

Operated by Wildlife Tours & Education



We can see Barnacle Geese in spectacular numbers on this tour

6th to 10th March 2024

£1319

This is a visit to Southern Scotland and Morecombe Bay area to experience the sight and sound of some of the 35,000 Barnacle geese that come from Svalbard each year to winter on our shores, Sea Ducks, Grebes and Divers as well as some scarcer passerines such as Hawfinch.

Departure is from Norfolk early morning of Wednesday 6th March and drop off is in Norfolk on the evening of Sunday 10th March. Pick up and drop off 'en-route' can be arranged.

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| Day 1 | Drive to Leighton Moss and on to Dumfriesshire |
| Day 2 | A visit to Loch Ryan and surrounding area. |
| Day 3 | A day at Caerlaverock |
| Day 4 | A walk along a river for Goosander and an afternoon at RSPB Mearshead |
| Day 5 | A visit to a Hawfinch site, RSPB Leighton Moss and return to Norfolk |
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Although we will endeavour to follow our planned programme due to bad weather and other considerations this is not always possible. You can rest assured that any alterations to our planned itinerary will be made to make maximum use of our time and weather conditions.

Overview

This is a late Winter tour to the Scottish side of the Solway Firth centred on the WWT Caerlaverock reserve with visits to the west coast of Scotland and areas around Morecombe Bay in Lancashire to see wintering birds and occasional rarities.

Day 1 - Wednesday

We will leave Norfolk early morning and stop en-route at Leighton Moss RSPB Reserve to take in a few overwintering birds during our journey to Dumfriesshire. Arriving at our Hotel we will have a hearty meal before retiring. Leighton Moss has become a northern stronghold for wintering Great White Egrets and is an Otter haven.

Day 2 – Thursday

After breakfast we will drive to the west coast visiting and exploring Loch Ryan. This is a haven for wintering duck, grebes and divers. Cetaceans are also possible. We will be taking our time to explore this the most southerly of Scotland's sea lochs before returning to our hotel for our evening meal.

Day 3 – Friday

After a filling breakfast we will make our way onto the local WWT reserve at Caerlaverock and surrounding areas. The centre of attraction will be the thousands of Barnacle geese that use the reserve during winter. Any small flocks of this goose elsewhere in the UK are usually escapes from collections or at best feral birds so the chance to study wild barnacles in their wintering quarters will be quite special. Other geese species will also be present and the chance of a rarity among them is high. The reserve is also used as a wintering area by raptors and owls; Peregrine and Goshawk are possible. Whooper Swans also return annually to the reserve and the area is used by wintering waders and duck including over wintering Scaup and Whimbrel. Green winged Teal and Goosander are also regular visitors during February. The area is a true delight and offers a great wildlife spectacle.



Wintering Whooper Swans are a feature of Caerlaverock but by no means the only highlight

