



# NATURE & TERROIR

## Nature & Terroir Scrl

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## Northumberland & the Farne Islands

Prix - **1181.00€**    Dates - 31/05 au 05/06/22    Guide - *Tim Dean or Tom Cadwallender*

Large numbers of Puffins, Arctic Tern colonies, Roseate Terns, and a myriad of nesting seabirds are just a few of the attractions awaiting participants on this 6-day birdwatching holiday. From a comfortable hotel base in Seahouses, we explore a variety of localities along the picturesque Northumberland coast and include in the itinerary a boat trip around Coquet Island as well as a full day on the legendary Farne Islands, ranked among the greatest seabird islands in Europe. Our tour will also visit the Cheviot Hills to observe a variety of upland birds and glimpse examples of Northumberland's past in the form of ancient castles and the impressive monastery on Lindisfarne (Holy Island).

Northumberland is a wild and splendid county, boasting a superb coastline — regarded by many as the finest in the country — and a fine range of upland habitats in the Cheviot Hills. Both aspects will be explored in full during this new 6-day tour which also includes a full day spent exploring the world-renowned Farne Islands. Our tour begins in Newcastle and from here we transfer north to a comfortable hotel which will be our base for five nights. During the following days, islands will be something of a theme as we visit Lindisfarne (or Holy Island), sail around Coquet Island, where over 70 pairs of Roseate Terns and thousands of Puffins nest, then finally visit the Farne Islands. The twin islands of Staple and Inner Farne provide one of the greatest seabird spectacles in Britain and draw visitors from all over the world. Colonies of Arctic and Sandwich Terns present scenes of constant activity and noise, Guillemots, Shags and Kittiwakes line cliff ledges, whilst the everpopular Puffins play their role as court jesters. A day on the Farne Islands is a truly magical experience and as well as the principal performers there is also an impressive supporting cast including rafts of handsome Eiders and large numbers of Atlantic Grey Seals. Elsewhere along the Northumberland coast we visit a colony of Little Terns and check for late migrant passerines and waders at various locations. Although the main volume of migration will have passed, early June often produces a few surprise rarities and we will be looking out for whatever may turn up. We complete our exciting break in Northumberland with an exploration of the dramatic fells and valleys of the Cheviot Hills, home to a variety of upland birds including Red Grouse, Dipper, Grey Wagtail and Raven, having hopefully demonstrated during the preceding days the great merits of picturesque Northumberland during the late spring. Indeed, is there a finer place in England to witness large numbers of seabirds at the peak of their nesting season?

### Highlights

- Large Puffin colonies on Coquet Island & the Farne Islands
- Nesting Arctic, Roseate & Little Terns
- Huge seabird colonies of Shags, Fulmars, Guillemots, Razorbills & Kittiwakes
- Numerous Grey Seals
- Comfortable hotel accommodation in the coastal village of Seahouses
- Enjoy the ancient ruins on Lindisfarne (Holy Island)
- Find upland birds such as Dipper & Red Grouse in the Cheviot Hills
- Learn from local ornithologist leaders

## Responsable destination

**Carine**

Présente du lundi au vendredi de 10h à 17h





## Dates & Prix

1181.00€

### 2021

Tue 1st Jun - Sun 6th Jun - 1181 €  
Tue 8th Jun - Sun 13th Jun - 1181 €

### 2022

Tue 31st May - Sun 5th Jun - 1181 €  
Tue 7th Jun - Sun 12th Jun - 1181 €

### What's Included?

- Accommodation: Comfortable tourist hotel, each room with private facilities.
- Food: Breakfasts and evening meals included in holiday price, allow £5 - £10 per day for lunches.

\* These tours are operated by Naturetrek (ABTA Y6206) for which Nature et Terroir acts as agent.

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-Le prix affiché est majoré de 10 euros pour frais bancaires.

-En cas d'inscription à moins de 70 jours de la date de départ, la totalité du montant du bon de commande est dû dès inscription. A plus de 70 jours, un acompte de 30% est dû, le solde étant à verser dans les 70 jours précédents le départ.



## Journalier

### Itinerary

NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather, tides & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available. In particular, we may change the sequence of visits in order to pick the best possible day for the Farne Islands excursion

#### Day 1 Belford

The meeting place to begin the tour will be Newcastle Railway Station at 1400 but precise details for the meeting arrangements will be contained in the tour joining instructions which will be sent approximately three weeks before the tour. Once the tour mini-bus has been loaded we leave the city of Newcastle behind and drive north along the picturesque Northumberland coast, stopping along the way to admire the coastal scenery and to look for birds at various locations. Late spring/early summer is an exciting time to be birdwatching in Northumberland. The majority of summer visitors are back in their breeding areas along with the resident nesting birds whilst there is always the possibility of encountering one or two more unusual migrants, particularly Arctic waders and seabirds. Bird song is at a peak and with the onset of summer, the emerging flora once again paints the countryside with splashes of colour. On this first afternoon we will be making the acquaintance of many birds that we will be seeing regularly over the following days. Stiff-winged Fulmars and delicate Kittiwakes pass-by offshore, Gannets fish these waters from their more northerly colonies and excited flocks of tern gather to plunge on shoals of small fish such as sand-eels. Oystercatchers proclaim their noisy presence on many shorelines and we may also come upon Ringed Plovers anxiously trying to prevent their beautifully concealed eggs being predated. Rafts of Common Eider are a familiar sight and here and there we may encounter a pair of Shelducks maintaining a vigilant guard on their newly hatched ducklings. Further out to sea there is even more activity but we will be getting closer views of these seabirds during our island visits.

