

NORTH WALES



"I really love the hotel and the little village of Betws-y-Coed on this trip and with Dippers and Grey Wagtails along the river there, it feels like you're really in the heart of the National Park."
Simon Eaves

Dates Sat 11 - Sat 18 May 2024
Price £2,125
Deposit £400 Single Supp £350

Leaders Simon Eaves and Darren Rees
Weather The weather will be mixed (10°-20°C). Expect sun and showers, with gusty wind on exposed headlands
Walking Varied, from wide forest tracks, to clifftop paths. Walking boots are recommended
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects Not anticipated this early in the season
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Chough	Guillemot
Hen Harrier	Razorbill
Peregrine	Puffin
Red Kite	Great Egret
Osprey	Avocet
Arctic Tern	Black-tailed Godwit
Black Grouse	Dipper
Redstart	Lesser Whitethroat
Pied Flycatcher	Whinchat
Wood Warbler	Black Guillemot
Ring Ouzel	Red Squirrel

Come and explore the rugged mountains, wild moorlands, 'hanging oak' woods and busy seabird colonies of North Wales - all from our base in beautiful Snowdonia

- Anglesey for tern colonies, plus South Stack for Choughs, Puffins and seabirds
- Welsh 'hanging oaks' at Ynys-hir for Wood Warbler, Redstart and Pied Flycatcher
- Based in beautiful Snowdonia National Park
- Classic upland species: Dipper, Ring Ouzel, Peregrine, Wheatear
- Traditional stronghold of Red Kites - plus new kids on the block - Ospreys!
- Dee Estuary for wetland and shore birds
- Chance of sky-dancing Hen Harriers on the Ruabon Moors

We meet at our hotel in Betws-y-Coed, in the heart of Snowdonia National Park, where Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Goosander and Common Sandpiper can be seen on the river just over the road. The scenic woodland walks close by may yield Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Nuthatch and assorted tits. Snowdonia is an ancient land of wild mountains and wooded valleys; of rocky cwms and tumbling streams, with a bird list that spans woodland and montane species.

2-7 We may start our exploration of North Wales on Anglesey. The RSPB's South Stack Reserve offers spectacular cliff scenery and we'll get great views of the seabird colonies, with masses of Guillemots and Razorbills and a few delightful Puffins, as well as Fulmar, Peregrines,

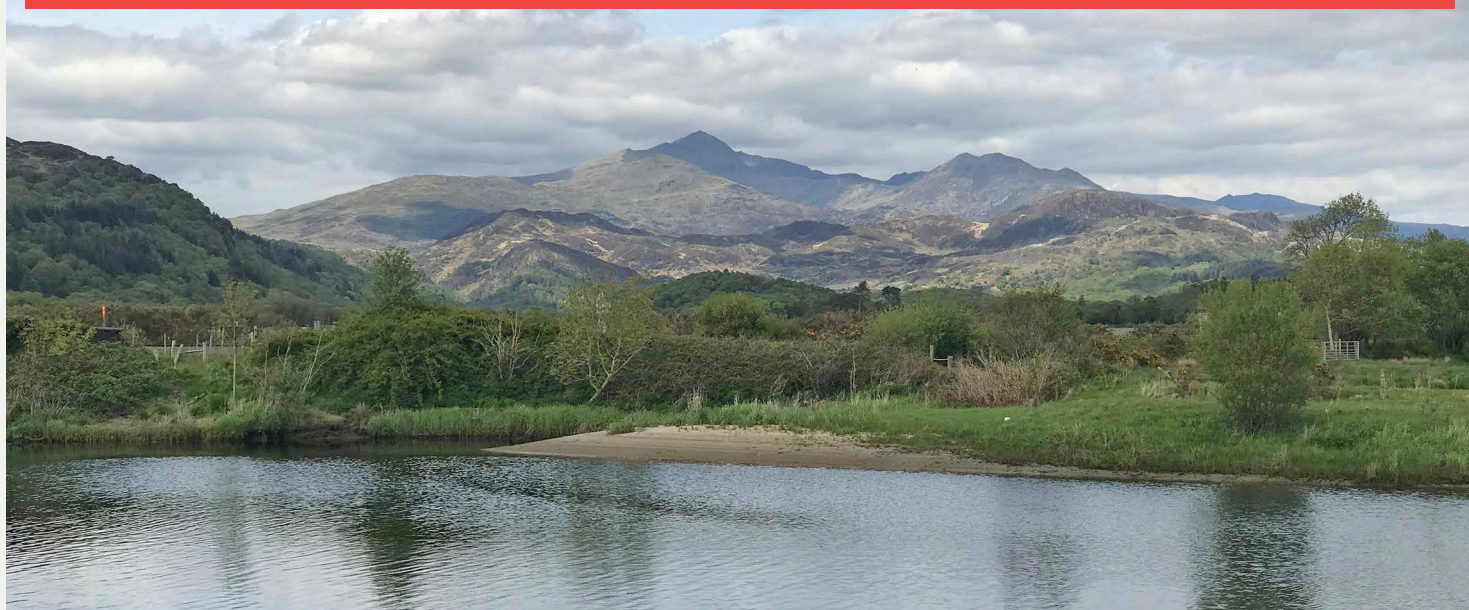
Ravens and sought-after Chough. Adders are also a possibility here, as we enjoy the coastal flowers such as Thrift, Sea Campion and the lovely Spring Squill.

