

Norfolk Broads

BRITAIN'S WETLAND WILDERNESS

LIMOSA | TOUR INFO PACK



Grasshopper Warblers can be heard reeling in the Broads throughout the spring and summer months © Brian Small, Limosa

- 2019** **Spring: Monday 20th - Thursday 23rd May (4 days)**
 Summer: Monday 1st - Thursday 4th July (4 days)
- 2020** **Spring: Monday 18th - Thursday 21st May (4 days)**
 Small group tour with Gary Elton (May) & Brian Small (July)

Protected from the sea by a barrier of low dunes that provide a welcome landfall for migrant birds, the Norfolk Broads are at their loveliest in spring and summer - and home to rare breeding birds such as Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Common Crane and Bearded Tit. On our May tour, the birds will be singing, waders will be moving north, Hobbies hunt for hirundines and the first Swallowtail butterflies should be emerging. In July, waders will be returning south again, Nightjars are churring, Swallowtails are still on the wing and the first Purple Hairstreaks should be out. Based in comfort at award winning farm barn accommodation close to the east Norfolk coast - and within easy access of the best wildlife spots.

- Choice of spring and summer tours in the beautiful Norfolk Broads
- Get to grips with some of Britain's rarest wetland species
- Bittern, Little Egret, Crane, Hobby, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, Common & Little Terns
- Barn Owl, Nightjar, Cetti's and Grasshopper Warblers, Bearded Tit
- Swallowtail, Purple Hairstreak, Dark Green Fritillary and Norfolk Hawker (according to season)
- Boat trip on Hickling Broad for breeding birds, butterflies and passage waders
- Small group tour led by Limosa's own Norfolk experts, Gary Elton and Brian Small

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- 3 nights at award-winning converted farm barn accommodation 'twixt Hickling and the coast
- All main meals - farmhouse breakfasts, dinners and packed lunches
- Minibus transport
- Boat trip on Hickling Broad
- All excursions, reserve entry fees, tour based tips and taxes
- Free pick-up and drop off at Norwich Station for rail travellers

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Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** Evening arrival for dinner at our comfortable guesthouse close to the coast. Hickling (3 nts)
- Days 2-3:** Two full days of birdwatching in the Norfolk Broads and along the east Norfolk coast
- Day 4:** Boat trip on Hickling Broad and picnic lunch. Return to our hotel at 2.30pm for farewells and departure for home. ^{*1}

**1 Option to stay an extra night before or after the break may be available at extra cost for those that want to extend their stay in the Broads, or to allow time for a more leisurely journey home after breakfast at the hotel the next morning. Please ask for a quote and availability at time of booking.*

Tour Overview

Encompassing an area of some 300 sq. km, the Norfolk Broads are the UK's largest protected wetland and a National Park in all but name. Despite their natural appearance the Broads are actually man-made, evolving over centuries from medieval peat diggings that subsequently flooded to form shallow lakes. Today this vast patchwork of rivers, meres, marshes, reed beds, meadows and wooded fens is outstanding for wildlife of all kinds - and a haven for many of Britain's rarest wetland animals and plants.

Lying close to Norfolk's tranquil east coast, the immense watery wilderness of Hickling, Horsey and Martham Broads is a 'must' to visit during the spring and summer months. Marsh Harriers are plentiful in the marshes and seldom out of sight for long; Bearded Reedlings 'ping' in the reedbeds; and Cetti's Warblers shout at passing birdwatchers from watery thickets. Barn Owls are perhaps nowhere more numerous in the UK than here - and there is a small but increasing population of Common Cranes to watch for!

The scrub-covered dunes that protect the low-lying coast are well worth investigating, too. Nightjar, Hobby and Stonechat breed and this

underwatched stretch of Norfolk's coastline is always worth checking for migrant birds. While not far to the south, the tidal waters of Breydon Water are an important rest and refuelling stop for resident, wintering and passage waders.

