

SCOTTISH MAMMALS IN SUMMER



"High summer in the Highlands is a great time to look for mammals; with Pine Marten, Badger, Fox, Brown and Mountain Hare, Roe and Red Deer all possible, as well as Otters, seals and cetaceans around the coasts. This really is a great all round trip!"
Craig Round

Dates Sat 3 - Sat 10 Aug 2019
Price £1295
Deposit £250 Single Supp £100

Leaders Craig Round and Kate Mennie

Weather The weather can vary enormously. During a typical week in this season we would expect mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range of 15-25°C. It could be cooler on the boat trips. You may want to bring sunscreen.

Walking Time will be spent patiently watching and waiting with only occasional gentle walks of up to 1-2 miles. Walking boots are recommended, but walking shoes are fine

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8

Insects Biting midges can occasionally be a nuisance by lochs and shores, especially in the west

Boats Boat trips are in relatively sheltered waters and last 2 hrs (Moray Firth), 2½ hrs (West Coast)

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at our very special, delightfully furnished converted barn, the Steading.

General Most days will finish very late - when our target mammals are most active - but will be compensated by late breakfasts

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Pine Marten	Red Deer
Badger	Roe Deer
Otter	Harbour Porpoise
Common Seal	Golden Eagle
Bottlenose Dolphin	Crested Tit
Minke Whale	Osprey
Red Squirrel	Black-throated Diver
Mountain Hare	Great Spotted Woodpecker
Pipistrelle Bat	
Mountain Goat	

The first holiday of its kind and you tell us, still the best - with an evening hide visit, chance to see Beaver and two boat trips. We won't leave out other special wildlife of the Highlands either.

- A superb selection of Scottish mammals and other wildlife
- Exclusive use of our evening wildlife watching hide for Pine Marten and Badger
- An inshore boat trip on the Cromarty Firth for Bottlenose Dolphins
- Exciting evening trip to see our newest mammal - European Beaver!
- A West Coast boat trip for Minke Whale, Harbour Porpoise, seals and more
- Skuas, divers, shearwaters and a good chance of Otter
- Eagles, Ospreys, Crested Tit, crossbills and Red Squirrels in Speyside

Dinner together on Saturday evening starts the holiday, followed by coffee as we discuss the coming week.

2-7 We may start the week with walks near our delightful Steading accommodation, where pale-tailed Red Squirrels can be busy in the tree-tops, and confiding Roe Deer often browse in the meadows. Or we may head up into the wild uplands in search of Mountain Hare. They are grey-brown at this time of year but may keep white feet or ears! Small groups of ancient Wild Goats are here and Golden Eagles hunt the mountain slopes while on the skyline the dramatic silhouette of Red Deer antlers encapsulate so much about the grandeur of the Highlands.

After dinner on the second day, we'll visit our baited hide to see elusive Pine Marten. Full of

character, this cat-sized member of the stoat family emerges from the forest, revealing bushy tail and cream-coloured bib - a wonderful animal and a highlight of the week. This is also a chance to enjoy Badgers at very close quarters and perhaps deer too.

In the ancient pines of Abernethy Forest we'll look for Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill, with the chance of Common or Parrot Crossbill too, but Capercaillie and Black Grouse are very elusive at this time of year as they are mid-moult.

On Cairngorm's slopes, we'll have a close encounter with Reindeer. Reintroduced many years ago, we will walk in with a guide to feed these delightful and friendly animals, while learning about their adaptations to the cold climate in which they live.





One evening we have the exciting chance to see Scotland's newest mammal - European Beaver. Introduced into Tayside they are doing well and are showing regularly at certain sites. We will learn how they are affecting the landscape and hopefully get to see one or two as they come out to feed at dusk. Using a bat detector we will see what species are flitting around the trees - Pipistrelle is most likely but other species such as Daubenton's are possible too.

On another day we will visit a private Estate for a fascinating insight into how such an area survives these days. This includes a visit to a large area of moorland, where we'll see Red Deer and Red Grouse - both important species for such an estate and a focus on land management.

We'll spend a day on the Black Isle in search of Bottlenose Dolphins, both from land and on an exciting two hour boat trip. There's nothing more thrilling than the sight of these powerful mammals breaching clear of the water and we stand good chances as they frequently come very close to shore at Chanonry Point and on our boat ride. We have a fast and very powerful boat, able to cover large distances if the animals are some distance away, and sometimes they seem to enjoy following in the wake or bow-riding. We'll also watch for Common Seal, Harbour Porpoise and numerous seabirds, including various tern species, Eider and auks.

Otters are at home in both fresh and seawater and we'll search for signs and wait patiently

at favoured lochs for a sighting of these sleek, playful creatures. While we know of a good freshwater loch near the Moray Coast, the tranquil West Coast sea-lochs offer our best chance. The scenery becomes more and more spectacular as you travel west and Otter activity here is linked more to the tides than the time of day, making them likely to be out in daylight. We have enjoyed wonderful sightings when they catch something too big to handle at sea and they bring it ashore to deal with. Birds such as Black-throated Diver and White-tailed Eagle are also likely here, plus Rock Dove, Twite, Raven and maybe Golden Eagle too.

On this special West Coast day we'll also experience an exciting boat journey into the realm of the Minke Whale. Heading out to sea to the north of Skye the scenery all around is breathtaking and we'll surely see hundreds of Manx Shearwater plus Gannets, Kittiwakes and Guillemots. We're likely to see Harbour Porpoise and both Grey and Common Seals too - but we'll look out for 'hurries' of Kittiwakes and other birds over the water signifying a mass of fish below the surface and this is often where a Minke Whale may be found - a thrilling experience.

8 After breakfast on Saturday we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Glen Feshie in time for an evening meal and a chat about our plans for the coming week.
7 nights at the Steading
- Days 2-7** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Abernethy Forest, Dava Moor, the Cairngorms, the Moray Firth and West Coast
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells and depart

Geraint Young: Pine Marten
Craig Round: Bottlenose Dolphin
Roy Atkins: Common Seal
Tim Drew: Otter
Jane Hope: Red Squirrel
Colin Scott: Mountain Hare
Andy Crofts: Badger at Hide

