

TROPICAL BIRDING

Scotland and Ireland: Caledonian Highlands, The Hebrides and the Emerald Isle

Set departure tour 3th – 9th June, 2018

Emerald Isle Extension 9th – 13th June, 2018

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Scotland is an iconic destination featuring Britain's highest mountains, picturesque lochs, ancient pine forests and fairy-tale castles. Although part of the United Kingdom, Scotland is a distinct nation and its people fiercely proud of its separate culture, long history and natural beauty. It features many birds and mammals difficult to find in the rest of the British Isles. Some of our highlights included Crested Tit and European Badger in the Caledonian pine forests, Horned Grebe at a Scottish loch, Willow & Rock Ptarmigans in the rugged Cairngorms, Eurasian Woodcock & Red Deer in the Findhorn Valley, Golden & White-tailed Eagles, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl and the globally threatened Corn Crake on the stunning Outer Hebrides, seabirds and sea mammals galore on our ferry crossings, and the fascinating White-throated Dipper at the base of Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis. On our Emerald Isle extension, we took in the world-famous Giant's Causeway and scenic Northern Ireland coastline; then south across the invisible border to the Republic of Ireland, with the historical sights of Dublin, the ancient monastic site of Glendalough established by St Kevin, then across to the west coast and the spectacular Cliffs of Moher and its thousands of nesting seabirds. This relaxed tour was an impressive combination of stunning scenery, ancient history and natural wonder producing a very memorable trip.

MAIN TOUR

3rd June - Edinburgh to Grantown-on-Spey

We started the tour with an early morning meetup at the airport hotel. We crossed over the Firth of Forth road bridge looking across at the famous Forth Rail Bridge, and it wasn't long before we escaped the city and entered the beautiful Scottish countryside. We drove by fields with our first **Eurasian Curlews**, **Eurasian Oystercatchers** and even a **Red Deer**. Our main target of the morning was the rare **Ring Ouzel**, and on our very first birding stop we found one scanning down into a heather-covered valley. From here we continued up to the Glenshee Ski Centre, where we saw **Common House-Martins** making a mud nest under a roof. We took a short walk up a track and found our first **Northern Wheatear**, **Meadow Pipit** and the Scottish race of **Willow Ptarmigan**. The latter is more commonly known as the Red Grouse and well known from its picture on the Famous Grouse whiskey bottle.



American Robin gets its name from the European Robin. Can you see the similarity?

Another stop gave us our first **Ring-necked Pheasant**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Greylag Goose** and **Common Woodpigeon**. We arrived at our destination of Grantown-on-Spey, had lunch and checked in to our hotel. In the afternoon, we took a walk in the beautiful Anagach Forest nearby and saw our first forest birds, with **Eurasian Wren**, **Goldcrest**, **Eurasian Treecreeper**, **Coal**, **Blue & Long-tailed Tits**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Common Chaffinch**, **Greenfinch** and **Eurasian Siskin**. We checked out a stone bridge over the River Spey looking for dippers, but instead found **Common Merganser**, **Goosander**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Grey Wagtail**. It had been a great day with some beautiful birds and no shortage of spectacular scenery.

4th June – Cairngorms NP, Loch Garten

We had an early start today and drove past Aviemore and up into the Cairngorms National Park. The weather was still a little misty, but we hoped that it would clear during the morning. There were only a few cars in the parking lot, so we were some of the first hikers to head up the trails; an advantage when looking for ptarmigan. As we set off along the trail, we had the silhouette of a **Willow Warbler** singing its little heart out in the mist, and along the first stretch of the trail, some distant **Red Grouse** giving their nasal clucking calls up on the side of the valley. We saw a few **Meadow Pipits** doing their flight displays and also flushed a nice **Arctic Hare** that still had plenty of white on its belly. We walked higher and higher towards the base of the towering cliffs, and reached an impressive amphitheatre surrounded by cliffs and rocky slopes; the perfect habitat for the **Rock Ptarmigan**. We heard a distant one calling, followed by a much closer one a short distance ahead. As we walked closer I scanned the top of rocks and sure enough there was a perfectly camouflaged one on top of a boulder. We walked closer and closer and the bird seemed completely unperturbed. We also had a nice male **Northern Wheatear** which hopped on the same rock. We scanned the area, hoping for a low dotterel, but the chances were that they were all on the very highest mountain tops, which were now covered in mist. It had been a great walk and really enjoyed the spectacular scenery of the Cairngorms.



The Cairngorms is as wild as it gets in the UK, and one of the best places to find Rock Ptarmigan.

