

heatherlea

birding and wildlife news

Autumn 2014

In 2015 we celebrate our 25th season, may we thank all our clients past and present for choosing Heatherlea. It's been great fun so far, and we look forward to your company in the future!

Kevin, Caryl and the Heatherlea team

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Main pic: Toby Green, Snowy Owl



Thanks for coming to see us at the Rutland Birdfair!

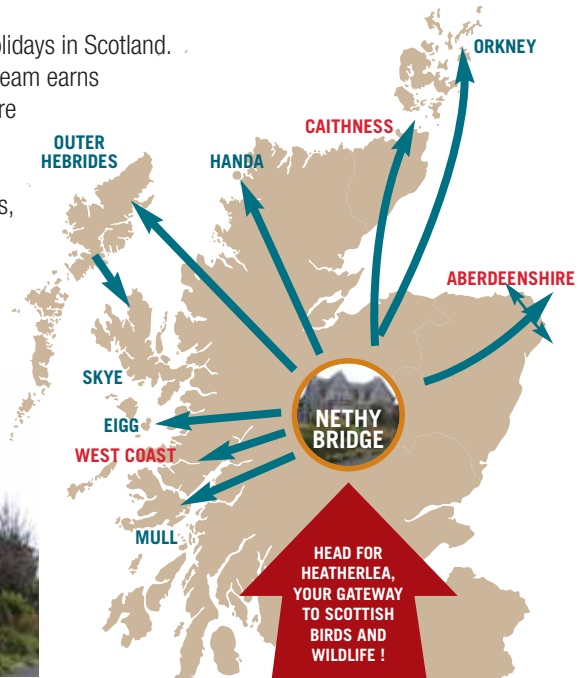
Thanks to photographers whose work is featured in this issue; Mike Coleman, Robin Cosgrove, Ian Ford, Toby Green, Cristian Jensen, Rob Jordan, Phil Knott, Jozef Leestmans, Paco Madrigal, Neil McIntyre, Orsolya Meszaros, Jonny Pott, Dave Pullan, Kevin Shaw, Nigel Sprowell, Chris Townend



Mountview Hotel – so much more than just a Hotel!

Relax!

Heatherlea is **THE** place for top quality birding holidays in Scotland. Great guiding and personal care from our crack team earns us five stars from visitScotland, and our guides are known far and wide for their birding skills. At Heatherlea you stay in our own three star Small Hotel, enjoy meals prepared by experienced chefs, and travel in minibuses which are great mobile hides, as we take you to the best birding spots across the Highlands and Islands.



Heatherlea offer much more than a hotel, our fully inclusive guided holidays deliver the real experience INCLUDING the wildlife!

Prefer to 'do it yourself'? You might be surprised how much you spend on extras, including petrol, guides, lunches, ferries, evening wildlife watches and access to reserves. All these things are included with Heatherlea. 'Mainland Scotland' holidays are based in Nethy Bridge, and often take you to a second centre for your convenience, in places as far away as Orkney, Mull, and the Isles of Lewis and Harris, where wildlife is special. All travel, accommodation and food is included. We think our holidays offer terrific value compared to 'do it yourself' options.



Above all, your holiday includes a Heatherlea Guide! Highly skilled birders and real 'people people', Ian Ford, Toby Green, Rob Jordan, Phil Knott, Jonny Pott and Dave Pullan have all been leading in Scotland for many years. From briefing on the first evening to round-up on the last, your guide plans the entire holiday, organising everything to suit wildlife, weather and your progress through the week. Our in-house knowledge is unbeatable, and your Guide knows where the birds have been showing, and the best route to maximise your chances. We think you will see far more with a Heatherlea Guide than under your own steam, and of course you can relax and enjoy yourself. Come and see how our guides make all the difference!

Join Heatherlea, and discover your gateway to Scottish birds and wildlife!





2015 Scottish holidays based at Mountview Hotel, Nethy Bridge

We currently offer reduced 'Advance Booking' prices, a saving of up to £150. If you have holidayed with Heatherlea before, you can claim an extra £25 discount as a 'Been Before' bonus – thank you for choosing us again!

**MORE GOOD NEWS!
A PRICE PROMISE FROM HEATHERLEA
YOU JUST CAN'T BEAT!**

- ✓ All holidays based at Mountview Hotel are filling and we won't cancel.
- ✓ Once your deposit is paid, we guarantee not to alter prices.
- ✓ No single supplement.
- ✓ Singles are never expected to share.
- ✓ Free collection from Aviemore transport links
- ✓ Free use of top-of-the-range Swarovski optics (subject to availability).

Book with confidence!

MAINLAND SCOTLAND HOLIDAYS

New Year Birdlist Booster Jan 3, Jan 10, Jan 17, Jan 24

This holiday is great fun, rounding up as many birds as possible for your new birdlist. We seek the 'Scottish specials' first, then northern birds at the coast and any available rarities. You don't have to be a 'lister' to enjoy this holiday, it's great fun for all.

Price £895pp Advance Booking price £870pp - Save £25.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Short breaks – Scottish birding in Winter Jan 31, Feb 3, Feb 7, Feb 10

Three day, four night short breaks for busy birders! Our days are categorised as 'speciality', 'eagle' and 'coastal', as we enjoy a rewarding few days of winter birding in the far north. SPECIAL '2-for-1' OFFER – see page 9 for details.

