

# 4 Night Guided Birdwatching in Northumberland

**Trip style:** Small group holidays

**Destination:** 📍 Northumberland

**Trip code:** ALN04-WBR05

**Carbon Footprint:** 🌳 111kg CO2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Explore some of Northumberland's best birdwatching sites in the company of like-minded nature enthusiasts and an expert ornithologist. Thousands of bird species flock to the sands and offshore islands of Northumberland's National Landscapes-awarded coastline every year so avid twitchers are in for a treat. Head out on daily walks as a group and your local birdwatching guide will lead you to beauty spots where birdlife thrives. You'll get the benefit of your guide's knowledge and expertise throughout the day and in the evening, enjoy sharing a meal and conversation about your days discoveries. To top it all, you'll stay in the comfort of our characterful country house just steps from the beach at Alnmouth – a great place for early morning birdwatching.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Daily guided visits to the best birding sites in Northumberland
- The expertise of a local ornithologist leader
- Visiting Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve, Holy Island, Druridge Bay
- The chance to spot brent geese, great northern divers, red-necked grebes, owls and more
- Relaxing at our comfortable country house
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Local ornithologist leader
- All transport throughout the itinerary
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information available in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

## TRIP SUITABILITY

Though these holidays don't cover great distances on foot, they are still active. You'll be hopping on and off the coach and should expect to spend the majority of the day on your feet. Walking to the birdwatching sites may take you across country tracks or footpaths and, at times, off the beaten track so be sure to bring sturdy shoes.

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1:** Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

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### **Day 2-4:** Lindisfarne, Druridge Bay & Bamburgh

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**Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve** Also known as Holy Island, Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve is the jewel in the crown of Northumberland when it comes to birding. During winter thousands of wildfowl and waders flock to the area, including almost the entire population of Svalbard breeding population of pale-bellied brent geese. We spend the day here, exploring the best birding sites. Keep an eye out for red-throated divers, great northern divers, slavian and red-necked grebes, whooper swan, pink-footed geese, and you'll not fail to find wigeon (over 20,000 can be found here at any one time).

**Druridge Bay** Another of our favourite sites is Druridge Bay. Six miles of long sandy beaches backed by sand dunes provide a series of ponds, patches of scrub, hedgerows, and fields – the perfect spot for year-round bird watching. The hides around Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and East Chevington provide views overlooking fresh water and reedbeds where waders and wildfowl spend the winter months and owls and raptors patrol in search of food. Watch out for long-eared owl, hen harrier, divers, grebes, merlin, peregrine, geese, plover, snipe, godwit, and more.

**Bamburgh, Beadnell & Boulmer** A tour of the coastline between Bamburgh and Boulmer sees us stop at some of the region's best birding sites including Stag Rock, Seahouses Harbour, Beadnell Bay and Low Newton. A mix of rocky and sandy shoreline, and sheltered bays, these habitats are home to waders and wildfowl, including the unobtrusive purple sandpiper, and sanderling – Northumberland's county bird. Look out for eider duck, and rafts of common scoter offshore too.

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### **Day 5:** Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

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## Nether Grange

You can tell that you're in for something special at this former 18th century granary in the heart of Alnmouth – the postcard-pretty coastal village treasured for its colourful cottages, superb walking routes, and peaceful beach where the River Aln meets the North Sea (in its heyday, it was a working river-port, exporting grain, wool, coal, and even the odd pipe of Madeira wine). Not only will you be a 40-minute drive from Northumberland National Park, but also within easy travelling distance of several visit-worthy castles, including Alnwick, Lindisfarne, Dunstanburgh, and Warkworth. If the weather's nice, a boat trip to the Farne Islands that lie just offshore midway between the villages of Seahouses and Bamburgh rewards with sightings of England's largest grey seal colonies.

### A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

### Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

### Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

### The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.