

4 Night Guided Birdwatching in Southern Snowdonia

Trip style: Guided Walking Holidays

Destination: ☺ Snowdonia

Trip code: DOL04-WBR05

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 109kg CO2



Holiday Overview

Join a group of likeminded nature enthusiasts on a guided exploration of Southern Snowdonia's best birdwatching sites. Beginner or seasoned birder, you'll head out each day with an expert ornithologist who knows the habitats, can pick out a bird by its call, and help you identify different species before you've got your binoculars up. You'll learn from both your experienced birdwatching leader and each other, so beginners can find their feet whilst practised birders add the likes of nuthatches, treecreepers and dippers to their list. From transport to meals, everything is taken care of, leaving you free to enjoy sociable daily birdwatching and easy over-dinner conversation with people who share your interests.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Relax at our comfortable country house
- Daily guided visits to the best birding sites in the area
- Having an expert ornithologist leader
- Visiting the Mawddach Estuary, RSPB Ynis-hir, Coed-y-Brenin, and Dyfi Wildlife Reserve
- Chances to spot thousands of wading birds, ducks & geese, as well as birds of prey and smaller birdlife too
- Relaxing at our comfortable country house

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Local ornithologist leader
- All transport throughout the itinerary
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information available in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently.

WALKING GRADES AND OPTIONS

Though these holidays don't cover great distances on foot, they are still active. You'll be hopping on and off the coach and should expect to spend the majority of the day on your feet. Walking to the bird watching sites may take you across country tracks or footpaths and, at times, off the beaten track so be sure to bring sturdy shoes.

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Day 1 Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

After dinner this evening, your local ornithologist leader will introduce themselves and the itinerary. They'll also give an introductory talk on the local area's birdlife and what you're likely to see during your holiday.

Day 2 Mawddach Estuary

Explore the Mawddach Estuary and RSPB Mawddach Woodlands, where tidal mudflats, riverside habitats and ancient woodland attract a wide variety of birdlife. Look out for overwintering waders and wildfowl feeding along the estuary, while nuthatches and treecreepers can be spotted among the trees. We'll also watch for dippers beside the woodland streams and scan the skies for hen harriers.

Day 3 Coed y Brenin and the Torrent Walk

Woodland and riverside habitats give us the chance to spot a variety of species today. We begin at Coed y Brenin Forest Park, where conifers and native oak woodland provide shelter for goshawks, redstarts, wood warblers and crossbills. We may also glimpse some of the forest's larger residents, including fallow and roe deer – and perhaps even an elusive pine marten.

In the afternoon, we follow the Afon Clywedog as it tumbles through the wooded ravine beside the Torrent Walk. This temperate rainforest provides a rich habitat for dippers, grey wagtails, long-tailed tits and goldcrests, while otters are also occasional visitors.

Day 4 Dyfi Wildlife Reserve & RSPB Ynis-hir

This morning we explore the Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve boardwalk, looking for wintering wildfowl, smaller birds at the feeder stations, and birds of prey in the skies above. We then head to Ynis-hir, an 800-hectare RSPB reserve home to England and Wales's only regular flock of Greenland White-fronted geese. Thousands of other birds make regular visits here too and with luck we'll spot wigeon, teal, gadwall, lapwings, curlew, oystercatchers, and lots of smaller birdlife too. Otters are seen quite frequently at high tide here in the streams, so keep your eyes peeled.

Please note entrance fees to RSPB reserves have not been included in the price of the holiday. We know many of you are RSPB members and will be able to access the reserve for free – please remember to bring your membership card. For any non-RSPB members, entrance fee is payable locally. The same applies to Cors Dyfi – this is a Montgomery Wildlife Trust Reserve, entrance fee is payable locally.

Day 5 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Accommodation

Dolserau Hall

We're delighted to share that Dolserau Hall has now reopened following a significant investment in this much-loved Welsh HF Country House. With beautifully updated social spaces, refreshed bedrooms, and thoughtful enhancements throughout, it's the perfect moment to rediscover this special spot in southern Eryri (Snowdonia). Read more. Dolserau Hall enjoys arresting countryside views at this Victorian manor house at the southern end of Snowdonia (Eryri) National Park. The location is idyllic; think ancient woods and craggy uplands in all directions (parts of the park served as the inspiration for Middle Earth in JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*). There's no shortage of things to do, either, including following the Mawddach Trail along the edge of the Mawddach Estuary, discovering the compact range of hills known as the Rhinogs, and climbing the rugged foothills of Cader Idris – the highest mountain in southern Snowdonia (Eryri) at 893 metres. You'll also be close to Dolgellau, the small market town best known for its once flourishing woollen industry (ruins of the Pandy fulling mills used to remove fats and grease from the wool cloth can still be seen along the Afon Aran River). With only 21 rooms, it's one of HF Holidays' smaller country houses and 40% of its rooms are reserved for singles, making it easier than ever to have your own space.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

About

- 21 well-appointed guest rooms · Exclusive occupancy: 31 guests minimum · Check in from 4:00pm · For members check in from 2:00pm · Full-board (including a cream tea welcome) · Free Wi-Fi · Free on-site parking · Boot room and drying room · Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks · Books and games to borrow · Licensed bar · Lounge · Garden · [Well-behaved dogs welcome](#) · Electric vehicle charging point - Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point



Food & drink

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

Rooms

A choice of guest rooms at Dolserau Hall

Designed with your comfort in mind, Dolserau Hall has 21 well-appointed guest rooms available in two categories: Classic and Premium.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers, and comfortable mattresses.

