We drove along Loch Ness but unfortunately dipped on its most famous resident (Charley Hesse)

If anywhere combines culture, scenery and wildlife beautifully it is Scotland, and we sampled a good amount of each on this tour. We started by exploring the Scottish Highlands with its spectacular mountains, pine forests and lochs, which held Eurasian Dotterel, Rock Ptarmigan, Crested Tit and Slavonian Grebe. Some of us had a late night visit to a viewing blind where we found ourselves just a few feet away from European Badgers and Pine Martens. Next we moved on to the Outer Hebrides, where we spent 3 days enjoying more stunning scenery along with the threatened Corn Crake, Golden Eagle and countless breeding shorebirds. We finished our Scotland tour on the remote Ardnamurchan Peninsular where we visited a malt whisky distillery. Our Emerald Isle extension began in Northern Island with a visit to the World Heritage site of Giant’s Causeway, then on to Dublin and the Wicklow Mountains National Park with its ancient monasteries and finally to the rural West Coast where we visited the world famous Ciffs of Moher with its thousands nesting seabirds. This tour certainly caters for people who want to see more than just the birds.
PRE-TOUR
3rd June – Edinburgh

A view of Edinburgh Castle from Princes street (Keith Barnes)

An overview of the historical city of Edinburgh (Keith Barnes)

Holyrood Castle (Keith Barnes)
MAIN TOUR
4th June - Edinburgh to Grantown-on-Spey
Our tour started in Edinburgh and we left early heading north for the Scottish Highlands. In fields on the way, we saw our first common bird species, including Northern Lapwing, Eurasian Curlew, Mew (or Common) Gull, Barn Swallow and Gray Wagtail plus our first mammals with European Rabbit, European Hare and Roe Deer. Our first birding stop was at the Glenshee Ski Centre, which of course in June didn’t offer any skiing, but instead we searched for our first target birds of the trip. We climbed up into the mountain pass where the habitat changed to Moorland. The Scottish subspecies of Willow Ptarmigan is known here as Red Grouse and was made famous by being the emblem on bottles of Scotch whisky, and we saw this species easily.

Eurasian Curlew (Charley Hesse) & Roe Deer stag (Keith Barnes)
After parking, we took a walk and went in search of **Ring Ouzel**; a black-colored thrush with a white ring across its chest. We found one quickly but the mist had already rolled down and visibility was poor. We finally got better views, and also found **Northern Wheatear, White Wagtail** and **Meadow Pipit** plus our first **Mountain Hare**. It had been a productive stop, and we went on towards Grantown-on-Spey with another quick stop at a thick patch of bright yellow Gorse bushes, where we saw **Eurasian Kestrel, Common Cuckoo, Willow Warbler** and **Eurasian Siskin**. When we arrived, we enjoyed a nice traditional lunch and had some time to relax in our rooms for a while. In the afternoon, we ventured to the Anagach Forest where we saw our first forest birds, with **Coal, Blue & Great Tits, Goldcrest, European Robin** and **Song Thrush** plus a soaring **Common Buzzard**. Capercaillies are to be found in the forest but they are extremely difficult to find out of the lekking season. Keith and I took the opportunity in the evening to visit a viewing blind where we had amazing views of **Pine Marten** & **European Badger**. It made for a late night but it was a once in a lifetime opportunity.
Our plan for the morning was to head up into the Cairngorm National Park. A few days ago I had spotted a Capercaillie by the roadside early in the morning, but today we weren’t quite so lucky. We arrived at the parking lot and said good luck to Keith who was undertaking a strenuous hike to the top of the mountains in search of **Eurasian Dotterel** and **Rock Ptarmigan**. We spent some time around the parking lot and saw some more **Ring Ouzels**, before setting off at a slower pace along the same trail in search of Rock Ptarmigan. We saw several **Red Grouse** and lots of **Meadow Pipits**, plus some kick-ass scenery but our group didn’t quite have the legs to make it up to where the Rock Ptarmigans are more common. We went back down and then took a drive past Aviemore to the wonderful RSPB Loch Garten reserve and on the way there saw our first **Eurasian Collared Dove**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, **European Goldfinch**, **Common Swift** and **Common Buzzard**. We had a nice morning in the reserve on a somewhat flatter trail through the Caledonian pine forests. On the loch itself we saw **Graylag Goose**, **Common Goldeneye** and **Common Sandpiper**, and plenty of nice birds in the forest, including **Eurasian Treecreeper**, **Eurasian Wren**, **Goldcrest**, **Willow Warbler**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Song & Mistle Thrushes**, **Tree Pipit** and **Eurasian Siskin**.