Much of Broadland lies well off the beaten birding track and we may find ourselves exploring one or two less well-known spots - perhaps the recently created wetland at Potter Heigham or the valley of the River Ant, where quiet boardwalks weave through swampy alder carr and tucked away footpaths offer a chance to peek over hidden marshes and lakes. Bitterns should be 'booming' in May and busy feeding young in July, while Little Egrets have a habit of popping up just about everywhere and Great Egrets were seen on both our spring and summer tours in 2018. Mammals to watch out for include Muntjac, Chinese Water Deer and Otter.

One special highlight of both our spring and summer tours to the Broads is our visit to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve at Hickling Broad. Marsh Harriers and Common Cranes are regularly seen - and few sights or sounds are more thrilling than watching these enormous grey birds flying low over the marshes, bugling as they go! We'll also enjoy a delightful boat trip out onto Hickling Broad, giving access to hides that are otherwise impossible to reach and overlooking pools that are attractive to waders and waterfowl on spring and summer passage.

On our late May tour, the first Swallowtails - Britain's largest and most spectacular butterfly, as well as one of its rarest and most localised - should be emerging and we'll watch for them flying strongly over the fresh green reedbeds. With Cuckoos calling, there'll also be plenty of bird song to enjoy in the marshes. We'll help you to distinguish between the similar songs of Reed and Sedge Warblers, Blackcap and Garden Warbler, and have good chances of seeing and hearing the skulking Grasshopper Warbler, too.

Our early July tour can be a terrific time to see Bitterns, now busy ferrying food to their young in the reedbeds. We'll look for Little Terns at the coast and passage waders already making their way back south at this time include Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper, Greenshank and

Spotted Redshank. Perhaps surprisingly, not all bird song is over - Nightjars and Grasshopper Warblers sing well into July and fine summer evenings offer chances to see and hear both. First brood Swallowtails, Dark Green Fritillaries and the scarce Norfolk Hawker dragonfly should all be about, and the first Purple Hairstreaks should also be emerging in the oak woodland.

Our tours are based at award-winning converted farm barn accommodation near Hickling, where a warm welcome and delicious home-cooked farmhouse breakfast and dinners are assured - and all within a few minutes drive of key birding spots on both the east Norfolk coast and Broads.

Whether you are new to birdwatching or more experienced, our guide will be on hand to take you to the best spots and ensure you have as much fun as possible whilst enjoying seeing lots of great birds and wildlife. Limosa has been operating birding tours in Norfolk for 34 years now. Take your pick of our May and July departures - and let us show you the beauty, bounty and birdlife of the Norfolk Broads!

Daily Itinerary

Our birdwatching tours to the **Norfolk Broads** commence with arrival at Dairy Barns Hickling on the Monday evening, where we meet at around 7.00pm for an informal get-together prior to enjoying dinner. Tuesday and Wednesday provide two full days in the field, with packed lunches and flasks of tea and coffee available on demand. We return to the hotel each evening in time for dinner. After spending the best part of our final day (Thursday) in the field, the break concludes back at Dairy Barns around 2.30pm for farewells and departure for home.

Our hotel is perfectly placed for getting about the Broads, lying within just a couple of minutes drive of the coast and major wetland sites such as Hickling and Horsey, and with easy access to the Yare Valley and Breydon Water to the south. A maze of minor roads gives access to some of the Broads' quieter backwaters and during our stay we may explore one or two tucked away spots that, even today, remain largely undiscovered by visiting birders.

As with all our Norfolk breaks, we may vary the below itinerary to take best advantage of the weather, local conditions and what birds and other wildlife are about at the time of your visit.

Limosa has been operating birding tours in Norfolk for 34 years. While we can't promise you a 'rarity' on every trip - highlights over our last three Broads tours include Spoonbill, Great Egret, Black-winged Stilt, Little Gull and Savi's Warbler - one thing's for certain: whenever you come and whatever we do, in Norfolk there will always be excitement and plenty to see!

