



Photo: Les Bunyan

RSPB Snettisham Spectaculars 2022

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 2022		February 2022		March 2022		April 2022	
No Spectaculars		No Spectaculars		No Spectaculars		Fri 1 st	5:30pm
						Sat 2 nd	6:00pm
						Sun 17 th	5:45pm
						Sat 16 th	5:00pm
May 2022		June 2022		July 2022		August 2022	
Mon 16 th	5:30pm	No Spectaculars		Fri 15 th	6:00am and 7:00pm	Fri 12 th	6:00pm
Tues 17 th	6:00pm			Sat 16 th	6:30am	Sat 13 th	6:00am and 6:45pm
Wed 18 th	6.30am and 7:00pm			Sun 17 th	7:30am	Sun 14 th	6:30am
				Mon 18 th	8:30am	Mon 15 th	7:00am
				Tues 16 th	8:00am		
		Mon 29 th	6:30am				
		Tues 30 th	7:00am	Weds 31 st	7:30am		
September 2022		October 2022		November 2022		December 2022	
Sat 10 th	5:45pm	Wed 12 th	6:30am	No Spectaculars		No Spectaculars	
Mon 12 th	6:00am	Thu 13 th	7:00am				
Tues 13 th	6:30am						
Wed 14 th	7:30am						
Wed 28 th	6:30am						
Thu 29 th	7:00am						

Pink-footed geese:

December 2021		January 2022		November 2022		December 2022	
1 st – 14 th 25 th – 31 st	6.30am	1 st – 12 th	6.30am	14 th -30 th	6.30am	1 st and 2 nd 14 th – 31 st	6.30am

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)