

Gairloch Wildlife Weekend: Saturday & Sunday 29-30 May

What wildlife can we find living in and around Gairloch?

Proposed schedule (for final details please see notice on WREN website, www.wr-en.co.uk, or contact Peter, see below):

- **Saturday 29th May**

6am & 8am - 10am: Bird search from Flowerdale car park. Many birds are most active first thing in the morning. We'll explore nearby woodlands to look for summer migrants in addition to local residents. Bring binoculars. **Hazard:** beware sheep ticks: wear suitable protective clothing.

10:30am - 2:30pm: The Big Bug Hunt from Flowerdale car park. What invertebrates can we find living in and around Flowerdale? We'll be looking for both terrestrial bugs and aquatic species. Bring notebook, magnifying glass and a good lot of curiosity. We'll keep to within a short walk (~800m) of Flowerdale car park: follow signs and come and go as you please. **Hazard:** beware sheep ticks: wear suitable protective clothing.

1pm - 3pm: Sweep netting for sea trout in Flowerdale Bay (a short walk across road from above activity). The Wester Ross Fisheries Trust will attempt to catch a sample of sea trout to check their condition and monitor parasites (as shown on BBC Alba, ~25/5). Sometimes other small fish are also caught. We'll bring buckets with anything of interest over to the slipway opposite the boat-park car park for closer inspection . . .

3:30pm - 7:30pm: Hill walk, ~8km, some rough going in places. You'll need to be reasonably fit if you want to keep up. **This is not a guided walk; you should be capable of finding your own way on and off the hill should you need to do so.** We may stop for a few casts for trout at a nearby loch (Gairloch Angling Club fishing permits required from 'The Cornerstone'). **Hazard:** beware sheep ticks and Lyme disease.

8:00pm 'til 11ish: Sea watch at sunset from Melvaig. Gannets guaranteed; also the chance of passing cetaceans or a basking shark; much depends on the weather. Refreshments (drinks only) and 'www.melvaigmist.com' in the Melvaig Inn!

- **Sunday 30th May**

9:30am - 12:30pm: North-shore road. Sand Campsite to Strath. We'll look for birds and other animals along the roadside and in the sea nearby. No cars please! Meet *en route* if a little late in getting going! **Hazard:** beware sheep ticks.

13:00pm - 16:00pm: Sea search, Golf Course beach. What can we find living between the tides and in the shallow seas nearby? **Beach combing and self-guided snorkeling at own risk.**

All weekend: Harbour, An Ard, Golf course beach, Flowerdale woods: circular walk from Flowerdale car park. Self-guided walk: look for wildflowers, birds and small animals. About 4km, on paths. **Hazard:** beware sheep ticks.

While every care will be taken to ensure everyone's health and safety, we can not take responsibility for your wellbeing. You should ensure that you are adequately equipped for any activity. Be familiar with sheep ticks and Lyme disease. A responsible adult should accompany all youngsters.

We also plan to hire a **Remote Operating Vehicle** to survey and film the seabed and some of the underwater wildlife of Loch Gairloch (focussing on local eelgrass beds). To help make this survey possible, funds are required. If you would like to help discover more about the loch, please contact Peter for more information. In return for a suggested donation of about £20 you will receive a dvd showing the highlights of this underwater sea search.

The Wester Ross Environment Network (WREN) may also use the occasion to launch their new book: **'Go Wild in Wester Ross'**.

Stories, reports, pictures, and lists of what we find will be posted on the WREN website (www.wr-en.co.uk) and elsewhere following the event.

Some activities are to be supported by the NTS Inverewe countryside ranger, The Highland Council countryside ranger, Wester Ross Fisheries Trust, Two Lochs Radio, SEPA, Gairloch Estate, and other local sponsors (the list of acknowledgements will accompany report). Thanks to all . . .

For further information about any event, please contact:

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