



Photo: Les Bunyan

RSPB Snettisham Spectaculars 2023

We have handpicked these dates and times for you to observe the best parts of the spectacles.

The time given is when to leave the RSPB car park (not the time of high tide).

Whirling Waders:

January 2023		February 2023		March 2023		April 2023	
No Spectaculars		Wed 22 nd	6.00am	Wed 22 nd	5.00am	Wed 19 th	4.45pm
		Thu 23 rd	6.45am	Thu 23 rd	5.30am	Thu 20 th	5.30pm
				Fri 24 th	6.00am	Fri 21 st	6.00pm
May 2023		June 2023		July 2023		August 2023	
No Spectaculars		No Spectaculars		Fri 7 th	8.00am	Wed 2 nd	5.30am
				Sat 8 th	8:45am	Thu 3 rd	6.00am
						Fri 4 th	6.45am
						Sat 5 th	7.15am
						Sun 6 th	8.00am
						Mon 7 th	9.00am
		Th 31 st	5.00am and 6.00pm				
September 2023		October 2023		November 2023		December 2023	
Fri 1 st	5.30am	Sun 1 st	5.30am	Wed 1 st	6.15am	No Spectaculars	
Sat 2 nd	6.00am	Mon 2 nd	6.15am				
Sun 3 rd	6.45am	Tues 3 rd	7.30am				
Mon 4 th	7.30am						
Tues 5 th	8.30am						
Th 28 th	5.00pm						

Pink-footed geese:

November 2023		December 2023		January 2024	
15 - 22	6.30am	3- 22	6.30am	2 - 15	7.00am

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the birds in the Whirling Wader Spectacle?

Most of the birds that you see are small wading birds called 'knot'. The Wash is an incredibly important habitat for these and similar birds such as dunlin and oystercatchers, as the mudflats contain substantial amounts of their food, mainly shellfish and worms. See our RSPB bird guide for more information rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/knot/

What causes the birds to whirl like that?

The highest of high tides (Spring tides) push the birds from their feeding grounds on the mudflats of The Wash onto the lagoons of the RSPB Snettisham nature reserve. The tide height usually needs to be 6.8m or higher as this is the point at which the bay of The Wash is filled with seawater and there is no more room for these wading birds to stand and feed on the mud.

When should I go to see the Whirling Wader Spectacle?

These spectacles do not happen every day. They are special because they are infrequent occurrences, so do make sure that you plan your trip to avoid disappointment. They require a Spring tide to occur in the daylight during late autumn or early spring (when large numbers of birds are migrating). . The dates and times given above are the time you will need to leave the car park to observe the best parts of the spectacle, although please note that as this is a natural phenomenon, factors such as the weather can impact the behaviour of the birds

Where should I go?...

The car park postcode is PE31 7RA and is signposted from the A149 via a brown sign.

The small car park can only hold around 80 cars and has a height barrier of 2.1m. Parking is pay and display via a machine in the main car park: Free for RSPB members, £3 for non-members. Please respect our neighbours and other visitors by parking responsibly onsite.

It is a 2.2km walk from the car park to the Wader Watch point, so allow plenty of time. The trail has steps to access the sea wall. This is a wild, remote site and there are no toilet or refreshment facilities available. See our website at rspb.org.uk/snettisham for more info on accessibility.

Please do not cross fence lines or climb shingle screening as this will cause disturbance to the internationally important wader roost (and spoil everyone else's experience).

Continued...

Frequently Asked Questions Continued...

What about seeing the pink-footed geese?

In the winter months pink-footed geese arrive to spend the winter away from the harsh conditions of their breeding ground in Iceland. RSPB Snettisham can host thousands of pink footed geese which roost on the mudflats of The Wash at night between November and January. At sunrise, you can witness the geese leaving their roost in extraordinarily large flocks.

The tide does not affect the geese, but the moon phase does. Movement of geese can be erratic and unpredictable five days either side of a full moon.

I'm concerned about the ongoing nature crisis. What can I do to support conservation and the RSPB?

These amazing wader spectacles only happen because of the international network of protected sites that support these long-distance migratory birds. As the largest conservation charity in the UK, managing reserves such as the one at Snettisham supports space for wildlife. For more information and to find out what you can do to support the RSPB, visit [rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/our-mission](https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/our-mission)