We went down to a small lake called Avielochan, which is a known breeding site for the locally rare Horned or **Slavonian Grebe**. There was no parking nearby, so we had to walk along the road but when we got there, the place was alive with birds. As well as the grebe we saw many other nice birds, including **Eurasian Siskin, European Goldfinch, European Greenfinch** and **Eurasian Collared Dove**. We were getting hungry after our long morning and we found a nice restaurant in the quaint nearby village of Boat of Garten, after which we visited the wonderful RSPB reserve of Loch Garten. We had a quick stop on the way in to look for **Crested Tit**, which I found, but flew away before I got the clients on to it. We visited the Osprey Centre which was unfortunately devoid of Ospreys, but a walk along the Loch produced a family of **Common Goldeneyes, Tree Pipit** and finally a **Crested Tit** which everybody could enjoy. The last site of the day was Nethy Bridge where we took a delightful stroll in a fruitless search for White-breasted Dipper and Scottish Crossbill. We had a quick rest and dinner before our evening activity at a large private estate nearby. We met up by a large loch where we saw a distant **Arctic Loon** before visiting a blind set up to observe local mammals attracted by peanuts scattered around outside. They usually get Pine Marten, but today we had to make do with 2 comical **European Badgers**.



Horned Grebe, and the very scenic Loch Garten.



Crested Tits are restricted in Scotland to the Caledonian pine forests.



We had a close encounter with European Badgers in a Speyside viewing blind.

5th June – Grantown-on-Spey to Isle of Skye & North Uist

Despite having finished rather late last night, we still had to make a rather early departure in order to make our ferry to the Outer Hebrides. We left just enough time to make a few birding stops, the first of which was in the Finhorn Valley. This is one of the best places to look for Golden Eagles soaring over the hills. On the way down, we were lucky enough to flush a **Eurasian Woodcock** from the side of the road, and we also saw a few other nice things, including **Common Buzzard**, **Northern Wheatear** and plenty of **Red Deer**. We spent some time at a viewpoint in the bottom of the valley scanning for eagles, but in the end we had to continue on our journey. We passed by the famous Loch Ness and its picturesque Urquhart Castle, but there was no sign of the loch's most famous resident which must have been lurking somewhere in the murky depths. We also passed another beautiful castle named Castle Eileen Donan. At the Kyle of Lochalsh, we crossed the Skye bridge and spent some time scanning for otters, but only saw **Great Cormorant & Shag** and lots of **Common Seals**.



Atlantic Puffin is a perennial favourite.

We stopped in the town of Portree for a quick lunch of Fish & Chips before arriving at harbour of Uig for our ferry across to Lochmaddy on the island of North Uist, in the Outer Hebrides. As we left the harbour, we saw some **Common Eider** and **Black Guillemots** bobbing along the coast, and out to sea, we found the other 3 possible Alcids, with good views of **Atlantic Puffin**, **Common Murre & Razorbill**. Amongst the numerous Kittiwakes I even managed to find the uncommon **Little Gull**. Other rarities seen during the voyage were **European Storm Petrel** and **Great Skua**. In Lochmaddy, we checked into our hotel before heading out for a drive. This year's ferry was earlier than in previous years, which had meant it was a bit of a rush to get here. Conversely, that meant that we had more time for birding on the other side. We had a nice drive nearby and watched **Mute Swan** getting mobbed by **Black-headed Gulls**, **Common Eider** females with chicks, **Eurasian Skylark**, **Twite**, **Hooded Crow** and **Common Raven**.

6th June – North Uist

We went out before breakfast towards the western side of North Uist in search of **Corn Crakes**. We drove along, listening out for them and found a nice wildflower meadow where they were calling. We got close but didn't get a view. We saw all the usual suspects driving by the fields with **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **Northern Lapwing & Eurasian Curlew** but added **Common Redshank** and had great views of a **Common Snipe** perched on a fence post. We also had several nice passerines, including **Eurasian Wren**, **European Stonechat**, **Song Thrush** and **Sedge Warbler**. We also saw several **Short-eared Owls** which seemed to be carrying food back to their nests. After a nice breakfast back at the hotel, we went back out to continue our search for corncrakes. We tried again back at the meadow where we had heard them in the morning but with no more success, so we moved on to the RSPB reserve at Balranald. We turned down the entrance road and almost immediately heard a **Corn Crane** calling loudly right next to the fence. We jumped out and scanned the grass for movement. It called another couple of times and then flew up out of the grass and giving us great flight views.



Common Snipe on a post. North Uist offers both birds and stunning scenery in abundance.

