

# NORTH WALES



"Watching a Hen Harrier sky-dancing was my highlight of our last trip here - a spectacular sight as it looped over and over - showing off to the female watching from nearby. I really hope we can repeat the experience, as well as enjoy the superb displaying Black Grouse at their lek early in the morning."  
Roy Atkins

Dates	Sat 12 - Sat 19 May 2018
Price	£1,495
Deposit	£250    Single Supp £200
Leaders	Roy Atkins and Darren Rees
Weather	The weather will be mixed (10-20C). 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

Come and explore the moorlands, hanging oak-woods, wetlands and seabird colonies of North Wales - all from our base in beautiful Snowdonia

- Visit 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!
- Early start for some of UK's biggest Black Grouse leks
- Chance of sky-dancing Hen Harriers on the Ruabon Moors

## Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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 in 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 we hope for some good views of 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 at the tern colonies. There will be plenty of Sandwich and Arctic Terns and a few Common too, but Roseate is a rare bird here now - but you never know your luck as they do appear from time to time. We may visit nearby marshlands and perhaps make a stop at Newborough to search for delightful Red Squirrels.

Being in one base, we shall be able to keep our itinerary flexible, as occasionally rarities turn up at this time of year, but one day will be spent on the Dee Estuary, one of the UK's premier





*"The variety of habitats we visit on this trip makes for a very varied experience, with some excellent wetlands teeming with birds, through to fabulous coastal bird colonies and beautiful oak woodlands - and of course spectacular Snowdonia itself - and all at a nice relaxed pace." Roy Atkins*

birding locations for wetland and shorebirds and we'll spend time exploring its marshes, to look for waders such as Black-tailed Godwit, Avocet, Lapwing and Redshank, plus wildfowl such as Shoveler and Gadwall. May can be a good month for Spoonbill or scarcer passage waders and Great Egrets seem to be making this their home these days! We may also visit Wales' only Little Tern colony.

We'll need an early morning start when we drive to the Ruabon Moors to watch Black Grouse at their lek. The males will be vying with each other in the hope of attracting the females at some of the biggest leks in the UK. These moors also support populations of Red Grouse, Curlew, Skylark, Wheatear, Stonechat and Whinchat. Perhaps our greatest prize though, will be a glimpse of Hen Harriers that have traditionally frequented the area and we shall spend time scanning hunting areas and if very lucky may even see them performing their spectacular sky-dancing.

Another possibility is Red Kite. The Red Kite's story is a more successful one, with re-introduced birds now seen across the UK, but 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.

We shall follow the river Conwy down to its estuary, where more wetland birds can be found, so expect Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Shelduck and Red-breasted Merganser amongst

many others. If time allows, we shall continue to Llandudno and walk up on to Great Orme in search of late migrants such as Yellow Wagtail and Whinchat. We'll also hope to see the resident Choughs and there's always the possibility of something scarce - we've seen Dotterel at this time of year! We'll also visit one of the world's biggest slate quarries to look for Ring Ouzel.

The RSPB's Ynys-hir Reserve on the Dyfi estuary, has a picturesque mix of woodland and saltmarsh, with birds such as Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Redstart and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, 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, with luck, Merlin.

East of Snowdonia, is Clocaenog Forest. Clocaenog is part of the greater Hiraethog Forest which covers 15000 acres, with a varied landscape of forest, open moorland, rivers and a beautiful lake. If time permits we'll walk the quiet trails to look for woodland birds such as crossbill, Siskin and possibly Goshawk.

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



### Outline Itinerary

- 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 Newburgh on Anglesey, the Dee Estuary and its marshes, Conwy valley and estuary, moors of north east Wales and the forest of Clocaenog, plus the RSPB's Ynys-hir Reserve
- Day 8 Depart after breakfast

**Jane Hope:** Black Grouse  
**Colin Scott:** Osprey  
**Craig Round:** Arctic Tern  
**Yerpo:** Redstart  
**Mary Braddock:** Hen Harrier  
**Mark Denman:** Red Squirrel  
**Mark Medcalf:** Pied Flycatcher  
**Anonymous:** Ring Ouzel