Price £545pp Advance Booking price £520pp - Save £25.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Highland Winter Birding Feb 14, 21, 28

Wild landscapes and solitude (you won't see many other birders!) with exceptional birding on this unique holiday; the very best in Scottish winter birding. Features an exciting expedition to coastal locations in the very far north, where we stay overnight.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £945pp - Save £150.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

The Top 20 in spring Mar 7, Mar 14

Both eagles, Otter and Pine Marten on the west coast, where early dusk and shortage of natural food means we watch wildlife at times convenient to ourselves. Ptarmigan, Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Dolphins, Red Squirrel, Mountain Hare, the list is long!

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Highlands and Mull Mar 21, Mar 28

Early spring in the Highlands is a great time for the 'specials'. Add an overnight on Mull, and this becomes a really cost effective way to see Scotland's special birds in one holiday. Winter visitors and early spring birds complete a big birdlist.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Spring into Scotland including Mull Apr 4, Apr 11, Apr 18

Perhaps the ultimate spring wildlife experience in Scotland, including an overnight stay on the west coast and a full day on Mull. Speciality birds are breeding, winter birds are still here in good numbers, summer visitors arrive daily. Ever popular!

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Highlands and Skye Apr 25, May 2

Two nights on Skye as we enjoy eagles, otter and a birding boat-trip amid spectacular scenery. All the birds of the mainland too, with many summer visitors arriving. An exciting way to include Skye in your Scottish birding experience!

Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1145pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Birding the Highlands in May May 9, May 16

A gently-paced holiday for those who want to see the specialities without too much travelling. We are based at Mountview Hotel for a full week, featuring all the key breeding birds, and including a boat trip to the Gannetry at Troup Head.

Price £1095pp

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

High Season across the Highlands May 23, May 30, Jun 6

Glorious Handa Island is a great day out, and we stay overnight on the west to see White-tailed Eagle too. Dotterel join Ptarmigan on the hills, and with all the birds settled for the season, this is classic birding. One of our most popular trips!

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Highlands and Orkney Jun 13

Visit Orkney's key birding places in summer, where breeding Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier and Black-tailed Godwit are found. Also includes breeding auks, skuas, and other seabirds, eagles, woodland species and more on this great trip.

Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £150.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

NEW! The 'Outer Limits' in summer June 20

An exciting new holiday, including the rugged beauty of Lewis and Harris, recently voted the best island destinations in Europe! Birds of forest, mountain and glen too.

Price £1195pp

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Highland Wildlife Jun 27, Jul 4

Birds, mammals, insects and flora on this unique and highly rewarding holiday, aimed squarely at the natural history all-rounder. Many species found only in the north of Scotland (or very rare further south) make this a fascinating holiday.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

NEW! Short Breaks – Scottish birding in summer Jun 27, Jun 30, July 4, July 7

Three day, four night short breaks for busy birders! Our days are categorised as 'local/mountain', 'eagle' and 'coastal', as we enjoy a rewarding few days of summer birding.

Price £545pp Advance Booking price £520pp - Save £25.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**



Eagles, Divers and Dotterel Jul 11, Jul 18

The best British birding in July? Both eagles on Mull, Dotterel and Ptarmigan on the tops, divers in breeding plumage inland – great birding! We stay overnight on Mull, seek Caper with chicks in our private estate, and visit the Gannets at Troup Head.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

The Top 30 in Summer Jul 25, Aug 1

Ever popular, featuring the birds and mammals of a Highland summer. Great fun on the west coast, where Basking Shark are now regular, and Minke Whale, Bottle-nosed Dolphin and Common Porpoise add a strong cetacean element. Crammed with birds and mammals!

Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1095pp - Save

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

High summer wildlife by land and sea Aug 8, Aug 15

Birds and sealife during the height of summer, featuring boat trips east and west of northern Scotland for dolphins and whales, plus all the special birds and early autumn migration. A thoroughly enjoyable exploration of wildlife by land and sea.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Specials and migration featuring 'The Burma Bank' Aug 22, Aug 29

Sabine's Gull, Sooty Shearwater and much more on 'the Burma Bank', Scotland's newest birding hotspot, now available with Heatherlea! With early migration and all the specialities, this is a very exciting itinerary.

Price £1145pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £100.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Migration and Scottish Specials Sept 5, Sept 12

With migration now in full swing this holiday can yield shearwaters, waders, skuas and petrels on our ferry trip to the Outer Hebrides - expect the unexpected! Plus of course our resident specialities including Caper, Blackcock, Crestie, Ptarmigan, and both eagles.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

The Outer Limits Adventure Sept 19, Sept 26, Oct 3

Including two nights on the Outer Hebrides, this is an exceptional itinerary at the 'outer limits' of Scottish birding, including two nights on Lewis. On other days we seek all the specialities of the Highlands. Outstanding scenery and great birding.

Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1145pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

The Top 20 in Autumn Oct 10, Oct 17

An extraordinary autumn holiday for those who love mammals and birds. Both eagles, otters, pine marten, badgers from a warm hide, Capercaillie, Black Grouse and seaduck are just some of the highlights. See reports on our website!

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Late Autumn in the Highlands Oct 24, Oct 31

Autumn in northern Scotland is a wonderful birding time. We have Caper, Blackcock, Crested Tit, Scottish (Parrot) Crossbill and Golden Eagle inland, seaduck flocks are at maximum volume, and this is an excellent time for geese and rarities.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Short breaks – Scottish birding in Autumn Nov 7, Nov 10, Nov 14, Nov 17

Three day, four night short breaks for busy birders! Our birding days are categorised as 'speciality', 'eagle' and 'coastal', as we enjoy a rewarding few days of late autumn birding in the far north.