Day 1

ARRIVAL AT HICKLING

Our birdwatching tours to the Norfolk Broads begin with an evening rendezvous at our converted farm barn accommodation near the village of Hickling, close to Norfolk's east coast. We gather for an informal get-together at 7.00pm, followed by dinner. *Night Hickling*

Days 2 – 3

BRITAIN'S WETLAND WILDERNESS: THE EAST NORFOLK BROADS & COAST

Occupying a vast swathe of low-lying land between Norwich and Norfolk's east coast, the Broads comprise Britain's largest and most important protected wetland area. Its landscape of windmills, winding rivers, wetlands and waving reeds, mixed with wet woodlands, grazing marshes and arable fields is unique. The whole creates a mosaic of wonderful habitats that are exceptionally rich in wildlife, with everything from Cranes and Cetti's Warblers to Swallowtails and Chinese Water Deer.

To make best use of our time, our spring and summer tours focus on the area of Broadland that lies to the northeast of Norwich, along the valleys of the rivers Bure, Thurne and Ant, and south to Breydon Water on the River Yare, which exits into the sea at Great Yarmouth.

There's no shortage of places to explore! Within this immense, low-lying basin are to be found some of the UK's rarest breeding birds: Bittern, Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, Bearded Tit and the vociferous but 'oh-so-difficult-to-see' Cetti's Warbler are resident and Barn Owls are

perhaps more numerous here than anywhere else in the UK. Norfolk's small but slowly expanding population of Common Cranes has its main home here, too - although for all their size, the great grey birds can often prove elusive!

Great Crested and Little Grebes, Teal, Shoveler, Gadwall and Garganey are among many species of waterfowl to nest locally. In May, we should hear the Cuckoo calling, the reedbeds are alive with the songs of Reed and Sedge Warblers, and there are Whitethroats and Lesser Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Garden Warblers, Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs to listen for, too. While a late May visit is best for bird song, Grasshopper and Cetti's Warblers are among a surprising number of species that continue singing well into July.

Both May and July are good months to see the energetic Hobby hawking over the marshes, chasing down the abundance of Swifts, Swallows, martins and dragonflies on which it preys. Both periods can be excellent for passage waders - heading north to their breeding grounds in May and returning south again to their winter quarters in July. If we are lucky to catch a rising tide at Breydon Water, we'll find that shorebirds are forced off the expansive mudflats to roost within comfortable range. The beaches nearby often hold one or two Mediterranean Gulls.

Britain's largest and most spectacular butterfly, the Swallowtail, emerges in late May and we'll watch for them flying strongly over the reeds. This first brood remains on the wing in Norfolk until mid-July, so we should also see them then (if the weather is fine, of course). Our July tour adds the prospect of the localised Dark Green Fritillary at the coast and the season's first Purple Hairstreaks should also be emerging now - we'll look down on them from a sturdy viewing platform in the tree tops beside Hickling Broad. The tower is easily ascended via a steel staircase and - even if the butterflies don't oblige - it's well worth climbing up for the bird's eye views across the marshes from the top are unrivalled.

Both trips can be good for dragonflies, but if it's the scarce Norfolk Hawker you're after, July is perhaps the more reliable month to come. With its clear wings, green eyes and yellow triangle on the body helping to separate it from the more

common Brown Hawker, East Anglia is the only part of the UK where this localised speciality occurs.

As dusk falls over Hickling and Horsey Mere, Chinese Water Deer emerge from their daytime hideaways to graze in the fields and Barn Owls drift silently back and forth across the marshes. An unexpected treat for participants on our July 2018 tour was seeing Barn Owl chicks being ringed at Limosa HQ!

While there's plenty to occupy us within the Broads, the east Norfolk coast also lies within a few minutes drive of where we stay. The scrub-covered dunes that protect its low-lying shores from Waxham south to Winterton are attractive to migrants and have a long history of turning up rare and unusual birds. Stonechats and Meadow Pipits nest in the dunes and we'll pay an evening visit here to look and listen for Nightjars, which also breed. Sandwich, Common and Little Terns fish along the shore, and seabirds passing might include Gannet. *Nights Hickling*

Day 4 HICKLING BROAD BOAT TRIP ^{*1}

A special highlight of our May and July tours will be a boat trip this morning on to Hickling Broad, largest of Norfolk's broads, to visit the hides overlooking Swim Coots and Rush Hills scrape. Hemmed by reeds, these large shallow lagoons are attractive to passage waders in May and July. Avocets, Lapwings and Common Terns nest, one or two Garganey are often about and passage waders regularly include Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Whimbrel and Little Stint. Scarcities such as Spoonbill and Little Gull also drop in from time to time - and a couple of our groups have been lucky to see Otter here!

