



**UNITED KINGDOM BIRDING TOUR:
ENGLAND IN SPRING**

17 – 27 MAY 2026

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Atlantic Puffin is one of our spectacular targets on this trip.

This small-group birding tour of eastern England starts in the south in the capital London, then travels north via some of the best birdwatching areas of the UK, such as Norfolk and North Yorkshire, until we get to beautiful Northumberland just south of the Scottish border. From here, it is a short journey to Edinburgh in southern Scotland, from where you can either join our Scottish birding tour or fly home. Spring is the best time to look for European breeding birds in England, and our tour is timed during the peak of the spring migration and when breeding will be well underway.

Some of the key targets on this England in spring tour include the UK endemic **Red Grouse**, getting amazing close views of seabirds like the charismatic **Atlantic Puffin**, and seeing iconic species such as **Black Grouse**, **European Nightjar**, **Eurasian Stone-curlew**, **Pied Avocet**, **Common Kingfisher**, **European Robin**, **Common Nightingale**, and **Bearded Reedling** (Bearded Tit). During this tour we will look for a number of scarce, or very local breeding species in England like **Garganey**, **Common Crane**, **Eurasian Woodcock**, **Purple Sandpiper**, **Little Tern**, **Mediterranean Gull**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Red Kite**, **Short-eared Owl**, and **Eurasian Hobby**. While traveling through eastern England, we will enjoy repeat views of many resident and common bird species (which are spectacular to the visiting birdwatcher or bird photographer), such as **Common Wood Pigeon**, **Northern Lapwing**, **European Green Woodpecker**, **Eurasian Blue**, **Great and Long-tailed Tits**, **European Nuthatch**, **European Goldfinch**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, and **Yellowhammer**. We have put together a detailed "Common Birds of the UK" blog series presenting a photographic look at the common garden, farmland and woodland, and wetland and coastal birds of the United Kingdom, many of these species are possible on this tour. These common resident species will also add great value to our tour and are sure to delight.



Eurasian Blue Tit, gorgeous and abundant in the United Kingdom.

England is home to a number of brilliant nature reserves that offer easy access to the country's wildlife, and we make use of these throughout the tour. Starting in Norfolk, we visit excellent wetland and coastal reserves in search of species like **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Red Knot**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Ruff**, **Eurasian Bittern**, **Cetti's** and **Dartford Warblers**. Traveling inland, we explore the Brecks, a unique region of sandy heath and pine forest that spans parts of Norfolk and Suffolk. Here we will look for **Eurasian Stone-curlew**, **Eurasian Goshawk**, **Eurasian Hobby**, **Woodlark**, **Common Firecrest**, and (with luck) **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, among others.

We then travel north to the beautiful Roman city of York, where much of our birding takes place in the grasslands, moorlands, and woodlands of the Vale (a large valley) of York. We will look for the now rare **European Turtle Dove**, along with **Grey Partridge**, **Willow Tit** and **Black Grouse**, amongst many others. We visit the famous Bempton Cliffs Nature Reserve, part of the dramatic Yorkshire coastline. These towering chalk cliffs are home to thousands of breeding seabirds, including **Black-legged Kittiwake**, **Northern Fulmar**, and **Northern Gannet**. During our time in Yorkshire, we will search for nocturnal species such as **European Nightjar** and **Tawny Owl**. We finish the tour in Northumberland with a boat trip to the Farne Islands, where we expect close views of the characterful **Atlantic Puffin** and many other seabirds, before enjoying some final coastal birding on the way to Edinburgh, Scotland, where the tour ends.



Red Grouse was recently split from the widespread *Willow Ptarmigan* and is a UK endemic.

As this England bird watching tour will take place during the spring passage period, we could be interrupted by a scarce migrant such as **European Bee-eater**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Icterine Warbler**, or something altogether much rarer. Spring rarities in the United Kingdom can come from far-flung places such as the United States of America, the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, or Siberia, so almost any migratory species could be on the cards! This tour can be combined with our Scotland birding tour immediately after this England trip.

Itinerary (11 days/10 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in London and transfer to a hotel near the airport

After your arrival in London (Heathrow) you will transfer to our hotel and gather for our group evening welcome meal together. If you would like to explore the many tourist attractions of the city of London (Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, Kew Gardens, Natural History Museum, etc.) please organize an early arrival into England as we will not be ending the tour in London.

Overnight: Heathrow Airport area, London

Day 2. Transfer to Norfolk

We will leave the Heathrow area after breakfast and will commence our journey to central Norfolk, our base for the next four nights. Birding near London may get our lists going with some of the many exotic, feral species present in the United Kingdom, such as **Egyptian Goose**, **Mandarin Duck**, or **Rose-ringed Parakeet**. We will also likely see the first of the common species that we should get to know very well over the course of our birding tour, such as **Common Wood Pigeon**, **Eurasian Magpie**, **Eurasian Blue** and **Great Tits**, **European Robin**, and **European Goldfinch**. On arrival in Norfolk, we will likely get our birding underway at one of the many nearby birding sites described below.