Price £545pp Advance Booking price £520pp - Save £25.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

Hogmanay Birding Festival Mon 28 Dec 2015 – Sat 2 Jan 2016

Fancy a New Year treat? Targets include Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Ptarmigan (weather permitting!), Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill, and we visit the coast for wonderful winter birding.

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.

▶ **'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.**

To reserve your holiday, please call **01479 821248** or email **info@heatherlea.co.uk**
We will provisionally reserve a room (and the **'Advance Booking'** price) for you immediately.

FOCUS ON

Birding in the north of Scotland is wonderful in winter. With shorter days, less food in the wild, and less human disturbance, winter is a time when we can get really good sightings. The weather is often surprisingly good, and we enjoy a wide range of birding habitats, from white Ptarmigan on the high tops to many thousands of wintering birds at the coast. This is a time to see the real Scotland, still largely unspoilt, undeveloped, and with unbelievable wildlife.

We are open every week, and our holidays include travel by comfortable minibus, all access fees and the knowledge of Heatherlea's capable and enthusiastic guides. Back home at our 3-star Hotel, we offer great food, comfortable accommodation including a warm open fire, and a fully licenced Hotel - everything you need!

Key birdlife includes Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Golden Eagle, Ptarmigan, Crested Tit, Scottish (Parrot) Crossbill, White-tailed Eagle and Red Grouse, all of which are resident throughout the winter.

Our itineraries change with the season, and winter visitors and residents include Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Goose, Greylag Goose, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, Velvet Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Goosander, Red Grouse, Red-throated Diver, Black-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Slavonian Grebe, Red Kite, Purple Sandpiper, Iceland Gull, Dipper, Hooded Crow, Raven, Tree Sparrow, Twite, Redpoll, Snow Bunting, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting. You should see most of these whenever you join us during these months. In recent years we have also seen Bean Goose, Barnacle Goose, Brent Goose, Pintail, King Eider, Surf Scoter, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Goshawk, Merlin, Peregrine, Golden Plover, Spotted Redshank, Glaucous Gull, Waxwing, Great Grey Shrike, Brambling and Common Crossbill during the winter, and rarities have included Ross's Goose, Red-breasted Goose, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Black Scoter, White-billed Diver, Red-necked Grebe, Great Bittern, Greater Yellowlegs, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Ross's Gull, Ivory Gull and Little Auk.

As the year turns, divers and grebes move inland, and the first migrating passerines begin to arrive. We also include mammals, especially during our 'Top 20' weeks, when Pine Marten, Badger and Otter are key species. At any time, you should see Red Squirrel (virtually guaranteed on our feeders during breakfast), and Red Deer, Roe Deer, Mountain Hare, and Bottle-nosed Dolphin, both seals, and maybe Stoat in ermine too.

WINTER IN THE

Choose from;

New Year Birdlist Booster

Jan 3, 10, 17, 24

Short breaks – Scottish birding in winter

Jan 31, Feb 3, 7, 10

Highland Winter Birding

Feb 14, 21, 28

The Top 20 in Winter

Mar 7, 14



HIGHLANDS



*Enjoy a great winter birding holiday
in the north of Scotland with Heatherlea!*

NEWS Join Phil Knott and Toby Green as they go birding in Scotland!

Heatherlea guides Phil and Toby both live here in the Cairngorms National Park, and when not with Heatherlea guests are usually birding for themselves. Here are a few highlights from their adventures in 2014.

Let's talk 'Capercaillie'

Heatherlea have a great record for finding the 'Horse of the Forest', and our guides do a lot of work behind the scenes to increase our chances.

Phil: *'One morning in April, we stopped north of Carrbridge as a male bird flew ahead of us. It landed about 100 metres into the woods, and all in the lead minibus got good views. Unfortunately my bus wasn't so lucky, and most missed it. We went off to carry on birding nearby, and I rang Toby to tell him the news. Although not guiding clients that day, he came out for a look almost immediately, but didn't find the bird. Toby doesn't give up easily, and around 4pm I got a text – two females had flown into the same area! We were only a couple of miles away, so rushed round and this time everyone got both birds – many thanks to Toby!'*



The Cairngorm Snowy Owl (September 2014)

Toby: *'I heard about this bird from a local contact, so decided to take a look. The bird was a long way from the summit of Cairngorm, but once located was very easy to see. A sub-adult male, this owl took my breath away in the barren but stunning surroundings. I didn't want to disturb the bird, so stayed about 400 metres away, though I was very pleased to take this pic with my telephoto lens. After watching the bird for nearly an hour I headed back over the plateau and was treated to a stunning flock of 30 Snow Bunting to cap a fine day out. If the owl comes a bit nearer, we will show it to our guests too of course, so here's hoping!'*

See front page for Toby's Snowy Owl photo.



Favourite bits with clients?

Phil: *'This year, it has to be the early September 'Burma Bank' holiday. We had all the specials with superb views by lunchtime on the third day, and 135 species over the week.*

On the Burma Bank day we had great Minke Whale, Common Dolphin, Harbour Porpoise, Arctic and Great Skua, Storm Petrel and Manx Shearwater with cripplingly close juvenile White-tailed Eagle on the Shiantis. We had a fantastic day out, capped off with an Otter and 62 Black-throated Divers in a favourite bay on our way home. Guest highlights for week included Ospreys fishing so close we could hear the splash as they hit the water and the Nairn 'pig pool' (a little-known hotspot) was superb for Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff and Little Stint. Our very next visit produced a Pectoral Sandpiper!'



