

heatherlea

birding and wildlife news

Winter 2014/5

In 2015 Heatherlea will be busier than ever before. Our holiday range is expanding rapidly, both in Scotland and further afield, and with many 2016 holidays also now available, our office team are working hard making all the preparations for your next birding adventure.



'Birding Buddies' is a new idea from Heatherlea, where we design just the right holiday for groups of friends. This idea is already extremely popular, not least because prices can be very competitive when you book well in advance. Read more inside!

You can also see dates and prices of all our trips, see what our guides have been up to (and where they are

going next), read about our long-running Bursary, and much more.

Our thanks to all our clients past, present and future, for choosing Heatherlea. May we wish you a healthy and enjoyable New Year.

Kevin, Caryl and the Heatherlea team

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2015 MAINLAND SCOTLAND HOLIDAYS

based at Mountview Hotel, Nethy Bridge

Heatherlea is **THE** place for quality birding in Scotland. We offer everything you need, and our fully inclusive guided holidays deliver the real experience **INCLUDING** the wildlife!

Heatherlea 'Mainland Scotland' holidays are based at our comfortable three star hotel, and include all meals. All 20 full-week itineraries cover the speciality birds of the mainland, and each runs for a full week, Saturday to Saturday, every week between January and November. During our days in the field, we travel in minibuses which are great mobile hides. In 2014 we added two Ford 'Shuttle' buses to our fleet, very roomy and fitted with grab handles for easy access.



GUIDING IN SCOTLAND

Above all, your holiday includes a Heatherlea Guide. Highly skilled birders and real 'people people', Ian Ford, Toby Green, Rob Jordan, Phil Knott, Dave Pierce, Jonny Pott and Dave Pullan have all been leading in Scotland for many years. We are proud that our holidays have earned five stars from visitScotland, the highest available rating, designated as 'Exceptional'.



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!

We have now agreed our Guide Rota for many holidays, so join your favourite! There may be two Guides on each holiday, depending on client numbers. Our rota may change for reasons beyond our control, and we can't absolutely guarantee the named Guide!

Key: Ian Ford (IF), Toby Green (TG), Jonny Pott (JP), Dave Pullan (DP), Phil Knott (PK), Rob Jordan (RJ).



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FOCUS ON the Highlands and Islands in just one week!

ISLANDS

Join Heatherlea in Nethy Bridge, and go birding on the Scottish islands too.

If you want to visit the Scottish islands, it is already too late to join many of our dedicated holidays in 2015; accommodation is sparse on some islands, and most trips fill quickly.

A great alternative is to join us here in Nethy Bridge, where many full-week holidays include visits to far flung islands. Think of the benefits;

- ✓ two-centre holidays are great fun and give you more birding options than single-centre trips.
- ✓ you see the Highlands **AND** islands on just one trip.
- ✓ expensive island accommodation is minimised, so prices are competitive.
- ✓ you don't have to drive to the islands. Leave your car safely parked with us in Nethy or travel by train to Aviemore, and we do the onward driving.
- ✓ all travel costs are included, so save on ferries and petrol.
- ✓ there are no single supplements on these holidays.

NEW YEAR BIRDLIST BOOSTER

Jan 3(PK), Jan 10(TG), Jan 17(DP), Jan 24(IF)

Price £895pp Advance Booking price £870pp - Save £25
'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25

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.

In the listing below, our two-centre holidays which include the islands are highlighted for your convenience. Visit your target Scottish island(s) on one of these trips!

SHORT BREAKS – SCOTTISH BIRDING IN WINTER

Jan 10, Jan 13, Jan 17, Jan 20

Price £545

"TWO FOR ONE" SPECIAL OFFER - LIMITED AVAILABILITY

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.

HIGHLANDS AND MULL

Mar 21(JP), Mar 28(TG)

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50
'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25.

Early spring in the Highlands is a great time for the 'specials'. Add an overnight and two part days on Mull, and this becomes a really cost effective way to see Scotland's special birds in one holiday. In early spring key targets are Golden and White-tailed Eagle, Otter and Hen Harrier. We also look for moulting Slavonian Grebe and Great Northern Diver, slowly making their way north to breeding grounds in Iceland. Winter visitors and early spring birds complete a big birdlist.

HIGHLAND WINTER BIRDING

Feb 14(TG), 21(TG), 28(JP)

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £945pp - Save £150
'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25

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.

SPRING INTO SCOTLAND INCLUDING MULL

Apr 4 (TG), Apr 11(IF), Apr 18(JP)

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50.
'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25

Perhaps the ultimate spring wildlife experience in Scotland, including an overnight stay on the west coast and a day on Mull. With all breeding birds settling down, this is a great time to visit Mull and the Highlands; speciality birds are breeding, winter birds are still here in good numbers, and summer visitors arrive daily. We search for eagles, otters, divers, harriers and more, and reserve time to look for more eagles and Red Deer on nearby Morvern on the Scottish mainland. Ever popular!

THE TOP 20 IN SPRING

Mar 7(PK), Mar 14(PK)

Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100.
'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25

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!

