

RELAX IN THE HIGHLANDS



"The sounds of autumn fill me with joy, as we hear the stags roaring on hillsides, huge flocks of Pink-footed Geese calling overhead, the trumpeting of Whooper Swans and the squabbling of Redwing and Fieldfare as they greedily refuel on ripe Rowan berries."
Sally Nowell

Dates Mon 4 - Mon 11 Oct 2027

Price £3,610

Deposit £700 Single Supp £950

Leader Sally Nowell

Weather We expect mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range 5-25°C. It can be wet and windy, or we can be lucky and have lovely warm weather. Warm layers, including an effective waterproof jacket and trousers are advised. Hats and gloves are also recommended.

Walking We shall take regular but short walks, generally on easy tracks over even ground. Walking boots are recommended. Bring walking poles if you find these helpful.

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

Insects Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year.

Accom Comfortable double, twin and doubles as single ensuite accommodation.

Group 6

Just some of what we hope to see:

Greenshank	Scaup
Purple Sandpiper	Pink-footed Goose
Fieldfare	Barnacle Goose
Redwing	Pintail
White-tailed Eagle	Eider Duck
Golden Eagle	Razorbill
Pintail	Black Guillemot
Hen Harrier	Gannet
Peregrine	Raven
Black-throated Diver	Arctic Skua
Red-throated Diver	Common Seal
Great Northern Diver	Grey Seal
Slavonian Grebe	Otter
Whooper Swan	Red Deer
Long-tailed Duck	Red Squirrel
Common Scoter	

Autumn in the Highlands is a stunning time, the trees are ablaze with colour and our winter visitors are arriving, with Pink-footed Geese, Redwings and Fieldfares sometimes pouring in in their thousands!

- A single centre relaxed Highland wildlife holiday
- Witness the Red Deer rut
- Opportunities for spectacular Golden and White-tailed Eagle
- Lots of varied habitats, with great wader and seawatching
- Shorter days and easy walks in stunning locations
- Visit the Highlands when the forests are glowing with colour
- Stay in a cozy, award-winning family run hotel

We meet in Inverness and make our way to our base for the week, a 25-minute drive. Guests can drive directly to the hotel if they wish. We have chosen a very special hotel for this holiday, Coul House Hotel, which is described as 'Deliciously Relaxing'. This is a family run hotel hidden away in some beautiful grounds and in this beautifully restored 18th century house there are some exquisite bedrooms and a beautiful dining space.

This holiday is about much more than enjoying Highland wildlife, it's also about enjoying some wonderful Highland cuisine and hospitality in some truly special surroundings.

After acquainting ourselves with our beautiful hotel and grounds we settle in and look forward to our first dinner together.



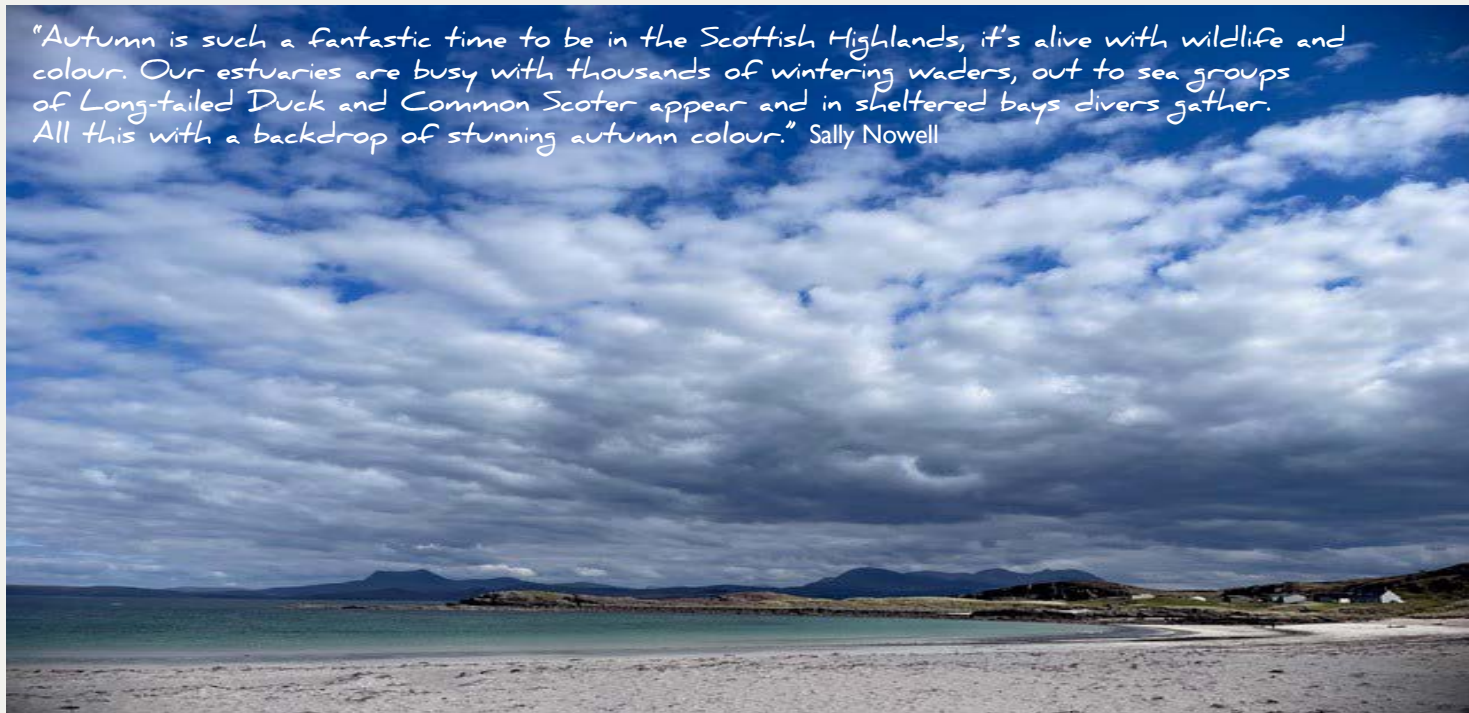
2-7 From our base we shall explore some of the fabulous birding areas north, west and east of Inverness. Our holiday is timed to take in the delights of the Red Deer rut, the arrival of winter migrants, which may include Waxwing and the fantastic autumn colours.

