

The Magic of Mull

Naturetrek Tour Report

16th – 22nd June 2026



Three Lakes viewpoint



Otter



Razorbills



Northern Eggar

Tour report by Andy Smith



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Tour participants: Andy Smith (leader) with seven Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Tuesday 16th June

After successful pick-ups at both Paisley station and Glasgow airport, we headed off towards Oban, stopping for lunch at Tyndrum. Problems with the Oban/Craignure ferry necessitated a diversion to Lochaline, via scenic Glencoe and the Corran ferry. It was a longer drive, but the two ferry journeys were short, and waiting time was minimal. In the event, we arrived on Mull at pretty much the same time as we would have done coming from Oban, and our first bird as we docked at Fishnish was an adult White-tailed Eagle perched in the shoreside spruces: a brilliant start!

Driving to our base at Pennygael, we had our first taste of Mull's beautiful and varied landscapes, and saw a few more birds including a couple of Buzzards, a brief female Hen Harrier, and the ubiquitous Meadow Pipits, Starlings and Hooded Crows. There were a few Red Deer along the way too, and during a brief stop at the north end of Loch Spelve we saw a smart male Red-breasted Merganser, lots of Common Gulls, some Oystercatchers and a Mountain Hare.

Day 2

Wednesday 17th June

Having left Pennygael shortly after breakfast, we drove around the north shore of Loch Scridain and took the scenic minor road across to Loch Na Keal. Common Sandpipers were a regular feature along the loch shore, and then we saw Wheatears as we crossed the higher ground. A couple of Peregrines over the crags on the south side of Loch Na Keal were a good sighting, and on the north shore we had some lovely views of an adult White-tailed Eagle, both perched and in the air. A little later, we arrived at Ulva Ferry in good shape for our boat trip to Staffa and the Treshnish Isles.

The next six hours or so proved to be a wonderful experience. Staffa, with its stunning geology, exceeded expectations, and brought us encounters with Black Guillemots, a Twite, a couple of Ravens, some Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and a pair of mighty Great Skuas. On Lunga, we soaked up the experience of being immersed in the noise, bustle and smell of a big seabird colony, and enjoyed fabulous encounters with Razorbills, Guillemots, Shags, Kittiwakes, Fulmars and lots of wonderful Puffins. A fantastic bonus came in the form of a Corncrake, which showed exceptionally well for half an hour or so. Other birds on this very beautiful little island included Rock Pipits, Wrens, Rock Doves, Eiders with chicks, and a pair of Twites. A few Arctic Terns as we cruised through the other Treshnish Isles were a last good sighting, before we headed back towards Ulva.

Day 3

Thursday 18th June

After yesterday's sunshine, today brought cloud and rain. Undaunted, we set off to explore the Ross of Mull. During a series of stops and short walks that took us to Fionnphort, Knockvologan, Ardalinish and Uisken, we saw a reasonable range of birds, despite the inclement conditions. These included Red-breasted Merganser, Ringed Plover, Greenshank, Lapwing, Rock Dove, Sand Martin, Wheatear, Sedge Warbler and Redpoll.

Finally, the weather got the better of us, and we returned to the hotel to dry out. By late afternoon, conditions had improved, so we headed out locally around the top end of Loch Scridain. This proved to be a fine wee session,

with good sightings of a pair of displaying Greenshanks, half a dozen Golden Plovers, a Great Northern Diver, a couple of Black Guillemots, a Whinchat and an adult White-tailed Eagle. This last tracked low across the landscape in front of us, covering a big distance in no time, and put up all the Greylag Geese and gulls as it went: it was a fine sight!

Day 4

Friday 19th June

Today it was wet in the morning, but drier in the afternoon. We decided to explore the south-east of the island, and started with nice views of a Tree Pipit in the oak woodland at the head of Loch Spelve, followed by a few distant and brief Harbour Porpoises out in the loch itself. At Lochbuie, we walked along the beach and past Moy Castle, and saw a nice little range of birds, including three Turnstones, a couple of Ringed Plover, a few Rock Pipits, some Wheatears and several Sand Martins.

After lunch at the Old Post Office café, we took a walk out to Mull's only stone circle (Redpolls and Siskins were here) and then proceeded around the north shore of Loch Spelve towards Croggan. This was a beautiful area, and as we drove slowly along, we came across an Otter fishing in the seaweedy shallows. It stayed around for a good while, and we all enjoyed the most wonderful views of it catching and eating small fish and crabs, and then grooming itself out on the rocks.

At Croggan itself, we took a walk along the shore and were treated to a prolonged encounter with a pair of Golden Eagles, which appeared over a nearby ridge. This was thrilling stuff: we were able to watch them both in the air and on the ground. Early on in the episode, one of them saw off a first year White-tailed Eagle in a spectacular tussle: there was no doubting which was the dominant bird and the more agile flier. Also at Croggan was a pair of Ringed Plovers with chicks on the beach, and a sizeable herd of Red Deer up on the eagles' hill. On the way back to Pennygael, a male Bullfinch flew across the road just ahead of us: it was a lovely flash of colour with which to end the day!