ISLANDS

ISLANDS

HIGHLANDS AND SKYE

ISLANDS

Apr 25(TG), May 2(TG)**Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1145pp - Save £50 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

Includes a two-night, three-day trip to Skye, where we enjoy eagles, otters and a birding boat-trip amid spectacular scenery. All the birds of the mainland too, with many summer visitors arriving. We often see Whimbrel and White Wagtail on migration at this time, and we have a great spot for Ptarmigan as we cross spectacular scenery to reach the island. An exciting way to include Skye in your Scottish birding experience!

BIRDING THE HIGHLANDS IN MAY**May 9(JP), May 16(TG)****Price £1095pp 'Been Before' Bonus save £25**

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.

HIGH SEASON ACROSS THE HIGHLANDS

ISLANDS

May 23(PK), May 30(JP), Jun 6(JP)**Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

Glorious Handa Island is a great day out, and we walk across duckboards where nesting Arctic Skuas protect their territories, and see divers and Red Grouse at close quarters. Seabirds should include Gannet, Black Guillemot, and many auks on the cliffs. We stay nearby overnight, breaking a long journey, and visit quiet places the next day where summer-plumaged waders stop en-route to Iceland. We also search for White-tailed Eagle, regular in this area. 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

**HIGHLANDS AND ORKNEY**

ISLANDS

Jun 13(IF)**Price £1195pp 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

Includes two overnights on mainland Orkney, giving us time for a good exploration. We seek breeding specialities including Short-eared Owl, Black-tailed Godwit and Hen Harrier. Seabirds should include skuas, Gannet, Black Guillemot, Puffin and much more. We visit cliffs and small harbours as we travel north, and again as we return home after a great experience. Also includes forest and moorland species inland.

NEW! THE 'OUTER LIMITS' IN SUMMER

ISLANDS

June 20(JP)**Price £1195pp 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

An exciting new holiday, including a two-night, three-day trip to rugged Lewis and Harris, recently voted the best island destinations in Europe! Eagles, skuas, shearwaters, Hebridean sub-species, whales, sharks and dolphins from the ferry, a delightful trip! We also enjoy birds of forest, mountain and glen too, during long summer evenings amid glorious scenery.

HIGHLAND WILDLIFE**Jun 27(JP), Jul 4 (IF)****Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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.

NEW! SHORT BREAKS – Scottish birding in summer**Jun 27(DP), Jun 30(DP), July 4(DP), July 7(DP)****Price £545pp Advance Booking price £520pp - Save £25 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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.

EAGLES, DIVERS AND DOTTEREL

ISLANDS

Jul 11(RJ), Jul 18(RJ)**Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

The best British birding in July? A full week in the Highlands including an overnight and two part days on Mull. In high summer eagles are very active, perhaps with young in the air. Key targets are Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle and Otter. In high summer we expect fantastic scenic views on Mull, and beautiful drives across the Highlands. Dotterel and Ptarmigan on the tops, divers in breeding plumage inland, Capercaillie with chicks in our private estate, Gannets at Troup Head – great birding!

THE TOP 30 IN SUMMER

ISLANDS

Jul 25(JP), Aug 1(IF)**Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1095pp - Save £100. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

A classic and ever-popular holiday including a day visit to Egg and Muck. We seek Minke Whale, Basking Shark, Bottle-nosed and Common Dolphin, Grey and Common Seals, Harbour Porpoise, Manx Shearwater, Golden Eagle, Storm Petrel and a host of other seabirds, with time to walk on Muck. A lovely day! We stay two nights on the west coast, looking for Otter, Pine Marten and both eagles before returning to Nethy for much more wildlife. Crammed with birds and mammals!

HIGH SUMMER WILDLIFE BY LAND AND SEA**Aug 8(RJ), Aug 15(JP)****Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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

SPECIALS AND MIGRATION featuring 'The Burma Bank'**Aug 22(JP), Aug 29****Price £1145pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £100. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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.

MIGRATION AND SCOTTISH SPECIALS**Sept 5, Sept 12****Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

A full week in the Highlands including a day trip across the Minch to Stornoway. We don't leave the vessel, so not really a holiday to the Hebrides, though birding from the ferry can be exceptional. With migration now in full swing this trip can yield shearwaters, waders, skuas and petrels - expect the unexpected! Plus of course our resident specialities including Caper, Blackcock, Crestie, Ptarmigan, and both eagles.

THE OUTER LIMITS ADVENTURE**Sept 19, Sept 26, Oct 3****Price £1195pp Advance Booking price £1145pp - Save £50 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

This is an exceptional itinerary at the 'outer limits' of Scottish birding, including a three-day, two-night visit to Lewis. Outstanding scenery and great birding might include both eagles, seabirds, migrants and interesting residents (eg Hebridean Wren). We frequently turn up rarities from North America in places such as the Butt of Lewis and Tiumpan Head. Two long ferry trips and a drive across Skye are an important part of the birding experience. On other days we seek all the specialities of the Highlands.

ISLANDS**THE TOP 20 IN AUTUMN****Oct 10, Oct 17****Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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

LATE AUTUMN IN THE HIGHLANDS**Oct 24, Oct 31****Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £995pp - Save £100. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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.