The hike up to see Eurasian Dotterel is only for the fittest birders (Keith Barnes)
Our main target was the Scottish Crossbill, but the only crossbills we found took off before we could identify them. Next we stopped in at the visitors centre from where we enjoyed scope views of nesting Osprey and webcam views of the chicks inside the nest. Despite being common in many parts of the world, Ospreys are rare birds in the UK and a strictly protected. We watched a feeder for a while hoping the Crested Tit would come back, but we had to make do with our first European Greenfinch. We also spotted a distant Common Cuckoo on the way back to the vehicle. It was time to pick up Keith after his long hike, and he showed us great photos of the Eurasian Dotterel and Rock Ptarmigans that he had seen. After a nice lunch, we dropped in at Avielochan where we saw a breeding pair of Horned Grebes and saw plenty of Bank Swallows zipping around. After a rest back at the hotel, we went back out in the afternoon in search of our target Crested Tit. We finally found one, way at the top of a pine tree after scouring the much more numerous Coal & Blue Tits. We enjoyed another wonderful dinner at our hotel on our last night in the Scottish Highlands.
Today was a long travel day, leaving the highlands and heading to the Outer Hebrides. We left early and crossing the River Spey saw our first Common Merganser sitting on a rock with a brood of chicks. We also saw a Common Buzzard soaring over the trees, a Common Tern and a number of Bank Swallows zipping to and fro over the water. We made our way to the Findhorn Valley where we were going in search of Golden Eagle. It was a quiet, winding road through stunning scenery and we saw many birds on the way. We had a pair of Red-legged Partridges crossing the road, and in the fields, Ring-necked Pheasant, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Eurasian Curlew, Black-headed, Mew & Lesser Black-backed Gulls. We reached the spot and spent some time scanning the mountainside of eagles, but only added Common House-Martins which were nest under the eaves of a local house. We had to give up on the eagles as we were pressed for time but would have more chances for them later.
Next dropped in at the RSPB Loch Ruthven hide, where we saw **Tufted Ducks, Little & Horned Grebes** but none of our hope for loons. The woodland here held **Great Tit** and **Willow Warbler**. We continued our drive towards the Isle of Skye passing many fields full of **Rooks** and crows. As we drove, the **Carrion Crows** changed to **Hooded Crows**, which are the species found on the west coast. At the bridge onto Skye, we stopped and saw our first **Otter** foraging along the kelp-covered coastline. The scenery of Skye was stunning and we made our way to the town of Uig in the north. As we approached the town, we saw our first **Golden Eagle** being mobbed by a **Common Raven**, but it disappeared quickly behind a hill. Around the harbour we saw several **Great Cormorants** and **European Shags**. We drove on the car ferry to North Uist and were soon enjoying some sea-watching from the upper deck. We saw **Northern Fulmar**, **Manx Shearwater**, **Common Murre**, **Razorbill**, **Atlantic Puffin**, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, **Great Black-backed Gull** and **Arctic Terns**. Arriving at the Lochboisdale harbour we found the local restaurant and had a hearty dinner before driving on to our comfortable B&B for our 2-night stay.
7th June - North Uist & Benbecula
In a spot of pre-breakfast birding I went to the RSPB Balranald reserve where I went in search of Corn Crake. It took a while but I finally tracked down an individual close to the road that was good enough to pop its head out of the grass for me. It was another beautiful day and the fields were full of breeding shorebirds, including Eurasian Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing, Common Redshank and Common Snipe. Wild Rock Pigeons were seen in the fields nearby, along with numerous Meadow Pipits, Eurasian Linnet and even a Common Raven flew by. After a nice cooked breakfast back at the B&B, we came back to Balranald where the Corn Crakes had now gone quiet. We drove out to the peninsular and took a walk along the beaches and rocky headlands, where we saw Common Shelduck, Tufted Duck and Common Eider in the little bays, Common Loon and Northern Gannets out to sea, many shorebirds along the seashore, including Common Ringed Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Dunlin and a beautiful, breeding-plumaged Curlew Sandpiper. Gulls were numerous, with Black-headed, Mew, Herring & Lesser Black-backed, plus Little & Arctic Terns. We even had a few Rock Pipits.