Having found the main target in the Outer Hebrides, we continued in to the reserve to see what else we could find. We took a walk along a beautiful stretch of coastline where we found **Corn Bunting**, **Twite**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, a flyby of a **White-tailed Eagle** and even a Ruff in breeding plumage. After this, we drove along the cross-island Committee Road, where we parked and scanned for **Golden Eagles**, finding 3 soaring in the distance. After lunch in a nice café, it was back to Balranald, where we walked out to the **Arctic Tern** colony. It was great for gulls and we saw **Iceland**, **Glaucous & Great Black-backed** among the common **Herring Gulls**. We also found **Little Stints**, **Ruddy Turnstone** and a **Curlew Sandpiper** among the common **Dunlin**. Off the coast, we saw several **Black Guillemots**, and dotted over the Machair habitat on the headland were **Northern Wheatear**, **Rock Pipits**, **Linnet** and of course hundreds of nesting **Arctic Terns**. We were pretty tired after our long walk and drove back to Lochmaddy for a nice dinner at the hotel.



North Uist is a great place for rarities showing up. Iceland Gull was one of several we found.

7th June – North Uist to Barra

The original itinerary had us staying tonight on the island of South Uist, but changes to the ferry schedule meant having to go to another one of the islands named Barra. We still had most of the day to explore Benbecula and South Uist, and we began by birding our way along the road from Lochmaddy. We stopped at a few small lochs where we had good views of **Red-throated Loon**, **Common Raven** and some **European Stonechats** but the midges were out and drove us quickly back into our car. We had a short detour onto the small island of Grimsay, where a bit of exploring got us **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Common Buzzard**, **Great Black-backed Gull**, **Common Cuckoo**, the Hebridean race of **Eurasian Wren** and **Northern Wheatear** and some **Red Deer**. Crossing over to Benbecula we had our only **Whimbrel** of the trip, and a little further south on Loch Mor we found our target **Red-necked Phalarope** in full breeding plumage. On another loch nearby, we found a great selection of water birds including **Graylag Goose**, **Mute Swan**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Gadwall**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Tufted Duck**, **Little Grebe**, **Eurasian Moorhen** and **Eurasian Coot**.



The stag is one of Scotland's most iconic sights.

One of our remaining targets of the islands was the **Hen Harrier**, which finds one of its last strongholds on the Hebrides. One of the clients spotted one and we pulled in as soon as we could and luckily it was still soaring over the road. After lunch in a local café, we had just enough time to go and check out a very scenic peninsular nearby. It was worth the visit for the scenery alone, but the place was also loaded with birds and we saw, **Common Shelduck**, **Common Eider**, **Common Ringed Plover**, **Common Redshank**, **Black-headed, Mew** and **Great Black-backed Gulls** and **Arctic Terns**. It was time to get to the small island of Eriskay which was accessible by a bridge. From there, a ferry crosses to the island of Barra, where we were spending the night. On the short crossing we had a few seabirds, with **Northern Gannet**, **Great Cormorant**, **European Shag**, **Black Guillemot** and **Black-legged Kittiwake**. We settled into our cosy B&B and had a nice hot dinner at the local hotel.

8th June – Barra to Fort William

After an early breakfast, we drove the short distance to Castlebay and lined up for our ferry to Oban, on the Scottish mainland. This was our longest ferry of the trip and potentially the most exciting for sea-watching. After parking the car deep in the bowels of the boat, we made our way up on deck to get some good seats. Before pulling out at the port, we saw a **Common Raven** being mobbed by some **Hooded Crows**. We were soon out at sea and started our sea-watch. We had numerous alcids and ended up seeing all 4 species, with **Common Murre**, **Razorbill**, **Black Guillemot** and **Atlantic Puffin**. We saw many of our previously seen seabirds, like **Northern Gannet**, **European Shag** and **Black-legged Kittiwake**, but added **Northern Fulmar**, many **Manx Shearwaters**, lower numbers of **European Storm-Petrel** and a single **Parasitic Jaeger**. As well as the pelagic bird species, we were also on the look out for sea mammals and we saw several pods of **Harbour Porpoises**, **Common Dolphins**, several **Minke Whales**, **Gray Seal** and even a distant Basking Shark. After the windy open sea, we entered the calmer channels between the islands and mainland and along this stretch, spotted a **Common Loon**.



We saw many Northern Gannets on our excellent ferry crossing back to the mainland.

