



# Scottish Highlands

## An Autumn Spectacular at Aigas

**Saturday 1 – Saturday 8 October 2011 (8 days)**  
**Saturday 13 – Saturday 20 October 2012 (8 days)**

*Join us in the Highlands as the bracken and birch leaves turn gold and the red deer are rutting in the hills. We explore the Caledonian Pine Forest and firths full of wildfowl while based on a splendid Victorian estate. Expect roaring Red Deer stags in the estate and roaring log fires to come home to!*



The Scottish Highlands are at their most romantic in late September and October, with autumn colours permeating the trees, mist lingering in the glens and stags roaring in the hills. We stay fifteen miles southwest of Inverness, based at Aigas Field Centre, a fine Victorian mansion built as a shooting lodge. Aigas has been Scotland's premier residential Field Centre since 1977, and is the family home of Sir John and Lady Lucy Lister-Kaye. They always make us feel most welcome here, and John delights in interpreting the origins of the landscape, geology and ancient history that are unique to Aigas, and that form a backdrop to his much-acclaimed book 'Song of the Rolling Earth'.

Aigas has a well-deserved reputation for comfort and excellent food, and its small estate includes mixed woodland, pine plantation and a most attractive loch. Guests are accommodated in spacious wooden lodges. Aigas is the site for a trial introduction scheme for European Beavers, which has featured several times on BBC television programmes, including 'Autumnwatch' and 'Johnny Kingdom goes to Scotland'. Uniquely, we can now see beaver-felled trees and beaver lodges around a loch for the first time in Britain for over three hundred years! The Beavers themselves are more difficult to see, but have been seen on early-morning visits to the lochside hides. We'll also be visiting a hide to watch for Pine Martens and Badgers one evening.

The lodge is the perfect base for exploring the Highlands. To the east are the deep inland firths where tens of thousands of wildfowl are arriving from the arctic, while huge flocks of migratory waders congregate on the headlands and in the bays of Easter Ross and the Black Isle. Red Kite can be seen over the woods here, and also sometimes feeding in groups on the stubble fields. This year we have added an additional boat trip out of Cromarty Bay in search of Bottle-nosed Dolphins.

To the north and west, the long glens run



Aigas House: a superb base for a week in the Highlands (Photo: Aigas Field Centre)

between the mountains. It is in the hills above these that we'll be looking for soaring Golden Eagles. The hills are also the realm of the ever-growing Red Deer herds, each guarded by a jealous stag that will be keen to see off any interlopers – and the battles can be spectacular!

We will make one longer expedition to the west coast via Loch Maree, one of the most beautiful landscapes in Scotland. White-tailed Eagle are regularly seen in certain spots, and we hope for luck with these dramatic raptors.

This trip is special – not just for what we may see, but for the friendly and homely atmosphere of the place we stay, for good home cooking, the crackling pine log fires in the evenings, the lovely walks round the gardens and the loch, and for the taste of real Highland hospitality.



Pine Marten (Photo: Aigas Field Centre)

### TRIP DETAILS

**TRAVEL :** Clients may be met either at Inverness railway station, or at Inverness airport after 3 pm on **Day 1**, or may arrive at Aigas after 3pm. We gather for afternoon tea at 4.30pm on **Day 1** and the holiday concludes after breakfast on **Day 8**, although earlier departures can be arranged.

**ACCOMMODATION :** At Aigas Field Centre, as described above in twin rooms with private bathrooms. A very limited number of single rooms are available.

**PRINCIPAL LEADER :** Robin Noble

**NUMBERS :** Max. 14 clients

**PRICES :** **2011 - £ 1,145**  
**2012 - £ 1,195**

**Single Supp. :** NIL  
**Deposit :** £ 200 per person

The price is per person and includes 7 nights' accommodation, all meals on the tour, transport on the tour and Inverness/Aigas, admissions, and leadership.

The price excludes travel to and from Inverness, travel insurance, drinks and other personal expenses.

**Please do not book your flights to and from Inverness until you have had confirmation from us that the trip is going ahead as planned, and that your proposed times are suitable.**

### What you say:

*It was a good mixture, with lots of educational value. Aigas was certainly a unique experience I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you!*

S.H. Cheshire

*It was a great success...Robin is good at sharing his wide knowledge of the geology, wildlife and history of Scotland.*

H.C. Somerset