SHORT BREAKS – SCOTTISH BIRDING IN AUTUMN**Nov 7, Nov 10, Nov 14, Nov 17****Price £545pp Advance Booking price £520pp - Save £25 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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.

HOGMANAY BIRDING FESTIVAL**Mon 28 Dec 2015 – Sat 2 Jan 2016****Price £1095pp Advance Booking price £1045pp - Save £50. 'Been Before' Bonus save an extra £25**

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

**NEW AIR LINKS TO INVERNESS**

Now it's even easier to join us here at Heatherlea.

With the addition of several **NEW** direct flights, you can now fly to Inverness from the following airports:

London Gatwick, Luton, Bristol, with EasyJet**London City, Manchester, Birmingham, Dublin, with FlyBe**

From Inverness take a taxi to our door, or the train to Aviemore. On Saturdays we offer a free transfer service (at 1630 hrs and 1930 hrs), when your Heatherlea Guide will greet you at the rail station.

To reserve your holiday, please call **01479 821248** or email info@heatherlea.co.uk. We will provisionally reserve a room for you immediately. 'Advance Booking' prices may be removed without notice, so book early to guarantee our best price!

2015 SCOTTISH ISLAND ADVENTURES

Birding holidays on the islands and far west coast.

These very popular holidays are specially designed to explore the beautiful, wildlife-rich Scottish islands and far west coast. Each takes you to the right place at the right time, and in 2015 we offer more choice than ever. All are run at a leisurely pace, and numbers are strictly limited to seven clients per guide, so you benefit from a high level of personal attention from your experienced Group Leader.

Transfers from Nethy Bridge are included in most holidays, and you may book an extra night's stay at either end of your holiday. If driving, leave your vehicle safely parked at Mountview Hotel free of charge, and if using public transport take our 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 – Heatherlea Island Adventure holidays make it easy and give you real savings.



Holidays featured in our brochure but not in this list are sold out for 2015. Guides now allocated for all spring and summer trips (see key on page 2).

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS IN SPRING	Sat 18 April – Sat 25 April (IF)	Price £1495pp ssupp £160	<i>three places left</i>
SHETLAND and ORKNEY	Sat 20 June – Sun 28 June (PK)	Price £1795pp ssupp £200	<i>three places left</i>
UNEXPLORED HEBRIDES	Sat 4 July – Fri 10 July (PK)	Price £1645pp ssupp £120	<i>just one place left</i>
ST KILDA & THE HEBRIDES	Fri 10 July – Fri 17 July (TG & JP)	Price £1995pp ssupp £15	
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS IN SUMMER	Sat 18 July – Sat 25 July (PK)	Price £1495pp ssupp £160	
SUMMER ISLAND SPECTACULAR	Sat 8 Aug – Sat 15 Aug (PK)	Price £1495pp ssupp £160	
NORTH RONALDSAY and mainland ORKNEY	Sat 19 Sept – Fri 25 Sept (TG)	Price £1075pp ssupp £120	
SHETLAND for birders	Sat 26 Sept – Sat 3 Oct (tba)	Price £1095pp ssupp £140	
OUTER HEBRIDES for birders	Sat 10 Oct – Fri 16 Oct (tba)	Price £995pp ssupp £140	<i>two places left</i>
COLL and TIREE	Sun 18 Oct – Sat 24 Oct (TG)	Price £1395pp ssupp £120	
ISLAY and JURA	Sat 24 Oct – Wed 28 Oct (tba)	Price £895pp ssupp £80	



FOCUS ON BBC Wildlife

Magazine Reader Holiday

The birds and mammals of the Scottish Highlands and Islands

Price: £1495pp

£160 single supplement. Deposit £100

Dates: 11 Jul - 18 Jul 2015

This holiday is ideal for those who would like to see Scotland's special birds and mammals while also visiting spectacular Scottish islands. Targets include Capercaillie, Crested Tit, Otter, both eagle species and an evening watch for Pine Marten at a secluded and private west coast location, an element not usually included on our island holiday itineraries, but included here for readers of BBC Wildlife Magazine. This exciting, panoramic tour of the Scottish Highlands and Islands includes all minibus travel, ferries, accommodation, meals and guiding.

We begin near Aviemore looking for Capercaillie, Red Grouse, Slavonian Grebe, Red- and Black-throated Diver, Osprey, Red Squirrel, Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill. The next morning we travel to Skye, seeking Ptarmigan en-route. While on Skye we

search for White-tailed and Golden Eagle, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl and Otter. Next we return to the mainland and take a voyage to the islands of Eigg and Muck before our evening watch for Pine Marten; with luck you will enjoy excellent views of this rare and beautiful mammal. Next we cross to Mull, where again Otter and both eagle species are resident. We return to Strathspey while watching out for Raven, Common Seal, Black Guillemot and Hooded Crow, before our final night in Strathspey close to mainline rail and road links.

The focus of the holiday is on birds and mammals of land and sea, with an emphasis on the key islands of Skye, Mull, Eigg and Muck. The tour is generally easy-paced, and hotels are private and homely, with all rooms en-suite. A great 'Grand Tour'!