After enjoying a final picnic lunch at Hickling, our break concludes with a return to nearby Dairy Barns at around 2.30pm this afternoon, for farewells and journeys home.

**1 Please note the boat trip is subject to weather and availability, and may be rescheduled to run on a different day of our tour.*

Trip Information

Group Size Max of 8 participants & 1 leader

What To Expect Led by Limosa's friendly expert guides, our Norfolk holidays are suitable for birdwatchers of all levels of ability, interest and experience. Just bring your bins and enthusiasm for birds - we'll do the rest!

Birds 90-110 species

Mammals We usually see 5-10 species

Accommodation 3 nights accommodation in Norfolk at the award-winning converted Dairy Barns, on a working farm betwixt the sleepy village of Hickling and the east Norfolk coast close by. Beautifully converted to provide warm and comfortable accommodation, and with good old-fashioned farmhouse breakfasts and evening meals to look forward to. All rooms *en suite*.

Meals All main meals are included in the price, commencing with dinner on arrival at the hotel on the evening of Day 1 and concluding with a packed lunch on Day 4. Excellent farmhouse breakfasts and dinners, while lunches will be picnics to make the most of our time in the field.

Walking Easy. Short walks (1-4 miles) at a gentle pace over mostly flat terrain. Sturdy trainers will suffice if the weather is dry; if not, wear comfortable waterproof walking shoes or boots. [Wellies recommended in wet weather, and can be handy first thing when the long grass along paths can be wet with dew first thing.]

Weather The UK climate is famous for its unpredictability. In Norfolk, temperatures in May average 8-16C (46-61F); July is warmer 11-20C (52-64F). It can feel cooler near the coast when an onshore breeze is blowing. Norfolk is one of the driest parts of the UK, but some rainfall is of course possible at any season so do bring rainwear just in case.

Ground Transport Excursions by minibus

Boat Trips Our tour price includes the cost of reserve entry fee and a 2-3 hour boat trip at Hickling Broad NWT Reserve, visiting private hides with an experienced naturalist boatman.

How To Get There

Participants arriving in Norfolk **by car** will be sent a map and joining instructions to find Dairy Barns, Hickling. We meet for an informal get-together at around 7.00pm on the first evening.

For those without their own transport, **we pick up at Norwich railway station at approx 4.45-5.00pm on the Monday** afternoon (most routes arrive into Norwich just ahead of this time), and are able to drop off there again by about 4.00pm on the Thursday evening. *There is no extra cost for pick-up and drop-off as outlined above.*

Please note: if you intend to travel by rail and wish to spend an extra night or two at the hotel before or after the tour, we are unable to offer return transport to/from the station. Instead, it will be necessary for you to arrange a taxi from Norwich to Hickling or vice versa (a distance of approx. 20 miles) or to the nearest branch line at Wroxham (approx. 12 miles).

Tour Cost ^{*1}

May / July 2019 tours (4 days):

£625 from Hickling (or Norwich)

Deposit: £150

Single Supp: £65

Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- 3 nights accommodation in Norfolk
- All main meals (from dinner on evening of Day 1 through to packed lunch on Day 4)
- Minibus transport
- Hickling Broad boat trip
- Entry fees at reserves, tour based tips & taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds
- Pick up/drop off at Norwich railway station as above, if required.

Cost excludes

Insurance, drinks & other items of a personal nature.