It had been a great ferry ride, and we were soon pulling into the picturesque port in Oban. After driving off the ferry, we set off towards Fort William, stopping en route for a pub lunch. We checked in to our hotel in Fort William and went for an afternoon drive up the Glen Nevis valley. Many young hikers were on their way down after ascending the UK's highest mountain, Ben Nevis. We continued past the trailhead where it got a lot quieter and we enjoyed a few birding stops along the road. We saw several common forest species, like **Eurasian Blue & Great Tits**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **European Robin**, **Eurasian Blackbird** and **Common Chaffinch**. The highlight of the afternoon was close up views of the **White-throated Dipper** which we observed feeding above a waterfall, collecting food for its chicks in its nearby nest. Some local boys turned up and started jumping off the waterfall into the pool below, and of course the dipper made itself scarce. On our final night in Scotland, we enjoyed another pub meal.



The beautiful port town of Oban and the handsome White-throated Dipper.

9th June – Fort William to Glasgow

Today was the last day of the main tour, and with a midday flight, we had to leave Fort William early to get there with plenty of time. Just leaving Fort William, we had a surprise **White-tailed Eagle** getting mobbed along the edge of the water. During the picturesque drive passed Loch Lomond and the beautiful Trossachs National Park, we watched the West Coast's **Hooded Crows** change to **Carrion Crows**, and also saw our first **Eurasian Magpie** in quite a few days. At the airport we dropped our hire car off and checked in for the short skip across to Belfast.

EMERALD ISLE EXTENSION

9th June – Belfast to Giant's Causeway

After an uneventful flight, we had lunch, picked up our hire car then started the drive up to the north coast of Northern Ireland. The main reason for coming up here was to see the world-famous Giant's Causeway, but this we would look at tomorrow morning. We had a short time to explore the area, which we used to visit a very pretty harbour town called Ballintoy. This location appeared in the famous TV series 'Game of Thrones'. We took a walk around the harbour and saw a **Northern Fulmar** soar by, our daily **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, a very close pair of **Common Eiders**, and many cheeky **Rock Pipits** hopping around very close by. After this we took a peek at another filming location from the same series, called the 'Dark Hedges'. It was a wonderfully atmospheric place and popular with tourists, who were blocking the narrow road with their cars, much to the chagrin of the local farmer trying to get his tractor by.



The striking Common Eider (above) and slightly less striking Rock Pipit (below).

10th June – Belfast to Dublin

Our comfortable hotel was right next to the causeway, and we took a pre-breakfast walk down there before the crowds arrived. Giant's Causeway is named so after a legend of there being a causeway across to Scotland made by the Irish giant Finn MacCool. The hexagonal columns of rocks are up to 12m long in places. As well as being a wonderful place to see, this wild section of coast of course has plenty of birds too. Out to sea, we saw **Northern Fulmar**, **Northern Gannet**, **European Shag** and **Great Black-backed Gulls**, with **Rooks**, **Rock Pipit** and **Northern Wheatears** hopping around on the rocks. There were plenty of bushes and ferns full of other passerines too, with singing **Eurasian Wren**, **Sedge Warbler**, **Greater Whitethroat**, **European Stonechat**, **Reed Bunting**, **Eurasian Linnet** and **European Goldfinch**. After seeing our fill of the picturesque causeway coastline and all its birds, we walked back up for a filling breakfast, before packing up and starting our drive to Dublin. As we drove south on the motorway, it was barely noticeable where we crossed the border into the Republic of Ireland.



The Giant's Causeway is a World Heritage Site.

After a late breakfast, we decided to take a late lunch in the seaside resort of Skerries, just north of Dublin. It seemed like a good idea, but it was a Sunday with blue skies and it seemed that the whole of Dublin was there too. We finally found a parking space next to a restaurant for lunch. The clients decided that a whistle-stop driving tour of Dublin's sites was sufficient for their requirements, so we drove around the Guinness factories, St Patricks Cathedral and the University area. After checking in to our comfortable guest house, we decided to go and do a bit of birding along the coast. We drove to the harbour, where we took a lovely walk along the West Pier on a gorgeous cool summer afternoon. It was surprisingly birdie for being so close to Dublin, and we had good views of **Great Cormorant, Gray Heron, Black Guillemot, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Tern** and **Rock Pipit**. The bird of the afternoon though was a beautiful breeding-plumaged **Mediterranean Gull** which flew backwards and forwards in front of us. In the evening we walked along from the guest house to enjoy a delicious meal in a local restaurant.



Gray Heron & Mediterranean Gull.

11th June – Wicklow Mountains National Park & the coast

We had a full day to explore the Dublin area and we drove south and up into the Wicklow Hills to an area known as the Sally Gap. We enjoyed some lovely scenery and had a couple of birding stops where we saw **Great Spotted Woodpecker, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Meadow Pipit, Eurasian Siskin** and heard **Common Cuckoo**. The highlight though was seeing numerous **Fallow Deer**, which were introduced by the Norman's and have been here hundreds of years. We drove down into a lush green valley with the famous Glendalough Monastery. Although a popular tourist location, most groups hadn't arrived yet and we had the place to ourselves for the first part of our walk. We started looking around the monastery which was established by St Kevin in the 8th century. We left the site and started birding our way along the road. We had a great morning of birding and saw **Great Spotted Woodpecker, Common House-Martin, Coal & Long-tailed Tits, Eurasian Wren, Common Chiffchaff, Eurasian Blackcap, Gray Wagtail & European Goldfinch**.