Toby: *'My favourite trip with clients this season was to St Kilda, especially pulling into Village Bay at midnight. We enjoyed a stunning crossing surrounded by Storm Petrels, Manx Shearwater and several pods of Common and Rissos Dolphin, then had the privilege of two days on Hirta, watching skuas and thousands of Puffin. The week continued in that vein with a visit to the Monarch Isles and Taransay, and then wonderful close views of both White-tailed and Golden Eagle in a remote Harris sea loch, oh and finding Bog Orchid on Taransay was pretty special too!'*

Phil and Toby are looking forward to 2015, see **'Follow that Guide!'** on page 12.

Short Breaks - Ideal for busy birders!



Although we are about to begin our 25th season of birding holidays here in Scotland, it has come to our attention that some of you have never been to Heatherlea, and others haven't joined us for quite some time. We want to celebrate our special anniversary by welcoming as many people as possible to our award winning Hotel in Nethy Bridge, where we hope for a fantastic holiday, full of great days in the field as we show you the special birdlife.



For a limited period, we are offering you the chance to join a tremendous short birding break on a **'TWO-for-ONE'** basis. That means two people can enjoy four nights comfortable accommodation, including dinner, breakfast and packed lunch, plus three exciting days birding with a Heatherlea Guide in our minibus, for just £545! We will seek all the speciality birds including Capercaillie, Golden Eagle, Crested Tit, Black Grouse and many more, including at least one visit to the bird-rich Moray coastline.

Short breaks – Scottish birding in Winter

Price £545pp no single supplement.
SPECIAL OFFER '2-for-1'

Sat 31 Jan – Wed 4 Feb,
Tues 3 Feb – Sat 7 Feb,

Sat 7 Feb – Wed 11 Feb,
Tues 10 Feb – Sat 14 Feb,

Three day, four night short breaks for busy birders! Targets include Golden Eagle, Capercaillie, Crested Tit, Scottish Crossbill, Black Grouse, and many more inland and at the coast. Other dates may become available, please check our website.

Special 2-for-1 offer

The holiday is based around our **'Birds of Strathspey'** itinerary, and you can currently choose dates in February 2015. There is no catch, this is a genuine top-value offer to encourage as many people as possible to sample our holidays.

We expect this offer to be very popular, and availability is necessarily limited, so don't delay, book soon!
Ring **01479 821248** or email info@heatherlea.co.uk, and once your deposit (£200) is paid your place is secure.



HEATHERLEA BIRDING BUDDIES

A great new offer for friends who enjoy birding together!

We know many of you like travelling with friends to enjoy wildlife holidays, so here's a new service from Heatherlea. Wherever you want to visit, whatever you want to see, we will design the best possible trip for you, at the best possible price!

It doesn't matter whether you are a formal club or group, or whether you are a group of friends, who perhaps met on a Heatherlea trip, we can create just the right itinerary for your next unforgettable wildlife holiday.

Mainland Scotland at Mountview Hotel

- ✓ choose when you want to come.
- ✓ join a Heatherlea group or have your own exclusive guide and accommodation.
- ✓ set your own agenda based on wildlife/places you want to include.
- ✓ choose the length of your stay.
- ✓ benefit from special prices not quoted anywhere else.

Example; Seven people wanting to join our High Season across the Highlands holiday in June, to see Golden Eagle, Dotterel, Crested Tit and to visit Handa Island, **pay only £895pp for seven nights DBB including six days birding.**

Scottish Islands

- ✓ choose where you want to go.
- ✓ have your own exclusive Heatherlea Guide and transport.
- ✓ set your own agenda based on places you want to include.
- ✓ specify wildlife you really want to see.
- ✓ enjoy a bespoke tour.

Example; **Six or more people can save £200 each** on our exciting St Kilda holiday in June 2015. Only one 'Birding Buddy' space available on this UK voyage of a lifetime!

Overseas

- ✓ choose when you want to go.
- ✓ have your own exclusive Heatherlea Guide and transport.
- ✓ specify wildlife you really want to see.
- ✓ enjoy a bespoke tour or join a Heatherlea group.

Example, Six people wanting to visit Extremadura in early May to see all the speciality birds, with excellent en-suite accommodation, **saving £100 from the published price of £1595.**



FREE!

These crystal binoculars are an example of superb workmanship, created by Swarovski in accordance with their family tradition of excellence. The first 50 'Birding Buddies' to reserve their holidays with us in 2015 will each receive one of these pieces free of charge!



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Just call Kevin, Emma or Amanda for a no-obligation chat. We will construct the best and most cost-effective holiday for you and your friends.



WANT TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS? USE YOUR OWN HOLIDAY WEBPAGE!

Why not send a webpage of your proposed holiday to all who might be interested? This saves a lot of hard work! You can print the page to use as a handout or poster at meetings, so your friends can see all details of the trip before they decide. The page would be hosted by Heatherlea, and completely confidential to you and your friends. A great new service! This newsletter is available as a pdf for you to circulate – just ask for the link to send to your friends.

FOLLOW THAT GUIDE!

Many of you have favourite guides, whether for their infectious enthusiasm, personal care or sheer birding ability. Here's our guide to some of our Guides! This list runs to mid-August, though some trips are confirmed to the end of 2015. If your holiday isn't listed below, just call or email for details of your Guide.

Please note; our Guides Rota is firmly in place, though changes may occur; we can't absolutely guarantee the named Guide.



