

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

### **Walk on the wild side in Arran**

The National Trust for Scotland has published a spotter's guide for visitors to Goatfell

The end of lockdown is almost 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 on Goatfell in Arran.

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. The conservation charity protects Scotland's natural and national treasures, including rugged mountain landscapes like Goatfell.

One guide turns its eye the Isle of Arran's highest point – at 874m, Goatfell boasts magnificent views for all visitors to enjoy.

Walkers are encouraged to keep a close eye open for some of Scotland's most iconic species as they reach the mountain's summit, which takes anywhere between two and five hours.

The guides are published as the charity runs a fundraising appeal in support of its work to protect Scotland's nature. Caring for countryside costs the charity millions each year. Supporters are being asked to donate to help the Trust help nature, now and in the future. Find out more at: [www.nts.org.uk/help-nature](http://www.nts.org.uk/help-nature).

#### **The Golden Eagle**

At the highest peak on the Isle of Arran, visitors can look out for the golden eagle, one of Scotland's big five. The beautiful bird of prey is the king of the skies and can be admired as they hunt for rabbits, hares and grouse. The golden eagle is a magnificent sight: its wing span is huge, with some adults reaching well over 2m. Golden eagles are one of Scotland's few remaining natural predators and play an essential role in maintaining Highland ecosystems.

#### **Ptarmigan Mountain Bird**

The Ptarmigan mountain bird is exclusive to the Scottish Highlands. These mountain birds have adapted to the cold climate by having feathery feet and they grow a totally white plumage in winter to camouflage against the snow. In the recent past, ptarmigan regularly

bred on Arran, but climate change has shrunk their range and now they are only occasional visitors.

### **Hen Harrier**

Walkers can spot the hen harrier, another bird of prey with a strikingly owl-like face, flying low across the heather moorland. The male is an unusual slate grey colour with black wing tips; the female is dull brown in colour with a distinctive white rump. Unlike other areas where hen harriers have been threatened to the point of extinction due to persecution, the Isle of Arran has a significant number of breeding pairs. Hen harriers are ground nesting birds so their success on Arran is partly due to fewer ground predators, with no foxes, stoats or weasels present on the island.

### **Whinchat**

Early May and the click, click sound of two stones knocking together alerts walkers to the return of the whinchat to their breeding grounds in Glen Rosa. Whinchats have shown a dramatic decline in numbers in many parts of Britain. The National Trust for Scotland are monitoring their numbers in Glen Rosa and ensuring that their breeding grounds are maintained in a good condition.

### **The Adder**

Although many people feel anxious about encountering an adder whilst out in the countryside, they're quite timid reptiles. Adders have a very distinctive zigzag pattern along their back and will give a loud warning hiss if you get too close – they don't want to be stepped on! These reptiles roam around the woodland areas, moorland or even can be seen sunbathing on rocks. Goatfell has a strong adder population, including black adders.

### **Insects that can be spotted**

Other magnificent creatures which can be spotted along the way to the summit are emperor moths which can be found in the heathland or moorland, the green tiger beetle which enjoys roaming the bare hillside, and the highland midge which can be found, or avoided, in the boggy landscape.

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**

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### **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](http://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'.

