



# a unique

## Sea and Coast

Muir is Oirthir

### Lochalish

**1) Kirkton Bay** (B, 1-2km)  
**Look out for:** Otter, seal, wild and waders.  
**Best time to visit:** October – April  
**How to get there:** Off the A87(T) 3.5 miles before Kyle of Lochalish, park adjacent to church at NG829272.

### Skye

**2) Broadford Bay** (A-B, 0-4km)  
*“...probably the best birding spot on Skye...”*  
 (Skye-Birds.com)  
 Visit Ashig, Ardnish and the immediate bay area itself.  
**Look out for:** Otter, seabirds, wildfowl and waders. In the winter, Shovelin grebes, red-throated divers, black-throated diver and great northern diver abound. Common seals haul out on the offshore skerries at Ardnish.  
**Best time to visit:** All year round.  
**How to get there:** Off the A87(T), 8 miles from the Skye Bridge, NG6523.



# wildlife

## Freshwater

Fìor-uisge

### Lochalish

**6) Loch Shiel** (B, 0-1 km)  
**Look out for:** Whooper swan, goldeneye, goosander, widgeon, dipper.  
**Best time to visit:** November – March.  
**How to get there:** Park off the A87(T) 0.5 miles from Shiel Bridge at NG942183.

### 7) Abhainn a' Ghlinne Bhiag

(Glen Bhiag River) (B, 1-2km)  
**Look out for:** Martin colony (a Species of European Conservation Concern) in a 20m (60ft) high sand cliff. A range of migrant birds including tree pipit, wood warbler and blackcap in the woodlands.  
**Best time to visit:** May – June.  
**How to get there:** From Shiel Bridge travel along the Old Military Road to Glenelg. Turn left 1 mile south at the Eileanreach junction. Stop at NG812175. The sand martin colony is 200m upstream of the road.

### Skye

**8) Mointeach nan Lochainn Dubha**  
 (Moorland of the Black Lochs) (SSSI, SAC) (B, 1-2 km)  
**Look out for:** Drapellions & damselflies. Water plants including white water lily, water lily, lesser water plantain and pipewort.  
**Best time to visit:** July – August.  
**How to get there:** Two miles south of Broadford on the A851. Park at the layby at NG6833203.

### 9) Loch Mealt

What to see: Little grebe, tufted duck, goldeneye and occasional pochard and greylag.  
**Look out for:** Greylag and tufted duck. This is home to the last population of Arctic charr.  
**Best time to visit:** November – March.  
**How to get there:** 16 miles north from Portree on the A855. Park at the Kill Rock car park, NG508655.

### 10) Loch Suardal

(A, 0-1 km)  
*“a bit of a gem”* (Skye-Birds.com)  
**Look out for:** Whooper swan, widgeon, teal, goldeneye, mallard. Banties (red-winged grebe) may be seen here.  
**Best time to visit:** October – March.  
**How to get there:** Two miles north of Dunvegan (past Dunvegan Castle).

### 11) Mill Pond, Portree

(A, 0.5 km)  
 Created around 100 years ago to provide clean water for the Portree Woolen Mill.  
**Look out for:** A fascinating range of aquatic invertebrates. Palmate newts abound as do common frog and toad.  
 Pippardie bats, swallows and spotted flycatcher feed over the pond in summer.  
**Best time to visit:** April – July.  
**How to get there:** Off Hedgefield Road, NG473487.



# in Skye

## Woodland

A' Choille

### Lochalish

**15) Coille Mhòr** (NTS, SSSI, SAC) (C, 2-3 km)  
**Look out for:** Breeding birds include great spotted woodpecker, tree pipit, redstart, wood warbler and spotted flycatcher. Otters, pine martens and badger frequent the woods.  
**Best time to visit:** Late April – July.  
**How to get there:** Off the A87(T), two miles from Kyle of Lochalish. Park at Balmacara Square, 300m on at Collemore, take the track on the right hand side at NG607282. The nearby Loch Achaidh na h-Inn (NG608310) is home to a wide range of dragonflies and damselflies and is well worth a visit in July and August.

### 16) Carr Brae

(A, 2-4 km along road)  
**Look out for:** Summer migrants including blackcap, garden warbler, wood warbler, tree pipit, redstart as well as resident woodland species including great spotted woodpecker.  
**Best time to visit:** April – July.  
**How to get there:** Off the A87 (T) between Invernate and Eilean Donnan Castle. Park at Dornie and walk along the back road towards Carr Brae (NG887253).