2016 SCOTTISH ISLAND ADVENTURES *Already filling!*

Here are our 2016 dates for our SIA holidays in spring. For the first time EVER, we offer 'Early Birder' prices on the Scottish Islands – another great reason to book early!

HOLIDAY	DATES	GUIDE PRICE	EARLY BIRDER PRICE	DISCOUNT
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS IN SPRING	16 – 23 April	£1595	£1495	£100
OUTER HEBRIDES IN SPRING	7 – 13 May, 14 – 20 May, 21 – 27 May	£1345	£1295	£50
MULL, IONA & TRESHNISH	18 – 21 May	£895	£845	£50
SOUTHERN HEBRIDES	29 May – 4 June	£1745	£1695	£50
ISLANDS ON THE EDGE	30 May – 6 June, 13 – 20 June	£1725	£1675	£50
ORKNEY ISLAND EXPLORER	4 – 11 June	£1725	£1675	£50
SHETLAND ISLAND EXPLORER	18 – 25 June	£1645	£1645	
SHETLAND & ORKNEY	18 – 26 June	£1845	£1795	£50
INNER HEBRIDES	24 June – 1 July	£1695	£1645	£50
UNEXPLORED OUTER HEBRIDES	2 – 8 July	£1695	£1645	£50
ST KILDA & THE HEBRIDES	8 – 15 July	£2095	£1995	£100
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS IN SUMMER	16 – 23 July	£1595	£1545	£50
SUMMER ISLAND SPECTACULAR	6 – 13 August	£1595	£1495	£100

2014... SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR GUIDES!

Fantastic birding in Goa! – Nov/Dec 2014 (next trip Nov 2015)

'I've just arrived back from our fantastic Heatherlea Goa trip, and with 284 species of bird and 49 species of butterfly, it's too tough to pick a single highlight. We saw hundreds of Lesser and Greater Sand Plover and a stunning Great Knot on the Morjim estuary. There were delightful flocks of colourful passerines feeding in the jungle, including jewel-like sunbirds and Asian Fairy Bluebird. The trip to Backwoods produced so many great birds, one of my favourites being Sri Lanka Frogmouth. Seven species of Kingfisher, so many raptors, and Malabar Giant Squirrel too! From stunning mountain scenery on the Karnatika border, to wetlands holding thousands of wagtails, waders and wildfowl (including the handsome Spot-Billed Duck), the whole trip was a highlight to me'. **TOBY GREEN**



Manatee Magic in Florida – Nov 2014 (next trip Nov 2015)

'I have been wildlife watching in Florida for over twenty years, and this year's highlight for me was a visit to Blue Springs State Park, near Orange City. We had a special experience because Manatee numbers were exceptionally high, with an incredible 270 animals counted while we were there. They seemed to be everywhere we looked in the crystal clear St John's River, with mothers and calves in abundance underneath us and within touching distance (although we left them well alone). These animals seem so graceful and captivating in the water, words really fail to do justice. Conservation scientists recently reported that numbers of damaged and injured Manatees have been reducing due to intensive efforts to

persuade and enforce boat speed limits on inland waterways: a sure sign that conservation efforts are working and that the value of Manatees to the Florida ecology and economy are fully being recognised'. **PETE COSGROVE**

Unexplored Outer Hebrides - July 2014 (next trip July 2015)

'We boarded our RIB vessel on the west coast of Lewis and headed straight to where the Orcas had been seen earlier that morning. Soon the boat was surrounded by feeding Orcas, some as close as 25 metres, others 400 metres away, across a big swathe of sea. Brilliant and utterly amazing! We could hear the closer ones breathing as they surfaced and could see there were mature males and females with smaller individuals of both sexes. The whole group of 25 animals were very relaxed at our presence and continued to feed. The sun shone, the sea was calm, and we stayed with a small group of Orcas for half an hour or so. A larger group of about a dozen or so included some calves and were more actively pursuing fish. On a few occasions one of the males would slap his tail on the surface of the sea, apparently to stun fish for the calves to pick up more easily. To see one Orca at close range is a red letter occasion but for the largest group of Orcas in British waters for some years to be feeding around our small boat must be one of the most magical wildlife experiences in my life'. **IAN FORD**



The Heatherlea Bursary in Environmental and Biological Science

It's been some time since we updated you on the progress of our Bursary at Lancaster University, which is now into its ninth year and still going strong. Heatherlea make a cash grant to the University each year, and in November we receive the name of the beneficiary, who is chosen by the department. After the presentation photograph, we leave the student to get on with things, though they write a brief summary after the project.

Here are a few details of the people and projects we have supported. By choosing Heatherlea you have also indirectly supported this important work – our sincere thanks on behalf of ourselves and all the students!