Phil Knott

New Year Birdlist Booster 3 Jan
 Costa Rica 17 Jan
 Birds of Strathspey 7 Feb
 Highland Winter Birding 14 Feb
 Top 20 spring 7 Mar, 14 Mar
 Highlands and Mull 28 Mar
 Skyros 25 April
 Outer Hebs in spring 9 May
 Mull, Iona and Treshnish 20 May
 High Season across the Highlands 23 May
 Orkney Island Explorer 6 June
 Shetland and Orkney 20 June
 Highland Wildlife 4 July
 Highlands and Islands summer 18 July
 Top 30 summer 1 Aug
 Summer Island Spectacular 15 Aug
 Rutland Birdfair 21 Aug



Cristian Jensen

Birding and Lynx 6 Jan
 Morocco 22 March
 Extremadura 19 April
 Turkey 1 May
 Pyrenees, steppes and Ebro 13 June
 Picos birding and bears 23 August
 Mexico 16 Nov
 Senegal 7 Dec



Josele Saiz

Andalucia 15 Sept
 North Morocco 3 Oct



Dave Pullan

New Year Birdlist Booster 17 Jan
 India 5 March
 Lesvos 18 April
 Trinidad, Tobago and St Lucia 29 April
 Outer Hebs in spring 16 May
 Islands on the Edge 1 June
 Shetland Island Explorer 14 June



Rob Jordan

New Year Birdlist Booster 24 Jan
 Birds of Strathspey 31 Jan
 Highland Winter Birding 21 Feb, 28 Feb
 Camargue 18 March
 Spring into Scotland 4 April, 11 April
 Mallorca 2 May
 High Season across the Highlands 23 May, 30 May
 Eagles, Divers and Dotterel 11 July, 18 July
 High Summer Wildlife 8 Aug, 15 Aug



Toby Green

New Year Birdlist Booster 3 Jan, 10 Jan
 Fuerteventura 23 Jan
 Highland Winter Birding 14 Feb, 21 Feb
 Camargue 18 March
 Highlands and Mull 21 March
 Spring into Scotland 4 April
 Highlands and Skye 25 April, 2 May
 Birding the Highlands in May 16 May
 Outer Hebs in spring 23 May
 High Season across the Highlands 6 June
 Islands on the Edge 15 June
 St Kilda 10 July
 Rutland Birdfair 21 Aug



Jonny Pott

Hogmanay Birding Festival 29 Dec
 New Year Birdlist Booster 10 Jan, 17 Jan
 Birds of Strathspey 31 Jan, 7 Feb
 Highland Winter Birding 28 Feb
 Top 20 spring 7 March
 Highlands and Mull 21 March
 Spring into Scotland 18 April
 Highlands and Skye 25 April
 Birding the Highlands in May 9 May, 16 May
 High Season across the Highlands 30 May, 6 June
 Outer Limits in summer 20 June
 Birds of Strathspey 27 June
 St Kilda 10 July
 Top 30 summer 25 July, 1 Aug
 High Summer Wildlife 15 Aug
 Specials and 'Burma Bank' 22 Aug

Ian Ford

Hogmanay Birding Festival 29 Dec
 Gambia 9 Jan
 New Year Birdlist Booster 24 Jan
 Costa Rica 20 Feb
 Cuba 12 March
 Spring into Scotland 11 April
 Highlands and islands in spring 18 April
 Mallorca 2 May
 Outer Hebs in spring 16 May
 Southern Hebrides 31 May
 Highlands and Orkney 13 June
 Inner Hebrides 26 June
 Unexplored Outer Hebs 4 July
 Yellowstone 20 July
 Rutland Birdfair 21 Aug



2015 SCOTTISH ISLAND holidays

Birding on the islands and far west coast.

These very popular holidays offer carefully designed itineraries. Each takes you to the right place at the right time, and in 2015 we offer more choice than ever, with many new and exciting itineraries. All are run at a leisurely pace, though we might move a bit faster with rare birds in our sights!

Transfers from Nethy Bridge are included in most, and you may book an extra night's stay at either end of your holiday. If driving, your vehicle may be left safely parked at Mountview Hotel free of charge, and if using public transport we offer a morning courtesy bus to Aviemore links. As an alternative you can join the holiday at a convenient point closer to our destination.

Tremendous value! This is often the most economical way to visit the remotest parts of Scotland – our holidays make it easy and give you real savings.

NB – many are filling fast.
The best way to secure your Scottish Island Adventure is to book as soon as possible!

