

## **NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Take a walk on the wild side at Grey Mare's Tail**

The National Trust for Scotland has published a spotter's guide for visitors to one of Scotland's favourite waterfalls

The end of lockdown is in sight just as the first green shoots of spring start to emerge. And with the changing of seasons, a whole new world will come to life at Grey Mare's Tail in Moffat.

To mark UN World Wildlife Day in 2021, the National Trust for Scotland has published a series of spotter's guides for visitors to their nationwide network of properties and wild spaces.

One turns its eye to one of the UK's highest waterfalls plunging 60m from Loch Skeen, Grey Mare's Tail – a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts.

While exploring, walkers can spot the effects of glacial erosion on the landscape and if they look carefully there's a whole host of wildlife nestled along the trail.

#### **The Dipper**

Small but perfectly formed, this robin-sized bird can be seen darting up and down the waterfall. Its bright white tummy, in contrast to its dark body, often catches the eye first, but keep an ear cocked for its beautiful and distinctive song. The dipper is named after its characteristic bobbing movement when perched on rocks or branches. And, when on the hunt, it has a special skill and can both feed and walk underwater.

#### **Kestrel**

One of the UK's smaller birds of prey, the kestrel has adapted to hunting in a wide range of habitats, and is often spotted near roads, keeping a sharp eye out for small rodents. It is perhaps best known for its distinctive hovering in the air, as well as its orangey brown colour and long tail. These birds have a trick up their wing: they can see the world in ultraviolet and follow the urine trails of small mammals to pinpoint their prey.

#### **Mountain Hares**

Masters of disguise, mountain hares change their coats into a soft brown in summer. Keep an eye out for those distinctive black ear tips. If disturbed, mountain hares can reach speeds of up to 40mph thanks to their immensely powerful back legs. Mountain hares are a native Scottish species and are bigger than rabbits and yet slightly smaller than brown hares.

#### **Peregrine Falcon**

This bird is the largest falcon found in the UK and is the fastest creature in the world. It can reach speeds of up to 200mph during a dive (a cheetah can reach a top speed of 70mph) – their long, pointed wings turn them into an aerodynamic masterpiece. They often take their prey in mid-flight, relying on the speed of their surprise attack.

### **Vendace**

You'll struggle to spot this small fish in Loch Skeen - with a blue-green back and a silver belly, it is the UK's rarest freshwater fish. The vendace is highly protected as it is very susceptible to changes in water conditions. It likes cool, upland water and so has settled well in Loch Skeen's clear, unpolluted water.

### **Wheatear**

Often known as a harbinger of spring, the wheatear has the longest migration of any small bird in the world with a return journey of 18,640 miles from sub-Saharan Africa. Male birds will typically arrive in late March to claim the best territories before the female Wheatears arrive in April. The small bird can often be spotted on top of the cliff edge, puffing out its chest, marking the beginning of spring.

If you are thinking of travelling to a National Trust for Scotland property, please check Scottish Government Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions. You can also find out more about the properties at [nts.org.uk](https://www.nts.org.uk)

**ENDS**

**Issued on behalf of National Trust for Scotland by Frame PR. For media enquiries contact:  
Mamta Kakaiya, 07876 835 744, [Mamta.Kakaiya@framecreates.co.uk](mailto:Mamta.Kakaiya@framecreates.co.uk)  
Gregor Kyle, 07415 537 087, [gregor.kyle@framecreates.co.uk](mailto:gregor.kyle@framecreates.co.uk)**

### **Editor's Notes:**

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at [www.nts.org.uk](https://www.nts.org.uk).

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to 'the National Trust'. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or 'the Trust'.