

Bird & Nature Reserves

New Buckenham Common - Norfolk Wildlife Trust (9 Miles)

This registered common is very much part of the New Buckenham village landscape. The south end of the reserve connects with the Tas Valley Way

What to look for: Spring/summer cuckoo flower, meadow sweet, lesser spearwort, tubular water-dropwort, cowslip, meadow saxifrage, harebell, hoary plantain, green-winged orchid. Great crested newt. Whitethroat, blackcap. Year round bullfinch.



Redgrave & Lopham Fen – Suffolk Wildlife Trust (13 Miles)

The largest remaining river valley fen in England and the source of the River Waveney. As one of the most important wetlands in Europe, Redgrave and Lopham Fen now has international protection. As well as an open fen the reserve includes a mixture of wet heathland, open water, scrub and woodland. The underlying acid and alkaline geology has resulted in characteristic wildlife including many species now rare in Britain.

Historically local people dug peat for fuel, harvested reed and sedge for thatching and grazed the drier margins with cattle. With the demise of these activities, together with post-war drainage and water abstraction, the fen began to dry out and degrade.

The Trust's restoration project has included the reinstatement of traditional management, grazing with a herd of resilient Polish tarpan ponies, cattle and sheep, peat scraping to expose fresh wet peat and the re-siting of a public water abstraction borehole. This has resulted in rehydration of the fen and the gradual return of its wonderful wildlife. Already wetland species such as butterwort, marsh fragrant orchid and cross-leaved heath have made a comeback as have breeding snipe.



Thompson Common - Norfolk Wildlife Trust (18 Miles)

Famous for its pingos, a series of 300 or so shallow pools with a dazzling array of water plants. One of the most important sites in Europe for water beetles and in the UK for dragonflies.

What to look for: Spring/summer water violet, marestail, marsh pennywort, fen pondweed, bogbean, marsh orchid, marsh cinquefoil, heather, quaking grass, salad burnet, dwarf thistle. Scarce emerald, hairy and emperor dragonfly.



Rockland Marshes – RSPB (19 Miles)

This small reserve provides views over Rockland Broad, the River Yare, Reedbeds and open grazing marshes, via a wheelchair-friendly path. A hide overlooks the Broad, where in spring and summer, kingfishers and great crested grebes can be seen. Along the path, wetland warblers can be seen and barn owls often hunt.



Surlingham Church Marshes – RSPB (19 Miles)

This small reserve provides a delightful circular walk around Reedbeds, fens and pools. In spring and summer, marsh harriers, kingfishers, water rails, and reed and sedge warblers can be seen. Wetland wild flowers provide a riot of colour.

East Wretham Heath - Norfolk Wildlife Trust (20 Miles)

Beautiful meres support large numbers of birds and are an attractive focus for birdwatchers and walkers alike. Both meres are fed by rising ground water and their water levels vary throughout the year - they are highest in summer and lowest in winter, and sometimes dry out all together for long periods.

What to look for: Spring/summer early forget-me-not, sheep's sorrel, mossy stonecrop, heath bedstraw, harebell, lesser stitchwort, viper's bugloss, great mullein, wall bedstraw. Brown argus and Essex skipper butterflies. Adder, grass snake. Redstart, willow warbler, woodlark, tree pipit, wheatear. Autumn/winter fieldfare, redwing. Year round gadwall, teal, shoveler, curlew, snipe, little grebe, skylark.

Between 1942 and 1970 the nature reserve was requisitioned for military training and used as an airfield. The crumbling runways now provide ideal conditions for mosses and lichens.



Lower Wood Ashwellthorpe - Norfolk Wildlife Trust (20 Miles)

One of Norfolk's few remaining ancient woodlands. Bluebell and ramsons make colourful displays in spring. What to look for: Spring/summer wood anemone, ramsons, early purple orchid, wood spurge, hairy St John's wort, bluebell, woodruff, herb Paris, twayblade. White admiral butterfly. Autumn/winter oak, ash, hornbeam, hazel.



Strumpshaw Fen – RSPB (21 Miles)

Strumpshaw Fen is in the heart of the Norfolk Broads. A number of nature trails lead you through the varied habitats, including Reedbeds and woodland. In the summer, there is a special trail in the flower-filled meadow. You may hear a bearded tit or see a swallowtail butterfly in the summer. Small broad, Reedbeds, mixed woodland, typical breeding and wintering birds, observation hide and displays. Walk round the Reedbeds, woodlands and orchid-rich meadows and you could chance upon marsh harriers, bitterns and kingfishers



Wayland Wood - Norfolk Wildlife Trust (21 Miles)

The impenetrable wild wood of NWT Wayland Wood instils a sense of history for which it is locally renowned.

What to look for: Spring/summer bluebell, yellow archangel, early purple orchid, wood anemone, bugle. Nightingale. Autumn/winter oak, ash, hazel, bird cherry. Year round golden pheasant.

Buckenham Marshes – RSPB (23 Miles)

Buckenham Marshes is a traditionally managed grazing marsh with large numbers of breeding wading birds, and ducks and geese in winter. The reserve also often boasts the only regular winter flock of bean geese in England (November to February), together with white-fronted geese and up to 10,000 wigeons.

Upton Broad and Marshes - Norfolk Wildlife Trust (25 Miles)

Most of the site is nationally and internationally recognised for its rich assemblage of wetland habitats and species.

What to look for: Spring / summer swallowtail and white admiral butterfly, Norfolk hawk and hairy dragonfly, variable damselfly. Marsh helleborine, milk parsley, greater spearwort, round-leaved wintergreen, bog pimpernel, frogbit, water soldier, stoneworts. Reed warbler, yellow wagtail, hobby. Autumn / Winter marsh fern, saw sedge, fen pondweed. Year round marsh harrier. Water vole.



Minsmere - Suffolk – RSPB (28 Miles)

Set on the beautiful Suffolk coast, Minsmere offers both families and keen birdwatchers a great day out. Nature trails take you through a variety of habitats to excellent bird watching hides. In spring, you can watch avocets and marsh harriers or hear booming bitterns. On the beach, a special area is cordoned off to protect nesting little terns. In autumn and winter, many wading birds and wildfowl visit the reserve. There is a visitor centre where you can find out more about the reserve, browse the shop or enjoy a meal in our licensed tearoom. There are also events throughout the year, including special events for children and people new to bird watching.



North Warren – RSPB (29 Miles)

North Warren comprises five main habitats - lowland wet grassland, Reedbed, heathland, woodland and shingle beach - within a relatively small area. The wet grassland supports up to five species of breeding waders plus nationally important populations of wintering wildfowl, including some of the UK's only regular tundra bean geese. The heathland holds Dartford warblers and woodlarks, while bitterns and marsh harriers can be seen in the Reedbeds.

This delightful reserve on the Suffolk coast contains grazing marshes, Reedbeds, heathland and woodland. Thousands of wildfowl use the marshes in winter, while spring brings breeding marsh harriers, woodlarks, nightingales and sometimes bitterns. Look out for the many species of butterflies and dragonflies.

Lakenheath Fen – RSPB (38 Miles)

At Lakenheath Fen, the RSPB has converted an area of arable farmland into a large wetland. There is a new visitor centre where you can find out more about the reserve, its wildlife and history. An events programme is run throughout the year, and family explorer backpacks and trail guides are available.

Please check opening days and times before travelling – we'd be happy to do this for you.

Useful Links:

Suffolk Wildlife Trust:	www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk
Norfolk Wildlife Trust	www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
RSPB:	www.rspb.org.uk