### Skye

**17) Coille Thogavaig** (SSSI) (B, 2-3 km)  
**Look out for:** Golden eagles, Summer migrants including redstart and pied flycatcher, resident woodland birds including great spotted woodpecker and tawny owl.  
**Best time to visit:** Late April – July.  
**How to get there:** Turn right off the A851 for Ord Park by the shore, cross the river and follow road south to entrance to wood around NG514127.

### 18) Armadale Castle Gardens

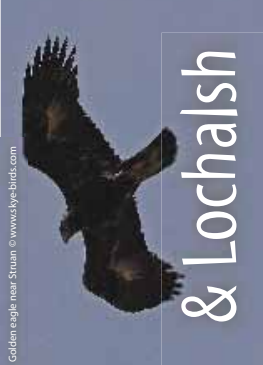
(A, 1-2 km)  
**Look out for:** Woodland birds including chiffchaff, garden warbler, blackcap and wood warbler.  
**Best time to visit:** Late April – July.  
**How to get there:** ½ mile north from ferry terminal at Armadale, NG539044.

### 19) Kinloch-Leitir Fura

(SAC) (A, 4-7 km)  
**Look out for:** Adders, slow worms and common lizards. 15 different butterfly species including Scotch argus, green hairstreak, dark green fritillary, small pearl-bordered fritillary and painted lady.  
**Best time to visit:** April – August.  
**How to get there:** Off the A851 near Drumfearn, NG703161.

### Raasay

**20) Hallaig Woods** (B, 5 km)  
**Look out for:** Jurassic limestone. Mountain avens, dark-red helleborine and the rare rock whitebeam present. Holly fern and Wilson's filmy fern also occur here. Birds include golden eagle, sea eagle, sparrowhawk, tawny owl, sparrow and pied flycatcher and redstart.  
**Best time to visit:** July.  
**How to get there:** From Portree. From Inverish head east to start of walk at North Feams (NG594361) then along the cart track to Hallaig.



# & Lochalsh

## Mountain and Moorland

Beinn is Mòinteach

### Lochalish

**21) Morvich, Kintail**  
 The mountains around Kintail are a stronghold for the golden eagle. Contact the NTS Rangers for information on where and when to look.

### Skye

**22) Aros, Portree**  
 At the Aros Centre on the Isle of Skye you can watch superb CCTV footage of the UK's largest bird of prey - the white-tailed eagle. Depending on the time of year, you may also be able to see footage of a sparrowhawk nest, the homelife of the heron or the antics of a family of tawny owls.

### 23) Skye Cuillin

(SSSI/SPA/SAC)  
 The 29,490 hectare Cuillin Golden Eagle Special Protection Area supports eight breeding pairs of golden eagle. Scanning the skyline anywhere within this area may reward the visitor with a view of this majestic bird.

### 24) Camas Malag

(SSSI, SAC) (B, 1-2 km)  
 Part of the Strath Special Area of Conservation - *“one of the most floristically-rich areas of limestone pavements in Scotland”* (JNCC).  
**Look out for:** Carpets of mountain avens. A range of lime-loving wildflowers and ferns amongst the limestone pavement.  
**Best time to visit:** May – June.

**How to get there:** Four miles south along the B8083 from Broadford, turn left for Kilbride and park when you reach the shore. There is a good exposure of limestone pavement at NG583188.

### 25) The Storr

(SSSI, SAC) (C-D, 3-6 km)  
**Look out for:** Arctic-alpine plants and high ground birds including raven, ring ouzel and golden eagle. Many interesting plants can be seen at lower levels. Dwarf willow and the rare lecland purslane can be found towards the Storr summit.  
**Best time to visit:** March – August.  
**How to get there:** 5 miles north of Portree on the A855. There is a good path up from the car park (NG509529).  
**Warning:** Please avoid the area directly below the Storr cliff as it is unstable and liable to collapse.

### 26) Beinn Aialak

(FCS) (D, 4.5 km)  
**Look out for:** Parnagian, occasionally snow bunting.  
**Best time to visit:** November – February.  
**How to get there:** Turn off the A87(T) 3 miles past the Skye Bridge towards Kylehea. Stop 3 miles along this road at NG729217 and follow the forest track up the hill to the south. The summit of Beinn Aialak is 1.2km east from the track end.