Flight display of Common Snipe & Common Ringed Plover (Keith Barnes)
From here we went along the cross island Committee Road where we saw Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier and also flushed a Eurasian Teal. After a delicious lunch, we continued our birding, past lakes with Mute & Whooper Swan plus Red-breasted Merganser, and to a stake out for the very rare Red-necked Phalarope of which only a few pairs nest on the Uists. We also came across a rather vocal Sedge Warbler which was singing in a reed bed. We tried a small harbour for White-tailed Eagles but instead found our first Red-throated Loon and a close up views of Twite. We went back over the Committee Road but again no eagles, just a pair of Common Cuckoos and lots of midges. It had been a full day which we finished off with a nice dinner in a local pub.

8th June - North Uist to South Uist
We started the day back at Balranald to try and get views of Corn Crake for those who hadn’t seen it yet. There was a bird calling in a field and we managed to position ourselves behind the fence as close as possible. We finally got views of the bird that was preening on a rock behind some grass. Although partially obscured we finally got decent views before it disappeared into the field. From here we went back to the Committee road again and in the same place saw Short-eared Owl and Hen Harrier again. It was overcast this morning which really seemed to have brought out the owls as we saw several more during the morning. Next we continued our search for eagles on the way to Benbecula island at Ceallan, but instead saw Red-breasted Merganser, Common Raven, European Greenfinch and Common Eider. After a substantial lunch, we continued our birding at Loch Skipport. Again, no eagles, just a few wild Rock Pigeons and a rather nice Otter.
The weather improved and we were treated to more blue skies and some of the most stunning scenery of the trip. We moved on to Locheynort, where we saw Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Gray Heron and Herring & Great Black-backed Gulls on and around the water. We parked the van and took a walk along a trail through a small woodland where we saw European Robin, Eurasian Blackbird, Willow Warbler, Common Chaffinch and European Greenfinch. The track continued along the hill and had tremendous views of the mountain scenery. We finally found our target Golden Eagle plus Common Buzzard, Common Raven and the Hebridean race of Eurasian Wren. The midges were getting a little bad now so we set off back and saw our first Common Redpoll of the trip. We had time for just one more birding site for the day and we drove out to a peninsular on the west coast of South Uist. We got to a productive spot where we saw Common Shelduck, Tufted Duck, Common Eider, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing, plus our first Whimbrel and 3 stunning breeding-plumaged Black-tailed Godwits. We drove on to the town of Lochboisdale where we were to spend the night.
We were finally leaving the magical Uists on an early ferry back to the mainland. After picking up tickets, boarding the ferry and enjoying fried breakfast, we went up on the top deck and started our seawatch in earnest. As we were pulling out of the harbour, we saw **Red-breasted Merganser** and a couple of **Common Loons**, before we went out into the open sea. The water was like a mirror, good for not getting sea sick, but not so good for sea birds. We had the odd **Northern Fulmar**, **Black-legged Kittiwake** and **Northern Gannet** before things started to liven up. We ended up with fairly good alcids, with dozens of **Common Murres**, **Razorbills** and **Atlantic Puffins**. We also saw a large flock of several hundred **Manx Shearwaters** sitting on the water. On the other side, we drove along quiet and winding roads, and spotted a **Tree Pipit** on the way to the wild and remote Arnamurchan Peninsular. We enjoyed lunch in a local pub, checked in, then after a rest, went on a very informative tour of the recently established Arnamurchan Distillery and had the chance of trying some fine Scottish whiskey. Keith & I opted to take a late night drive in search of Scottish Wildcats, which still exist in this area. Unfortunately we didn’t see any but it wasn’t for lack of trying.
10th June – Ardnamurchan Peninsular to Glasgow
After our very late night drive last night, plus a client with a niggly cold, we had a hearty cooked breakfast at a civilized time before packing up and starting our long drive to Glasgow where we finished our Scotland tour. We were treated to more stunning scenery today, including the Trossachs National Park and the famous Loch Lomond. At the airport we dropped our hire car, said goodbye to Keith and the rest of us checked in to flights to Belfast in Ireland to start the Emerald Isle Extension.

