



## 1-DAY SUFFOLK BIRDING TOURS



*Black-tailed Godwits in breeding plumage are always fun to see.*

Below we detail two options for birding tours in Suffolk, we can of course tailor these tours as to your specific needs – you may have certain target birds you would like to track down, perhaps you would prefer to focus on bird photography, or we could spend the day looking for Suffolk's next rarity.

### Suffolk Birding Tour 1: Minsmere/Dunwich Heath

RSPB Minsmere is one of Britain's top bird reserves and is superb year-round. One of the best things about this reserve is the sheer diversity of habitats (and therefore bird species!), ranging from gorse and heath (particularly extensive on the adjacent Dunwich Heath), a beautiful beach, vast marshes and several large scrapes which can literally be jam-packed with birds, and extensive tracts of woodland.

On this day trip, we often find the charismatic, Near-threatened (BirdLife International) **Dartford Warbler** year-round (although more patience – and luck – is needed in winter!). This is also a great tour to see the dazzling **Bearded Reedling** on, although it is another skulker, not in the heathlands like Dartford Warbler but instead in the extensive reedbeds. In summer, these marshes (viewing these wetlands from up on Dunwich Heath across to Sizewell nuclear power station, over Minsmere, allows one to realize just how large an area the reedbeds here cover) also teem with warbler species such as **Eurasian Reed Warbler** and **Sedge Warbler**. **Cetti's Warbler** prefers areas where trees punctuate the reeds. **Eurasian Bittern** is possible year-round, but its deep booming can usually only be heard in spring and summer.



*Black-legged Kittiwake* is one of several of gull and tern species we can see on our Suffolk day tour.

In summer, there is a frenzy of tern species moving between the open sea/beach and the famous scrapes of Minsmere. These usually include small numbers of **Little Tern**, and this is a great place for scarcer species such as **Roseate Tern** and **Arctic Tern**. Noisy **Sandwich** and **Common Terns** abound (in summer). **Little Gull**, **Mediterranean Gull**, **Yellow-legged Gull**, and other less common gull species can very often be picked out among the abundant **Black-headed Gulls** and **European Herring Gulls**. There are very often good numbers of **Black-legged Kittiwakes** as well.



*The secretive **Eurasian Bittern** is present year-round at the wonderful RSPB Minsmere Nature Reserve.*

Waders can be abundant and it is a treat to see stunning breeding plumaged ones such as **Spotted Redshank**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, and **Ruff**, among all the others; a real feast for the eyes! Wildfowl also fill the scrapes, quite often including scarce species such as **Garganey** or perhaps something rare like the (American) **Green-winged Teal** that was present for a bit in 2020.

It's easy to spend a whole day birding the varied habitats of Minsmere, but time-permitting, a walk up onto Dunwich Heath (a National Trust site) is always productive as well, and if one gets bored (unlikely!) then a visit to any of the other smaller reserves in the area is worthwhile. Our birding guides are also always watching the news for any unusual species in the area, like the **Iberian Chiffchaff** that stayed quite a while in 2020, the smart breeding plumage **Red-necked Phalarope** that put in an appearance in 2021, or the **Black Redstart** that can sometimes be seen around Sizewell nuclear power station.

### Suffolk Birding Tour 2: Lakenheath Fen/Cavenham Heath/Brecks

This is another fabulous birding day tour that we can run any time of year (although we of course change the exact sites depending on the season). The Brecks (including Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve and other nearby reserves and farmland), are famous for **Eurasian Stone-curlew** (Eurasian Thick-knee) in spring, summer and autumn, and this is also a classic area to enjoy the amazing aerial display of **Tree Pipit** and to enjoy the beautiful song of **Woodlark**. We also often visit nearby sites for **Common Nightingale**, a species that we find more easily in Suffolk than in Norfolk these days. The other specials of the Brecks mentioned above (notably the stone-curlew, the pipit, and the lark) can also be seen on the Norfolk side e.g. in and around Weeting Heath, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve.

Near to the Brecks/Cavenham Heath is the absolutely brilliant RSPB Lakenheath Fen Nature Reserve, actually the focal point of this 1-day birding tour of Suffolk. This is one of the best places to actually see (and not just hear) two charismatic European bird species, **Eurasian Bittern** and **Bearded Reedling**, but it also abounds with a great variety of other bird species. Although the famed **Eurasian Golden Orioles** have not bred in the Black Poplar woodlands at the site for a few years, there is still the occasional sighting, so a return to breeding in the area could be on the cards in the near future, we hope. Plenty of other great birds can be found in the reserve, and large numbers of **Eurasian Hobby** and a small number **Common Crane** may also be on the birding menu. **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Common Cuckoo**, **European Turtle Dove**, **Great Egret**, **Common Kingfisher**, **Water Rail** and many other species might also be seen depending on what time of year you join this trip (we can run this tour any time by request). We can easily spend a full day here at fabulous Lakenheath, but we usually do combine this reserve with a bit of time in the Brecks.



*Eurasian Hobby occurs in good numbers in RSPB Lakenheath Fen Nature Reserve.*

Both of these day tour options in Suffolk offer some excellent scarce or even rare UK birds, but there are numerous common birds likely to be seen too, and we've prepared three blog posts on the common [garden](#), [farmland and woodland](#), and [wetland and coastal](#) birds that you might find interesting and useful in your preparation of a birding trip in the UK. We also of course offer [full-length British birding tours](#) such as our [England in winter birding tour](#) and our [spring birding tour encompassing the best of Scotland and England](#).

### Our Suffolk birding day tour prices and how these day trips work

We run these Suffolk (and [Norfolk](#)) guided birding day trips any time, by request, and we can slow down the pace if you prefer a birding photographic tour rather than a classic birding tour. If you e-mail us (at [info@birdingecotours.com](mailto:info@birdingecotours.com)) you can just arrange whatever focus or exact trip you prefer for the day. Perhaps you have a target wish-list you can send us and we will let you know the likelihood of finding each species.

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| <b>Duration:</b>   | 1 day                                |
| <b>Group Size:</b> | 1 - 8                                |
| <b>Dates:</b>      | Year-round                           |
| <b>Price:</b>      | £300, plus £50 per additional person |

#### Price includes:

Guiding fees

#### Price excludes:

Transport  
Lunch  
Items of a personal nature  
Entrance fees  
Gratuities (*please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#)*)

#### Important Covid-19 considerations:

Our general comments and considerations on Covid-19 and the running of tours can be found on our frequently updated blog [here](#). Please carefully read the latest update and please also read our day tour Covid-19 protocol provided [here](#).