We saw a delightful family of Long-tailed Tits at Glendalough.

By late morning, the crowds had arrived, and we left this very special place. We headed east towards the coast, stopping in a small town at a local café for a simple lunch before moving on to our birding site for the afternoon, East Coast Nature Reserve. There was a mix of habitats here from open fields and lakes, to reed beds. We saw **Mute Swan** on the lake and in the other habitats, a good selection of passerines, with **Sedge Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Song Thrush, Dunnock, European Greenfinch, Eurasian Linnet, European Goldfinch** and a family of **Willow Warblers** with recently fledged young. After this we took a walk along the coast and saw **Little Egret, European Shag, Eurasian Oystercatcher** and **Common Shelduck** and a nesting colony of **Little Terns**. We also had **European Stonechat, Eurasian Skylark, Greater Whitethroat** and even **Reed Buntings** feeding on the beach. Our time was up and we drove back to our Dublin hotel enjoyed another delicious meal in a local restaurant.



The beautiful valley of Glendalough is steeped in history.

12th June – Dublin to Lisdoonvarna

We left Dublin and headed east on the main M5 highway. By mid-morning we had arrived at The Burren National Park; a very scenic area with more than its fair share of beautiful **wild flowers** dotting the limestone covered hills. There were some large lakes which held **Gray Heron**, **Little Egret** (until recently a rare species in the British Isles), **Common Sandpiper**, **Black-headed, Mew & Lesser Black-backed Gull**. We heard a **Common Cuckoo** calling in the distance, and also saw some recently fledged **Northern Wheatears** on top of the rocks and **Meadow Pipit**, **Reed Bunting** and **Lesser Redpoll** on top of some bushes. After a lovely walk we drove the short distance to the town of Lisdoonvarna where we would spend the night. After lunch, we checked in to our very nice B&B and had a short rest before heading out in the afternoon to the famous Cliffs of Moher. Unlike most places we had been up until now, this was a very popular tourist site and deservedly so. There were a lot of people there, but we still enjoyed a lovely walk on the top of the cliffs.



We enjoyed beautiful wildflowers at The Burren National Park.

Unlike many of the other tourists, we stayed well away from the edge. There was even a plaque dedicated to all those that had lost their lives on the cliffs. With so many taking photos teetering on the edge of the abyss, it's surprising that even more people don't go over the edge. One of the most noticeable birds were the hundreds of **Northern Fulmars** nesting on the cliffs. The lower parts the cliffs were covered with **Common Murre**, **Razorbill** and on the grassy areas, were the nesting burrows of the **Atlantic Puffin**. The sea was dotted with alcids and there was a constant to and fro while birds came to feed their mates and chicks. We also saw several **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, **Great Black-backed Gull** and even a **Peregrine Falcon** which was perched high up on the cliffs scanning down for potential quarry. In the fields behind the cliffs were many **Rooks**, **Eurasian Skylarks**, **Meadow & Rock Pipits**, but our main target of the afternoon was the **Red-billed Chough**. I spotted some flying along the cliffs but they also came down in a nearby field and gave great views. We returned to Lisdoonvarna and enjoyed a nice dinner in a local pub with traditional Irish music.



Red-billed Choughs, although widespread, are rare in the British Isles.

13th June – Lisdoonvarna to Shannon

Today was the last day of the tour and we had a full morning to do a last bit of birding. Most of the possible additions were forest birds, so we decided to explore the Drumore Woods & Castle just 30 minutes away from our hotel. Our luck with the weather seemed to have come to an end, and it was overcast with steady rain. It had eased off enough by the time we arrived to allow us to take a walk along the forest road. We picked up the usual common stuff, with **Eurasian Blackbird**, **Eurasian Blue Tit**, several recently fledged **Great Tits**, **Song Thrush** and the diminutive **Goldcrest**. The main target of the morning was **Eurasian Bullfinch** which also turned out to be one of the clients' favourite birds. After a while, we bumped into a pair and had a quick look at the male's beautiful red underparts. Further along, we added **Eurasian Jay** which was another addition to the trip list. We got to a couple of small lakes which we scanned to find a couple of elegant **Mute Swans**, and a noisy **Common Raven** flew *cawing* overhead. We crossed over to a small island where we walked the loop trail to find our first **Common Chiffchaff**; almost identical to the Willow Warbler but with a tell-tale song which gave away its identity. Time was up and we drove the winding roads back to the B&B, packed up, said goodbye to our gracious host and headed into town for our last lunch in a traditional pub. It was a short drive to Shannon International airport where we said our goodbyes, after a very enjoyable tour.



