

## Creating Bird Watching Breaks - Contacts and Information

Do you have visitors interested in Birds or is this a market you wish to know better or would you like to offer bird watching breaks to your visitors – if you answer yes to any of these you will find some useful information below on birds, where to find them, who offers tours or walks, and who you can speak to further on this subject.

### Birding in Wales

Why come birding in Wales?

One of the main reasons why Wales proves such a fascinating place to visit for Birding is the wonderful variety of habitats that include ancient sessile oak woods, rugged offshore islands, river valleys, heather moorland and vast expanses of salt marsh that are home to a splendid mixture of species.

These special habitats mean that there is year round interest and with such glorious countryside on offer, it is remarkable that more Birders don't make Wales their first stop on a UK visit. The geographical location is superbly placed to pick up migrants from all corners of the globe and in addition to some very special breeding birds; the list of rare visitors is very impressive. For those who have visited us it is a revelation, for those who haven't, what are you waiting for?

### Trails in Wales

The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) has produced a new publication, Trails in Wales, containing evocative and stimulating walks through some of the most breathtaking scenery in Wales. Each walk has been specially selected for its abundance of bird life, ranging from red kites and choughs to dippers and Cetti's warblers and there is plenty of other wildlife to look out for too.

The six walks are graded according to their level of difficulty and there is one to suit all ages and abilities. Each has a detailed route map showing top spots for wildlife.

The trails include:

Borth to Aberystwyth cliff trail, Llyn Crafnant; Llyn Mair ; Rhossili coastal trail  
Mawddach; Teifi river trail. Further information on: [www.rspb.org/wales](http://www.rspb.org/wales).

### Red Kite Feeding Centres

Wild Red Kites are fed at Gigrin Farm, Rhayader every day of the year. With breathtaking feats of aerial piracy red kites compete with buzzards and ravens for choice pickings. Feeding takes place at **2pm GMT = 3pm in summer & 2pm winter** (well, no-one tells the kites that the clocks change!). [www.gigrin.co.uk](http://www.gigrin.co.uk)  
Other sites include: Tregaron, Kite Country Centre, Ynys-Hir RSPB reserve near Machynlleth and Nant-yr-Arian Forest Visitor Centre near [Aberystwyth](http://Aberystwyth).  
[www.kitecountry.co.uk](http://www.kitecountry.co.uk)

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### Osprey Spectacle in Wales

Ospreys nested for the first time ever on record in Wales in 2004. Glaslyn Valley Osprey Project near Porthmadog in North Wales is a unique and special project that gives visitors and local residents the opportunity to see, understand and protect these magnificent birds of prey in the glorious setting of the Glaslyn Valley.

Ospreys are spectacular birds of prey that feed on fish and can have a wingspan of up to 2m. They feature on the amber list, meaning that their survival status is threatened. While they are increasing in Scotland, they remain rare elsewhere (just three pairs in England and Wales). In the past, one reason for their decline has been persecution.

The RSPB believes that their decision to breed in Wales represents a fantastic wildlife tourism opportunity for North Wales and the start of a bright future for colonisation of Ospreys in Wales. It will therefore be driving the Osprey project from April 2005 onwards, with the aim of setting up a visitor viewing platform and CCTV cameras to beam pictures of the adults and their young back to the local communities. As law protects Ospreys, Wildlife Protection Officers and Rangers will also be providing these special visitors to Wales with 24/7 protection for the duration of their stay in Wales.

### Operators featuring birding holidays in Wales

#### Celtic Bird Tours

ABA member Neil Donaghy of Celtic Bird Tours runs guided holidays throughout the country, as well as other areas of the UK & Europe and can be contacted at [www.celticbirdtours.com](http://www.celticbirdtours.com) . [Birds@celtictours.org.uk](mailto:Birds@celtictours.org.uk), 84 Coity Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LT Wales, UK. Tel: +44 [0] 1656 645709 or Neil Donaghy on 07971 983227

#### Plas Tan y Bwlch

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The end of April is the peak time for territorial display and birdsong, and is a particularly good time for birdwatching. By then our resident birds will be well into nesting, while a good number of spring migrants will be either newly arrived or due during the week. You'll see redstarts and wood warblers in the Maentwrog woodland; the elusive ring ouzel and ravens in the uplands; sedge and grasshopper warblers in nearby wetlands, while out on the Llŷn cliffs razorbills, guillemots and cormorants will be hugging their nesting ledges with chough displaying and holding territory nearby.

A variety of walks are organised daily visiting a range of very different habitats – woodlands, moorlands, lakes, rivers, marshlands, mountains, estuaries, beaches and sea cliffs. Previous courses at this time of year have frequently included sightings of 100 species, but, always, good clear sightings and learning about the birds themselves will be preferred to the numbers game!!

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### Merlin Bird Tours

Merlin Bird Tours offer bird watching holidays in Wales, with both summer and winter bird watching guided tours. Their guide will be more than happy to find any bird you would like to see. The wonderful thing about west Wales is they can take in mountains, woodland, reed beds, rugged coastline and estuaries in one weekend. Because of their small groups (maximum of six) they can tailor make days to suit the customers, based on bird watching requirements and walking needs. [www.birdwatchingholidayswales.co.uk](http://www.birdwatchingholidayswales.co.uk)

### **Bird Watching – General Information for S Wales**

Dare Valley Park, in Rhondda Cynon Taff area. They offer bird walks, Peregrines and all sorts of things bird orientated. They offer accommodation.

Contact: Jan Jones [Janet.v.jones@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk](mailto:Janet.v.jones@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk) and David Protheroe [david.h.protheroe@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk](mailto:david.h.protheroe@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk)

Kenfig National Nature Reserve where there are two bird hides for watching the ins and outs on Kenfig Pool as well as the other local birdlife.

Contact 01656 743386 Ask for Roz or Graham.

Birdwatching is possible at Blaenavon, at Garn lakes and the area around the heritage railway. [www.world-heritage-blaenavon.org.uk](http://www.world-heritage-blaenavon.org.uk)

Llandegfedd Reservoir, Waenavon Bog, and the lowlands around Cwmbran are also excellent sites. I am told (by those in the know) that wildlife within Torfaen is prolific with many unusual species. The chap in the 'know' is the area ecologist – Steve Williams. Tel 01633 648256 [steve.williams@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:steve.williams@torfaen.gov.uk). Llandegfedd Reservoir also put on a programme guided of birdwatching events throughout the year. Contact Becky Ward for more information 01495 769281.