

Operated by Wildlife Tours & Education



Dartford Warbler – Arne RSPB

7th to 11th July 2025

£1464

This is a five-day visit to the Jurassic Coast of Dorset to discover the birds and other wildlife so much a part of the beautiful calcareous landscape.

Departure is from Norfolk early morning of Monday 7th July and drop off is in Norfolk on the evening of 11th July. Pick up and drop off 'on-route' can be arranged.

Day 1	Arrive Dorset
Day 2	Brownsea Island
Day 3	Arne RSPB
Day 4	Swanage Cliffs
Day 5	Bournemouth Area and Return to Norfolk

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.



Lulworth Skipper – Durlston Head

Overview

This is a summer tour to the coastal region of Dorset centred on the Isle of Purbeck and the wonderful coastal area to see breeding and early autumn passage birds and other wildlife unique to the region.

Day 1 - Monday

We will leave Norfolk early morning and stop on route to take in a reserve known for its butterflies and orchids in the renowned area once frequented by the renowned Naturalist the Rev. Gilbert White. It was more than 230 years ago that the Rev. Gilbert White became the first person to identify the chiffchaff, willow warbler and wood warbler as three distinct species. The Hampshire county parson was also the first to describe the harvest mouse and the noctule bat, and to tell of swifts mating in flight, something not recorded again until the 1930s We will follow in his footsteps. Arriving at our Hotel we will have a hearty meal before retiring.

Day 2 – Tuesday

After a filling breakfast we will make our way to the quay at Poole Harbour; the second largest natural harbour in the world. Here we will catch the ferry to Brownsea Island. The island is owned by the National Trust and has dramatic views over the Harbour and the Purbeck Hills. Lord Baden-Powell formed the Scout movement and first camped at this site in 1907. Today the island is famous for its resident population of Red Squirrels and the Nature reserve and lagoon owned and managed by the Dorset Wildlife Trust. Here we hope to see nesting Common and Sandwich Terns as well as the first waders returning to the site after their breeding further north. The isolated hide out in the lagoon, one of five on the island, has to be the best place in the country to see and photograph terns. Mediterranean Gulls and Spoonbills are also regular here. After catching the ferry back to the mainland, we may well have an early evening meal and visit a local heath to watch displaying Nightjars.

Day 3 - Wednesday

After breakfast we will visit the RSPB reserve at Arne. This is a large reserve covering almost 600 Hectares of heathland and old oak woodland. We will spend the day here looking for birds, dragonflies, butterflies, reptiles and Raft Spiders. Up to 22 species of dragonfly have been seen on the reserve and we may also see the Silver studded Blue Butterfly. It is possible to find all of the UK reptile species at Arne including Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard but we would be very lucky indeed to see both.

It is by far easier to see the Dartford Warblers which occur here in good numbers. The gorse and heather covered heaths are ideal habitat for Dartford Warblers; this is without doubt the best place in the country to see them. Stonechats, Woodlark and Sika Deer also occur here in good numbers and there will undoubtedly be Spoonbills and a selection of waders viewable from the hides. If we are lucky we may also see one of the Ospreys that nest in the adjacent estuary.



Nightjars will be churring on the heaths – This bird was photographed at Arne.

Depending upon time available we have a choice of visiting several heaths close by before returning to our Hotel for dinner.



Common Tern – Brownsea Island

Day 4 – Thursday

We will spend the day exploring the cliffs around Durlston and surrounding areas. Much of the cliff top is managed for Butterflies and we hope to see many varieties including Marbled White, the beautiful Adonis Blue as well as the Lulworth Skipper which is found nowhere else within the UK.

Guillemots and Razorbills nest on the sea cliffs here and they will be rearing young during our visit.

Keeping an eye on the sea for cetaceans it is possible to see White Beaked as well as Bottlenose Dolphins and the occasional Balearic Shearwater at this time of the year.

Day 5 – Friday

After breakfast we will search the cliffs at Bournemouth looking for Lizards. There are three species to be found here; in addition to Common Lizards Wall Lizards are usually easy to find but the Western Green Lizards are more difficult. Both species are either introduced possibly by the Victorians or they may be relict naturalised populations. Mid-afternoon we will be reluctantly heading north back to Norfolk. Perhaps there will be time to call in to see a Bog Orchid site on the journey home.

What is included?

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

All meals and lunches from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 4 are included within the price.

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

A single room supplement of £100 is payable.

Photographic Tuition – this is an ideal tour for the wildlife photographer.

Boat trip to Brownsea Island and entry onto the NT island.

What is not included?

All drinks with meals and items of a personal nature.

Entry into the Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) reserve on Brownsea Island – around £5 – free if you are a member of DWT. We believe this is the fairest way of dealing with reserve entry fees as some guests will already be members.

Further notes.

This is a medium graded trip with most walking being on level ground although some footpaths at Durlston can be quite steep. As always our trips are not just about birds but aim to encompass any wildlife we see and we will be taking our time to search and explore.

Group Size.

4 Persons

How to Book

Please telephone 07833 463 034 or 01263 837 038 at a time convenient to yourself or email carl@wildlifetoursandeducation.co.uk

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