The lush Drumore Forest reserve.

Bird list

Taxonomy follows ebird/Clements online checklist. Updated Aug 2017

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

Graylag Goose

Anser anser

Commonly seen in the Highlands & Outer Hebrides.

Mute Swan

Cygnus olor

Seen on Outer Hebrides, East Coast NR & Drumore Woods.

Common Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

Seen on Outer Hebrides & East Coast NR.

Northern Shoveler

Spatula clypeata

Seen on Outer Hebrides.

Gadwall

Mareca strepera

Seen on Outer Hebrides.

Eurasian Wigeon

Mareca penelope

Seen on Outer Hebrides.

Mallard

Anas p. platyrhynchos

Commonly seen throughout.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Seen on Outer Hebrides.

Common Eider

Somateria m. mollissima

Seen on Outer Hebrides & Ballintoy.

Common Goldeneye

Bucephala c. clangula

Seen at Loch Garten.

Common Merganser

Mergus m. merganser

Seen on the Spey River.

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Seen on Outer Hebrides.

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

Ring-necked Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Introduced. Seen in Speyside, Findhorn Valley & heard in Northern Ireland.

Willow Ptarmigan (Red Grouse)

Lagopus lagopus scotica

Endemic subspecies

Seen at Glenshee & Cairngorm NP.

Rock Ptarmigan

Lagopus muta millaisi

Endemic subspecies

Seen in Cairngorm NP.

GAVIIFORMES: Gaviidae

Red-throated Loon

Gavia stellata

Seen on Outer Hebrides.

Arctic Loon

Gavia a. arctica

Seen at the Loch an Eileen.

Common Loon

Gavia immer

Seen on the ferry crossing from Castlebay to Oban.

PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus r. ruficollis

Seen at Avielochan & on Outer Hebrides.

Horned Grebe

Podiceps a. auritus

Seen at Avielochan.

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Procellariidae

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Seen on the ferry crossing to the Outer Hebrides, coastal Northern Ireland & the Cliffs of Moher.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Castlebay to Oban.

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Hydrobatidae

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates p. pelagicus*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Uig to Lochmaddy, and from Castlebay to Oban.

SULIFORMES: Sulidae

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Seen on the ferry crossings from Eriskay to Barra, from Castlebay to Oban & in coastal Northern Ireland.

SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax c. carbo*

Commonly seen along coasts.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax a. aristotelis*

Commonly seen along coasts.

PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae

Gray Heron *Ardea c. cinerea*

Commonly near water.

Little Egret *Egretta g. garzetta*

Seen at The Burren & East Coast Nature Reserve.

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae

Golden Eagle *Aquila c. chrysaetos*

Seen on North Uist.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Seen on Benbecula.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Seen on North Uist and Fort William.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Seen at several sites throughout.

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

Seen at Balranald.

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula c. chloropus*

Seen on Benbecula.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica a. atra*

Seen on Benbecula.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Haematopodidae

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus o. ostralegus*

Commonly seen throughout.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Seen in the Highlands & on the Outer Hebrides.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius h. hiaticula*
Seen at Balranald.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Seen on Benbecula.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Near-threatened. Seen at Grantown & on the Outer Hebrides.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Seen at Balranald.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

A breeding-plumaged male seen displaying at Balranald.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Seen at Balranald.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Seen at Balranald.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Seen at Balranald.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Seen in the Findhorn Valley & at night on Speyside.

Common Snipe *Gallinago g. gallinago*

Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Seen on Benbecula.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Seen at Grantown, on the Outer Hebrides & The Burren.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus robusta*

Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercororiridae

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Uig to Lochmaddy and from Castlebay to Oban.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus.*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Castlebay to Oban.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae

Common Murre *Uria aalge*

Seen on the ferry crossings to & from the Outer Hebrides & the Cliffs of Moher.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Seen on the ferry crossings to & from the Outer Hebrides & the Cliffs of Moher.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Seen on the ferry crossings to & from the Outer Hebrides & the Giant's Causeway.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Seen on the ferry crossings to & from the Outer Hebrides & the Cliffs of Moher.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Seen on the ferry crossings to & from the Outer Hebrides & the Cliffs of Moher.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Commonly seen throughout.