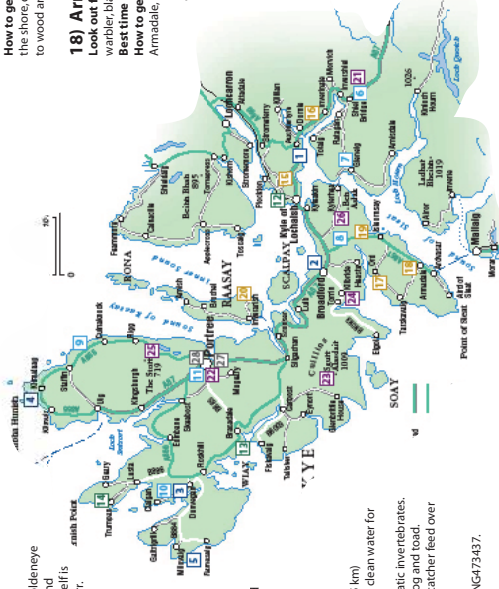
## The Built Environment

### 27) The Lump

(Am Meall) (A, 0.5 km)  
 The Lump in Portree is worth a visit for only for the busy rookery. The Apotheary's Tower there is a great place for wildlife watching out over Portree Bay.

### 28) Leasgeary Wood

(A, 1 km) (NG479437)  
 Leasgeary Wood regularly features tawny owl. Rarer migrants, like wood warbler, turn up occasionally.



© 2008 Skye Pine Cater

## List of abbreviations used:

SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
NTS	National Trust for Scotland
FCS	Forestry Commission Scotland



Heather's starfish resting on a rocky seabed. © James Merryweather

## Habitats

### Arainnean

#### An introduction to Biodiversity

Biodiversity is short for 'biological diversity' or the variety of plants and animals in the world. We depend on this richness of plants and animals. It has important economic benefits, through farming, fishing, tourism and through the provision of raw materials for medical research for example. Plants and animals are an important part of our cultural heritage, and give us pleasure and enjoyment. Biodiversity also provides us with natural services such as soil creation, biological control of pests and flood prevention.

*The range of habitats in Skye and Lochalsh and their importance for species of conservation concern was highlighted by the 2003 Skye and Lochalsh Local Biodiversity Action Plan. For details, see: [www.highlandbiodiversity.com](http://www.highlandbiodiversity.com)*



Bottlenose dolphin © Bill Gowrie, [www.skystorms.co.uk](http://www.skystorms.co.uk)

## Wildlife watching tips

### Sùil air fiadh-bheatha – combhaille

#### Tides

Be sure to check the tides before setting out sea-watching. Incoming tides when looking out for creels and carcasses. High tide is a good time to see waders at roost on off-shore skerries.

An exciting range of marine wildlife can be found by searching the tide-line during low-spring tides.

#### Otters

Look out for the distinctive 'V' bow-wave when an otter swims at the surface and for the flick of a slender tail as it dives.

#### Bird-watching

For coastal birdwatching, a telescope greatly extends your range of view. Use binoculars when you are patrolling golden eagles.

#### Care for Wildlife

If you find a sick or injured wildlife animal, contact the Skye Wildlife Centre, Wildlife Hospital, telephone: 01471 822 487.

#### Remember

Take only photographs, leave only footprints.



Heather's sea slug © James Merryweather

#### Sea and Coast

You can experience the marine environment of Skye and Lochalsh from one of the many tour boats in the area. Boats operate from Plockton, Kyle, Armadale, Broadford, Elgol, Portree, Sàim, and Dunvegan. Details are available from the local Tourist Information Offices.

The coastline of Skye and Lochalsh offers many opportunities to go on marine wildlife too. The exposed headlands which are typical of Skye can be well worth the effort of walking to them.

#### Freshwater

There is no shortage of fresh water in Skye and Lochalsh. In the summer, red-throated divers breed on many of the area's lochs and lochans. Winter visitors include whooper swan and goldeneye, both from the Icelandic breeding populations. Palmate newts are common here as are the spectacular white water lily. Rare aquatic plants found in the area include pipewort and lesser water plantain.



White-tailed eagle © www.skye-birds.com

## Eagles

### Iolaitrean

#### Sea eagle (white-tailed eagle)

The Aros Centre in Portree has an excellent sea eagle exhibition with a live CCTV link to a sea eagle nest. Boat trips to see sea eagles are available from Portree too - information from the Aros Centre.

