

BIRDS

*Our specialists reveal a few
of their ornithological
highlights from around
the world.*

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Feath

Bald Eagle, Canada

Each winter the small village of Brackendale near Squamish, in British Columbia, is home to the largest concentration of bald eagles in the world. From mid-November to mid-February thousands of these magnificent birds are attracted here by the dead and dying carcasses after the salmon run. The eagles, unique to North America, are best seen by a gentle raft trip along the Squamish River. The birds sit in the trees lining the river banks truly making this a spectacle not to be missed.

Catherine Spink: 01993 838 706

Bird of Paradise, Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is home to 38 species of bird of paradise. Males do not play a part in rearing their offspring as the forests provide sufficient food and shelter for the females to cope on their own. Instead, they put all their energy into attracting mates using elaborate plumage, body 'adornments' and demonstrative mating dances. Visitors to Papua New Guinea can marvel at the same species that inspired Wallace and Darwin as they developed their theories of natural and sexual selection, but in more luxurious surrounds staying at tasteful rainforest lodges that provide expert birding guides.

Vanessa Coleridge: 01993 838 117



Condor, Peru

Bald-headed Ibis, Morocco

The northern bald-headed ibis was once widespread across North Africa, the Middle East and the European Alps, but today just two populations remain. The first is a tiny colony of 16 birds in Palmyra, Syria. The second colony is in the Souss Massa National Park, 40 kilometres from Agadir in Morocco. The park was established in 1991 and conservation of the ibis was its primary objective. Since 1991 the number of breeding pairs in the park has doubled to over 100. These birds are present all year round but the best times of year to spot them are from February to April and from September to November. This bird is a strange, mysterious creature with a bald head, long red curved bill and a wild plumage of black feathers.

Donna Piccini: 01993 838 419

Andean Condor, Peru

Surely one of the most majestic sights in South America is watching the Andean condor soaring through the skies above you. Condor's Cross, a viewpoint overlooking the vast Colca Canyon in Peru, is one of the best places on the continent to view these wonderful birds, as early most mornings you are likely to find several condors circling just above you as there is a nesting area nearby. With a wing span of up to three metres this is quite a spectacle!

Joanne Soddy: 01993 838 619



Bald eagle, British Columbia

Cranes and Sea Eagles, Japan

The remote and rugged eastern corner of Hokkaido (Japan's most northerly island) is little visited by foreigners, yet it boasts some spectacular wildlife. For birding enthusiasts, the most notable are the endangered Japanese red-crested crane and the Steller's sea eagle. The cranes, which live and breed in the Shitsugen National Park, are most visible during winter and early spring when they perform their elaborate mating dances, although sightings are possible all year round. A little further east the ice floes that drift south from the Sea of Okhotsk to Abashiri provide the hunting ground for the spectacular sea eagles that migrate south from Siberia during the winter months.

Lou Mullineux: 01993 838 209

Kiwi, New Zealand

When talking about New Zealand's birdlife, most people immediately focus upon the kiwi. This little-seen flightless bird has long been adopted as the symbol of the nation and continues to delight visitors. Huge efforts have been made to increase their numbers, and many protected 'mainland islands', where destructive pests such as stoats and weasels have been eliminated, have been created. Most people head to Stewart and Ulva Islands to see kiwis in their greatest numbers, but there are many other places they can be seen including Trounson Kauri Park on the west coast of the Northland.

Cass Talbot: 01993 838 813



Bald-headed ibis, Morocco



Kiwi, Stewart Island

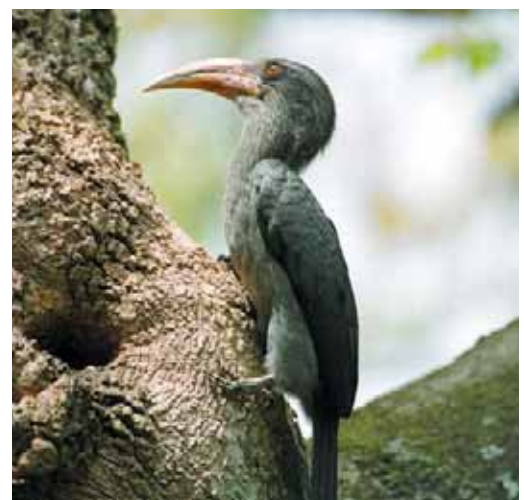


Steller's sea eagles, Hokkaido

Grey Hornbill, India

This striking and prehistoric looking bird is abundant throughout the Indian Subcontinent both in rural and some urban areas. Defined by its large horn-shaped bill and long tail feathers, the grey hornbill can be found nesting in tree holes in forested areas and is often found in pairs. Perhaps the most bizarre behaviour occurs during nesting when the male almost completely blocks the entrance to the nest to keep out predators, leaving a hole just large enough to feed the female through. During the nesting period the female will often pluck out her feathers to maintain enough space for her hatchlings and re-grow them in time for her and her young to fly the nest.

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Grey hornbill, India