

4 Night Self Guided Birdwatching in Northumberland

Trip style:

Destination: 📍 Northumberland

Trip code: ALN04-WBW05

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 103kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Thousands of rare bird species flock to the sands and offshore islands of Northumberland's National Landscapes-awarded coastline every year. So it's easy to see the appeal of our bird watching holidays here. Stay at our characterful country house in the coastal village of Alnmouth and get talks, tips, and recommendations from our HF Holidays Host so you can visit the best birdwatching sites independently during the day. Alternatively, head out on self-guided walks using our easy-to-follow routes, maps, and 24-hour support. In the evening, you can share the company of fellow birdwatchers and their stories of what they've spotted that day.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Independently exploring some of the best birding sites in Britain
- Heading out on your choice of self-guided walks
- Being in the company of fellow bird watchers
- Staying in the comfort of our country house in Alnmouth

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable accommodation in our country house
- 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 are available in our Discovery Point

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 in 2026. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests. In the evening there'll be a talk from a local birding expert with tips on where to go and what to see during your holiday.

Day 2-4: Your birding break

Explore superb birding sites right on the doorstep of our country house or travel just a short distance north or south for some equally fabulous bird watching locations. Some standout sites to visit during your stay:

Alnmouth: The postcard-worthy coastal village treasured for its colourful cottages, superb walking routes, and peaceful beach is just a five-minute stroll from our country house at Nether Grange. Hit the sands and you're in with a chance of spotting species such as bar-tailed godwit, grey plover, and purple sandpiper. Red-necked divers, grebes, long-tailed duck, and common scoters can usually be found here in the winter months, as well as the characterful eider duck. And because Alnmouth is at the mouth of the River Aln, saltmarsh and saline reedbed habitat attracts redshanks, snipe, wigeons, curlews, and dunlins, too.

Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve: Also known as Holy Island, this 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 light-bellied brent geese. Keep an eye out for red-throated divers, great northern Divers, slavianian 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). There are wildlife watching hides overlooking the reserve at Fenham-le-Moor, Beal, and at both The Lough and Window on Wild Lindisfarne building on Holy Island. The harbour at Holy Island can also be a good place to watch birds.

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 are one of the best places to camp out for the day. In winter and early spring, watch out for long-eared owl, hen harrier, divers, grebes, merlin, peregrine, geese, plover, snipe, godwit, and more.

Low Hauxley is the most northerly point of Druridge Bay and not only has some excellent trails and hides, but a nice café, too.

Budle Bay: A fabulous place to watch the birds of the mudflats on an incoming tide. There is a long layby where you can park and some information panels. As the tide comes in, it pushes the birds closer to the shore and this is the best time to see them.

The Farne Islands: This internationally important breeding ground for both seabirds and seals, is usually open from the end of March until the end of November. Boats go out daily from Seahouses. Mid-April to July is probably the most popular time to visit the islands as it's breeding season for a variety of birds. To spot puffins, it's best to visit in May, June, or July.

Coquet Island: Boats depart from Amble harbour and take you around this tiny island, where some 35,000 birds breed. The island is home to puffins from May to July, but its most famous resident is the Roseate tern (this is the only site in Britain where they breed).

Day 5: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

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.