Year	Name	Course and Project
2006-07	Victoria Smith	MSc in Ecology & Environment (Distinction) The ecological and environmental implications of a barrage across the Solway Firth
2007-08	Robert Lindley	MSc in Ecology & Environment (Distinction) Induced resistance as a driver of above and below ground plant-insect interactions
2008-09	Alex Parker	MSc in Ecology & Environment (Distinction) The effects of grazing on small mammal communities and their parasite loads
2009-10	Jennifer James	MSc in Ecology & Environment (Merit) Bat Survey of the Langdale Estate.
2010-11	Matthew Barnes	MA Environmental Management & Consultancy The effects of realistic transport policy interventions on urban air quality: a modelling study for Birmingham, UK
2011-12	Zoe de Sylva	MSc Conservation Science (Merit) Investigating the direct and indirect effects of climate change on distribution of the northern dung beetle.
2012-13	Hannah Fletcher	MSc Ecology & Conservation (Distinction) Song behaviour and reproductive success in dippers.
2013-14	Heather Galliford	MSc Ecology & Conservation (still studying) The impact of conservation policy on birds in Wales.
2014-15	Rosamund Sparks	MSc Ecology & Conservation (still studying) Freshwater invertebrates and their effect on dipper breeding success.



Alex Parker



Robert Lindley



Rosamund Sparks



Jennifer James

HEATHERLEA 'BIRDING BUDDIES'

A great idea for friends who enjoy birding together!

It doesn't matter whether you are a formal club or group, or friends who perhaps met on a Heatherlea trip, we have just the right itinerary for your next unforgettable wildlife holiday. You can choose Scotland or anywhere in the world for your 'Birding Buddies' holiday. You can choose an intensive 'birders' trip', or a less-intensive relaxed break. You can include flights, hotels, car parking, airport lounges, city extensions or anything else you want when overseas, and in Scotland target key birds and/or specific island destinations on a bespoke holiday to remember.

EXAMPLE Here's a holiday we recently put together for a group of friends joining us in Scotland in June 2015.

What would YOU like to do?

What WE want to do ...

Location: want to tour the Highlands, and also spend time on Orkney and the Outer Hebrides.

Birding: The group would like to see all the Scottish specialities, including Capercaillie, Black Grouse, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Crested Tit and more. We also want to see Corncrake and Red-necked Phalarope, and breeding Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl. Would also like to spend time at auk cliffs to see Puffin, Gullinmot and Razorbill in good numbers.

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

Why not send a webpage of your proposed holiday to those 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 details of the trip before they decide.

The page is hosted by Heatherlea, and completely confidential.

Other things:

- ✓ good quality hotels required, especially on the islands.
- ✓ would like more than one week duration, but less than two weeks.
- ✓ the group want to avoid long walks, particularly on the mountains.
- ✓ travelling by train to and from Aviemore, need to be met and returned to the station.
- ✓ there are seven participants, who would like to travel together with one guide for the entire holiday.



OUTLINE ITINERARY

DAY 1: Sat 6 June

Arrival, collection from rail link in Aviemore, and welcome, dinner and briefing at Mountview Hotel in Nethy Bridge. We will stay here for five of the next seven nights, with two nights on Orkney in the middle of the first week.

DAY 2: Sun 7 June

A morning in the Abernethy Forest for Crested Tit and Scottish (Parrot) Crossbill. Later we investigate local lochs and rivers, birchwoods and moorland. Your list may include Osprey, Dipper, Buzzard, Goldeneye, Red Grouse, Black-throated Diver, Redpoll, Peregrine, a host of breeding waders and Slavonian Grebe.

DAYS 3 - 5: Mon 8 June - Wed 10 June MAINLAND ORKNEY

An exciting few days on Mainland Orkney to see waders, raptors and seabirds. Our drive north takes us to tiny fishing towns in Sutherland where a late Iceland Gull, stray Black Guillemot or summering King Eider is a possibility. In Caithness, we make time to see auks at their breeding ledges, with Puffin, Guillemot and Razorbill the major species. At Dunnet Head, mainland Britain's most northerly point, we should see Great and Arctic Skua, and perhaps rare Red-throated Diver in breeding plumage. We stay for two nights on



Mainland Orkney, the largest of the Orkney Isles. By tranquil pools surrounded by yellow irises, and with the sound of Skylark and Meadow Pipit all around, we hope to find beautiful Black-tailed Godwit among as many as eleven breeding waders, and to see both Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl quartering the wetlands. We may also see Whimbrel. On Wednesday we make a leisurely return to Nethy Bridge in time for dinner.

DAYS 6 - 7: Thurs 11 June – Fri 12 June

Capercaillie! We visit exclusive private estate woodlands in our minibus. In June hen birds are more likely, perhaps with tiny chicks. Later we head for the Cairngorm plateau, where we take the funicular railway to avoid long walks. Ptarmigan, Dotterel and Snow Bunting are found here.

An optional early start to see Black Grouse at the lek is a great start one day. At coastal haunts, expect to see a range of breeding birds including Osprey fishing, Common Eider, Goosander, Merganser, Stonechat, Common Scoter, Red-throated Diver, Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer and Grey Partridge. Gannet, and Sandwich, Common, Arctic and Little Tern are possible. We also search for any rarities within reach.

DAY 8: Sat 13 June THE OUTER HEBRIDES!

An early breakfast, as the next part of our holiday begins! We stay for four nights on the Outer Hebrides, giving us good time to enjoy the very best birding on the islands.

