



Wild Globe Travel Consultancy

Tailored Wildlife, Wilderness and Adventure Travel Across the Globe.

14 Greenfield Road, Eastbourne,
East Sussex BN21 1JJ, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1323 731865
Mob: +44 (0)7821 640118

Email: jason.woolgar@btinternet.com
Website: www.wildglobetours.com



YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND

Date - May 2013

Duration - 5 Days

Destinations

Tophill Low Nature Reserve - Mount Grace Priory - North York Moors National Park - Dalby Forest - Cropton Forest - Whitby - Greatham Creek - Yorkshire Dales National Park - Hawes - Snaizholme Red Squirrel Reserve - Greatham Creek - Bempton Cliffs - Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden - Arundel Wetland Centre

Trip Overview

A short trip, principally to photograph stoat at Mount Grace Priory and red squirrel at Snaizeholme Red Squirrel Reserve, with a few additional stops to look for other wildlife locally. I started at Tophill Low Nature Reserve in East Riding, as a weasel had been making fairly regular appearances and otters are often seen swimming along the adjacent river. Although I had no luck with either, I



did see a first stoat a day earlier than planned, as well as a solitary roe deer and a striking barn owl perched on a fence post at first light. Preferably, I would have stayed longer at Tophill Low, two or three days would give you a good chance of encountering the otters, but I had to move on to Mount Grace Priory, a pretty Carthusian ruin maintained by English Heritage and one of the best locations in England to see wild stoats. Although visitors have been watching these splendid mustelids for several decades here, there are no guarantees on any given day and I was extremely fortunate to spend a couple of hours observing several stoats hunting the resident rabbits. Never nice of course to see the rabbits killed or to hear their pitiful cries, but still a rare privilege to watch natural behaviour of this kind and

for so long. I was actually lucky with behaviour in general on this trip, as I also spent about fifteen minutes watching two hares 'boxing' on the Yorkshire Dales. I have witnessed this to some degree previously, but never for this long and never with such intensity, as these hares hurled themselves furiously at one another and were eventually so exhausted that a third hare turned up and chased them both away. Despite the fact that they have a couple of feeders to attract the squirrels to one viewing area, the red squirrels at Snaizeholme were another highlight, as the feeders only supplement their natural diet and these beautiful animals are living a completely wild existence in an unenclosed coniferous woodland within the North York Moors National Park. The squirrels are easily seen away from the feeders and, although I do not believe that it is acceptable to eradicate the invasive grey squirrel population in the United Kingdom, it is wonderful to see this native species once again thriving within an English forest. I also had good sightings of three deer species at several locations, four if you include the sika deer viewed within a managed herd at the splendid Fountains Abbey, and visited the rather surreal setting of Greatham Creek on the River Tees, where harbour and grey seals relax on the mudflats

surrounded by a mass of industry. Fortunately, the majority of the local countryside is far prettier and I encountered a great deal of general wildlife at some highly scenic locations, including a lovely red grouse nestled among the heather of the Yorkshire Moors and a huge colony of distinctive gannets, as well as a couple of puffins, at the Bempton Cliffs RSPB site, from where I also saw two more harbour seals and the only harbour porpoise of the trip. On the drive home I dropped in at the Arundel Wetland Centre, a Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust site, where you can take walks and boat rides to see the wild water voles. They are generally easy to find here and I saw three on this occasion, bringing the total number of mammal species encountered to an encouraging eighteen in less than five



full days. Despite some fairly severe reservations regarding both the treatment of wildlife within the United Kingdom and the quality of our so called protected areas, I intend to research additional destinations over the next couple of years with a view to possibly organising a compressive tour incorporating the best wildlife sites within the British Isles. Foxes have been terribly persecuted for decades in this country, but they remain easy to see in urban areas and badgers are also routinely encountered at several locations, although whether this will be the case after the proposed and completely unnecessary cull is uncertain. I saw both of these animals on this trip and when you add the wild cats, otters, pine martens, beavers and mountain hares of the Scottish Highlands and conceivably polecats in Wales, there is certainly the possibility of creating a tour that will include a diverse and interesting variety of wildlife, particularly when you also consider how easily a number of marine species can be observed at various points along the coast. I would initially expect to be able to arrange a trip incorporating at least 30 major mammal species, as well as a large selection of birds and a few rare reptiles, but ultimately any future tour will depend on the levels of protection our wildlife receives and how easy it will consequently be to observe certain species. If the situation with the Scottish wild cat is anything to go by, which has been allowed to reach the very edge of extinction, then any tour will remain as uncertain as the continued survival of several of our native animals.



No.	Species	Scientific Name	Notes
1	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	One individual in Dalby Forest.
2	Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Two animals at a hide near Cropton Forest.
3	Stoat or Ermine	<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Observed at Tophill Low and Mount Grace Priory.
4	Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>	Small group of females on the edge of the woods near Dalby Forest.
5	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Several females and one male in the North York Moors NP.
6	Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Seen at Tophill Low and in both national parks.
(7)	Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>	Managed herd at Fountains Abbey.
8	Western European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Lone individual whilst driving at night in the dales.
9	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	More than a dozen, including a fighting pair.
10	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Abundant, particularly at Tophill Low and Mount Grace.
11	Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	A few individuals seen at Tophill Low and Cropton Forest.
12	Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Around ten at Snaizeholme Red Squirrel Reserve.
13	European Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	Three swimming and cleaning at Arundel Wetland Centre.
14	Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Several around the squirrel feeders at Snaizeholme.
15	Long-tailed Field Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	One around the squirrel feeders at Snaizeholme.
16	Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	One at the RSPB site at Greatham Creek.
17	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Several at the RSPB site at Greatham Creek.
18	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	One from the RSPB site at Bempton Cliffs.







14 Greenfield Road, Eastbourne,
East Sussex BN21 1JJ, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1323 731865
Mob: +44 (0)7821 640118

Email: jason.woolgar@btinternet.com
Website: www.wildglobetours.com