Day 5

Saturday 20th June

We were away after an early breakfast, noting a Mountain Hare and a Hen Harrier en route, and were in Tobermory by 9.00am for our second boat trip of the week. This one took us out past Ardnamurchan towards the northern end of Coll, where we cruised around for a while before heading back to Tobermory. Conditions were fairly good, if a little breezy, and during the course of the morning we enjoyed some great sightings. The highlights included thirty or so bow-riding Common Dolphins, a pod of at least five Harbour Porpoises, thousands of Manx Shearwaters and a Great Skua which hung around the boat for some minutes. The supporting cast comprised Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills, Kittiwakes, and both Common and Arctic Terns. Almost back at Tobermory, we concluded things in style with two fly-past Red-throated Divers, and excellent views of a pair of White-Tailed Eagles perched and flying at Ardmore Point.

Once back on shore, we had a break in Tobermory, then drove around to Loch Baa. This was a beautiful spot, and we enjoyed a pleasant stroll, which produced excellent prolonged views of a Golden Eagle over a nearby ridge. The bird was in view for much of our walk, so we had a fantastic opportunity really to watch it, and to get a full appreciation and understanding of what a Golden Eagle looks like and how it flies: a real treat! For while, it was mobbed by a Raven, which looked tiny by comparison, and which it avoided with skill and ease. What a bird!

After dinner back at the inn, we took a spin west along the south shore of Loch Scridain to Ardtun, and finished the day with sightings of over thirty Harbour Seals hauled out on some rocks, and a superb male Hen Harrier hunting over the fields and gardens. Lovely!

Day 6

Sunday 21st June

Today was a lovely, warm, sunny day with a gentle breeze. Setting off directly after breakfast, we first explored around the northern end of Loch Scridain, where we found the hoped-for Otter, albeit distantly, and enjoyed good views of Redshanks, Greenshanks, Curlews and a Spotted Flycatcher. We drove out towards Grass Point, stopping for a singing roadside Reed Buntings en route. We took a short walk in the lovely oak woods near the point, and found a Buzzard, a Kestrel, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blue and Coal Tits, and a smart Common Goldenring Dragonfly. At Grass Point itself, we admired the view and enjoyed sightings of a couple of Great Northern Divers offshore, singing Whitethroats, a song-fighting Siskin (wonderfully yellow!), and a handsome Northern Eggar moth roosting in the tall grass.

We ate lunch at the dramatically positioned Duart Castle, where the top sighting was the local youth bagpipe band (in MacLean tartan) practicing on the lawn, then headed on past Craignure and through Salen to Loch Na Keal. Here, a short watch turned up another White-tailed Eagle, a smart breeding plumage Great Northern Diver, and our only Black-headed Gulls of the week. From here, we took the “scenic road” back to Pennygael, stopping for a while at an idyllic spot on the south shore of the loch, where we soaked up the sunshine and noted a number of juvenile Wheatears, plus both Oystercatchers and Ringed Plovers with chicks.

Day 7

Monday 22nd June

We left Pennygael shortly after breakfast, and drove around to Craignure, noting a couple of Curlews, a Snipe on a post and a close Hen Harrier en route. Soon enough, we were on the ferry and enjoying a last few birds (Black Guillemots, Arctic and Common Terns and so on), before arriving into Oban and hitting the road. Lunch was taken at Tyndrum, and an hour or two later we rolled into Paisley, all the happier for our brief sojourn on Mull.

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Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

I=Introduced		June 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Canada Goose - I	<i>Branta canadensis</i>				✓		✓	✓
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>						2	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>		10	1	1			
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>		5		1	1		
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	1	1	5	1	4		2
Common Pheasant - I	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1		1H	1		
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>			2				1
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		1H			1H		
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	1	5	10	✓	1	✓	✓
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		2		2			
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1	1			1		1
Corn Crake	<i>Crex crex</i>		1					
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>			6			4	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			3	5		✓	
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	1	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	2	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		2	3	3	1	3	2
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1	12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	1		5	6		✓	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			3	1	1	2	
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>		7			3		✓
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>					3		✓
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>		✓			✓		1
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>						4	
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		3					
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>		2			1		
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		✓			15		
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	2	8	2	1		1	3
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>		✓			1		
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓			5	✓	✓
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>					2		
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>			1			3	
European Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>					1		
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓					
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>					✓		
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			2		2		
European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3	6	5	6	4	5	1
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>				2	1		
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>					1		

I=Introduced		June 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1				2		1
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	1	1	1	1	2	1	
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	4	3	3	2	3	3	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>						1	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			1	1	2	1	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		2					
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		2					
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>							10
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		4		2		7	
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	1H				2	2	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>						1	3
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	2		1	1			
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1	3	3	3		2	3
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			25	✓	✓		3
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	10	5	15	✓	✓	✓
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2	5	✓	5	✓	✓	H
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>				1H			
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			2+2H			1H	
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	1H			1H	2H	2H	
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	1H		1H	1H	2H	8	
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				1H		1H	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		5	✓	1+4H	✓	2H	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		8	✓	✓	✓	✓	2
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		1			1	1	
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		5	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>						1	
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	1	2	1	2	2	3	
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			1				
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		1	3	3	2	2	
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		10	12	3	25	12	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			1H	1	1H	1H	
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				2	1		1
European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>		3	3	5	1	1	
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				1			2
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			1H	1H	1H	4	
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>		3					
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		5	5		1		
Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>			5	6	5		
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	1	5	8	5	2	5	
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		2	2	5	6	8	5
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>				1H			
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>			1H			3+1H	

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	June 2026						
		16	17	18	19	20	21	22
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>			1	8	2	2	
Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>	1		2		1		
Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>					30		
Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>				2+	5+		
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>				6			
Western Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Harbour (Common) Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>		2			30		
Eurasian Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>			2	1	1	3	