EMERALD ISLE EXTENSION
10th June – Belfast to Giant’s Causeway
After a very short flight, we landed in Belfast and were soon heading north, zipping by green fields to our comfortable hotel just an hour away in Portballantrae, just a stone’s throw from the World Heritage site of Giant’s Causeway. We ended our travel day with some a meal looking out over the misty bay.

The fascinating hexagonal rock formation at the Giant’s causeway (Charley Hesse)

11th June – Giant’s Causeway to Dublin
One of the main reasons for coming to Northern Ireland was to see the Giants Causeway. It is a hugely popular tourist attraction so we decided to go there before breakfast to beat the crowds as it was just a few minutes from our conveniently located hotel. It was overcast and a bit misty, but it added to the mystery of the place. We parked in the empty parking lot and were the first to walk down the path along the coast to the World Heritage site. Having seen photos many times, the scene was not a surprise but it lived up to its reputation and was very interesting. A Common Raven flew overhead and was mobbed by Hooded Crows which added to the atmosphere. After breakfast, we checked out and did a quick tour of some of the local sites, including the ancient ruins of Dunluce Castle, Mussenden Temple above the beautiful Downhill beach, and The Dark Hedges, a very scenic road lined with huge twisted Beech trees.
A delightful family of Eider Ducks (Charley Hesse)

The coolest place of the morning though was the very quaint Ballintoy Harbour where we had a nice **Common Eider** duck with her chicks, plus many seabirds winging their way by, like **Razorbills**, **Gannets** and countless gulls. Many of these locations formed the backdrop to episodes of the popular series, Game of Thrones. After this, we set off south and had a nice pub lunch before crossing over the non-existent border into the Republic of Ireland. Before arriving in Dublin, we had a quick stop in the seaside town of Skerries where we saw a few more seabirds such as **Black Guillemot**, **Kittiwakes** and many other gulls. We took a brief diversion into the centre of Dublin where we drove past the Guinness brewery and St Patrick’s Cathedral before arriving at our comfortable hotel in the southern suburbs.

