

3 Night Self Guided Bird Watching in Northumberland

Destinations: Northumberland, United Kingdom & England
Trip code: ALWBW-3



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 twitchers and enjoy talks from a local ornithologist who'll help you identify what you've spotted.

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

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- 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
- Evening lectures on the ornithology of the local area
- Relaxing at our comfortable country house

ITINERARY VERSION 1

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check in from 4pm onwards and enjoy a complimentary cream tea on arrival. 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.

Your local birding expert on this holiday is Martin. Martin Kitching has been birdwatching for more than 50 years, and for the last 30 of those he's been based north of the Tyne where he's a former author and editor of the annual report 'Birds in Northumbria'. He's the director and senior guide of wildlife tours and for the last two years he's been studying the breeding ecology of Kittiwakes, as a Field Biologist, as well as leading wildlife and landscape photography. He's also the coordinator of the North East Cetacean Project, which is mapping marine mammal and seabird distribution off the coast of NE England to inform marine conservation decision-making processes, and authored the majority of the cetacean species accounts in 'Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles of the North East'.

Day 2 - 3: 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, slavonian 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 4: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

ACCOMMODATION

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.

Country House Accommodation

Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Nether Grange has 36 well-appointed guest rooms available in two categories: Classic and Premium.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers, and comfortable mattresses.

We love: The sea-facing rooms are especially lovely.

The Choose Your Room service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Check in & check out

You are welcome to check in from **4:00pm at the earliest**. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team.

On the day of departure, we kindly ask all guests to check out by **10:00am**. You'll be asked to settle your bill prior to leaving. You may, of course, make a charitable donation to our HF Holidays Pathways Fund if you wish. Please note that we only accept card payments.

Room supplements

Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

About Your Stay

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

The walking day

Prior to setting off on 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.

Food & Drink

Led by experienced chefs, we serve a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients. We always aim to source the best produce available and use home-grown herbs and vegetables from our own gardens whenever possible. Additionally, we have a licensed bar with beers, soft drinks, and a superb selection of spirits. Full-board comes as standard and includes a cream tea on arrival and a hearty breakfast on departure day.

HF Holidays understands the importance of managing allergens effectively to ensure food is safe for guests with food allergies. Whilst we are always able to confidently inform guests which allergens are present in our ingredients and dishes, we are unable to guarantee absolute freedom from the 14 main allergens in our kitchens. Vegetarian and vegan menu choices are available. If you have allergies, food intolerances, or any special dietary requirements, please inform our reservation team at the time of booking.

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Nether Grange](#)

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Nether Grange
Alnmouth
Alnwick
Northumberland NE66 2RZ

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1665 830431](tel:+44(0)1665830431)

By Train

The nearest station is Alnmouth, on the main east coast line between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

By Taxi

The 1.5-mile journey from Alnmouth railway station to Nether Grange is about five minutes by taxi. Taxis are in limited supply in Alnmouth, so we recommend pre-booking as early as possible.

For pricing, please contact the taxi company directly.

Taxi companies in the area include:

Sovereign Taxis*

Tel: [+44 \(0\)7553 360662](tel:+44(0)7553360662)

Wizard Taxis*

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1665 663709](tel:+44(0)1665663709)

AA Taxis*

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1665 606060](tel:+44(0)1665606060)

Some taxi companies have school runs so taxis may be in short supply between 9:00am and 10:00am. It is advisable to book your return taxi when you book your arrival taxi.

*HF Holidays does not own or manage any of the above taxi companies.

By Car

Before travelling by car, note that there is no car park at Nether Grange and there's very limited on-street parking.

Exit the A1 onto the A1068 towards Alnwick. At the roundabout turn right (it's not well signposted), following the A1068 towards Alnmouth. Go straight ahead at the first roundabout then left at the second roundabout onto the B1338.

As you approach Alnmouth, turn right at the next roundabout, then left into The Wynd. Follow to Marine Road into Northumberland Street. After 100 yards turn right into Pease's Lane. You'll find Nether Grange on the left.

By Air

The nearest airport is Newcastle International Airport. Take the metro to Newcastle Central station, then the train to Alnmouth - a straightforward journey taking just over an hour.

LOCAL AREA

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Nether Grange.

Alnmouth

This pretty coastal village is adored for its colourful cottages, superb walking routes, peaceful bays, and deserted sandy beaches where the River Aln meets the North Sea. There's a small tidal harbour, a handful of small shops, and several pubs and cafés.

Alnwick Castle

A 15-minute drive away, the market town of Alnwick is dominated by the second-largest inhabited castle in the country. Home to the Duke of Northumberland's family for over 700 years, it has featured in *Harry Potter* films and *Downton Abbey* specials.

Alnwick Gardens

The castle's 12-acre garden is home to a collection of over 4,000 plant varieties. Highlights include the world's largest Tai Haku Cherry Orchard, a cascade comprising of 120 water jets, and the world's largest treehouse restaurant set 18 metres above ground level.

Bamburgh Castle

Home of the Armstrong family since 1894 and crowning nine acres of the Great Whin Sill, this so-called king of castles has stood guard above the Northumberland coast for thousands of years. The site is by the seaside village of Bamburgh, a 35-minute drive away.

Farne Islands

Located off Northumberland's coast in the North Sea, this groups of islands is home to a breeding colony of thousands of seabirds and grey seals. Between March and October, regular boat trips run from Seahouses harbour - a 45-minute drive away.

Lindisfarne (Holy Island)

An hour's drive away, this sacred place is where you can follow in the footsteps of the ancient monks who built their priory here nearly 1,400 years ago. Don't miss the museum for a chance to learn more about the 8th century manuscript known as the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Warkworth Castle

Crowning the hilltop above the River Coquet, Northumberland's hilltop fortress and hermitage was used by William Shakespeare as the setting for several scenes of his *Henry IV* plays. Located in the village of Warkworth, it's just a 10-minute drive away.

Cragside House

A 40-minute drive away, this National Trust-owned house was the first in the world to be lit by hydroelectric power. Highlights include one the largest rock gardens in Europe, a rhododendron-filled garden, and over 40 miles of lovely lakeside and woodland walks.

Seaton Delaval Hall

Designed by acclaimed Baroque architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, this National Trust-owned mansion is a 40-minute drive away. The grounds are gorgeous, especially the formal rose garden that was created in the 1950s and 1960s by Lady Hastings.

Hadrian's Wall

A 90-minute drive away, this World Heritage Site built in AD 122 extends for 73 miles. Don't miss the Roman Vindolanda Fort & Museum for fascinating artefacts, reconstructed turrets and temples, and insight of daily life in a Roman garrison town.

Edinburgh

Scotland's capital is just a one-hour train ride from Alnmouth station and worth the effort for its wealth of attractions. Must-dos include visiting Edinburgh Castle, spending time at the National Museum of Scotland, climbing Arthur's Seat, and strolling through Holyrood Park.

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

Simply known as Newcastle, this vibrant city is an hour's drive away. Highlights include admiring the iconic Tyne Bridge, relaxing at Newcastle City Baths, crossing the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, and visiting Gateshead's Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

Essentials

- Bird watching field guide
- Spotting scope and/or binoculars
- Warm & waterproof clothing
- Hat
- Camera
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner
- Thermos flask for hot drink
- Water bottle (at least one litre),
- Spare high-energy foods such as a chocolate bar,
- First-aid kit

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the

itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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