NEW! HIGHLANDS and ISLANDS in Spring

Sat 18 April – Sat 25 April

Price £1495pp ssupp £160

OUTER HEBRIDES in Spring

Sat 9 May – Fri 15 May,

Sat 16 May – Fri 22 May

Sat 23 May – Fri 29 May

Price £1195pp ssupp £145

MULL, IONA and the Treshnish Isles

Wed 20 May – Sat 23 May

Price £825pp ssupp £75



SOUTHERN HEBRIDES

Sun 31 May – Sat 6 June

Price £1645pp ssupp £140

ISLANDS ON THE EDGE

Mon 1 June – Mon 8 June,

Mon 15 June – Mon 22 June

Price £1675pp ssupp £140

ORKNEY ISLAND EXPLORER

Sat 6 June – Sat 13 June

Price £1675pp ssupp £140

SHETLAND ISLAND EXPLORER

Sun 14 June – Sun 21 June

Price £1645pp ssupp £140



SHETLAND and ORKNEY

Sat 20 June – Sun 28 June

Price £1795pp ssupp £200

INNER HEBRIDES

Fri 26 June – Fri 3 July

Price £1595pp ssupp £160

UNEXPLORED OUTER HEBRIDES

Sat 4 July – Fri 10 July

Price £1645pp ssupp £120

ST KILDA and the HEBRIDES

Fri 10 July – Fri 17 July

Price £1995 ssupp £15

NEW! HIGHLANDS and ISLANDS in Summer

Sat 18 July – Sat 25 July

Price £1495pp ssupp £160

NEW! SUMMER ISLAND SPECTACULAR

Sat 8 Aug – Sat 15 Aug,

Price £1495pp ssupp £160

NORTH RONALDSAY and mainland ORKNEY

Sat 12 Sept – Fri 18 Sept

Price £1075pp ssupp £120

SHETLAND for birders

Sat 26 Sept – Sat 3 Oct,

Fri 2 Oct – Fri 9 Oct

Price £1095pp ssupp £140

FAIR ISLE

Fri 9 Oct – Thu 15 Oct

Price £995pp ssupp £30

OUTER HEBRIDES for birders

Sat 10 Oct – Fri 16 Oct

Price £995pp ssupp £140

COLL and TIRRE for birders

Sun 18 Oct – Sat 24 Oct

Price £1395pp ssupp £120

ISLAY and JURA

Sat 24 Oct – Wed 28 Oct

Price £895pp ssupp £60

SOLWAY FIRTH

Sat 14 Nov – Wed 18 Nov

Price £745pp ssupp £80



FOCUS ON **NEW!** Birds of the Highlands and Islands

Price: £1495pp ssupp £160

Dates:

Sat 18 April – Sat 25 April

Sat 18 July – Sat 25 July

This exciting new grand tour aims to find many of the most sought-after birds of the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Aimed at the busy birder who wants to see the specialities of the mainland and also visit key islands on the same holiday, this is a great way to cover some of Scotland's best birds and destinations in just one week. As usual, Heatherlea provide all minibus travel, ferries, accommodation and expert guiding. Here is an outline of our spring tour, for the summer tour please see our website.

Spring Tour (18 – 25 April)

We begin in Strathspey on the first full day, looking for iconic Scottish speciality birds, including Black Grouse, Red- and Black-throated Diver, Osprey, Red Squirrel, Crested Tit and Scottish (Parrot) Crossbill. We search for Capercaillie in our exclusive private estate woodlands, and our success rate at this time of year is excellent. Staying inside our large minibus gives us an excellent chance of seeing both male and female birds. The next morning we look to round up any species missed before travelling to Skye, seeking Ptarmigan en-route. While on Skye we search for both White-tailed and Golden Eagle, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl and Otter.

Next we return to the Scottish mainland and head south to Morvern for an overnight stay before crossing to Mull, where migration should be well under way. Whimbrel, Great Northern Diver, Slavonian Grebe and Twite are just some of the birds, and of course both eagle species and Otter are also found on Mull. We return via good sites for Black Guillemot and Hooded Crow, for our final night close to rail and road links.

Our focus is strictly on birding, though we should also see Otter, Red Squirrel, Red and Roe Deer, and both Grey and Common Seal. The pace is easy, though our optional search for Ptarmigan requires some hillwalking (though many have seen the birds more easily, sometimes from inside the minibus!) Hotels are en-suite, private and homely.



Overseas birding and wildlife holidays

Do it the Heatherlea way!

Our overseas holidays are booking rapidly next year, our thanks to those who have already chosen Heatherlea! We have a reputation for being 'less-intensive', and all itineraries are planned carefully so you see memorable wildlife, whilst enjoying relaxed, informal days that are great fun. Our holidays are not 'dawn to dusk' expeditions, and we take sensible breaks when in very hot places and regular comfort breaks on every holiday.

Every holiday is run the 'Heatherlea way', for guests who we consider friends as well as clients. That means rewarding and exciting days in the field, in the company of capable Leaders who really look after you, and good quality accommodation and meals, with a real flavour of the country we are visiting. Please take a close look for great holiday content at very attractive prices - wherever you want to go!

PRE-FLIGHT SERVICES – latest update

With Heatherlea, your overnight hotel room pre-flight is included. If you need car parking, we can organise it for you, to make your airport experience easier. The following morning, enjoy a VIP Airport Lounge, and arrive at the departure gate already relaxed, and ready for your holiday. On some long-haul holidays, namely Cuba, Arizona Nepal, India, Senegal and Goa, the relevant field guide is also included.

Next time you have an early flight, a stopover or are in transit, why not get a few hours to relax, refresh, connect and sleep before your onward journey? Ask our office for details.

GATWICK HOTEL

For most departures we use a hotel adjacent to North Terminal. Our record from bedroom to check-in terminal is three minutes! No hopper bus, no waiting at the hotel front door, no tour of other airport hotels on a cramped bus and Heatherlea book and pay for it too!



NEW! SECURITY FAST TRACK*

When you arrive at departures, show your lounge voucher at the 'fast track' lane, and skip the queues! You can reach the shops and your VIP Lounge sooner! *please note fast track is subject to availability on the day of travel.