Mew (Common) Gull *Larus c. canus*

Commonly seen throughout.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*
Commonly seen along the coasts.

Iceland Gull *Larus g. glaucooides*
Seen at Balranald.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
Seen in the Scottish Highlands & at The Burren.

Glaucous Gull *Larus fuscus*
Seen at Balranald.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*
Seen in the Outer Hebrides, Giant's Causeway & Cliffs of Moher.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
Seen on Outer Hebrides & West Pier in Dublin.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*
Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
Wild type seen on Outer Hebrides & coastal Northern Ireland.

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus*
Seen at many sites throughout.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Seen at many sites throughout.

CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus c. canorus*
Seen at Loch Garten & Outer Hebrides. Heard at Wicklow NP & The Burren NP.

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

Short-eared Owl *Asio f. flammeus*
Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

APODIFORMES: Apodidae

Common Swift *Apus a. apus*
Seen at Grantown & Loch Garten.

PICIFORMES: Picidae

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major pinetorum.*
Seen at Anagash Forest, Loch Garten, Wicklow Hills & Glendalough.

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco t. tinnunculus*
Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco p. peregrinus*
Seen at the Cliffs of Moher.

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius hibernicus*
Seen at Drumore Forest

Eurasian Magpie *Pica p. pica*
Seen in Edinburgh, East Coast Nature Reserve, Glendalough & Cliffs of Moher.

Red-billed Chough Seen at the Cliffs of Moher.	<i>Pyrrhocorax p. pyrrhocorax</i>	Endemic subspecies
Eurasian Jackdaw Commonly seen throughout.	<i>Corvus monedula spermologus</i>	
Rook Seen in the Findhorn Valley, Giant's Causeway, Skerries & the Cliffs of Moher.	<i>Corvus f. frugilegus</i>	
Carrion Crow Seen at Anagach.	<i>Corvus corone</i>	
Hooded Crow Seen Outer Hebrides, Glandalough, East Coast NR & Cliffs of Moher.	<i>Corvus c. cornix</i>	
Common Raven Seen on the Outer Hebrides & Drumore Woods.	<i>Corvus c. corax</i>	

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae

Sky Lark Seen on the Outer Hebrides, Giant's Causeway, East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.	<i>Alauda arvensis scotica</i>	Endemic subspecies
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PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae

Bank Swallow Seen at Avielochan & Balranald.	<i>Riparia r. riparia</i>	
Barn Swallow Commonly seen throughout.	<i>Hirundo r. rustica</i>	
Common House-Martin Seen at Glenshee, Finhorn Valley & Glendalough.	<i>Delichon u. urbicum</i>	

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae

Coal Tit <i>P.a.britannicus</i> seen at Anagach & Nethy Bridge. <i>P.a.hibernicus</i> seen at Wicklow Hills & Glendalough.	<i>Periparus ater britannicus/hibernicus</i>	Endemic subspecies
Crested Tit Seen at Loch Garten.	<i>Lophophanes cristatus scoticus</i>	Endemic subspecies
Eurasian Blue Tit Seen at Anagach, Avielochan, Glen Nevis, East coast NR & Drumore Woods.	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus obscurus</i>	Endemic subspecies
Great Tit Seen at Nethy Bridge, Glen Nevis, Glendalough, East coast NR & Drumore Woods.	<i>Parus major newtowni</i>	Endemic subspecies

PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae

Long-tailed Tit Seen at Glendalough.	<i>Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus</i>	Endemic subspecies
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PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae

Eurasian Treecreeper Seen at Anagach.	<i>Certhia familiaris britannica</i>	Endemic subspecies
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PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae

Eurasian Wren <i>T.t.indigenus</i> commonly seen at most locations in Scotland & Ireland. <i>T.t.hebridensis</i> seen on Outer Hebrides.	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Endemic subspecies
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PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae

Goldcrest Seen at Anagach, Glendalough & Drumore.	<i>Regulus r. regulus</i>	
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PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus t. trochilus*

Commonly seen or heard throughout.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Seen at Drumore Woods & heard at Glendalough.

PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Seen at Balranald, Giant's Causeway & East Coast Nature Reserve.

PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia a. atricapilla*

Seen at Glendalough.

Greater Whitethroat *Sylvia c. communis*

Seen at Giant's Causeway & East Coast Nature Reserve.

PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa s. striata*

Seen at Loch Garten, Glen Nevis & East Coast Nature Reserve.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula melophilus*

Seen at Anagach, Nethy Bridge, Balranald, Glen Nevis, Glendalough, East Coast Nature Reserve, Burren & Drumore.

