

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

6th to 10th June 2022 (5 days)

NORFOLK



"excellent guides, knew their stuff inside out and were a great inspiration to learn more about the natural world"

Norfolk 2021

Natural history of the Broads, Brecks and coast

Norfolk is justly known as one of Britain's best counties for wildlife. From a base just north of Norwich, we'll explore a diverse range of habitats in search of the late spring wildlife.

We will spend our first day in **Broadland**, England's most important lowland wetland, where we will visit the Yare Valley. Hairy Dragonfly, Norfolk Hawker and Swallowtail butterflies are among the rare creatures we may see on the wing over fens full of fascinating plantlife. Marsh Harriers are busy hunting, Bitterns are booming and the reedbeds are alive with the song of freshly-returned warblers. Nearby, we will check out the dune vegetation at the coast, where Dark Green Fritillary and Green Hairstreak may be on the wing.

We will visit **Breckland**, Norfolk's historic sandy grassland, where Mediterranean plants and insects have their northern-most outposts and **Stone Curlews** have their national stronghold. Though the landscape has changed dramatically, with the introduction of modern agriculture and forestry, we'll find quiet corners of the Brecks where we can still explore the fascinating history and natural history of these unique grasslands.

Heading to the famous North Norfolk Coast, we will take a privately-chartered boat trip out to Blakeney Point, where we will visit the busy colonies of breeding terns and pupping seals. We will also visit the famous Holkham Marshes reserve, where we will look for dozing Spoonbills, and listen out for pinging Bearded Tits amongst the reeds, and then head inland to Kelling Heath, where Dartford Warblers and Woodlark may be seen, with early butterflies and reptiles also in our sights.



Price
£985

Single Room Supplement
£180

Full board

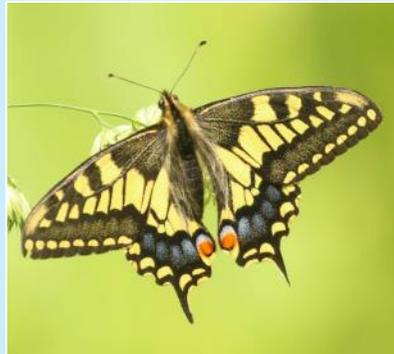
Day 1 arrive
Day 2 Norfolk Broads
Day 3 The Brecks and Lakenheath Fen
Day 4 N Norfolk coast
Holkham, Kelling & Blakeney Point
Day 5 depart

Leader
James Lowen and second leader tba

Group size
min 4, max 12

rare Broadland insects,
easy birding,
seal colony boat trip

Wildlife and culture holidays



Our profits are donated to the **Wildlife Trusts**



FOCUS OF INTEREST

This holiday is one of our **'Mixed Natural History'** trips, which have a very general natural history focus including birds, plants, and other wildlife. Other aspects such as landscape and geology, habitats and ecology are also sometimes included - the topics covered are described in this leaflet. Cultural highlights are also included.



ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

Day 1, 6th June Our holiday starts in Crostwick where we will meet this evening at our hotel in time for an introduction to the holiday and our first dinner together.

Day 2, 7th June We head south today to the nearby Yare Valley. The RSPB reserve at **Strumpshaw Fen** gives us access to alder woodland and open pools in the reedbeds. Here, Cetti's Warbler may be heard singing, while we will also be listening out for the squeals of secretive Water Rail, and the yelps of Marsh Harriers are to be heard overhead. Chinese Water Deer graze quietly along the edge of the reeds, and the reserve offers some of the best chances for seeing Otter, although we would need more than a little luck.

However, much of our attention here will be on insects. One of the stars of the reserve is the impressive **Swallowtail**, Britain's largest butterfly, which is restricted to the fens of Broadland. Many dragonfly species will also be present including Variable Damselfly and Hairy Dragonfly, but the real local speciality is the **Norfolk Hawker**, a large brown dragonfly that relies on clean water ditches filled with floating Water Soldier.

In the afternoon we will head to the coast, and the sand dunes of Winterton Dunes National Nature Reserve, where Skylarks sing overhead, and interesting butterflies on the wing could include the first Dark Green Fritillaries of the season.

Day 3, 8th June No trip to Norfolk is complete without a visit to **Breckland**: this ancient grassland once covered a huge area of the south-west of the county and neighbouring Suffolk. Today only small remnants remain and the most celebrated among them is Norfolk Wildlife Trust's (NWT) Weeting Heath. The stronghold of **Stone Curlew** conservation, this beautiful reserve also boasts an intact Breckland flora, though it is usually not possible to walk onto the grassland. Stoa, Woodlark and Crossbills are among the creatures we may find here.

