

The Scottish Highlands

Birds & Mammals “In Comfort & Style” April 11-17

Possible highlights: Black Grouse “lekking”, Capercailie, & “close-ups” of Pine Martin.



Red Grouse

The Habitat? The highest, snow-clad mountains in Britain, cliffs & corries, ancient Caledonian Pine forest carpeted with heather, bilberry & juniper, Silver Birch woods, marshes, tranquil lochs, open bog and moorland – all adding up to the most wonderful picturesque wildlife region on the British Mainland.

The Wildlife Highlights? Huge displaying Capercailie, Black Grouse “lekking” with maybe Ptarmigan & Snow Bunting on the high mountain tops, Red Grouse, soaring Golden Eagles, nesting Ospreys & Peregrine Falcon, Red Kite, and perhaps a dashing Merlin or quartering Hen Harrier. Stunning Goldeneye & Slavonian Grebes, Black-throated & Red-throated Divers. Scottish Crossbill & Crested Tit, Dipper & Twite with possibly Ring Ousel

& Northern Wheatear, along with “wintering” Pink-footed Geese, Whooper Swans, Golden Plover, Long-tailed Duck, Eider & Purple Sandpiper. Then on “four legs”, fabulous “white” Mountain Hares, Red Squirrel, Red & Roe Deer, and if lucky, both Pine Martin & Badger. It all adds up to super wildlife watching!

The Accommodation? The highly personable and family-owned *Tigh-na-Sgiath* Country House Hotel. Built in 1902 and once the home of the Lipton Tea family, this elegant mansion is set in the heart of the Cairngorm National Park near Grantown-on-Spey, with each of the eight bedrooms individual in character, size and design. The 5-course Table d’hôte menu makes creative use of local & organic produce, the cuisine modern Scottish in style and with the emphasis on quality & presentation. During our stay *Island Ventures* will have exclusive use of this lovely Hotel.

The Itinerary? Depart Inverness after breakfast for Loch Ruthven RSPB Reserve, then driving over to explore the beautiful Findorn Valley [Strathdearn] before arriving at *Tigh-na-Sgiath* for our 5-night stay. Over the next four days exploring the fabulous Spey Valley [Strathspey] and Cairngorms National Park inc. Abernethy Forest, Loch Garten & Tulloch Mhor, Aviemore & the Cairngorms Funicular Railway [to the top of Cairn Gorm]; also Loch an Eilein & The Insh Marshes RSPB Reserve, Loch Vaa, Carrbridge, Anagach Woods & Lochindorb. On the final day [IF seen all the Scottish “specialities”], then driving north across the Black Isle and exploring Loch Fleet NNR [for lingering “wintering” species] before returning to Inverness for approx. 17.00 hours.

Cost: £995 [s/s £95]

Deposit: £200

B/L due: Feb. 11

Included in the Cost: 5 nts. dinner, bed & b/fast at *Tigh-na-Sgiath*, Cairngorm Funicular, entrance to the Pine Martin hide, full transportation and guidance throughout. **Not included in the cost:** Lunches, drinks, travel insurance, gratuities & items of a personal nature.



Pine Martin



Mountain Hare



Slavonian Grebe