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola hibernans*

Seen on the Outer Hebrides, Giant's Causeway & East Coast Nature Reserve.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe o. oenanthe*

Seen at Glenshee, Outer Hebrides, Giant's Causeway & The Burren.

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

Ring Ouzel *Turdus t. torquatus*

Seen at Glenshee. Heard in Cairngorm & Findhorn Valley.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus m. merula*

Commonly seen throughout.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos hebridensis/clarkei* **Endemic subspecies**

T.p.clarkei seen at Loch an Eileen, East Coast Nature Reserve & Drumore Woods. Endemic

T.p.hebridensis seen at Balranald.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus v. viscivorus*

Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten & Findhorn Valley.

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus v. vulgaris*

Commonly seen throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae

Dunnock *Prunella modularis hebridium*

Endemic subspecies

Seen at Wicklow Hills & East Coast Nature Reserve.

PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla c. cinerea*

Seen at Anagach, Findhorn & Glendalough.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarelli*

Commonly seen throughout.

Meadow Pipit***Anthus pratensis whistleri***

Seen at Glenshee, Cairngorms, Findhorn Valley, Balranald, Ballintoy, Giants Causeway, Wicklow Hills, East Coast Nature Reserve, the Cliffs of Moher & The Burren.

Tree Pipit***Anthus t. trivialis***

Seen at Loch Garten.

Rock Pipit***Anthus p. petrosus***

Seen at Balranald & Ballintoy, Giant's Causeway, West Pier & Cliffs of Moher.

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae**Reed Bunting*****Emberiza s. schoeniclus***

Seen at Giant's Causeway, East Coast Nature Reserve & The Burren.

Corn Bunting***Emberiza calandra***

Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae**Common Chaffinch*****Fringilla coelebs gengleri*****Endemic subspecies**

Commonly seen throughout.

Eurasian Bullfinch***Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata*****Endemic subspecies**

Seen near in Drumore Woods.

European Greenfinch***Chloris c. chloris***

Seen at Anaagach, Avielochan & East Coast Nature Reserve.

Twite***Linaria flavirostris pipilans*****Endemic subspecies**

Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

Eurasian Linnet***Linaria cannabina autochthona*****Endemic subspecies**

Seen in the Outer Hebrides, Giant's Causeway & East Coast nature Reserve.

Lesser Redpoll***Acanthis cabaret***

Seen at The Burren.

European Goldfinch***Carduelis carduelis britannica***

Seen at Avielochan, Giant's Causeway, Glendalough & East Coast Nature Reserve.

Eurasian Siskin***Spinus spinus***

Seen at Anagach, Avielochan, Nethy Bridge, Loch Garten & Wicklow Hills.

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**House Sparrow*****Passer d. domesticus***

Commonly seen throughout.

Mammal list

Taxonomy follows en.wikipedia.org

Muridae (rats, mice and relatives)

Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*

Seen briefly from the viewing blind near Aviemore.

Sciuridae (squirrels)

Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*

Seen near Aviemore.

Leporidae (hares and rabbits)

Mountain Hare *Lepus timidus*

Seen at Cairngorm NP.

European Hare *Lepus europaeus*

Seen on the Outer Hebrides.

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Seen commonly in the Highlands of Scotland and the Outer Hebrides.

Vespertilionidae (common bats)

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Seen from the viewing blind near Aviemore.

Phocidae (seals)

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*

Seen at Kyle of Lochalsh & around the Outer Hebrides.

Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*

Seen at Kyle of Lochalsh & around the Outer Hebrides.

Mustelidae (mustelids)

European Badger *Meles meles*

Seen from the viewing blind near Aviemore.

Cervidae (deer)

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

Seen several times during the tour.

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*

Seen at several locations in the Highlands & Hebrides.

Fallow Deer *Dama dama*

Seen at Sally Gap in the Wicklow Mountains.

Balaenopteridae

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Castlebay to Oban.

Phocoenidae

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Castlebay to Oban.

Delphinidae (marine dolphins)

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Uig to Lochmaddy.

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

Seen on the ferry crossing from Castlebay to Oban.

AMPHIBIAN LIST

Common Frog

Seen in Cairngorms NP.

Rana temporaria

FISH LIST

Basking Shark

Seen by the guide on the ferry crossing between Castlebay & Oban.

Cetorhinus maximus

BUTTERFLY LIST

Pieridae (Pierid butterflies)

Green-veined White

Seen at several sites.

Pieris napi

Nymphalidae (Nymphalid butterflies)

Red Admiral

Seen on the Outer Hebrides

Vanessa atalanta

Painted Lady

Seen at the Cliffs of Moher.

Vanessa pardeni

Speckled Wood

Seen at Glendalough.

Pararge aegeria