Nearby we'll visit the RSPB's Lakenheath reserve, where Hobbies and Marsh Harriers hawk over head, while Common Cranes nest on the reserve and might be seen making feeding flights to and from their nest.

Finally, given time, we will visit NWT East Wretham Heath, among the largest nature reserves in Breckland, an area of grassy heaths, maintained by Rabbit grazing as they have



been for hundreds of years, and fascinating fluctuating wetlands known as meres.

Day 4, 9th June Today we head north to the **North Norfolk Coast AONB**, where we will start the day at Morston Quay. From here, we take a boat trip out through the creeks and channels through the salt marsh to the sand and single banks of Blakeney Point.

Here we will find a **large colony of seals**, with both Grey and Common Seals present in large numbers. This is the start of the pupping season for the smaller Common Seal.

The Point is also home to terns, with Little, Sandwich, Common and Arctic Tern all to be seen at their breeding colonies.

Nearby, we will visit **Holkham Marshes National Nature Reserve**, where newly-fledged Spoonbills from the nearby breeding colony can be found out on the marshes, while Little and Great White Egrets stalk the shallows.

Heading inland, we will end the afternoon at Kelling Heath, where butterflies should include Green Hairstreak and Small Copper, and where we will watch out for reptiles including Common Lizard and Adder.

Day 5, 10th June One final breakfast, and then it is time to bid farewell to The Old Rectory and to Norfolk and to head home, hopefully taking some good memories of the big skies and wonderful wildlife of the Norfolk summer.

Accommodation, meals and travel

Our accommodation will be at **The Old Rectory** in the village of Crostwick, which lies 10 minutes north of Norwich on the B1150 towards North Walsham. All rooms are en-suite.

The nearest train station is Norwich.

We shall be taking packed lunches each day. Evening meals will be taken at our hotel, Requests for special diets can be accommodated.

Our transport for this trip will be by small coach or minibus. Our 1.5 hour boat trip to Blakeney Point will be in a traditional Norfolk ferry.

If you would like to **extend your stay** in Norfolk, we can book extra nights accommodation at the hotel, and give advice on good places to visit.

Weather

The English summer is of course unpredictable. The weather could be hot and sunny on some days and cold and wet on others! We will adapt our itinerary to the weather. It can be 'breezy' or even windy on the coast at times. We will not walk for long in adverse weather conditions. Evenings can be cold.



Leaders

This trip will be led by Norfolk resident, wildlife expert and author **James Lowen**. James has been immersed in all aspects of natural history since he was able to walk. This eventually persuaded him to ditch a career in the civil service in favour of becoming a full-time (and award winning) wildlife and travel writer, editor, guide and photographer. James is a frequent contributor to BBC Wildlife and author of several books, most notably the recent *Much Ado About Nothing* as well as *A Summer of British Wildlife: 100 Great Days Out Watching Wildlife*, winner of the Travel Guide Book of the Year at the 2016 Travel Media Awards, and *52 European Wildlife Weekends: a year of short breaks for nature lovers*, shortlisted for the same prize in 2018.



Depending on final group size, James will be joined by a second Wildlife Travel leader.

Covid-19 security

We will be keeping to any government rules on social distancing and other covid-19 security precautions for this trip, with the final group size dependent on those rules at the time of the holiday.

We will ask travellers to take a covid antigen (lateral flow) test prior to joining the trip, and to wear face coverings in indoor public spaces, including while on the bus.

Fitness

We will be **walking for much of the day**, each day, albeit at a slow pace. In some locations 'facilities' are scarce! **You therefore need to have a reasonably good level of fitness** although none of the walks are strenuous. You will need to be able to step into and out of the small (12 person) boat.

TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT PER PERSON £350,
BALANCE DUE BY 07/03/2022**

INCLUDED: Four nights' accommodation, all meals from dinner day 1 to breakfast day 5. Local transport on excursions as specified in the itinerary. Entrance fees as specified in the itinerary. Services of leaders. **NOT INCLUDED:** Travel to Crostwick. Refreshments and drinks with meals. Entrance fees for optional tourist attractions. Gratuities. Travel insurance. Covid tests and associated costs

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Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; (for Registered Charity numbers, please contact us)*

Photos: front (clockwise from top): Avocet, Swallowtail, Yellow Flag Iris, Stone Curlew. **Back:** Cream-spot Tiger Moth. **Inside** (from left): Green Hairstreak, Sedge Warbler, North Norfolk scenery, Marsh Harrier, Norfolk Hawker, Poplar Hawkmoth.

