



Norfolk, April 2027 Itinerary



Day One - Friday 23rd April 2027

Meeting time: 9:00am

Meeting Place: Meet at **RSPB Frampton Marsh, Roads Farmhouse, Frampton Road, Boston PE20 1AY**. Car parking charges apply; RSPB members are free. Toilets and café on site.

Frampton Marsh has become one of the RSPB's flagship reserves in the East, developing from wet grassland into an array of pools, reedbeds and scrub. Bordered by intense arable farmland inland the reserve is separated from the saltmarsh on the other side, and the vast area of mudflats that are The Wash by a raised sea wall which provides excellent views across the reserve and the saltmarsh. From the sea wall visitors can view the hundreds of **Brent Geese** and **Wigeon** that over winter here and on the adjacent wet grassland, as well as picking out plenty of wading birds such as **Curlew**, **Redshank** and **Snipe** that feed along the muddy channels that cross the saltmarsh. Often hunting in daylight **Short Eared Owls** can be seen and **Marsh Harriers** are regular visitors hunting the **Meadow pipits** and **Skylarks** that spend the winter months here on the coast. A flash of a **Merlin** or **Peregrine** is not unusual.

We will spend the whole day at the reserve, breaking for lunch whether a packed lunch or a hot meal in the café. Paths around the reserve are mostly graveled except the grass along the sea bank, and are very rarely too muddy or wet. Atop the bank can be very exposed but there are a number of hides for shelter if the conditions deteriorate. From the hides, a variety of waders such as **Black Tailed Godwit**, **Avocet**, **Ruff** and **Redshank** can be seen and there's the possibility of catching **Little Ringed Plover** and **Spotted Redshank** using the muddy pools to refuel as they move north to breed. At this time of year, summer migrants such as **Common Terns** and **Sedge Warblers** should have arrived, ready for breeding at Frampton. Depending on the conditions and birds sighting we will either head to RSPB Freiston Shore, a short drive of 25 minutes or take a longer walk around the hedgerows of Frampton in the afternoon to look out for **Stonechat**, Reed **Bunting**, **Yellowhammer**, **Tree Sparrow** and perhaps some newly arrived warblers.

We will aim to finish our day at around 4.30pm leaving plenty of time for people to head to their accommodation and dinner for the evening.

Day Two & Three – Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th April

Meeting time 8:00am

Early starts & packed lunch needed on both days. Refreshments and toilets available at lunchtime on both days.

Staying in the area around the Heathland and Brecklands of south west Norfolk gives us a range of opportunities to visit a selection of habitats.

Meeting Place: Depending on weather conditions and daily sightings we will visit either **Weeting Heath (postcode IP27 0FD What3words is streamers.foru.skid) OR Maid's Cross nature reserve** (Maids Cross Hill, Lakenheath, Brandon IP27 9EJ) first thing, meeting in the car park at both locations for an early start.

Weeting Heath is an area on the edge of the Norfolk Brecklands and the site of breeding **Stone Curlew**, a fascinating summer inland wader which uses this small reserve and its managed grasslands to breed. Fantastic views can be seen from both hides and if we don't also catch a sight of **Woodlark** on this grassland then a stroll through the woodland and up the opposite hillside should prove successful, with a chance of **Crossbill** and **Tree Pipit** along the way. Heading from Weeting Heath it is only a short drive to the RSPB Lakenheath (Station Rd, Lakenheath, Brandon, Thetford IP27 9AD) where we will spend the rest of the day. There are toilets and a small kiosk for hot drinks in the centre. Car park fee applies, free for RSPB members. Lakenheath reserve is THE place to visit to have an encounter with **Bitterns** as last year over 15 booming males were heard across the reserve and we are visiting at peak booming season when males compete for a partner, often seen flying as males chase each other in defence of their territories. The reedbeds are extensive and are home not only to Bitterns but also a breeding site for **Common Cranes** which could fly overhead at any time, coming in from nearby farmland where they feed. As well as reedbeds there is also woodland and the reserve is bordered by the River Little Ouse where **Garganey** is a possibility and recently arrived **Hobby** and **Cuckoo** should be seen, if not heard.

Maids' Cross nature reserve is a total hidden gem. Found on the edge of Brandon it is a great site for one of the loveliest songbirds of them all, the **Nightingale**. Meeting early will give us the best chance to experience the beautiful song as males project their voices from the depths of dense scrub and thicket. The songs of **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Common Whitethroat**, **Blackcap** and **Willow warbler** may not compete with the Nightingales's melody but worth seeing all the same and like all summer migrants on our trip, filling the morning air with their territorial songs. Heading from Maid's Cross we will then visit the more established woodland that makes up Lynford Arboretum (Lynford Road, Thetford, IP26 5HW what3words: canal.played.herb). Car parking charges apply; toilets are available. An area of mixed woodland with several walking trails we are visiting at the ideal time for spring flowers and common woodland birds such as **Nuthatch**, **Treecreeper** and **Great Spotted Woodpecker**. **Firecrests** and **Hawfinches** are the speciality species that we will be looking for, heading to several of the open spaces where Hawfinches are attracted to magnificent Yew and Hornbeam trees, whereas Firecrests can regularly be spotted in the conifers around the car park. The Shepherd's Baa café offers a

good choice of refreshments and maybe our last fuel stop of the day unless we decide we have time for a short walk along the river at Stanton Downham where **Mandarin duck** and **Kingfisher** should be present and if the water levels are low then **Grey Wagtail** should be seen. This area is one of the last remaining breeding sites for the very rare **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** in the UK but over recent years the chances of seeing or hearing one has greatly reduced.

We will aim to finish the day around 4.30pm to allow people to head back to their accommodation or to start on their journey home.

Important Contact Details:

Your YCN guide: Margaret Boyd Leader: mobile 07513 438314

What's Included:

- Expert guiding in a small group
- Use of binoculars (if required) and scope shared between the group
- Field Guides used on the trip

What to bring each day:

- Packed lunch and drink/s
- Binoculars
- Telescope if you have one but your guide will have a scope which the group can share
- Stout boots/outdoor footwear
- Waterproofs and warm clothing

Please note: Yorkshire Coast Nature reserve the right to change any part of the tour at short notice due to weather conditions, reserve closures or bird information which would increase the enjoyment of the tour.

Please be aware these days include leisurely walking on ground which may be rough at times. Your guide will tailor the walking routes to the group abilities. Expect to walk a total of 5 or 6 miles during the day.