

MULL AND SPEYSIDE IN SUMMER



"I visited Mull for the first time since childhood recently and it still retains its magic, even in the rain! Stunning scenery on a magnificent scale, there's never a dull moment, Mull just keeps on delivering spectacular wildlife."
Sally Nowell

Dates Tue 12 - Fri 22 Jun 2018

Price £1,895

Deposit £300 **Single Supp** £200

Leaders Sally Nowell and Louise Hughes

Weather Mixture of sun and showers, but cooler on boat trips and in the mountains (10° - 25°C)

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. Our Cairngorms walk is more steep and uneven, but low-level unguided alternatives are available

Walks on Lunga and Staffa, although approx only 1 mile long, are more challenging and only suitable for those with good mobility and balance. Walking boots will be needed.

Boat Trips Our boat trip to Lunga lasts 6 hours, including 3 hours onshore. Our trip to Iona is a short 10 min ferry ride

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11

Insects Biting midges will be encountered

Accom Ballintean Mountain Lodge - double, twin and single ensuite rooms, the last single room will be in a self-contained flat 50 metres from the main building.
Isle of Mull Hotel - double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

White-tailed Eagle	Dotterel
Golden Eagle	Raven
Hen Harrier	Peregrine
Short-eared Owl	Osprey
Crested Tit	Puffin
Scottish Crossbill	Arctic Skua
Ring Ouzel	Guillemot
Red-throated Diver	Razorbill
Red Kite	Otter
Ptarmigan	Pine Marten

Mull in summer plus Speyside - Britain's very best and, we think, striking wildlife, including eagles, Otters and a boat trip for "up close and personal" views of Puffins and seabirds.

- Amazing opportunities to see White-tailed and Golden Eagle in spectacular habitat
- Otter spotting wherever we go
- Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier and divers
- A trip to Iona with chance to hear and, who knows, even see the elusive Corncrake
- Treshnish boat trip for close-up Puffins and loads more
- Scarce mountain birds in the Cairngorms
- An evening in our 'dusk watch' hide for Pine Marten and Badger

I Dinner together on Tuesday starts the holiday at the Steading.

2-4 In Speyside's ancient Caledonian Pines, amongst gnarled and lichen festooned 'granny' Pines, there'll be Scottish Crossbill, Crested Tit, Black Grouse and wary Capercaillie. The woods are also full of summer migrants at this time of year, such as Cuckoo, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Tree Pipit and Wood Warblers giving out their fantastic pulsating 'trilling' song, from nearby birches and fragments of oak woodland.

Ptarmigan are well camouflaged amidst the boulders of the Cairngorms, with Dotterel on the plateau and some fantastic views to be had from the high tops. On wild moors there are Ring Ouzel, Wheatear, Red Grouse, Merlin

and breeding waders such as Golden Plover and Curlew. Moorland lochs hold Red-throated and Black-throated Divers, now in full summer plumage and exquisitely plumaged Slavonian Grebes, always a real gem of Speyside! Ospreys may be busy at their nest sites, Dipper, Grey Wagtail and Common Sandpiper will be on our target list and we'll also visit our hide in the evening for Pine Marten, Badger and not forgetting Wood Mouse!

A scattering of Eider, Red-breasted Merganser and maybe a lingering Long-tailed Duck or Arctic Skua will be in the Moray Firth, whilst Red Kite and Common Buzzard circle overhead. The shingle shores are busy with Arctic, Common and Sandwich Terns, whilst migrant waders such as Redshank, Bar-tailed Godwit and Dunlin are



"Guests are always astounded by the diversity in Strathspey; forests, rivers and mountains all combine to provide the ideal habitat for a plethora of Scotland's best flora and fauna. Combining Strathspey with Mull showcases just what amazing wildlife Scotland has to offer."

Sally Nowell



bound for Arctic breeding sites and we'll also spend some time scanning for the Moray Firth's famous population of Bottlenose Dolphins, which can be seen here offshore.

5-10 We journey through stunning west coast scenery via Fort William and Loch Linnhe, to catch an afternoon ferry to Mull; during our short boat crossing looking out for passing seabirds and possible cetaceans, such as Harbour Porpoise.

Here, from our seashore base, Gannets go by, whilst offshore Red-throated Diver and Great Northern Diver linger and we'll watch for majestic White-tailed and Golden Eagles now busy feeding young.

Mull is probably 'the' best place in Britain to see White-tailed Eagles, with around 16 pairs of this magnificent bird of prey nesting on the island and Golden Eagles at their highest density in Europe.

Around the coast, Common Seals haul out on the offshore rocky islets and skerries and we'll spend time quietly seeking out some of the island's Otters, whilst Greenshank and Common Sandpiper and noisy 'kleeping' Oystercatcher, keep us company on weedy rocks. Raven and Peregrine patrol the dramatic and imposing Gribun Cliffs and Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl can be seen hunting low over the island's moorlands, grassland and pine plantations.



We'll visit the stunning white shell sand beaches and famous Abbey on Iona, where Corncrakes call from hay meadows full of wildflowers, alongside a clear azure blue sea.

A highlight will be our day out on the Treshnish Isles. On the boat trip over to the islands, we'll be alert for Minke Whales and also watch out for Black Guillemot and the odd Great Skua, Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel. We take in the island of Staffa and the basalt columns of 'Fingal's Cave', before landing on Lunga Island with its fantastic seabird colony.

Rock Dove and Twite are here and we'll wander amongst hundreds of Puffins, green-eyed Shags, Guillemots and Razorbills on the Harp Rock. Fulmar cackle, Kittiwake cries echo up from narrow chasms and Arctic Skuas patrol offshore, amongst the flocks of wheeling seabirds ... it's a wonderful place!

On the last day we'll bring you back to Speyside and the Steading for the night.

After breakfast on Friday we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive in Glen Feshie
4 nights at the Steading
- Days 2-4 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration throughout Speyside, including Abernethy Forest, the Cairngorms and the Moray Firth
- Day 5 Journey through stunning scenery, before catching the ferry to Mull
5 nights at Isle of Mull Hotel
- Days 6-9 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration on Mull, including a boat trip to the Treshnish Isles
- Day 10 Ferry back to mainland then drive to Speyside birdwatching enroute
1 night at the Steading
- Day 11 Depart after breakfast

Craig Round: Otter, White-tailed Eagle, Gannets
Simon Eaves: Lunga, Puffins
Mark Denman: Crested Tit