We love: The rooms in the main house or converted coach house. Some come with standout views of Snowdonia (Eryri) National Park.

Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

Choose Your Room Service

Some guests love choosing a particular room, for the view, a quiet spot in an annex, or to be close to the dining room. Many return to the same room time and again, creating a familiar and comforting sense of place for only £30 per room.

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Dolserau Hall](#)

About your stay

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

Accessibility

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Travel Details

Address

Dolserau Hall
Dolgellau
Gwynedd LL40 2AG

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1341 422522](tel:+44(0)1341422522)

By train

The nearest station is Machynlleth.

For train times and to plan your route check National Rail.

By taxi

The 16-mile journey from Machynlleth railway station takes about 30 minutes.

For pricing, please contact Cader Cabs directly.

Cader Cabs

A local, 24/7 firm, who can provide transport from nearby train stations and bus stops. No pre-booking is required.

Cader Cabs are offering a 10% discount on all taxi journeys for guests coming to or going from Dolserau Hall.

Tel: [+44 \(0\)7766 983 103](tel:+44(0)7766983103)

Email: This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.

*Cader Cabs are not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By bus

From Machynlleth take the T2 bus to Dolgellau. You can complete the two-mile journey to Dolserau Hall by taxi. Or if you alight at Dolgellau Starbucks, it's a one-mile walk along a quiet country lane to the house.

By car

It takes about 90 minutes to drive from the M56 at Chester or the M54 at Telford to Dolserau Hall.

From the north

Head to Chester, then take the M53 and A55 to join the A550, followed by the A5104 for about 20 miles, then finally the A494 signposted to Bala.

Stay on the A494 through Bala heading towards Dolgellau. A mile after going past a junction for the B4416 to Brithdir, take the next turning on the left to follow the country lane for half a mile to Dolserau Hall.

From the south

Take the M54 and A5 to Shrewsbury to join the A458 towards Welshpool. Continue on the A458 through Welshpool and after 27 miles turn right at a roundabout onto the A470 towards Dolgellau. As you come down a steep hill before Dolgellau, look out for a petrol station on the right. Take a right turn immediately before it, then you'll find Dolserau Hall is about one mile along this country lane on your left.

By Shared Transfer

If you're travelling to or from Dolserau Hall on Mondays or Fridays, you can join our group transfer from Shrewsbury Railway Station.

2026 prices are £30 per person for a return transfer or £15 per person for a single transfer.

Outward journey: Depart Shrewsbury Railway Station at 15:00; arrive at Dolserau Hall at 16:40. Return journey: Depart Dolserau Hall at 09:00; arrive at Shrewsbury Railway Station at 10:40.

By air

The nearest airport is Manchester Airport.

You'll need to allow around five hours, firstly taking the train to Chester, changing to the Sapphire bus to Wrexham, and from there taking the T3 bus to Dolgellau.

Local Area

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Dolserau Hall.

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway

Established in 1832, this heritage line offers nearly 40 miles of Snowdonia (Eryri) scenery. The Ffestiniog Railway runs from Porthmadog to Tan y Bwlch while the Welsh Highland Railway travels from Caernarvon to Beddgelert. Porthmadog station is a 40-minute drive away.

Great Little Trains of Wales

A collection of little steam railways, this makes for an enchanting way to discover the visually-striking Welsh countryside. The Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) Mountain Railway has been taking passengers to the mountain's summit since 1896 (early bookings are highly recommended).

National Slate Museum

A 90-minute drive away, this Llanberis-based museum is housed in the industrial Victorian workshops once used for serving and maintaining the Dinorwic slate quarry. Highlights include watching slate being cut by hand and visiting the terrace of quarrymen's houses.

Caernarfon Castle

Just over an hour's drive away, this fortress-palace on the banks of the River Seiont was built by Edward I. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum is located inside the castle and offers a wealth of exhibits that tell the story of the oldest infantry regiment in Wales.

Harlech Castle

A 45-minute drive away, Edward I's stone fortress dominates the landscape and affords incredible views across Snowdonia (Eryri). The castle is largely a ruin, although the huge inner walls and towers still stand almost to their full heights.

Criccieth

A 50-minute drive away, this seaside town is famed for its 13th century castle ruins overlooking Cardigan Bay. Highlights include relaxing on the beach and stopping for an ice cream at Cadwaladers - the esteemed Welsh ice cream parlour founded here in 1927.

Llechwedd Slate Caverns

A 40-minute drive away, this visitor attraction is best known for its deep mine tour that descends 500 feet underground. Highlights include learning about the subterranean chambers and enjoying a fabulous light and sound display at the underground lake.

Bodnant Gardens

Just over an hour's drive away, these breathtaking gardens spread across 80 acres offer wonderful views of Snowdonia (Eryri). Founded in 1874 and given to the National Trust in 1949, highlights include the Italianate terraces, wildflower meadows, and woodland.

Plas Newydd House

A 90-minute drive away, the historic home of Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby (the so-called Ladies of Llangollen) was a stone cottage converted into a gothic fantasy. The mansion also comes with 40 acres of garden and 129 acres of woodland and parkland.

Portmeirion

Designed by celebrated Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in the mid-1920s, this Italianate-style coastal village is an hour's drive away. For walkers, not-to-be missed sights include the Dwyrdd Estuary and the subtropical forest known as The Gwyllt.

Essential information

Packing list

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket, preferably insulated
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Spotting scope and/or binoculars
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and insect repellent
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- First-aid kit

Tripnote validity

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The

information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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