is the largest and most varied, with a large mixed wood, extensive wet grazing meadows and reedbeds. This should produce many summer visitors, including Marsh Harrier as well as some late winter wildfowl, like Brent Goose. Holkham is also one of the few Norfolk sites for the rare Natterjack Toad. After a leisurely walk through the reserve, we will return to our guest-house for about 6.00 p.m. In the evening, for those who wish, we can take a short excursion out in search of Barn Owls. Norfolk remains a stronghold for Barn Owls and presents one of the best opportunities in the country for observing this beautiful, but declining, species.

Day 3

Sunday

Today will offer a complete contrast to the teeming wetlands of the north coast. 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. However, before we reach these we will visit Wayland Wood, one of the finest ancient woods in the county, with a spectacular woodland flora. Dating back to the time of the Domesday Book and the supposed setting of the old folk tale Babes in the Wood, Wayland reveals all the characteristics of traditionally managed woodland. It is also an excellent place for birds, with Sparrowhawk, Nightingale and the extremely beautiful and shy Golden Pheasant all possible.

Just to the south is the true Breckland, where we will look for the area's other specialities - Woodlark, Tree Pipit, Crossbill and especially Stone Curlew. Other rarities breeding in this area include Goshawk and Golden Oriole, and this is also one of the few remaining English strongholds of the Red Squirrel. We will spend time searching for all of these before starting our journey home in the mid-afternoon.

Clothing and equipment

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

Grading

Grade A. Gentle walks on mostly flat terrain.

Food

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.

How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read our main Naturetrek brochure and complete and return the enclosed booking form together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us now on 01962 733051. Alternatively, you are very welcome to book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk or call us with your credit card details.

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