Don't forget, when comparing Heatherlea prices with others;

NEW! CABINS INSIDE THE AIRPORT TERMINAL

Heatherlea now offer a great hotel experience **inside the airport**. 'Cabins' give you the ultimate experience of being only minutes away from departures and arrival gates. These cabins are small but smartly designed so that everything is at your fingertips, simple and easy to use. 'Food to Go' is available, and you can also get complimentary hot drinks; coffee, tea and hot chocolate. They are very comfortable, bookable by the hour, and have free TV and Wifi. Kevin says *'I had several hours to kill on my return from Cuba this year, so instead of trying to get comfortable in the public places, I booked one of these cabins inside the terminal at Gatwick. It was fantastic, I grabbed a few hours' sleep, and felt much better by the time I joined my connecting flight. I know our clients will love these cabins!'*

- ✓ pre-flight airport hotel INCLUDED^
- ✓ pre-flight VIP lounge entry INCLUDED^
- ✓ departure tax (several long-haul destinations) INCLUDED
- ✓ birding Field Guide (six destinations in 2015) INCLUDED
- ✓ major tips to Hotels and local guides INCLUDED (whip-rounds for drivers/guides always encouraged, but not compulsory).
- ✓ a 'feel' of the country and other benefits INCLUDED. This might be a tour of Havana, tea in the Sahara, internal flights in countries where roads aren't great, tavern lunches **The list goes on!**

^ price reduction if not needed or unavailable.

Winter and early spring – still time to join us!

GAMBIA

9 Jan - 16 Jan 2015

£1845pp, £180 single supplement.

Heatherlea Guide Ian Ford plus Kevin Shaw and local guide.

Max group size 12.

Departures from London Gatwick.

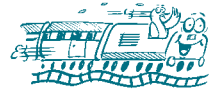
The Gambia is a superb option for British birders because it offers the nearest forest jungle to the UK, is readily accessible, reasonably priced, and with easy birding and comfortable hotels close to the airport. This holiday is a simple and straightforward introduction to African birding, and is based almost entirely at the bird-rich coastal strip, largely considered safe and friendly. The Gambia is usually dry and sunny when we visit, so we will be flexible, switching between sites.

Birding promises to be exceptional, beginning in our hotel grounds and spreading to such sites as the famous Abuko Nature Reserve, marvellous Lamin Lodge, the village of Brufut, bustling Tanji, scrubby open woods at Turjering, the Faraba-Banta Bush Track (better known as the 'Raptor Track'), and a visit one hour inland to Marakissa Rivercamp, a top destination which has a greater diversity of species than anywhere else we visit. As usual, we shall be keeping an eye on the general wildlife of the area including some spectacular butterflies and reptiles, Nile Monitor Lizard, and monkeys such as Green Vervet and Red Colobus.



HOLLAND and FLANDERS *by train,*

Eurostar to Brussels, then great winter birding.



Sat 7 Feb – Sat 14 Feb 2015

£1395pp, £110 single supplement.

Heatherlea Leader Josef Leestmans, plus another from our team with more than seven clients. Max group size 12 clients.

Some of you really hate flying! Join our Holland and Flanders trip by train to Brussels, where we visit the best places to see geese, including Red-breasted, White-fronted, Lesser White-fronted, Dark-bellied Brent, and 'tundra' Bean, with Snow Goose a distinct possibility. Seaduck include Smew, all three egrets, Eurasian Spoonbill and the first returning Black-tailed Godwits. Woodlands hold five woodpeckers including Black, and Middle- and Lesser-spotted. Crested Tit, Firecrest, Great Grey Shrike and Woodlark overwinter. Many raptors include White-tailed Eagle, Marsh and Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl and rarities perhaps including Rough-legged Buzzard. Other birds of note might include Caspian Gull, Bearded Tit, Bittern, Crested Lark and Serin. Exciting overseas birding, and not far away on the train!



CROATIA

23 Apr - 30 Apr 2015

£1695pp, £140 single supplement.

Leader Gerard Gorman. Max group size 12 clients. Flights from London Gatwick

Something different, on a relaxed and non-intensive holiday with many sought-after birds to delight us. Key species include Rock Partridge, Pygmy Cormorant, Rock Thrush, Scops Owl, and a wide range of southern European species. Squacco, Purple and Night Heron, White Stork, Black-winged Stilt, Spotted Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Ruff, Glossy Ibis, Stone Curlew, Short-toed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Ferruginous Duck, Garganey, Grey-headed and Middle-spotted Woodpecker,

Wryneck, Hoopoe, 'real' Rock Dove, Alpine Swift, Crag Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Rock Nuthatch, Tawny Pipit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Black Redstart, Blue Rock Thrush, Black-eared Wheatear, Sombre Tit, Subalpine, Orphean, Great Reed, Wood, Fan-tailed and Cetti's Warbler, Woodchat Shrike, Bee-eater, Golden Oriole, Hawfinch, Serin, Rock Bunting and Cirl Bunting to name but some of the avian delights. We stay in comfortable en-suite accommodation, visiting Crna Mlaka, the Krka National Park, Lake Vrana and Pag Island, and Paklenica National Park.

NEPAL

16 March – 28 March 2015 (second departure, brochure dates now full).

£2995pp, £295 single supplement.

Optional Everest/Kathmandu sightseeing extension add £260pp

Guides - Kevin Shaw plus local guides including Suchit Basnet, one of the country's top guides – we have friends in high places!
Max 12 guests.

Nepal is a fantastic country for the wildlife enthusiast, and this holiday is ideal for the visitor who wants a relaxing experience of birds, mammals, landscape and lifestyle. We travel in spring, when temperatures are beginning to rise, and lowland areas can be warm.