We drive to the famous Skye Bridge, travelling across the island to the ferry point at Uig. Birdwatching as we cross The Little Minch to Lochmaddy, we may see Great, Arctic, Pomarine and Long-tailed Skua, Manx Shearwater, Fulmar, Gannet, Black Guillemot and other auks. On arrival we transfer to our comfortable privately-run hotel.

DAYS 9 - 11: Sun 14 June - Tues 16 June NORTH UIST, BENBECULA, SOUTH UIST

You are in the right place to see Corncrake, and with patience we expect to obtain good views. Corn Bunting, Ringed Plover,

Meadow Pipit and Skylark make the machair of North Uist a special habitat - full of song! Summer plumaged Great Northern Diver are likely, as are 'real' Rock Dove and Raven. Arctic Skua breed, Great Skua are frequently seen, and we sometimes see passage of hundreds of Pomarine and Long-tailed Skua. We know the weather conditions favoured by the birds, and this experience can be special! Mountainous parts hold both Golden and White-tailed Eagle, and we often watch Otters playing on the coastline



whilst an adult eagle circles against a stunning mountain backdrop. Rare and delicate Red-necked Phalarope are breeding, and other summer-plumaged migrants at the coast should include Whimbrel, godwits, many Dunlin and Sanderling, and Dotterel if we are lucky. An absence of persecution means Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl are present, and rarities including Gyr Falcon and Snowy Owl have been seen. A real feast of birds! Days are governed by the weather and our progress, and your guide will plan each day according to the conditions. Optional early and late birding trips may be offered, again depending on weather and progress.

DAY 12: Wed 17 June

Our final morning's birding ends by the ferry on North Uist, and we sail back to Uig, then crossing Skye as we return to the Aviemore area early evening. We may enjoy more views of both White-tailed and Golden Eagle, Arctic Skua harassing terns, Manx Shearwater and Black Guillemot from the ferry. You will stay overnight in the Aviemore area, conveniently placed for your early morning train.

DAY 13: Thurs 18 June

Breakfast and departure. Your London-bound train arrives in Aviemore at 0830 hrs!

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

It's free to ask, so ring our office and chat to Heatherlea. We can answer all your questions, and perhaps take the strain of organising your next group holiday!

BIRDING BUDDIES – a few ideas!

Birding Buddies are welcome on these departures, or suggest your own dates and itineraries.

ST KILDA July 2015 from only £1695pp
just one group available, up to seven people!

EAGLES, DIVERS and DOTTEREL
July 2015 from only £795pp

HIGH SUMMER WILDLIFE
August 2015 from only £795pp

Overseas birding and wildlife holidays

Do it the Heatherlea way!

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. Each is run for guests who we consider friends as well

as clients. That means rewarding and exciting days in the field with 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! Thanks to all of you who have already chosen Heatherlea for 2015.

Pre-flight Services

With Heatherlea, your overnight hotel room pre-flight is included. 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.

Latest news.....

Some of our Costa Rica holidays depart from Terminal 2 at Heathrow (now relaunched as 'The Queen's Terminal'), and we are pleased to offer a new lounge service here. The lounge is light and airy, and offers hot pastries before 11am, self-service snacks, hot drinks, orange juice and soft drinks.

If you are going to Panama, Nepal or India, we now have access to the 'Sky-Team' lounge at Terminal 4. Enjoy hot and cold snacks, complimentary wines/beers, free wifi and more.

Remember where lounges aren't available, we make a rebate of £18pp.

Don't forget that our Gatwick arrangements also include 'Premium Security', which gives you a dedicated route through airport security, helping you get from check-in to your lounge as comfortably and easily as possible. (This useful extra service is of course subject to availability on the day).

Most pre-flight arrangements are handled by Melanie Clouston, whose voice is often the first you hear when you call Heatherlea. Melanie can also book other services you might need, such as car parking and flight upgrades (please note these items are chargeable).



2015 Holidays

Last call for some holidays, still plenty of choice! Published departures not on this list are now full, sorry.



