

Scottish Highlands & Islands Species List | June 7 – 18, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Dave Mehlman with local guides Ian Ford and Jenna Berry. Our clients included Dave, Dawn, Deb, Ellen, Lisa, Lorraine, Jim, Kathleen, Kim, Mary, Philip, Tony, and Will.

This wonderful adventure took an intrepid group, expertly guided by Ian and Jenna from Heatherlea Birdwatching, through the vast and beautiful highlands of Scotland with a memorable few days on the Isle of Mull at the end. The group experienced all forms of weather possible, from sunny and warm to the classic Scottish dreich, but we never stopped exploring and looking for birds, wildlife, plants, and critters of all kind. The tour included two excellent off-shore boat trips, both experiences to be remembered. The first, for which we had to split into two groups, was a half day boat trip from MacDuff on the Moray coast to the famous Troup Head RSPB preserve. Here, we got our first exposure to puffins, Razorbills, guillemots (both Black and Common, the latter of which is known on the left side of the pond as the Common Murre), seals, and Northern Gannets. Many, many, many gannets, some of which demonstrated their diving proficiency quite closely when Captain Harold fed them on the return trip—a memorable highlight of the tour for many.

The second boat trip was an almost all-day tour of the Treshnish Isles on the Turus Mara (Gaelic for sea tours) to visit Staffa, Lunga, and a few of the other islets. Though not able to land on Staffa due to dock construction, we admired its impressive basalt columns and the legendary Fingal's Cave (which inspired Felix Mendelssohn to write his classic Hebrides Overture). The visit to Lunga was an unforgettable, up-close and personal experience with puffins, razorbills, European Shags, and other species, though it required a bit of nimble walking to negotiate the landing on the island and the climb up to the puffin burrows. Those who walked all the way to the end of the viewing trail were rewarded with the multi-sensory experience of seeing, hearing, and smelling thousands of Common Murres busy raising their chicks.

Every day of this tour was filled with excellent experiences and sightings, carefully unspooled by Ian and Jenna as we went along. Bird feeding stations provided close viewing and photographic opportunities and we stayed at excellent accommodations and enjoyed great meals every day, including a classic fish and chips lunch in the small coastal town of Findhorn one day, and opportunities to have Scotland's most famous dish, haggis. Among the top bird sightings (aside from the boat trips) were memorable views of male Black Grouse at their lek site, several Short-eared owls hunting and sitting, and sweet views of White-throated Dipper. We saw many mammals, too, including four species of deer (some native, some introduced), three species of rabbits, and a brief, but awe-inspiring, view of a Pine Marten. Insects identified on this tour were numerous, thanks to the enthusiasm of Jim in particular, and assisted by the knowledge and passion of Ian and Jenna. A great tour that all will remember for many years to come.

BIRDS 130 species were recorded. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details 128 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to

click “Show All Details” on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Scottish Highlands & Islands | June 7-18, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

The following additional 2 species were also seen by the group, but not recorded in eBird:

Red-legged Partridge (I) *Alectoris rufa*

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Following is a list of the mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

MAMMALS (17 species):

Common Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* — A memorable sighting one morning at the Glenforsa, causing the entire group to perform an “emergency evacuation” of both vans in record time! Probably the same individual was seen on other days there; they are introduced on the Isle of Mull

Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus* — One found on the road dead at Burghead

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* — Nicely observed at the Poorhouse Wood feeders

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* — Recorded almost every day of the trip; easily the most frequently encountered mammal of the tour

European Hare *Lepus europaeus* — These frighteningly large lagomorphs were recorded on 2 days

Mountain Hare *Lepus timidus* — Recorded on 2 days in mountain (moor) habitats

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus* — Commonly encountered; seen on all days while on the mainland

Fallow Deer *Dama dama* — Seen on one day on Mull

Sika Deer *Cervus nippon* — This introduced east Asian species was found on our day in Strathdearn/Findhorn Valley

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* — Commonly encountered on the tour, particularly on Mull; this species is in the same genus as the North American Elk