^{*1} **2019 tour costs shown. Please note costs for our 2020 tour TBA (available summer 2019)**

About Your Guides

Gary Elton Gary is a principal Limosa guide who lives in Norfolk, where he divides his time between guiding for Limosa and working at Holme Bird Observatory, on the Norfolk coast. A former Herts Bird Club committee member and warden of a local nature reserve in north London (where he lived and birded for over 35 years), he is a qualified ringer with a particular fascination for studying bird migration in the eastern Mediterranean. In addition to leading most of Limosa's Norfolk breaks over the past 10 years, Gary's growing repertoire of overseas destinations includes Greece, Spain, Iceland, Sri Lanka, Gambia, Borneo, Florida, Mexico and Panama. He often joins our guided *BirdWalks* in Norfolk and regularly pops up on TV wildlife programmes, having featured on everything from *Springwatch* to *Bill Bailey's Birdwatching Bonanza*. Gary is great fun and his enthusiasm for birdwatching is infectious. He rates Norfolk as one of his all-time favourite places to watch birds - and you rate him as one of Limosa's most popular guides!

Brian Small Brian lives in Suffolk with his wife and their teenage son. A teacher for 11 years, since 2013 he has worked full time for Limosa, guiding tours and as Operations and Media Manager in the Limosa office. Brian has travelled around the globe and is the inspiration behind a growing number of *Limosa* tours, including those to Switzerland, Georgia, China, Borneo, Argentina and Brazil. He regularly leads our guided *BirdWalks* in Norfolk and Suffolk, too. A widely acclaimed bird artist, his current projects include work on a major new guide to birds in southern Brazil. At home he likes to concentrate on working his local patch on the Suffolk coast, searching especially for migrants and gulls. Brimming with infectious enthusiasm, Brian has been guiding tours for Limosa since 2002 and Norfolk has been one of his favourite destinations since childhood.

Financial Security

Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold

an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays' insolvency. Our ATOL licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as 'Land Only', all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For details please see our brochure or website: <http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection>

Limosa Loyalty Discount

We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying 'thank you', we offer a **Frequent Travel Discount**. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip. ^{*3}

^{*3} **Conditions:** *This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extra costs such as additional flights or accommodation, private extensions and cancellations.* • *Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.* • **Please note discount must be requested at time of booking!**

How To Book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

Book Online, by Phone or by Post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely **Online** via our website, using the '**Book This Tour**' button on the relevant tour page or the **Booking** tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there's one tucked inside every brochure or as a

PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Be sure to read our **Booking Conditions** and **General Information** (found at the back of our brochure, on our website or available from our office on request) prior to booking.

When to Book

Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an **Early Bird Discount** - see our current brochure or website for details.

All our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

Last-minute Bookings: We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season so it is always worth enquiring about vacancies on any tour - even for those departing in just a few weeks!

Payments

Deposit: The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **electronic bank transfer** (please ask for our bank details), **UK debit card** and **cheque** (made payable to *Limosa Holidays* and drawn on a UK bank in GBPounds Sterling).

We also accept Visa and MasterCard credit cards for payment of Booking Deposits only.

Balance: Full payment of the **tour balance** is due not later than 12 weeks prior to departure (20 weeks in the case of certain tours such as cruises or those involving rail travel). We will send you an invoice before the balance is due.

We accept balance payments and any additional payments (e.g. interim flight deposits, flight upgrades, extra hotels etc) by **electronic bank transfer (BACS), UK debit card** or **cheque**.

Payment by overseas customers

These must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by electronic transfer direct to our bank (*please ask for our bank details*).

We do **not** accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

Credit cards - please note:

(i) *We do NOT accept credit cards or overseas debit cards for balance payments (including any additional or interim payments) from customers living within the UK or European Economic Area (the EEA is the EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).*

(ii) *For customers living in North America, Australia and all other areas outside of the UK and the European Economic Area we are able to accept payment by Visa and MasterCard credit cards or overseas debit card but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges.*

Late Booking Payments: In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at time of booking for all late bookings (*i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure*).

Other Things You Need To Know

Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is **essential** before setting off on any overseas trip - and is to be much recommended for UK tours as well.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below ref optics), personal liability and legal expenses.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or

illness. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

Important Things to Note about Insurance

- Travel Insurance does **not** normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.

Arranging Your Insurance: due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

General Information

www.limosaholidays.co.uk

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

Special Diets & Other Requests

We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

Smoking

Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our NO SMOKING policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions at any time, you'll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way.

Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by fax and email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24 hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

*Thank you for your interest in our tours.
We do hope that you will be able to join us
- and we look forward to hearing from you
again!*

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