2015 Dates	Price	Availability	2015 Dates	Price	Availability
GAMBIA Fri Jan 9 – Fri Jan 16	£1845	2 SPACES	SPITSBERGEN VARIOUS DATES – Contact office for details	Cabins from £3495pp	
HOLLAND and FLANDERS by train Sat Feb 7 – Sat Feb 14	£1395	1 SPACE	YELLOWSTONE & GRAND TETON Mon July 20 – Sun Aug 2	£4495	4 SPACES
COSTA RICA Fri Feb 20 – Sat Mar 7	£4295	1 SPACE	ICELAND Thurs July 23 – Thurs July 30	£2595	4 SPACES
NEPAL (new departure) Mon March 16 – Sun March 28	£2995	4 SPACES	NOVA SCOTIA Sat Aug 15 – Sat Aug 22	£3095	SPACES
INDIA Thurs March 5 – Tues March 17	£3495	4 SPACES	AZORES Sat Aug 29 – Sat Sept 5	£2695	SPACES
CUBA Thurs March 12 – Tues March 24	£2495	SPACES	PICOS MTS – Birds and Bears Thurs Sept 10 – Thurs Sept 17 (revised dates)	£1695	1 SPACE
NEW! ICELAND orcas and auroras Sat March 21 – Thurs Mar 26	£1695	SPACES	ANDALUCIA Tue Sept 15 – Tues Sept 22	£1595	SPACES
ARIZONA and GRAND CANYON Sat April 11 – Sat April 25	£4295	3 SPACES	HUNGARY IN AUTUMN Sun Sept 27 – Sun Oct 4	£1395	SPACES
LESVOS Sat April 18 – Sat April 25	£1595	3 SPACES	NEW! North MOROCCO Sat Oct 3 – Fri Oct 9	£1495	SPACES
CROATIA Thurs April 23 – Thurs April 30	£1695	SPACES	BRAZIL Sat Oct 17 – Tue Oct 27	£2795	SPACES
TRINIDAD, TOBAGO and ST LUCIA Mon April 27 – Sat May 9	£3595	5 SPACES	PANAMA Mon Nov 2 – Mon Nov 16	£3995	SPACES
MALLORCA Sat May 2 – Sat May 9	£1595	5 SPACES	ETHIOPIA Sat Nov 7 – Wed Nov 17	£3195	SPACES
ESTONIA Sun May 3 – Sun May 10	£1595	1 SPACE	NEW! MEXICO Mon Nov 16 – Fri Nov 27	£3495	SPACES
HUNGARY in Spring Sat May 9 – Sat May 16	£1595	SPACES	GOA Sat Nov 21 – Sun Dec 6	£2495	SPACES
SPAIN - PYRENEES to EBRO DELTA Sat June 13 – Tues June 23	£1795	2 SPACES	NEW! BBC WILDLIFE READERS BREAK COSTA RICA Sun Nov 22 – Mon Dec 7	£4395	SPACES

FOCUS ON...

A FEW UPCOMING HOLIDAYS.

INDIA - Tigers and birding

Thu 5 March – Tue 17 March

Our key target is Tiger, with other mammals and significant birding too. We visit four of the best reserves, and include two internal flights to make travel easier. Early March is good because Tigers are more active as temperatures increase, though midday heat is less than later in the spring. As an extra, we have private jeeps with a maximum of four clients to each, an exclusive arrangement, not standard on some Tiger safaris. An optional Taj Mahal extension can be arranged.



CUBA

- Delightful Caribbean birding and the 'Cuban Experience'!

Thu 12 March – Tue 24 March

Cuba is exciting, with many endemics, near-endemics and other American species. People are friendly, the landscape is largely unspoilt, roads are quiet, and we visit major habitats from lush forests to craggy hills and vast wetlands. We also include time to visit the city of Havana. Birding at an easy pace, with time to appreciate the laid-back local way of life. NB We now offer this holiday at a reduction of £500pp from our brochure price, held also for our 2016 trip.



NEPAL

Birds and Mammals – ideal for the first-time visitor
Mon 16 March – Sat 28 March

Aimed at the first-time visitor, this is a relaxing tour of birds, mammals, landscape and lifestyle. We visit lowland habitats, including Nepal's finest reserves, Chitwan and Koshi Tappu, with time to explore both at a gentle pace. We also bird at Phulchowki, where our list will grow quickly. An internal flight back to Kathmandu is an important extra at the end of the trip, as is our optional extension to Mount Everest. We team up once again with local expert Suchit Basnet, our friend in high places!



ARIZONA and GRAND CANYON

Sat 11 April – Sat 25 April

We begin at the Grand Canyon, then travel south for legendary birding in Southeast Arizona. From desert and Mexican specialities to the many breeding-plumaged warblers heading north into the mountains, this is a trip every birder should do at least once. Migration will be in full swing and the excitement can be unparalleled as wave upon wave of new birds arrive around us. 'The Sunshine State' shares a 350 mile border with Mexico, and the landscapes, food and people have a Mexican feel. Just a few places left.



TRINIDAD, TOBAGO and ST LUCIA

Our unique three island Caribbean adventure!

Mon 27 April – Sat 9 May

An improvement over traditional 'T&T' holidays, we add St Lucia, where birding is excellent, offering five endemics and other Antillean birds. On Trinidad, the Asa Wright Centre is unforgettable, and key experiences include Scarlet Ibis coming in to roost, Oilbirds in Dunstan Cave, and endemic Trinidadian Piping-guan. Tobago is beautiful, and we visit the jewel of Little Tobago in a glass-bottomed boat to see boobies, frigatebirds and tropicbirds. All flights are with British Airways on a classic Caribbean birding experience!

FOCUS ON... A FEW NEW HOLIDAYS RUNNING LATER IN THE YEAR

NEW! BBC WILDLIFE MAGAZINE READER HOLIDAY COSTA RICA



Sun 22 Nov – Mon 7 Dec

This BBC Wildlife Magazine Reader Holiday promises birdlife, monkeys and sloths, lizards and crocodiles, bats, amphibians, turtles and snakes, a host of butterflies and a wealth of flora. We include a walk to find Green Turtle hatchlings and a night walk at La Selva Biological Station which are exclusive to this holiday.



