

BEGINNERS' BIRDWATCHING



"A Black-throated Diver is in the bay beside us, with a Red-throated Diver in behind it; a good opportunity to make comparisons. Unexpected encounters like that throughout the week, will give us ample opportunities to hone our birdwatching skills"
John Grierson

Dates Sat 3 - Sat 10 Sep 2016
Price £895
Deposit £150 Single Supp £100 (ensuite rooms only)

Leaders John Grierson plus one from our Speyside Team
Weather Varies from cold to warm and sunny (8°-20°C), with less rainfall than much of Scotland, but snow possible in the mountains
Walking Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 4 miles
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects Biting midges can be a nuisance, so bring repellent
Accom Double (ensuite), twin (ensuite) and single (ensuite and non ensuite) rooms
Group 12
Day 1 Arrive in the Cairngorms 7 nights at the Steading
Days 2-7 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including the Cairngorms, the Moray Firth, Dava Moor and Abernethy Forest
Day 8 Depart after breakfast

Just some of what we hope to see:

Golden Eagle	Red Kite
Peregrine	Black-throated Diver
Crested Tit	Red-throated Diver
Scottish Crossbill	Bottlenose Dolphin
Hen Harrier	Pine Marten
Dipper	Badger

Simon Eaves: Juvenile Osprey
Mary Braddock: Crested Tit

New to wildlife watching? Why not improve your skills, with hints and tips from guides who love to help you learn - and see some great birds and mammals of the Cairngorms?

- Pick up useful identification tips from our expert guides
- Local specialities - Crested Tit, Scottish Crossbill and Osprey
- Coastal visit for terns, gulls and eclipse plumage ducks
- Divers and grebes
- Learn to identify species using bird calls
- An evening for Pine Martens and Badgers too
- Come by train or plane with station/airport pickups

1 Dinner together on Saturday evening starts the holiday.

2-7 Specially created to help you gain confidence in identifying birds, this is a week to ask as many questions as you like, no matter how simple you think they may sound. We love helping you learn and whether it is a bird call you don't recognise, a raptor high overhead, or the fine art of telling a Meadow Pipit from a Tree Pipit we can help!

We'll tailor the week to what you need, but also find exciting new birds for you, so while picking out the difference between Great Tit and Coal Tit calls, we'll show you Crested Tit as well!

Raptors can cause great confusion, so grab this opportunity to become familiar with them - with young on the wing they are at their most numerous. Learn to tell that distant Golden Eagle from a Buzzard (well most of the time!), tell a Sparrowhawk from a Kestrel and we'll hope to find Peregrine, Hen Harrier and Merlin, all of which become easier with experience.

The most difficult bird of all is the crossbill, with three species possible - even the experts can't always be sure which is which!

The meandering River Spey and its rushing tributaries hold Dipper and Grey Wagtail, while

abundant Curlew, Redshank, Lapwing and Oystercatcher call to their young. It's a great mix of exciting birds in beautiful glens, forests and moorland scenery. We'll see Red-throated Diver and Slavonian Grebe on the coast and learn to identify Sandwich, Little and the more difficult Common and Arctic Tern. If you are really keen, we can do the gulls too! Ospreys fish in the surf here and ducks are challenging, with the males in 'eclipse' plumage.

We'll also seek out the different species of deer and hare that can be seen and on one evening we'll visit our hide and look for Pine Marten and Badger - perhaps the best view you'll ever have.

8 After breakfast on Saturday we say our farewells.