Day 4 - Saturday

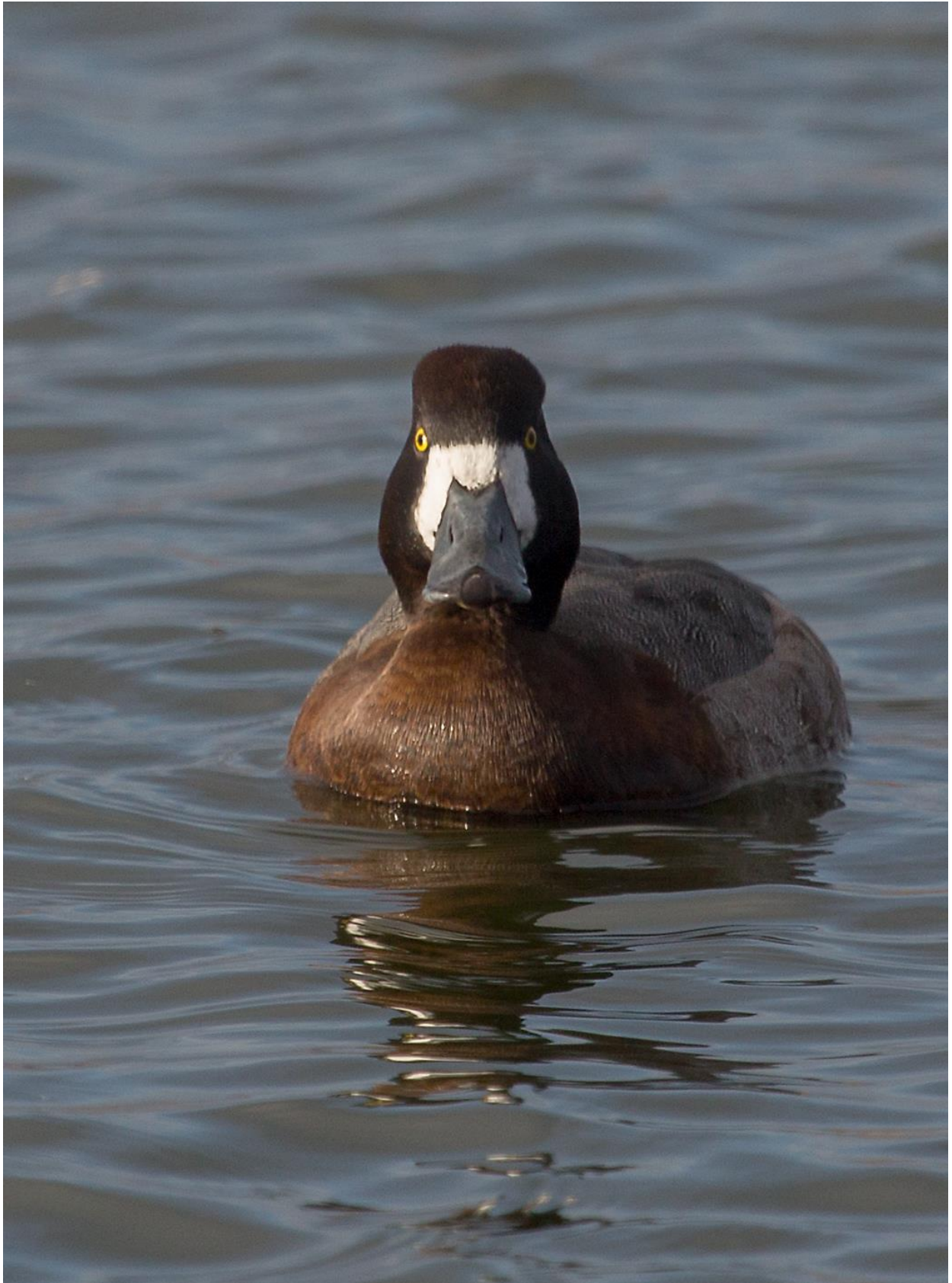
After breakfast we will search a local river for Dipper, Goosander Grey Wagtails and perhaps Otter before making our way to RSPB Mereshead. Here we are likely to see more Barnacle Geese among more traditional farmland birds as well as winter visiting raptors.



Goosander – spectacular swimmers in rough water and there will be ample opportunity to photograph them



Dippers are not uncommon on the rivers of southern Scotland



Scaup are not common but can be seen with some regularity and in good number on this tour

Day 5 – Sunday

After breakfast we will make our way South. First stopping at a Hawfinch stakeout then moving on to Leighton Moss searching the more traditional Reedbed part of the reserve. All too soon we will be making our way south again back to Norfolk dropping off guests en-route.

What is included?

Photographic Tuition.

All meals and lunches from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 5 are included within the price.

Transport to and from Norfolk and pick up en route at suitable locations.

Accommodation is normally in en suite rooms and lunches will be packed to give us more time in the field.

Rooms are offered on a shared basis. A single room supplement of £90 is payable although sharing can be arranged on most occasions.

What is not included?

All drinks with meals and items of a personal nature.

Entry into the WWT and RSPB reserves – around £12 and £10 respectively – free to members

Further notes.

This is an easily graded trip with all walking being on level ground. As always our trips are not just about birds but aim to encompass any wildlife we see.

Group Size.

4 Persons

How to Book

Please telephone 07833 463 034 or 01263 837038 at a time convenient to yourself or email carl@wildlifetoursandeducation.co.uk

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