You'll visit a unique range of habitats, from pristine beaches and tropical wetlands to high cloud forest festooned with orchids and cool, misty mountain tops. Amongst many highlights, discover Tortuguero National Park on the Caribbean coast, where you'll go in search of all six American kingfishers on a gentle boat ride through brackish mangroves. Other highlights include the misty cloud forest, home to magnificent Resplendent Quetzal. Arenal Observatory Lodge is a birding hotspot, with breath-taking views of the adjacent volcano. Expect fabulous wildlife, excellent guiding, comfortable accommodation in good quality hotels and lodges experienced at hosting birders, and good food with a wide choice. Walking is generally easy, and the pace is relaxed and laid-back.

NEW! ETHIOPIA

Sat Nov 7 – Wed Nov 17

This holiday includes many key birds, and unmistakable Ethiopian Wolf, yet avoids much of the uncomfortable travelling on poor roads which can characterize visits to Ethiopia. About half of the endemics or near-endemics can be seen, and we stay in some of the best birding sites: Awash, Rift Valley wetlands and Wondo Genet to Goba where the famous Bale National Park holds many endemic birds. We will visit many of the most important habitats, including wetlands, farmland, montane grassland, afro-alpine moorlands, forest and savanna.



Birds include Wattled Ibis, Blue-winged Goose, Chestnut-naped Francolin, Rouget's Rail, Arabian Bustard, Spot-breasted Plover, White-collared Pigeon, Black-winged Lovebird, Yellow-fronted Parrot, Abyssinian Owl, Banded Barbet, Gillett's Lark, Abyssinian Longclaw, Abyssinian Black Wheatear, Sombre Chat, White-winged Cliff Chat, Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, Abyssinian Catbird, White-backed Black Tit, Abyssinian Oriole, Thick-billed Raven, Black-headed Siskin and Brown-rumped Seedeater.

Mammals include Ethiopian Wolf, Hippo, Nile Crocodile, Golden Jackal, Olive Baboon, Guereza Colobus and Grivet Monkeys, Rock Hyrax, African Warthog, and many antelope including Grant's Gazelle, Beisa Oryx, Gerenuk and Klipspringer.

NEW! MEXICO

Mon Nov 16 – Fri Nov 27

Enjoy great birding and winter sunshine on this new holiday, timed to coincide with the passage of neotropical migrants. This is a tour of northern and central Yucatan, in a total of five centres as we cover the main habitats to see a host of tropical species. With the prospect of colourful endemic species, a boat-trip into bird-rich lagoons, tasty Mexican food, well-located hotels and breath-taking scenery, we enjoy great tropical birding at a leisurely pace.



This holiday also has a strong cultural aspect as we also visit amazing world-famous Mayan archaeological sites at Chichen Itza, Uxmal, and Coba. Our third Guide, Andrea, will concentrate on cultural aspects in the Mayan sites. Those who wish can spend time inside the ruins with Andrea, while others can keep birding with specialist birding guides Cristian and Gabor! Jungle birding is rewarding at all the heritage sites. Filling quickly, some places left.

**'HEATHERLEA EXTRA' – ask for more details,
now available on our website.**



2016 OVERSEAS HOLIDAYS & EARLY BIRDER PRICES

Book early and save money on these popular holidays in 2016. Save up to £300 overseas! Prices may increase without notice, so book now to secure the lowest price. All overseas holidays including flights also include our FREE pre-flight service of Airport hotel and airport lounge.

If you want a destination which isn't given here, please contact us and we will let you know our plans.



HOLIDAY/DATE	GUIDE PRICE	EARLY BIRDER PRICE	DISCOUNT	HOLIDAY/DATE	GUIDE PRICE	EARLY BIRDER PRICE	DISCOUNT
SPAIN - BIRDING & LYNX 5 - 12 Jan	£1495	£1445	£50	ARIZONA & GRAND CANYON 9 - 23 Apr	£4495	£4295	£200
GAMBIA 8 - 15 Jan	£1945	£1845	£100	LESVOS 16 - 23 Apr	£1645	£1595	£50
COSTA RICA 16 - 23 Jan	£4395			EXTREMADURA 16 - 23 Apr	£1645	£1595	£50
FUERTEVENTURA 22 - 27 Jan	£1095	£1045	£50	CROATIA 21 - 28 Apr	£1745	£1695	£50
HOLLAND & FLANDERS 6 - 13 Feb	£1395			SKYROS 23 - 30 Apr	£1645	£1595	£50
NEPAL 26 Feb - 9 Mar	£3295	£2995	£300	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO & ST LUCIA 25 Apr - 7 May	£3695	£3595	£100
INDIA 4 - 16 Mar	£3495	£3295	£200	MALLORCA 3- Apr - 7 May	£1645	£1595	£50
CUBA 10 - 22 Mar	£2495	£2395	£100	ESTONIA 1 - 8 May	£1695	£1645	£50
CAMARGUE 17 - 24 Mar	£1495	£1445	£50	HUNGARY IN SPRING 7 - 14 May	£1645	£1595	£50
MOROCCO 22 Mar - 1 Apr	£1975	£1925	£50	PYRENEES & EBRO DELTA 11 - 21 June	£1895	£1795	£100
PO DELTA & VENICE 2 - 9 Apr	£1645	£1595	£50				

For MORE DETAILS of all our holidays

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



heatherlea

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