Our hotel is in the historical village of Belford, a delightful small village located midway between Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed.

#### Day 2 Holy Island

We spend today investigating Holy Island (Lindisfarne) and the surrounding National Nature Reserve. Separated from the mainland by a paved causeway which is covered twice daily at high tide, the island is steeped in history and a place of pilgrimage for many. The first monastery on the island was established by Saint Aiden who arrived with 12 monks from Iona in 635 and with assistance from King Oswald at Bamburgh began his mission of education and ministrations for the local population. Another famous resident was Saint Cuthbert who supervised the monastery for ten years before retiring to a hermitage on the rather inhospitable location of Inner Farne. The first wooden constructed monastery was eventually destroyed by the elements but a second stone building was occupied by Benedictine monks in 1066 and survived until the dissolution of the nation's monasteries by Henry 8th in 1536. Today, the Parish church of St Mary the Virgin stands in the site of the second monastery and is the focal point of religious activity on the island. An impressive 16th century castle dominates the landscape on Lindisfarne and along with Bamburgh just across the water is part of a chain of defences that once stretched along the north east coast.

Our visit to Lindisfarne will have to be tailored to the tide movements but as we cross over to the island we will scan the miles of exposed mudflats to check whether any non-breeding shorebirds such as Curlew or a late Whimbrel might be present. We may see Grey Seals or the occasional Common Seal hauled out on the mud near the water's edge but the views at low tide will be somewhat distant! After paying due attention to the historic aspects of the island we will visit the nearby Lough where a large colony of Black-headed Gulls fill the air with their raucous calls. Handsome Stonechats may be collecting insects for their nestlings from the margins and we may see a Common Buzzard soaring over the remaining patches of forest. Just 160 people live on Lindisfarne and it remains a unique community, utterly exposed to the winter savagery of the North Sea yet still maintaining a slender umbilical link with the mainland.

It is also an excellent place to look for orchids, with a number of those growing here having a very restricted range. During the early summer some areas of the island have a multi-hued carpet of flowers, creating a beautiful vista and making it a lovely place to spend some time on a sunny day. These attract in insects such as moths and butterflies and we may find Six-spot Burnet Moths, Dark Green Fritillary or Small Heath Butterflies.

Depending upon the times of access to Holy Island, we will fit in visits to other local birdwatching locations such as Budle Bay where in winter large flocks of wildfowl gather but at this season interest will more likely be focused on any waders frequenting the mudflats. At the end of a varied and interesting day we will have had a great introduction to the delights of the Northumberland coast and a taste of what is to follow.

#### Day 3 Coquet Island/Long Nanny

Coquet Island, lying one mile off the coast from the village of Amble, is a very important seabird breeding island which is today protected as a reserve by the RSPB. Wardens from the Society are the only human residents but there is history of occupation going back to the 7th century although this tiny island must always have been a lonely and exposed place to exist. Landing is not permitted in order to safeguard the precious seabird colonies but it is possible to sail around Coquet and we will join one of the morning sailings from Amble Harbour. It is estimated that between 30 and 40 thousand seabirds nest on the island and despite the landing restrictions we will see spectacular numbers during the cruise. Many thousands of Puffin inhabit the main part of Coquet and the constant traffic of birds to and from the sea will doubtless bring many close to the boat. Also present around the periphery are large colonies of Sandwich, Arctic and Common Terns but the rarest of the family is also represented by approximately 70 pairs of Roseate Tern. This delicate and beautiful tern has experienced a massive decline as a British breeding species and it is thought that the Colony on Coquet now represents 90% of the national population. At first the sheer number of terns might make it difficult to pick out the Roseates but even by tern standards these are exquisitely graceful birds with exceptionally long tail streamers, dark bills and superficially almost totally white plumage although closer views reveal very pale grey upperparts and a variable pink suffusion to the underparts Roseates also have a distinctive grating call although it might be hard to hear individuals amid the general hubbub of the island. Some 400 Grey Seals also inhabit the waters around Coquet and many pairs of Eider nest there.