Overnight: Norwich



European Robin is a common and attractive garden bird in the UK, and we will likely see it on most days of the tour.

Days 3 - 5. Norfolk and Suffolk birding

We will spend three full days at a selection of Norfolk birding sites and in adjacent counties (especially Suffolk) as we explore East Anglia, one of the best birding areas in the whole of the UK. East Anglia is great for a number of restricted-range breeding birds and has a fantastic reputation for spring passage migrants and rarities. Some of the coastal and inland reserves we can visit during our time in the area include Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Titchwell Marsh, RSPB Lakenheath Fen reserve, and Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) Cley Marshes, amongst others. We will visit vast areas of saltmarshes, freshwater marshes, inland and coastal wetlands, and estuaries that could be teeming with passage shorebirds changing color into their gorgeous breeding plumage as they head north. Some of these include **Common Ringed Plover**, **European Golden Plover**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Dunlin**, **Curlew Sandpiper**, and **Temminck's Stint**, as well as several raptors such as **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Red Kite**, and **Eurasian Goshawk**.

The water and its surrounding edge habitat are likely to hold a wide array of breeding ducks such as **Common Shelduck**, **Tufted Duck**, and **Garganey**, along with a mix of wading birds like **Pied Avocet**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Eurasian Bittern**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Little Egret**, **Grey Heron**, and **Water Rail**. **Bearded Reedling** (Bearded Tit), **Sedge**, and **Common Reed Warblers** can be found in reedbeds, and scrubland may support the prized **Common Nightingale**, **Cetti's**, and **Dartford Warblers**.



Pied Avocet is a striking bird.

We will spend some time inland in the unique sandy heath and pine forests of the Brecks. Here we will be on the lookout for breeding **Common Crane**, **Eurasian Bittern**, **Little Egret**, **Water Rail**, **Eurasian Goshawk**, **Little Owl**, **Eurasian Stone-curlew**, **Common Kingfisher**, **Eurasian Hobby**, **European Green Woodpecker**, **Woodlark**, **Common Firecrest**, **Western Yellow** and

White Wagtails (Pied Wagtail), **Red Crossbill**, and hopefully **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, which is unfortunately now rare throughout the UK. The above is just a small selection of the birds we may encounter and the places we will visit during our time in Norfolk.

Overnight: Norwich (three nights)



Eurasian Hobby will be a target in the Brecks.

Day 6. Transfer between Norfolk and the city of York

This will be a travel day as we move between Norfolk and the city of York after our final early-morning birding session in the area. York will be our base for the next three nights as we spend time birding across Yorkshire. York, the former Roman capital of the north of England, is a walled city and has some very impressive buildings, none more so than York Minster, although Clifford's Tower and 'the Shambles' (an ancient street) also take some beating. We will have some time to see these areas while we are in the city. One evening while in York, we will search for a range of crepuscular and nocturnal species, such as **European Nightjar**, **Eurasian Woodcock**, **Western Barn**, **Tawny**, **Little** and, with luck, **Long-eared Owls**, not far from the city itself.

Overnight: York

Days 7 - 8. Yorkshire birding

We will spend two full days birding in North Yorkshire, and the East Riding of Yorkshire, focusing on the farmed landscape of the Vale of York and the surrounding chalk hills of the Yorkshire Wolds. This patchwork of arable and pastoral farmland with many areas managed specially for flora and fauna, interspersed with woodland and 'common land' (shared land) forms an incredibly

important mosaic of habitats. Here we may find **European Turtle Dove**, which is now, regrettably, a rare breeding bird in the country.

Species we will search for around the city of York include **Red-legged**, and **Grey Partridges**, **Common Pheasant**, **Common Swift**, **Common Cuckoo**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Red Kite**, **Common Buzzard**, **Western Barn Owl**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Eurasian Whimbrel**, **Common Redshank**, **Common Snipe**, **Common Kestrel**, **Eurasian Hobby**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Rook**, **Western Jackdaw**, **Carriion Crow**, **Eurasian Skylark**, **Common House and Sand Martins**, **Marsh and Willow Tits**, **Goldcrest**, **Common and Lesser Whitethroat**, **Dunnock**, **Song and Mistle Thrushes**, **Common Blackbird**, **Eurasian Tree Sparrow**, **Common Linnet**, **European Goldfinch**, **Common Chaffinch**, **Corn and Common Reed Bunting**, and **Yellowhammer**.



Lesser Whitethroat, one of the many migrant passerines we will look for around York.

Part of the farmland in the Vale of York forms a seasonally flooded wetland and, depending on water levels, we will look for species such as **Garganey**, **Ruff**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Common Tern**, and rarities like **Common Quail**, **Black-necked Grebe**, **Black Tern**, **Spotted and Corn Crakes**.

