

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Malvern Group

Scottish Wildlife: Marcus John

Marcus John has led Naturetrek tours of Scotland for many years and is especially expert on the wildlife of Mull and Ardnamurchan. His talk conveyed his lifelong love of the area and the beauty of the landscape. Mull is the more accessible of the two areas despite being an island; Ardnamurchan is a remote, sparsely populated peninsula managed as an estate for red deer, and as a result some rare and interesting wildlife flourishes there too. White-tailed and golden eagles soar overhead, hen harriers breed there, falcons, owls and cuckoos all do well. Pine martens are fairly common in the woods and can be tempted into gardens with peanuts. On the hillsides there are mountain hares, turning white in the winter for camouflage in the snow. A few wildcat are left but rarely seen; an intensive and controversial conservation programme is in place, neutering feral and domestic cats in the area to prevent cross-breeding. Otters are often seen along the coast, catching fish and crabs. In the sea there are many porpoises and dolphins, and occasionally minke whales come in quite close to the shore. Grey and common seals breed in the area and can easily be seen resting on the rocks. A great many seabirds breed on the cliffs or pass through the area on migration. We are indeed fortunate to have such a fascinating area within relatively easy reach, full of iconic species living in wonderful scenery.

The next meeting is on March 3rd at 7.30 pm in the Lyttelton Rooms, Church St, Malvern. Gordon Forrest will talk about the Nature of Randan Meadows, a WWT reserve near Bromsgrove.

Alison Uren