

# Wildlife in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park



**The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park** has many different habitats supporting a large variety of wildlife. The park has forests, wetlands, mountains, lowlands, and marine areas. Throughout the year you will be able to see some interesting wildlife in the National Park.

Depending on the season you will find different species to interest you. This article gives you an introduction into wildlife to be seen here. Below you can find lists of species categorised by seasons. If you are interested in a particular species, here you can find out when and where to find it in the National Park.

## The Wildlife

The Trossachs offers a large variety of wildlife. Situated in the heart of the Trossachs is the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park where you can view squirrels, badgers, hedgehogs, bats, jays, buzzards, red deer and roe deer.

The area around 'Duke's Pass' north of Aberfoyle is an excellent place in which to view wildlife. Queen Elizabeth Forest Park has a planted conifer forest where you will be able to find insects, butterflies, long-eared owls and pine-martens. The Park Rangers offer lots of outdoor activities throughout the year such as guided tours for the whole family.

One of the most famous attractions in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is the David Marshall Lodge near Aberfoyle. This visitor Centre is a good starting point to explore the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park and its surroundings. It offers one of the most spectacular views across Loch Achray and to Ben Lomond.

The visitor centre has installed a number of CCTV cameras in the forest which will allow you to watch Buzzards, Red Squirrels, Peregrines and even Ospreys. Those cameras make it possible to observe the Ospreys at their nest during the breeding season.

Another popular attraction is Argaty Red Kites which is interesting for birdwatching. Argaty Red Kites is situated north of Stirling and can give you a very special falconry experience. The RSPB and Scottish Natural Heritage has reintroduced the red kites in the area and Argaty Red Kites has Central Scotland's only Red Kite feeding station here. During the whole year you can visit the falconry no matter if you go as individual or group. Guided walks are available in late spring and during the summer.

The feeding station attracts up to thirty birds depending on the weather and there is a hide from where you can view the birds. If you are lucky you can also see other birds such as peregrine, kestrel, buzzards, sparrow hawk, hen harriers and many smaller birds. There are about a hundred species on the farm.



Loch Drunkie



David Marshall Lodge

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### The Bird of Prey Trail

The 40km long Bird of Prey Trail runs through the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. Whether you go on foot, by bike or by car, there are many areas that are suitable for viewing wildlife.



This circular trail passes through the villages of Callander, Doune, Aberfoyle, Brig O' Turk and back to Callander. It passes Lake of Menteith, goes through the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park and along Lochs Achray and Venachar.

Birds you can sometimes see include Merlin, Osprey, Kestrel, Red Kite, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Peregrine, Golden Eagle, Hen Harrier and Owls. Another interesting place is the Inchmaholme Priory on the Lake of Menteith where you can watch great crested grebes (best during April to September). There are also pink-footed geese which come in to roost in the winter.

You will also come close to the Flanders Moss National Reserve which is the largest raised bog in Britain. Some special plants such as cranberry and bog rosemary grow here and if you're lucky you may see some roe deer, butterflies and adders.

If you are looking for Golden Eagle you should try Glen Finglas near Brig O' Turk which includes 4,063 Hectares of wood and hills.

Besides Golden Eagle you may see Osprey down towards Loch Venachar.

### Other Places, Other Species

When you are next to grassy riverbanks or narrow peaty burns you should listen to a "plop" sound in the water. These places are home to the water voles; the largest voles in the UK.

Water voles have been reintroduced into the Trossachs around Aberfoyle and Callander. If lucky you may see some at the Duchray and Kelty water systems which both flow through Loch Ard Forest.



Flander's Moss

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### By the Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond

Much of the wildlife around Loch Lomond can be found in the atlantic oakwoods in the east shores of Loch Lomond. The east shore of Loch Lomond is also a good place to view woodpeckers, siskins, and wood warblers. In summer, pied flycatchers and redstart breed here. In the high ground near forest plantations, it is possible to see golden eagles, black grouse and ospreys in the summer.

Some of the rare species in the Loch Lomond area are Scottish wild cat, the capercaillie, wild deer, wild goats, black grouse and the red squirrel.

Experts believe there could be as few as 400 pure-bred wildcats left in Scotland. This would mean that those animals are even rarer than the Bengal Tiger. They are rarely spotted by casual visitors.



The Capercaillie, an iconic resident of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, is the world's biggest grouse. Capercaillies are wary of visitors and are rarely seen near forest paths frequented by humans. They are becoming more and more endangered.

On the wooded shores of Loch Lomond lives the Otter. They can grow up to 1 metre in length. They prefer to be close to the sea, lochs and rivers, for example Loch Lomond and River Dochart. When they dive they can stay under for 6-7 minutes. Otters are most active in the night, but can be also seen in the morning and evening.

