

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

Walk on the wild side in the Highlands

The National Trust for Scotland has published a spotter's guide for visitors to Mar Lodge Estate and Inverewe

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 at Mar Lodge Estate and Inverewe.

To mark UN World Wildlife Day in 2021, conservation charity, 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 protect Scotland's natural and national treasures, including Mar Lodge Estate and Inverewe.

While exploring these properties, visitors can enjoy the beautiful landscape that provides sanctuary for these magnificent creatures and are encouraged to keep a close eye open for the array of wildlife that can be spotted.

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.

Wildlife that can be spotted at Mar Lodge Estate

Mar Lodge Estate is Britain's largest national nature reserve and home to many of Scotland's iconic species. The wildlife wonderland in the heart of the Cairngorms covers 29,000 hectares of landscape, with heather covered moorland, Caledonian pine forest, mountains and Quoich wetlands.

Otters

The Quoich wetlands provides sanctuary to otters, semi-aquatic animals that have adapted to life in water with webbed toes, a rudder-like tail, ears and nostrils that close underwater, a waterproof outer coat and an insulating undercoat. They are always on the hunt, eating machines who need to fuel for a body perfectly adapted to life on land and in water.

Red squirrels

This red is gradually making a comeback with the National Trust of Scotland working with a range of partners to support native populations and keep their dangerous grey cousins at bay. With the little tufts on their ears, long tails and rich, rusty colour, it's easy to see why visitors are completely entranced by them.

Pine Martens

The beautiful ancient pine forest provides habitat for pine martens, who are solitary, shy and mostly nocturnal – making them rather tricky to spot. They're related to stoats and weasels, but unlike their cousins they're brilliant climbers thanks to their long bushy tails and strong claws. Encouraging more

pine martens could be a great help for red squirrels, since pine martens enjoy a tasty grey squirrel snack!

Red deer

Another icon of the Scottish Highlands – you'll never forget seeing that majestic silhouette on the ridge for the first time! Red deer are the fourth-largest deer in the world (beaten by the moose, elk and sambar deer), and they're Britain's largest land mammal. These beautiful creatures can be spotted at Mar Lodge grazing on the open hills or roaming the woodlands.

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.

Wildlife that can be spotted at Inverewe

Inverewe is home to Scotland's big five including the golden eagle, red deer, otters, red squirrels and the harbour seals.

Harbour Seals

Inverewe boasts a resident harbour seal colony on the estate, where the best way to spot them is by boat from Inverewe's jetty. If you are lucky enough from land, you might be able to spot one of Scotland's best-loved animals coming up for air in Loch Ewe. Harbour seals feed locally around haul-out sites, eating a wide variety of prey including sand eels, whitefish, flatfish, herring, sprat, octopus and squid. Harbour seals can live up to a whopping 25 years in the wild!

White-tailed eagles

Bird lovers can enjoy white-tailed eagles, often spotted soaring the air hunting their prey. The white-tailed eagle was once extinct in the UK, but after incredible reintroduction projects there has been a return of these beautiful birds along the north-west coast of Scotland.

Grey Heron

It's perfect poise and pose, combined with long neck, long legs and long beak make the grey heron instantly recognisable. And watch out when they take flight – this is a sight to behold as their wingspan can reach up to 1.9metres.

Insects that can be spotted

Inverewe garden also provides the perfect habitat for rare insects to thrive, with azure hawker dragonflies, argent and sable moths, peacock butterfly, speckled wood butterfly, small pearl-bordered fritillary and the large red damselfly, which appears in spring and can be spotted a mile off with its superhero-coloured black and yellow belly.

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)

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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.

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'.