#### Golden eagle

The 29,490 hectare Cullinins Special Protection Area comprises a diverse range of habitats including heather moorland, rough grassland, blanket bog, coastal woodland, freshwater lochs and lochans, montane heaths and exposed rock and scree. In total, this area supports eight breeding pairs of golden eagle.

The mountains around Kinloch are another stronghold for the golden eagle. Scanning the skyline in this area will often give the watcher a glimpse of this much sought raptor. Contact the NIS Rangers for local information and details of places to visit.



Arctic tern chick © Laurie Campbell

#### Croft and Farm Land

Although the conservation value of croft grassland has declined here, some areas are still cut annually for hay for winter feeding of cattle in the traditional manner. These haymeadows benefit from the time that the hay is left to dry out, allowing wildflower seeds to germinate, so that modern high production does not allow for.

#### Woodland

The woodlands of the west coast of the highlands have been described as temperate rain forest! A wonderful variety of plants can be found there including rare lichens, orchids such as long-leaved helmet orchid (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) and fragile filmy ferns which depend on a constant humidity for their survival.

Since the completion of the Skye Bridge, pine martens have become as common in Skye woods as they are in Lochalsh. It is only a matter of time before badgers too will cross the bridge to repopulate territory which they undoubtedly held in past centuries.



Adder at Aros, MacLennan, (SFSB)

## Walk grades

### Irean nan cairtean

Visitors to the sites listed should be familiar with the uses of an Ordnance Survey (OS) map. Start points of most walks are indicated by an OS-grid reference.

#### The walks are graded as follows:

- A - Easy walking on established paths.
- B - Walking on paths and rough ground at low level
- C - Walking over rough/boggy ground and some hills
- D - A reasonable level of fitness required
- E - Walking through and over mountainous terrain - a good level of fitness required.

#### "Please remember

Know the Code before you go. Enjoy, Respect and Protect."

For more details: Tel: SNH 01738 458545

or [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)



Bog asphodel © Calumnes Biodiversity Collection

#### Mountain and Moorland

One of the big attractions of the hills of Skye and Lochalsh for the wildlife watcher is the likelihood of seeing one, or both, of our native pine marten and red squirrel. The disclosure of our native pine marten and red squirrel populations is not a new thing, but the information that the hay is left to dry out, allowing wildflower seeds to germinate, so that modern high production does not allow for.

#### The Built Environment

One place you are really likely to see otter in Skye and Lochalsh is around the old and new fishing piers of the Lochalsh and Broadford piers. The old pier is now a good place to see otter in Skye and Lochalsh. The old pier is now a good place to see otter in Skye and Lochalsh. The old pier is now a good place to see otter in Skye and Lochalsh.



Sundew © James Merryweather

## Wildlife on the web

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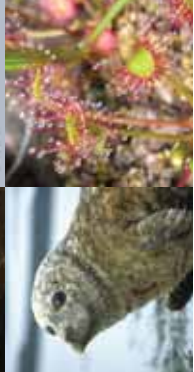
- [www.highlandbiodiversity.com](http://www.highlandbiodiversity.com)
- [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)
- [www.forestry.gov.uk/sotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/sotland)
- [www.skye.co.uk](http://www.skye.co.uk)
- [www.skye-birds.com](http://www.skye-birds.com)
- [www.skyeferms.co.uk](http://www.skyeferms.co.uk)
- [www.otter.org](http://www.otter.org)
- [www.aros.co.uk/skye-sea-eagles.html](http://www.aros.co.uk/skye-sea-eagles.html)
- [www.jmt.org/cons/skye/envirom.html#fauna](http://www.jmt.org/cons/skye/envirom.html#fauna)
- [www.nature-diary.co.uk](http://www.nature-diary.co.uk)



Ribb's Herring © Highland Council Rangers



## A guide to finding wildlife in Skye and Lochalsh



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Highland Council Rangers: 01 471 822 2005  
National Trust for Scotland Rangers: 01 599 511 231  
Balmacara Estate Office: 01 599 566 325  
Forestry Commission Scotland: 01 320 566 322  
Scottish Natural Heritage (Portree): 01 478 613 329

Tourist Information Offices:  
01 473 612 137 (Portree)  
01 599 534276 (Kyle of Lochalsh)  
[www.visithighlands.com/skye](http://www.visithighlands.com/skye)