Hiding away in woodland clearings and forest edges, the Black Grouse is becoming increasingly rare. In spring, the males pose at mating 'leks' and sometimes you can see 'them competing for the favours of the 'ladies'. You can hear their strange calls up to 400m across the fields.

Unusually for birds, the hen birds are less colourful than the cocks and are difficult to distinguish from red grouse. Black Grouse are an endangered species.

The native Red Squirrel is only half size of its grey cousin the non-native Grey Squirrel which has been introduced to Scotland. Red Squirrels prefer the conifer woodland. While many of them have disappeared it is still possible to see them on the Cowal Peninsula, the Loch Ard Forest, Trossachs and near Callander at the Auchenlaich morain.

### Sea Life

Loch Long and Loch Goil are home to seals and porpoises, while crabs and sea anemones can be found in rock pools.

It's very unusual to see porpoises as they don't leap. They can dive for up to 6 minutes.

Seals can be often be seen on the rocky skerries. It is believed that half of the world population live around the shores of Britain. In the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park coastal areas you can find common seals and grey seals which are much larger.

One of Scotland's most beautiful birds is the Black-Throated Diver. These birds spend most of their time in the water. During the summer you might see a few Black-Throated Divers in one of the lochans in the National Park but it's easier to see these birds is during the winter in the area of Loch Long.

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### In Woods and Mountains

In the evening or during quiet days you have the chance to see one of Scotland's exclusive animals: the Pine Marten. It is quite difficult to see pine martens in the wild. It is much easier to see them at feeding stations such as the David Marshall Lodge.

The favourite place of Pine Martens is the pine wood. Thanks to an improved land management and better legal protection the numbers have increased.



Woodlands and forests in the National Park are home to Britain's largest land mammal; the Red deer. There is a small population of reds around Loch Lomond. The smaller cousin, the Roe Deer, can be found in the Park as well. Deer can be seen throughout the whole year in: Glen Ample, Loch Arklet area, Inversnaid, North Loch Katrine, Brig o' Turk; Glen Kendrum, Inverlochlarig, Arrochar Alps, Callander Crags woods.

There is one animal living in Scotland which has completely adapted to arctic climates. Mountain Hares live on the higher mountain slopes and change their coats to match the seasonal change of the landscape. They look grey brown in the summer, grizzled-blue in spring and autumn and pure white in winter.

You can find mountain hares in mountain and moorlands for example between the Tay and the Earn, Glen Falloch Hills and Ben Vorlich

Another animal found in the mountain and moorland areas of the National Park is the Red Grouse. The red grouse feeds on heather shoots and blaeberry which abound on the moorland and mountainous areas of the national park.

One of the most beautiful inhabitants of the National Park is the Barn Owl. Often found on wooded fringes of long grassland where they prey on small mammals. As the name suggests they, they nest in barns and other buildings.

During spring and summer you can see one of the more dangerous creatures in Scotland, the adder. Their bite can become serious but fatalities are rare. Adders might become dangers to humans but still deserve their respect.

Like all reptiles they are cold-blooded. They need the warmth of the sun to give them the energy to hunt and move. So the best time to spot an adder is on a sunny spring morning when they come out to bask in warm, sheltered spots

Good places to see adders are in woodland banks, heathery moorland and boggy hummocks. These snakes are only active between April and October.



All other times of the year are too cold for them and they hibernate. Glen Dochart and Loch Ard are good places to see adders.

The lochs and rivers of Scotland are home to a large number of fish species. The National Park has 22 Lochs and many smaller lochans. In Loch Lomond there are 19 fish species. The Powan is the most exclusive fish because it is endemic to two lochs in Scotland: Loch Lomond and Loch Eck.

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## Wildlife and Plants by Season

Winter	Spring	Summer	Summer
Pine marten	Frog	Otter	Lesser butterfly orchid
Roe deer	Toad	Water vole	Porpoise
Barn owl	Newt	Globeflower	Common seal
Divers	Black grouse	Scottish dock	Mountain ringlet
Eider duck	Red-tailed bumblebee	Curlew	Blaeberry
Mountain hare	Celandine	Brown hare	Wild thyme
Golden eagle	Adder	Pipistrelle bat	Heather
Ptarmigan	Common lizard	Osprey	Mountain avens
Greenland white-fronted geese	Redstart	Lapwing	Butterwort
	Pied flycatcher	Skylark	Saxifrages
<b>Autumn</b>	Wood warbler	Swift	Cloudberry
Salmon	Bluebell	Argent & sable moth	Wood ant
Trout	Violet	Pearl-bordered and small pearl-bordered fritillaries	Royal buckler fern
Grey seal	Ramsons		
Red deer	Wood sorrel	Early purple orchid	
Oak			
Birch			
Red squirrel			
Greenland white-fronted geese			