

# SCOTTISH MAMMALS IN SUMMER



"With Pine Marten and Badger, Red and Roe Deer, Brown and Mountain Hare, cetaceans and seals off the coasts, as well as Otters and a variety of birds and other wildlife, it's easy to see why this trip is so popular."

Duncan Macdonald

Dates Sat 4 - Sat 11 Aug 2018  
 Price £1,265  
 Deposit £200 Single Supp £100

Leaders Craig Round and Duncan Macdonald

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 a night drive and boat trips. We focus on mammals, but won't leave out the birds and other special wildlife of the Scottish Highlands.

- A superb selection of Scottish wildlife
- Exclusive use of our evening wildlife watching hide
- An inshore boat trip for Bottlenose Dolphins
- A spotlighting night drive on a private Estate
- A West Coast boat trip for Minke Whale and more
- Skuas, divers, shearwaters and seals
- Eagles, Ospreys and good chance of Otter

**I** 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 at the feeders 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! Golden Eagles hunt the mountain slopes here and on the skyline the dramatic silhouette of Red Deer antlers encapsulates so much about the grandeur of the Highlands.

After dinner 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 Abemethy 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 shall 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. Late one night, using 4x4 vehicles and powerful spotlights, we'll visit a private Estate in search of Fox, Badger, deer and owls. We have been lucky to see Long-eared Owl



"The sea off the West coast of Scotland is rich for cetaceans and our boat trip is a highlight. We look for Minke Whale, Harbour Porpoise and Common Dolphin, with seabirds such as shearwaters, auks and skuas keeping us excited while we wait for the blow!" Duncan Macdonald



in the past and sometimes Pine Marten appear. Using a bat detector we shall see what species are flitting around the trees - Pipistrelle is most likely, but occasionally we find Brown Long-eared Bats too.

On another day we shall visit a different 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 them and a focus of 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 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. 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

**Mike Hems:** Pine Marten  
**Craig Round:** Bottlenose Dolphin  
**Andy Croft:** Badger  
**Jessie Brown:** Bottlenose Dolphin  
**Jane Hope:** Cairngorm Reindeer  
**Roy Atkins:** Common Seal  
**Mark Denman:** Red Squirrel