We should see wintering wetland birds, passerines from Siberia and high Himalayan breeders migrating to lowlands, plus the extra interest of early summer migrants. Expect well over 200 species as we move across Nepal's well-forested lowlands, enjoying a pleasant climate and splendid views of the foothills, including woodpeckers, minivets, warblers, flycatchers, laughing-thrushes, yuhinas, fulvettas, sunbirds, flowerpeckers, just to name a few! Elsewhere we spend time looking for rare Ibisbill, and expect delightful species such as Red-flanked Bluetail, Siberian Rubythroat and Wallcreeper. Other fantastic birds include Cutia, Swamp Francolin, Tickell's Red-breasted Blue Flycatcher and many more.

We focus on the best lowland habitats, including Nepal's two finest reserves, Chitwan NP and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. We have time to thoroughly explore both reserves at a gentle pace. This holiday has a secondary focus on mammals particularly at Chitwan, where we explore by jeep, elephant, rubber boat and on foot. This way we have maximum chances to see other wildlife, especially endangered royal Bengal Tiger and Great One-horned (Indian) Rhinoceros. Tigers move mostly during the cooler night, morning and evenings whereas rhino prefer grasslands to graze, and take to water holes when hot.

We also spend another very rewarding day birding in the Kathmandu Valley, as we drive close to the 2740-metre summit of Phulchowki, where our birdlist will grow quickly. Above all we take our time on a relaxing and enjoyable holiday, filled with wildlife.

An important extra on this holiday is our internal flight back from the east of the country. This may not seem important before you travel, and many competitor itineraries don't include it, but this flight saves a lot of 'road-time' at the end of the holiday, and we are certain once in Nepal you will be relieved to avoid the long drive to Kathmandu. You may also enjoy spectacular scenic views from the aircraft, and on a clear day can see the Himalayan Range, including the summit of Mount Everest (see photo below!).

At the end we offer an optional extension, featuring a thrilling Everest panoramic mountain flight, plus a most worthwhile visit to Kathmandu's monumental sites; highly recommended!



Overseas 2015

Max 12 clients on most holidays (we might take 13 clients when the last to book are a couple). Some are now full or nearly full – please phone or email to check details.

SPAIN – BIRDING and LYNX

Tues Jan 6 – Tues Jan 13

GAMBIA

Fri Jan 9 – Fri Jan 16

NEW! FUERTEVENTURA

Fri Jan 23 – Wed Jan 28

HOLLAND and FLANDERS by train

Sat Feb 7 – Sat Feb 14

COSTA RICA

Fri Feb 20 – Sat Mar 7

ICELAND birds and borealis

Thurs Feb 26 – Mon Mar 2

NEPAL (new second departure)

Mon March 16 – Sat March 28

INDIA

Thurs March 5 – Tues March 17

CUBA

Thurs March 12 – Tues March 24

CAMARGUE

Wed March 18 – Wed March 25

NEW! ICELAND orcas and auroras

Sat March 21 – Thurs Mar 26

MOROCCO

Sun March 22 – Wed April 1

SPAIN in early spring

Wed March 25 – Sun 29 March

PO DELTA & VENICE

Sat April 4 – Sat April 11

NEW! ARIZONA and GRAND CANYON

Sat April 11 – Sat April 25

LESVOS

Sat April 18 – Sat April 25

EXTREMADURA

Sun April 19 – Sun April 26

CROATIA

Thurs April 23 – Thurs April 30

SKYROS

Sat April 25 – Sat May 2

TRINIDAD, TOBAGO and ST LUCIA

Mon April 27 – Sat May 9

TURKEY

Fri May 1 – Mon May 11

MALLORCA

Sat May 2 – Sat May 9

ESTONIA

Sun May 3 – Sun May 10

HUNGARY in Spring

Sat May 9 – Sat May 16

SPAIN - PYRENEES to EBRO DELTA

Sat June 13 – Tues June 23

SPITSBERGEN

Thurs June 18 - Thurs June 25

YELLOWSTONE & GRAND TETON

Mon July 20 – Sun Aug 2

ICELAND

Thurs July 23 – Thurs July 30

NOVA SCOTIA

Sat Aug 15 – Sat Aug 22

AZORES

Sat Aug 29 – Sat Sept 5

NEW! PICOS MTS – Birds and Bears

(revised dates)

Thurs Sept 10 – Thurs Sept 17

ANDALUCIA

Tue Sept 15 – Tues Sept 22

HUNGARY IN AUTUMN

Sun Sept 27 – Sun Oct 4

NEW! North MOROCCO

Sat Oct 3 – Fri Oct 9

BRAZIL

Sat Oct 17 – Tue Oct 27

PANAMA

Mon Nov 2 – Mon Nov 16

NEW! ETHIOPIA

Sat Nov 7 – Wed Nov 17

GAMBIA

Mon Nov 9 – Mon Nov 16

NEW! MEXICO

Mon Nov 16 – Fri Nov 27

FLORIDA

Wed Nov 18 – Sat Nov 28

GOA

Sat Nov 21 – Sun Dec 6

NEW! SENEGAL

Mon Dec 7 – Fri Dec 19



For MORE DETAILS of all our 2015 holidays

- READ our colour brochure
- VISIT our website www.heatherlea.co.uk
- TELEPHONE 01479 821248 to speak to Kevin, Amanda, Emma, Isabel or Melanie.



- CALL at our stand at the NORTH WEST BIRD WATCHING FESTIVAL WWF Martin Mere

Sat 22 & Sun 23 November 2014

Coming along? Please pop by our stand and have a chat. We look forward to meeting friends of Heatherlea based in the north and midlands. A 'Taste of Scotland' will of course be available!

Heatherlea,
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