



Photo: Les Bunyan

# RSPB Snettisham Spectaculars 2024

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 2024		February 2024		March 2024		April 2024	
No Spectaculars		Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	6.15am	Wed 13 <sup>th</sup>	6.30am	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>	5.00pm
		Tues 13 <sup>th</sup>	7.00am			Tues 9 <sup>th</sup>	5.30pm
						Thu 11 <sup>th</sup>	7.00am
May 2024		June 2024		July 2024		August 2024	
No Spectaculars		No Spectaculars		Thu 25 <sup>th</sup>	8.00am	Tues 20 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm
				Fri 26 <sup>th</sup>	8.30am	Thu 22 <sup>nd</sup>	6.15am
						Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup>	7.00am
						Sat 24 <sup>th</sup>	8.00am
						Sun 25 <sup>th</sup>	9.00am
September 2024		October 2024		November 2024		December 2024	
Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>	6.30am	Sun 20 <sup>th</sup>	6.15am	No Spectaculars		No Spectaculars	
Tues 17 <sup>th</sup>	5.00pm	Mon 21 <sup>st</sup>	7.30am				
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup>	6.00am						
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup>	6.30am						

## Pink-footed geese:

21st November 2024 – 10th December 2024

21st December 2024 - 7th January 2025

# 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/](https://www.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](https://www.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)