One of Dublin’s most famous landmarks, the Guinness Brewery (Charley Hesse)
12th June – Wicklow Mountain NP & E Coast NR
We had a full day of birding the Dublin Area. In the morning we were to explore the beautiful Wicklow Mountains National Park, with its forests, lakes and historical ruins. We drove over moorland at the scenic Sally Gap, but unfortunately it was thick fog and only briefly did it lift to show the mountains in the distance. We were lucky enough to have an Irish Hare run across the road and poke its head above the heather. Down in the valleys, it cleared as we made our way to the famous monastic site of Gledalough. The monastery was set up by St Kevin in the 6th century and used for over a thousand years. The tall tower and ruined cathedral were a fascinating diversion and after taking a walk around, we started birding our way around the lake. It was very productive and we saw Coal, Blue & Great Tits, Eurasian Treecreeper, Willow Warbler, European Robin, Eurasian Blackbird, Song & Mistle Thrushes, Dunnock and Gray & White Wagtails. The birding highlight though was a flock of the delightful Long-tailed Tits. We also saw a very close Fallow Deer. The rain held off until we got back to the car and we drove on to lunch via a small dam, where we saw Little Grebe and our first Great Crested Grebe of the tour.
After another great lunch in a pub and chatting with some friendly locals, we continued on to the wonderful East Coast Nature Reserve. First we took a walk along the coast where we saw Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, Herring Gull and many Little Terns, plus Little Egret, Meadow Pipit, Sky Lark, European Stonechat and Reed Bunting in the coastal grasslands, reedbeds and ditches. Heading into the reserve, we had our first Greater Whitethroat singing from a post, Common Chiffchaff giving its signature song from some oak trees and we flushed a Common Kingfisher along a small creek. We followed the loop trail around natural meadows and stopping at the wonderfully constructed hides, we saw a good variety of birds, including Gray Heron, Common Buzzard, Sedge Warbler, Eurasian Blackcap, Spotted Flycatcher, European Greenfinch and European Goldfinch. We finished the day with some more fantastic food in a restaurant near our hotel in Dublin.
13th June – Dublin to Lisdoonvarna & Cliffs of Moher
After breakfast, we left Dublin via the ring road and were soon on the motorway heading towards the west coast of Ireland. Our luck with the weather had finally come to an end and the skies were gray with constant drizzle. After 3 hours we reached The Burren National Park with the final stretches along narrow, twisting roads typical to this area. We passed a house on the way used in a popular Irish TV comedy called ‘Father Ted’. It was still raining when we got to The Burren and apart from the fascinating rock formations in the mist, we saw little more than a few Little Egrets on the lake. We went on for lunch at a pub in Lisdoonvarna before going to our lodge for a bit of rest before heading out again in the afternoon. Lisdoonvarna is famous for its annual match-making festival although we were missing it by a few months. Our final birding of the tour was at the Cliffs of Moher; a world famous scenic location but also home to thousands of nesting seabirds. We had a break in the rain and we had the opportunity to scan the nesting colony with the scope to find Common Murre, Razorbill, Atlantic Puffin and Northern Fulmar, plus some Northern Gannets flying out at sea. The best bird of the afternoon though was Red-billed Chough, and we had good scope views of a pair mixed in with the seabirds. Although this species has a large range, it is locally rare in the UK and Ireland, and it was a good bird to end the tour on. In the evening we went for another pub meal and enjoyed some traditional Irish Music before calling it a night ahead of our flight home tomorrow. It had been a memorable trip, with some wonderful birds, mammals, scenery and culture.

Cliffs of Moher & Northern Fulmar (Charley Hesse)
Bird list
Taxonomy follows ebird/Clements online checklist. Updated Aug 2015

**ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae**
Graylag Goose *Anser anser*
Seen at Loch Garten & Avielochan.
Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*
Seen on N Uist & Benbecula.
Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Seen on N Uist & Benbecula.
Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
Seen on N Uist & S Uist.
Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*
Seen on N Uist.
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
Seen at Loch Garten, Loch Ruthven, Balranald, East Coast Nature Reserve & Glendalough,
Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*
Seen on Benbecula.
Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal *Anas c. crecca*
Seen N Uist.
Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*
Seen at Loch Ruthven, Benbecula & S Uist.
Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*
Seen at Balranald, Benbecula, Ballintoy & S Uist.
Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
Seen at Loch Garten.
Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*
Seen at Spey River.
Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*
Seen at Benbecula & on the ferry crossing to & from Uist.

**GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae**
Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*
Introduced. Seen in Findhorn Valley.
Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
Introduced. Seen in Findhorn Valley.
Eurasian Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*
Seen during pre-tour birding at Cairngorm NP.
Willow Ptarmigan (Red Grouse) *Lagopus lagopus scotica* Endemic subspecies
Seen at Glenshee & Cairngorm NP.
Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta millaisi* Endemic subspecies
Seen by Keith in Cairngorm NP.

**GAVIIDFORMES: Gaviidae**
Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*
Seen on Benbecula.
Common Loon *Gavia immer*
Seen at Balranald, on the ferry crossing to & from Uist.

**PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae**
Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Seen at Loch Ruthven & Vartry Reservoir.
Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*
Seen at Avielochan & Loch Ruthven.
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
Seen at Vartry Reservoir.
PROCELLARIIFORMES: Procellariidae
Northern Fulmar  
*Fulmarus glacialis*
Seen on the ferry crossing to & from Uist & the Cliffs of Moher.
Manx Shearwater  
*Puffinus puffinus*
Seen on the ferry crossing to & from Uist.

SULIFORMES: Sulidae
Northern Gannet  
*Morus bassanus*
Seen at Uig, on the ferry crossing to & from Uist, Balranald, Giant’s Causeway, East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.

SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae
Great Cormorant  
*Phalacrocorax carbo*
Seen at Uig, on the ferry crossing to Uist, Ballintoy, East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.
European Shag  
*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Seen at Kyle of Lochalsh, Uig, on the ferry crossing to Uist & the Cliffs of Moher.

PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae
Gray Heron  
*Ardea cinerea*
Seen at Benbecula & East Coast Nature Reserve.
Little Egret  
*Egretta garzetta*
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve.

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae
Osprey  
*Pandion haliaetus*
Seen at Loch Garten.

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae
Golden Eagle  
*Aquila chrysaetos*
Seen at Uig & on Benbecula.
Northern (Hen) Harrier  
*Circus c. cyaneus*
Seen on N Uist & Benbecula.
Common Buzzard  
*Buteo buteo*
Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten, Benbecula & East Coast Nature Reserve.

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae
Corn Crake  
*Crex crex*
Seen at Balranald.
Eurasian Moorhen  
*Gallinula chloropus*
Seen at Balranald.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Haematopodidae
Eurasian Oystercatcher  
*Haematopus ostralegus*
Commonly seen in Scotland.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae
Northern Lapwing  
*Vanellus vanellus*
Seen at Glenshee, Balranald & S Uist.
Common Ringed Plover  
*Charadrius hiaticula*
Seen at Balranald.
Eurasian Dotterel  
*Charadrius morinellus*
Seen by Keith in Cairngorm NP.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae
Common Sandpiper  
*Actitis hypoleucos*
Seen at Loch Garten.
Common Redshank  *Tringa totanus*
Seen at Balranald.

**Whimbrel**  *Numenius phaeopus*
Seen on S Uist.

**Eurasian Curlew**  *Numenius arquata*
Near-threatened. Seen at Glenshee, Findhorn Valley & Loch Ruthven.

**Black-tailed Godwit**  *Limosa limosa*
Near-threatened. Seen on S Uist.

**Ruddy Turnstone**  *Arenaria interpres*
Seen at Balranald & Skerries.

**Curlew Sandpiper**  *Calidris ferruginea*
Seen at Balranald.

**Sanderling**  *Calidris alba*
Seen at Balranald.

**Dunlin**  *Calidris alpina*
Seen at Balranald.

**Common Snipe**  *Gallinago gallinago*
Seen at Balranald & East Coast Nature Reserve.

**Red-necked Phalarope**  *Phalaropus lobatus*
Seen on Benbecula.

**CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae**

**Common Murre**  *Uria aalge*
Seen on the ferry crossing to & from Uist & the Cliffs of Moher.

**Razorbill**  *Alca torda*
Seen on the ferry crossing to & from Uist, Ballintoy & the Cliffs of Moher.

**Black Guillemot**  *Cepphus grylle*
Seen at Skerries.

**Atlantic Puffin**  *Fratercula arctica*
Seen on the ferry crossing to & from Uist & the Cliffs of Moher.

**CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae**

**Black-legged Kittiwake**  *Rissa tridactyla*
Seen on the ferry crossing to & from Uist, Ballintoy, Skerries & the Cliffs of Moher.

**Black-headed Gull**  *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Seen at Loch Garten, Findhorn Valley, Loch Ruthven & Balranald.