On our first day, we shall stay close to home for a relaxed day visiting secluded local lochs and rivers in search of Red Squirrel, Crested Tit, crossbill, Red Kite and with luck, we might even catch sight of leaping Atlantic Salmon. We shall wander some of the paths around beautiful Rogie Falls, Loch Achilty and Strathconon admiring the magnificent scenery and hoping for our first eagle sighting.

During the week we shall enjoy the breathtaking autumn colours and in this part of the world the varied woodlands we visit are bound to glow with



"Autumn is such a fantastic time to be in the Scottish Highlands, it's alive with wildlife and colour. Our estuaries are busy with thousands of wintering waders, out to sea groups of Long-tailed Duck and Common Scoter appear and in sheltered bays divers gather. All this with a backdrop of stunning autumn colour." Sally Nowell



golden Birches, red Rowans and butter yellow Aspen. The woodlands, fields and hedgerows provide some excellent fruits, nuts and seeds for mixed finch flocks, Siskins and Redpolls and hungry winter migrants such as Scandinavian Blackbirds, Redwings and Fieldfares.

We shall visit local glens, including the spectacular Glen Affric, in search of Golden and White-tailed Eagle and to listen out for the roar of Red Deer Stags, as we are here at the peak of the rutting season. If we are lucky we might catch sight of a hunting Hen Harrier or Merlin.

We shall also visit the areas along the far north-east coast. There are beautiful beaches and vast estuaries, all of which attract birds throughout the year, but at this time the coastal areas should be alive with activity.

We shall visit Loch Fleet and RSPB Nigg Bay Reserve. On the right tide, we can get great views of waders and the vast numbers of wildfowl that spend the winter here. This is another great location to look out for raptors, including Red Kite, Merlin and Hen Harrier. Waders are on the move and our firths are a favoured stopping-off spot for them. Expect to see Black and Bar-tailed Godwits, Greenshank, Purple Sandpiper, Sanderling and Curlew Sandpiper, all possible at this time of year. Our wintering seaduck will be here too, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter and maybe Velvet and Surf Scoter as well.

This can also be a good time to spot offshore birds, such as Manx and Sooty Shearwater; Great and Arctic Skua and maybe even a Pomarine Skua! We'll make our way to Tarbat Ness, a great area to look for Whooper Swans, which will have arrived in good numbers and

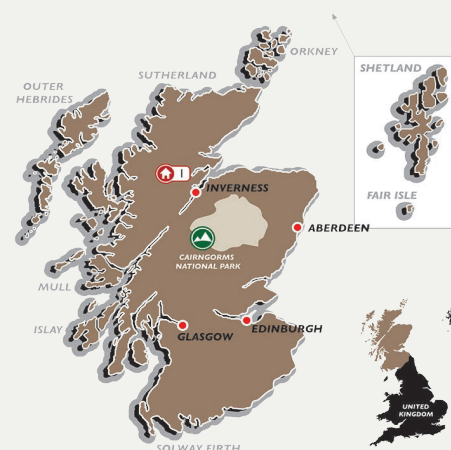
seeing them grazing in the fields is always a thrill, as is witnessing the thousands of Pink-footed Geese heading to roost in the late afternoon. This is such a scenic spot where we have the chance to see Tree Sparrow, Stonechat and Yellowhammer, as well as look out to sea, watching Gannets and scanning for divers.

Along the coastline and rivers we shall look for Otter and particularly on our trip over to the west coast we shall keep our eyes peeled for these charming mammals, as they bob and weave their way along the rocky shores.

On our visit west we make a stunning circuit through the mountains and some of Scotland's most breathtaking scenery. We shall take a leisurely drive, stopping regularly to scan for waders, eagles and divers, or simply to admire the scenery and the mountains in their glorious autumn colours. We shall also take time to call in at the fascinating Gairloch Museum, with its replica croft house and amazing original lighthouse lens.

Our week will be taken at a leisurely pace with some short walks on even ground. This holiday provides an ideal opportunity to relax and slow down, soak up the atmosphere of the Highlands and enjoy immersing ourselves in the special wildlife of the area.

8 We leave our hotel and make our way back to Inverness to begin return journeys home.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet in Inverness and make our way to our hotel further North
7 nights Coul House Hotel, Contin
- Days 2-7** Exploration of areas north, east and west of Inverness, including Rogie Falls, Loch Achilty, Strathconon, Glen Affric, Loch Fleet and RSPB Nigg Bay, with a Red Deer rut for good measure
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells

Jane Hope: Red Deer
Sally Nowell: Mellon Udrigle, Coul House, Redwing
Trevor Tippler: Eider
Malcolm Hopkins: Sanderling
Julian Sykes: Long-tailed Duck

