

Country Notes for August 2024

August is traditionally the holiday month when many people, especially those who teach or have children of school age, are able to get away for a much needed break. If you are one such person there will be new experiences to enjoy and new things to see, and that includes the wildlife.

If you are staying in the UK you may be travelling down the M40; not one might think a wildlife highlight, but in fact you could be wrong! It is one of the best places to view red kites as they scavenge for food and roadkill near the verges. Recently I gave up counting the number I had seen when I got to 50! I was not driving I might add! If you are visiting Scotland it is not difficult to find places where ospreys may easily be seen and a walk through the woods could perhaps reward you with the sighting of a red squirrel, unknown these days in Kent. Many coastal locations further north and in the West Country and Wales might reward you with sightings of puffins. Beware however seeing a buzzard and thinking you have seen an eagle. In Scotland they refer to them as 'Tourists Eagles'!

If you go abroad the possibilities are endless. In the Mediterranean there might be bee-eaters or hoopoes to be seen. If you go to North America you will probably see vultures and may be lucky enough to see a hummingbird. If you should venture as far afield as Australia you could, and probably will, see kangaroos, emus and kookaburras! What an exciting prospect!

If like many of us staying in our lovely villages there are wonders to see here as well. Hopefully butterfly numbers will have picked up by then, and after all the rain we have had, there should be lots of wild flowers to enjoy. All the summer visiting birds will still be here, many still breeding, and what could be more summer-like than watching swallows flying around catching insects to feed themselves and their young.

There so much to enjoy wherever you are!

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