**Mew (Common) Gull**  *Larus c. canus*
Seen at Glenshee, Findhorn Valley, Balranald, S Uist & Ballintoy.

**Herring Gull**  *Larus argentatus*
Commonly seen along the coasts.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**  *Larus fuscus*
Seen at Findhorn Valley & Balranald.

**Great Black-backed Gull**  *Larus marinus*
Seen on the ferry crossing to Uist, Benbecula, Ballintoy & Skerries.

**Little Tern**  *Sternula albifrons*
 Seen at Balranald & East Coast Nature Reserve.

**Common Tern**  *Sterna hirundo*
Seen at Spey River & Findhorn Valley.

**Arctic Tern**  *Sterna paradisaea*
Seen on the ferry crossing to Uist & Balranald.

**COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon**  *Columba livia*
Seen at Balranald, Benbecula, Giant’s Causeway, Ballintoy, East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.

**Common Wood-Pigeon**  *Columba palumbus*
Seen at Loch Garten, East Coast Nature Reserve & Glendalough.
Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Seen at Loch Garten, Balranald & Benbecula.

**CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae**
Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Heard throughout and seen at Loch Garten & N Uist.

**STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae**
Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
Seen on N Uist & Benbecula.

**APODIFORMES: Apodidae**
Common Swift *Apus apus*
Seen at Loch Garten.

**CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae**
Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Seen briefly by the guide at East Coast Nature Reserve.

**FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae**
Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Seen in the Highlands.

**PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae**
Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*
Seen in Edinburgh, Giant's Causeway, East Coast Nature Reserve & Glendalough.
Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax p. pyrrhocorax*
Endemic subspecies
Seen at the Cliffs of Moher.
Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Commonly seen throughout.
Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
Seen in the Loch Ness area, Ballintoy, East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.
Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Seen at Loch Ruthven.
Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*
Seen in the Loch Ness area, Giant's Causeway, Ballintoy & East Coast Nature Reserve.
Common Raven *Corvus corax*
Seen at Uig, N Uist, Benbecula, Giant's Causeway, Glendalough & the Cliffs of Moher.

**PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae**
Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis scotica*
Endemic subspecies
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.

**PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae**
Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*
Seen at Spey River, Avielochan & Boat of Garten.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Commonly seen throughout.
Common House-Martin *Delichon urbicum*
Seen at Finhorn Valley, at Uig & Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Paridae**
Coal Tit *Periparus ater britannicus/hibernicus*
Endemic subspecies
*P.a.britannicus* seen at Anagach & Loch Garten. *P.a.hibernicus* seen at Glendalough.
Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus scoticus*
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Loch Garten.
Eurasian Blue Tit  \textit{Cyanistes caeruleus obscurus}  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten & Glendalough.

Great Tit  \textit{Parus major newtowni}  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten, Loch Ruthven & Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae**

Long-tailed Tit  \textit{Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus}  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae**

Eurasian Treecreeper  \textit{Certhia familiaris britannica}  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Loch Garten & Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae**

Eurasian Wren  \textit{Troglodytes troglodytes}  
Endemic subspecies
\textit{T.t.indigenus} commonly seen at most locations in Scotland & Ireland.  \textit{T.t.hebridensis} seen on Benbecula.

**PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae**

Goldcrest  \textit{Regulus regulus}  
Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten & Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae**

Willow Warbler  \textit{Phylloscopus trochilus}  
Commonly seen or heard throughout.

Common Chiffchaff  \textit{Phylloscopus collybita}  
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve.

Wood Warbler  \textit{Phylloscopus sibilatrix}  
Heard at Ardnamurchan.

**PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae**

Sedge Warbler  \textit{Acrocephalus schoenobaenus}  
Seen at Benbecula & East Coast Nature Reserve.

**PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae**

Eurasian Blackcap  \textit{Sylvia atricapilla}  
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve.

Greater Whitethroat  \textit{Sylvia communis}  
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve.

**PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae**

Spotted Flycatcher  \textit{Muscicapa striata}  
Seen at Loch Garten, East Coast Nature Reserve & Glendalough.

European Robin  \textit{Erithacus rubecula}  
Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten, Benbecula & Glendalough.

European Stonechat  \textit{Saxicola rubicola}  
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve.

Northern Wheatear  \textit{Oenanthe oenanthe}  
Seen at Glenshee.

**PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**

Ring Ouzel  \textit{Turdus torquatus}  
Seen at Glenshee & Cairngorm NP.

Eurasian Blackbird  \textit{Turdus merula}  
Commonly seen throughout.

Song Thrush  \textit{Turdus philomelos}  
Seen at Anagach, Loch Garten, East Coast Nature Reserve & Glendalough.
Mistle Thrush  
*Turdus viscivorus*  
Seen at Loch Garten & Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae**  
European Starling  
*Sturnus vulgaris*  
Commonly seen throughout.

**PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae**  
Dunnock  
*Prunella modularis hebridium*  
Endemic subspecies  
Seen at East Coast Nature Reserve & Glendalough.

**PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae**  
Gray Wagtail  
*Motacilla cinerea*  
Commonly seen throughout.  
White Wagtail  
*Motacilla alba*  
Commonly seen throughout.  
Meadow Pipit  
*Anthus pratensis*  
Seen at Glenshee, Findhorn Valley, Balranald, East Coast Nature Reserve & the Cliffs of Moher.  
Tree Pipit  
*Anthus trivialis*  
Seen at Loch Garten & Ardnamurchan.  
Rock Pipit  
*Anthus petrosus*  
Seen at Balranald & Ballintoy.

**PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae**  
Reed Bunting  
*Emberiza schoeniclus*  
Endemic subspecies  
Seen at Giant’s Causeway & East Coast Nature Reserve.  
Crossbill sp  
*Loxia sp*  
Endemic subspecies  
Commonly seen throughout.  
Common Redpoll  
*Acanthis flammea*  
Seen on Benbecula.  
Eurasian Siskin  
*Spinus spinus*  
Endemic subspecies  
Seen at several locations in the Highlands.  
European Goldfinch  
*Carduelis carduelis*  
Endemic subspecies  
Commonly seen throughout.  
Twite  
*Carduelis flavirostris brevirostris*  
Endemic subspecies  
Seen on Benbecula.  
Eurasian Linnet  
*Carduelis cannabina autochthona*  
Endemic subspecies  
Commonly seen throughout.  

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**  
House Sparrow  
*Passer domesticus*  
Commonly seen throughout.
Mammal list
Taxonomy follows en.wikipedia.org

Muridae (rats, mice and relatives)
Wood Mouse Apodemus sylvaticus
Seen from the viewing blind near Aviemore.

Leporidae (hares and rabbits)
Mountain Hare Lepus timidus
Seen at Glenshee & Cairngorm NP.
[Irish (Mountain) Hare Lepus timidus hibernicus]
Seen at Sally Gap near Dublin.
European Hare Lepus europaeus
Seen near Glenshee.
European Rabbit Oryctolagus cuniculus
Seen commonly throughout.

Phocidae (seals)
Grey Seal Halichoerus grypus
Seen at Kyle of Lochalsh.
Common Seal Phoca vitulina
Seen at Kyle of Lochalsh.

Mustelidae (mustelids)
European Pine Marten Martes martes
Seen from the viewing blind near Aviemore.
European Otter Lutra lutra
Seen at Kyle of Lochalsh & Benbecula.
European Badger Meles meles
Seen from the viewing blind near Aviemore.

Cervidae (deer)
Red Deer Cervus elaphus
Seen several times during the tour.
Roe Deer Capreolus capreolus
Seen at several locations in the Highlands & Hebrides.

Phocenidae
Harbour Porpoise Phocoena phocoena
Seen on the ferry crossing to Uist.

Delphinidae (marine dolphins)
Common Bottlenose Dolphin Tursiops truncatus
Seen on the ferry crossing to Uist.