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* — Seen from the boat on the Troup Head trip

Eurasian Pine Marten *Martes martes* — A brief, but excellent, view of one on the feeders at Loch Spynie Reserve provided much excitement

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* — Seen by the entire group on one day at Loch na Keal on Mull and again by Tony the following day in the same location

Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus* — Seen by some at Mountview Hotel one evening

Pipistrelle spp. *Pipistrellus* spp. — Seen by some in the group near the Glenforsa

Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina* — Seen on all days while on Mull along the coast and in various lochs

Gray Seal *Halichoerus grypus* — Recorded on 4 days, first from the boat to Troup Head and again on several days while on Mull

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (1 species):

Slowworm *Anguis fragilis*

INVERTEBRATES (20 species): Primarily found and identified by Jim Greenway, Jenna Berry, and Ian Ford

Bordered Apamea Moth *Apamea sordens*

Brown House Moth *Hoffmannophila pseudospretella*

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Eurasian Silver-bordered Fritillary *Boloria selene*

European Peacock Butterfly *Aglais io*

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

Light Streak *Pleurota bicostella*

Map-winged Swift *Korscheltellus fusconebulosa*

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Poplar Hawkmoth *Laathoe populi*

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis*

Silver-ground Carpet *Xanthorhoe montanata*

Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*

Tawny-barred Angle *Macaria liturata*

True Lover's Knot *Lycophotia poryphyrea*

Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris*

Copper Click Beetle *Ctenicera cuprea*

Garden Bumble Bee *Bombus hortorum*

Saddleback Harvestman *Mitopus morio*

Tree Slug *Lehmannia marginata*

Black Slug *Arion ater*

LOCATIONS AND NOTES:

Day 1: Saturday, June 7, 2025; Premier Inn East, Culloden Battlefield, Clava Cairns, Carrbridge, Lochindorb, Old Spey Bridge, Mountview Hotel

Day 2: Sunday, June 8, 2025; Anagach Forest—Poorhouse Woods, Tomvaich, Carrbridge, Strathdearn (Findhorn Valley): Garbole, Glenmazeran, Coignafearn

Day 3: Monday, June 9, 2025; Troup Head boat trip [the order of sites visited depended on which group you were in] MacDuff Harbor, Banff (Deveron estuary), Cullen (not visited by both groups), Spey Bay, Bogmoor, roadside

Day 4: Tuesday, June 10, 2025; Abernethy Forest (2 Lochs trail), Nethy Bridge, Curr Wood, Craigellachie Nature Reserve, Avelochan, Milton Loch

Day 5: Wednesday, June 11, 2025; The Saltire (Black Grouse lek), Lecht, Braemar, Glenshee Ski Centre, Cairnwell, Devil's Elbow/Contours, Braemar

Day 6: Thursday, June 12, 2025; Loch Spynie Reserve, Lossie Estuary, Burghead, Kimberley Inn (fish & chips), Findhorn, Benriach Distillery

Day 7: Friday, June 13, 2025; Badaguish, Loch Insh, Dalnahaitnach, Dell Wood

Day 8: Saturday, June 14, 2025; drive to Isle of Mull: Spean Bridge, Craig Meagaidh, Fort William, Corran Ferry, Loch Linnhe, Loch Sunart, Lochaline Ferry, Fishnish, Glenforsa, Loch na Keal

Day 9: Sunday, June 15, 2025; Salen, Aros, Dervaig, Calgary Bay, Ulva Ferry; boat trip on Turus Mara to Treshnish Isles: Staffa, Lunga

Day 10: Monday, June 16, 2025; Scallastle, Loch Spelvie, Glenmore, Three Lochs viewpoint, Fionnphort (Iona Ferry), Iona, Loch Beag

Day 11: Tuesday, June 17, 2025; return trip to Inverness: Loch Spelvie, Fishnish, Lochaline Ferry, Corran Ferry, Fort Williams, Urquhart Castle, Inverness

Day 12: Wednesday, June 18, 2025; departures