Elsewhere on Anglesey, at Cemlyn Bay we'll enjoy the comings and goings of the tern colonies, busy with Sandwich, Common and Arctic Terns - Roseate is a rare bird here now, but you never know your luck - we've also seen Mediterranean Gulls on our visits. We'll follow in the footsteps of famous artist Charles Tunnicliffe at the delightful Cefni estuary, looking for Whimbrel and Black-tailed Godwits and at nearby Newborough Warren we hope to see cheeky Red Squirrels.

One day will be spent on the Dee Estuary, one of the UK's premier birding locations for wetland and shorebirds and we'll spend time exploring its



"The range of habitats in North Wales is really something special, from the lush green woodlands to the varied coastal habitats and the upland hills, it all adds up to an interesting diversity of wildlife."
Simon Eaves



marshes, busy with Avocet, Lapwing and Redshank, plus wildfowl such as Shoveler, Teal and Gadwall. In May we've been lucky with Garganey, Spoonbill and Wood Sandpiper and Great Egrets seem to be making this their home these days. On our round-up of the north shore we'll also visit Gronant beach, the site of Wales' only Little Tern colony.

We'll need an early morning start when we drive to the Ruabon Moors to watch Black Grouse, with the males vying with each other in the hope of attracting the females. These and other moors such as Migneint, also support populations of Red Grouse, Curlew, Skylark, Wheatear, Stonechat and Merlin.

Perhaps our greatest prize though, will be a glimpse of Hen Harriers, that still cling on as a rare breeder in Wales and we shall spend time scanning hunting areas and if very lucky, may even see them performing their spectacular sky-dancing.

The rugged slopes of the Ogwen valley and Aber Falls are home to Ring Ouzels, as well as rare breeding Twite and at the Conwy estuary, there are more wetland birds to be found, so expect Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Shelduck and Red-breasted Merganser amongst many others. Nearby, the distinctive headland of the Great Orme is always worth a visit for its resident Choughs (and feral goats) and seabird ledges and there's always the possibility of an unusual migrant – maybe a Whinchat or Yellow Wagtail?

We'll have a long day to the southern perimeter of Snowdonia and the Dyfi estuary. The RSPB's Ynys-hir Reserve has a picturesque mix of woodland and saltmarsh, with birds such as Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler and Redstart, as well as waders and wildfowl including Little Egret, Lapwing, Snipe, Redshank and Teal.

Ospreys now breed nearby too, a wonderful addition to the list of birds of prey, that includes Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and for many people the most Welsh of birds, the Red Kite. The Kite's tale is one of conservation success, with re-introduced birds now seen across the UK. However, we'll take time to look for some of the original population that have always called Mid-Wales their home. What better sight than this elegant red-tailed raptor soaring over the 'hanging oaks' of Wales.

8 After breakfast we bid our fond farewells to this delightful area.



Outline Itinerary

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| Day 1 | Arrive Betws-y-Coed.
7 nights at The Royal Oak Hotel |
| Days 2-7 | An exploration of North Wales to include South Stack and Newbrough on Anglesey, the Dee Estuary and its marshes, Conwy valley and estuary, moors of north east Wales, plus the RSPB's Ynys-hir Reserve |
| Day 8 | Depart after breakfast |

Steve Cullum: Black Grouse
Chris Piper: Snowdon, Common Blue, Sedge Warbler
Colin Scott: Dipper
Roy Atkins: Pied Flycatcher, Red Kite
Mary Braddock: Hen Harrier

