



Birdwatchers flock to see rare jack snipe



HERTS AND MIDDLESEX WILDLIFE TRUST

Jack snipe usually stay hidden in dense vegetation, but the cold weather has driven them into the open

10 February 2023

Three "rarely seen" northern European wading birds have been attracting large numbers of visitors, a charity said.

For the first time in six years, jack snipe have been spotted at **Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve** near Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.

The species usually prefer to remain camouflaged in dense wetland vegetation, but these birds have been seen in the open for prolonged periods on four occasions since October, said Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

Reserve warden, Barry Trevis, said the birds were tempted into the open by "an abundance of shrimp" and a chalk stream which "never freezes".



STEFAN CZAPSKI/GEOGRAPH

The birds had not been sighted at Lemsford Springs for six years

Jack snipe are a winter visitor to the UK, spending their summers on waterlogged bogs in northern Europe.

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They are **small waders about 19cm (7.4in) long**, which probe for food using long bills.

The wildlife trust, which owns the nature reserve, said the bird could be spotted by its "constant bouncing action... making it look as if its legs are on springs".

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