

## Nick Martin. Discovering Scotland's Western Isles December 2018

Nick Martin, a conservationist and wildlife photographer, took us on a tour of the landscape and wildlife of the Western Isles. For those of us who haven't visited, it was a view of the wonderful range of wildlife and habitats – for those that had, a chance to see some of the rare birds and mammals they may have missed! In Skye birds like skylark, cuckoo, curlew and merlin are thriving in the wet valleys, and the long coastline supports many seabirds, including the spectacular white-tailed eagle. Seals and otters are found throughout the Western Isles. The Outer Hebrides, from South Uist to Lewis is a windswept, sparsely-populated landscape, home to hen harrier, black-throated diver, merganser, red-necked phalarope and short-eared owl. The machair is a rare habitat formed when the peat soil is overlain by a shelly limestone layer from the beaches, supporting numerous wild flowers and insects. We ended our trip in the Shetlands with storm petrels in the brochs, red-throated divers, and the Shetland wren.

Over 100 people attended the talk, and there was a special raffle prize, a copy of 'The Nature of the Malverns' donated by Pisces Publications. Mary Horrobin was presented with the book by Margaret Vernon, the Vice-Chairman.