After the seabird frenzy of Coquet Island we plan a more subdued afternoon visit to 'Long Nanny' at Newton Links. Here we have the chance of a pleasant walk for about a mile following the coastal footpath to a sandy spit where there is a wardened nesting colony of terns containing some 700 pairs of Arctic and 40+ pairs of Little Terns. Watching from a discreet distance we can enjoy all the activity of the colony and after seeing the rarest British tern in the morning we can now admire the smallest as the diminutive Little Terns dash in and out of the rows of incubating birds, bringing fish back for their partners. At the end of another wonderful day we return to our hotel for a welcome evening meal and our thoughts will no doubt turn to the Farne Islands trip still to come.

NB – please note that the exact itinerary for this day will remain flexible as the timing of our Coquet Island boat trip will vary depending on the tides.

#### Day 4 Farne Islands

Inner Farne and Staple Island comprise one of the major sanctuaries in the UK for breeding seabirds. Millions of TV viewers have been enthralled by the coverage given to the islands on the 'Springwatch' series and today will be our opportunity to witness the amazing spectacle for ourselves. Our embarkation point for a full day touring the islands will be Seahouses and while we wait to board the boat we are likely to be entertained by the antics of Eiders in the harbour. The islands are only a few miles offshore and our programme will allow landings on both islands over a period of 5-6 hours.

The bald figures of the seabird numbers give an idea of the importance of the Farnes without conveying the impact on the senses as odours and noise combine with the colour and movements to create a truly astonishing natural history phenomenon. Over 490 pairs of Shag breed on Inner Farne and Staple, 470 pairs of Eider, 2,500 Kittiwakes, 1,350 Sandwich Terns, 1,060 Arctic Terns, more than 14 and a half thousand Guillemots, Razorbills and an astonishing 35,000 pairs of Puffin. The huge number of Puffins is somewhat disguised by their underground nesting habits but we are certain to see many hundreds of these most popular of auks and there will be plenty of photographic chances. Although in some parts of the British Isles Puffins numbers have declined in recent years, Northumberland seems to have been a beneficiary and the Farnes colony continues to thrive, perhaps because of the plentiful supply of small fish in the North Sea. There still seems to be plenty of larger fish too as evidenced by the growing Grey Seal population which now numbers many hundreds of animals around the islands. Our progress will be watched by these inquisitive creatures bobbing in the sea, whilst others will be hauled up on the rocks, snorting and snuffling as the boats pass by. Despite their name, Atlantic Grey Seals occur in a wide variety of colours with the darkest shades appearing almost black. The degree of blotching and spotting also varies widely but once the new pup has shed its initial white coat it retains the new pattern and colouration for the rest of its life.

A day spent around the Farnes is the highlight of our short tour and as we return to Seahouses we will treasure some enduring memories of the marine world we have been so privileged to observe.

#### Day 5 Cheviot Hills

Anywhere else on the coast would seem tame after the Farne Islands so we turn inland for the last day of the tour and enjoy some upland birding in the Cheviot Hills. Extending from Scotland along the English border, the Cheviots are a range of rolling, mostly fairly low, hills embracing a range of habitats including upland sheep pasture, moorland and wooded valleys. It is a region of great beauty and the section of hills in Northumberland is protected within the Northumberland National Park. As we spend the day exploring the Cheviots we will be searching for the characteristic birds in their favoured areas. Clear, fast flowing streams are the places to look for Dippers, Common Sandpipers and Grey Wagtails, heather moorland for Red Grouse, rocky fells for Ring Ouzel, Wheatear and Whinchat whilst Ravens and Buzzards might be encountered anywhere as they soar around looking for a meal. We hope to find Pied Flycatchers and Redstarts in the woodlands and perhaps a few other denizens of the forests such as Tree Pipit, Wood Warbler or maybe a few Crossbills in the pines. In recent years a small population of Black Grouse has gradually increased in number and whilst by no means a guarantee, we will hope to enrich our morning by a sighting of these impressive grouse.

There are many delightful and picturesque places to visit within the National Park and our time here will complement the previous days on the coast.

#### Day 6 Newcastle

After perhaps a final stroll on the beach we will gradually make our way back to Newcastle where the tour will end at the Railway Station approximately 1pm. During the preceding days we hope we will have amply demonstrated why a summer visit to the magnificent Northumberland is very definitely a birdwatching experience not to be missed!





## Quelques photos...



### Envie d'en voir plus ?

Visitez la fiche voyage sur notre site web [www.nature-terroir.com](http://www.nature-terroir.com)



## Formalités

### Comment s'inscrire ?

- 1° Remplissez notre formulaire en ligne [www.nature-terroir.com/inscription](http://www.nature-terroir.com/inscription)
- 2° Attendez votre confirmation d'inscription et versez l'acompte
- Ou remplissez notre formulaire papier (demandez notre formulaire papier par mail ou en nous téléphonant)

### Besoin d'infos ?

Contactez la responsable destination par mail ou par téléphone.

## Responsable destination

### **Carine**

Présente du lundi au vendredi de 10h à 17h