Moving further from the city of York, one of the must-see sites on the Yorkshire Coast is **Bempton Cliffs RSPB reserve**. These towering sea cliffs will be packed with returning breeding seabirds, including **Common Murre** (Common Guillemot), **Razorbill**, **European Shag**, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, **Northern Fulmar**, and **Northern Gannet**. We may also have our first chance to see the gorgeous and charismatic **Atlantic Puffin**, while **Great Skua**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **European**

Herring, Great Black-backed, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls will likely be seen patrolling the sea cliffs in search of an easy meal.



*Bempton Cliffs RSPB reserve is home to a large nesting colony of **Northern Gannet**, and great eye-level views will be possible as they fly onto and off the cliffs.*

While we are at the coast we will keep an eye out for passage migrants, as anything could turn up at this time of year, from **White Stork** to **Eurasian Hoopoe** to **Eurasian Wryneck**. Although none are necessarily to be expected, our tour coincides with the peak of spring migration and this area has a strong track record of rare birds turning up! More likely migrants include the exciting British woodland trio of **Wood Warbler**, **Common Redstart**, and **European Pied Flycatcher**. We will probably also visit the rarity hotspots of Flamborough Head or Spurn Point, though the exact locations will depend on the weather and rarity forecast.

The moorland in Yorkshire is also known for its excellent birding, and here, as well as in the nearby dales and Wolds (chalk hills), we will search for species such as **Black** and **Red Grouse**, **Eurasian Dotterel**, **European Golden Plover**, **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Merlin**, **Common Grasshopper** and **Garden Warblers**, **Eurasian Blackcap**, **Whinchat**, **European Stonechat**, **Ring Ouzel**, **Tree Pipit**, and **Redpoll**. Woodland bordering the moorland may hold a wide range of migrant and resident breeders including **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Wood** and **Willow Warblers**, **Common Redstart**, **European Pied** and **Spotted Flycatchers**.

Overnight: York (two nights)



European Golden Plover will be moving onto the moorland to start breeding.



Common Linnet is an attractive species that can be found on this tour.

Day 9. Transfer between Yorkshire and Northumberland

This will be a travel day as we move between York and our next base near Alnwick, in Northumberland. We will make a couple of stops along the way (there are a lot of great options) depending on what we've seen over the past couple of days.

Overnight: Alnwick

Day 10. Northumberland Coast

We will spend the day birding in Northumberland, visiting the spectacular Farne Islands. The seabird nesting colony here will likely be a highlight of the tour, with close views of breeding **Atlantic Puffin**, **Common Murre** (Common Guillemot), **Razorbill**, **European Shag**, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, and **Northern Fulmar**, as well as **Common**, **Sandwich**, **Roseate**, **Little**, and **Arctic Terns**, which will allow excellent photography opportunities. **Common Eider**, **Purple Sandpiper**, and **Ruddy Turnstone** are found around the rocky shores of the islands, with the shorebirds coming into breeding plumage.

Overnight: Alnwick



*We should have excellent photographic opportunities for **Purple Sandpiper** in Northumberland.*

Day 11. Northumberland to Edinburgh, and tour conclusion

Today is mostly a travel day as we leave England and drive to Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland. If tidal conditions allow, we may stop at Holy Island, where the mudflats often have an interesting mix of shorebirds such as **Grey Plover**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Red Knot**, and **Sanderling**. The tour will conclude at midday on arrival at Edinburgh airport. However, those interested in continuing

birding across the United Kingdom will continue on our Highlands and Islands of Scotland in Spring tour.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Duration: 11 days
Group Size: 4 - 6
Dates: 17 - 27 May 2026
17 - 27 May 2027
Start: Heathrow Airport, London, England
End: Edinburgh Airport, Edinburgh, Scotland
Prices: GBP£4,970 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2026)
GBP£5,260 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2027)
Single Supplements: GBP£800 (2026)
GBP£840 (2027)

Price includes:

Expert tour leader
Meals (from evening meal on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 11)
Accommodation based on two sharing (Day 1 to Day 10, as shown)
Guiding fees
All entrance fees to parks, nature reserves, bird blinds/hides, etc.
All land and boat based transport while on tour
Airport transfer at beginning of tour (organized by hotel at Heathrow Airport, London)
Airport drop off at end of the tour (we will drop you off at Edinburgh Airport when the tour ends)
Tolls

Price excludes:

Flights (arrival to Heathrow, departure from Edinburgh)
Airport transfers if you arrive before the tour starts or departs after the tour ends
Visas if required
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.

Alcoholic, soft drinks, teas, coffees etc. unless provided as part of a meal package (e.g. with breakfast)

Water (tap water in the UK is fine for drinking so we do not provide bottled water on this tour)

Personal insurance

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))