

Cumbria
Wildlife Trust



Great places to see
Winter
Migrating Birds
in Cumbria



▲ Purple sandpiper. Photo: Harry Hogg

Great places to See Winter Migrating Birds in Cumbria

Cumbria
Wildlife Trust



The mild and wet winters of Britain, along with our numerous estuaries full of food, create a brilliant winter haven for birds escaping the cold of the arctic or northern Europe. Autumn berries are also a big draw for flocks of thrushes which arrive to feast on our abundant harvest.

Our guide to **Great Places to see Winter Migrating Birds** in Cumbria recommends great lakes, towns and areas of the coast to spot amazing migrating birds.

www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 724133



① Bassenthwaite Lake Lake District National Park Authority

This lake is one of the largest in the Lake District but one of the least populated. In summer ospreys can be seen fishing on the lake. In autumn goldeneye arrive from northern Europe and can be spotted by their distinctive yellow eyes. Males are white and have a beautiful green/black head and back, whereas the females have reddish heads and grey bodies.

Where is it?

By car: From Keswick head towards Cockermouth on the A66. As it meets the lake drive on a little further until you see a layby on the right. Park here and walk out to the viewing point.
By bicycle: The lake is on National Route 71 (C2C)
By public transport: Regular buses run from Keswick to Cockermouth



② Bowness Bay

Although some mute swans are resident all year round, some gather together to form winter flocks, with birds arriving from northern Europe in cold winters. Mute swans are large birds with long S-shaped necks and have orange and black beaks. Bowness Bay is a great place to see these graceful and elegant birds which gather here to be fed by visitors.

Where is it?

By car: From Windermere head to Bowness on the A5074. There is parking near the bay on the road that runs along The Glebe.
By bicycle: Bowness Bay is on Route 6.
By public transport: Buses run from Windermere to Bowness.



Red wing. Photo: Margaret Holland



Fieldfare. Photo: Margaret Holland

③ Cogra Moss
Forestry Commission

Cogra Moss was created in 1880 as a reservoir and is now used by anglers. Flocks of redwings arrive in autumn to take advantage the berries that are abundant here. They escape the harsh winters in Europe to enjoy our milder British winter where they can still hunt for worms in the ground. Redwings are often seen alongside flocks of fieldfares.

Where is it?

By car: From the A5086 between Cockermouth and Egremont, turn east at Lamplugh and follow signs for Ennerdale. Drive past the two caravan sites and park in the car park at the north end of Felldyke.

By bicycle: Cogra Moss is on Route 71 (C2C).

By public transport: Buses run from Cockermouth and Egremont and drop off at St Michaels Church in Lamplugh.

④ Whitbarrow - Hervey Memorial Reserve
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

With stunning views of the Cumbrian fells and Morecambe Bay, this is a great place to walk and explore at any time of year. In autumn flocks of fieldfare arrive to strip hawthorn bushes of their berries. Often seen with redwings they form large flocks - and can be quite a spectacle.

Where is it?

By car: From the A590 take the road signposted for Witherslack. Follow this through the village and then for a further 2km north until you reach Witherslack Hall. Turn right onto the rough track to park. Follow the footpath across the field and up the scar to the reserve.

By bicycle: The reserve is 2 miles from Regional Route 70 (W2W).

By public transport: Buses run from Barrow in Furness, Ulverston and Kendal to Witherslack.



Curlew. Photo: Gillian Day



Brent geese. Photo: Derek Moore

⑤ Humphrey Head Nature Reserve
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Curlews don't migrate in the traditional sense, they spend the summers in our uplands where they raise their chicks, coming down to the coast for the winter. Its long curving beak distinguishes it from other wading birds. Humphrey Head is a great spot to watch birds in Morecambe Bay. Aim to arrive at high tide when birds roost on the saltmarsh.

Where is it?

By car: Follow the road towards the Head. Pass the farm and continue until a track with a public bridleway (part of Cumbria Coastal Way) leads off left. Park here. The reserve is reached by walking up the drive of the field centre and bearing right.

By bicycle: The reserve is 2 miles from Route 700.

By public transport: Buses run from Grange-over-Sands to Allithwaite

⑥ South Walney Nature Reserve
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Brent geese are birds of estuaries and saltmarshes and can be seen in Morecambe Bay from October to March having spent the spring and summer in the Arctic. They are small dark geese, about the size of a mallard, with a patch of white on their necks. Brent geese fly in loose flocks along the coast.

Where is it?

By car: From Barrow-in-Furness follow signs for Walney Island. Cross Jubilee Bridge onto the Island and follow brown signs turning left at the traffic lights, follow this road for about 1km/0.6 miles then turn left down Carr Lane. Continue on this road past Biggar Village. The reserve is 1km beyond the South End Caravan Site.

By bicycle: The reserve is 3 miles from National Route 70 (W2W).

By public transport: Buses run from Barrow-in-Furness to Biggar.



Brambling. Photo: Harry Hog



Starling. Photo: Margaret Holland

7 Thacka Beck Nature Reserve
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Hay meadows, wet grassland, scrub, hedges, ponds and the beck provide homes for a wealth of wildlife at Thacka Beck. Although small in size, the nature reserve has a remarkable number of birds. Many birds looking for autumn berries can be spotted here - look out for brambling in flocks of other finches such as chaffinches.

Where is it?

The nature reserve is within easy walking distance from Penrith town centre. Take the footpath that leads through the underpass on the corner of Lark Lane and Mallard Close, or enter directly from Thacka Lane, immediately after going under the railway bridge. The nature reserve can also be accessed from Cowper Road or Bowerbank Way in the Gilwilly Industrial Estate.
By bicycle: The reserve is 0.5 miles from National Route 7 (C2C).



Pink-footed goose. Photo: Margaret Holland

9 Wedholme Flow
Natural England

Part of the South Solway Mosses Natural Nature Reserve, Wedholme Flow is a peat bog previously cut for peat and now restored for wildlife by Natural England. Pink-footed geese arrive here in October to escape the cold of spitsbergen, Iceland and Greenland and spend the winter on our estuaries, going inland to farmland to feed. They can be identified by their pinkish grey plumage, pink bill and pink feet.

Where is it?

By car: From Wigton head north to Kirkbride, after 3 miles look out for the nature reserve car park.
By bicycle: The reserve is located 2 miles from Route 72.
By public transport: Trains run from Carlisle to Wigton

8 Vickerstown, Walney Island

Although resident all-year-round, migrant starlings arrive in the UK in autumn and join existing flocks to roost together for warmth. Often at dusk, just before roosting, vast numbers of starlings can be seen swooping in unison, creating what is known as a murmuration. They can be seen all over the UK and Vickerstown on Walney Island is a great place to sit and watch this amazing spectacle.

Where is it?

By car: From Barrow-in-Furness head west on the A590 crossing the bridge on to the A590. At the traffic lights turn left to Vickerstown.
By bicycle: The reserve is 1 mile from Route 70 (W2W).
By public transport: Buses run from Barrow-in-Furness to Vickerstown.



Purple sandpipers. Photo: Harry Hog

10 Workington Harbour

Purple sandpipers arrive from the Arctic in the autumn and head for the rocky coasts of Scotland but can also be found around piers and groynes. They only show a very subtle sheen on purple on their dark grey backs but can be distinguished from a dunlin by its bright yellow legs. Look out for them in Workington Harbour where they hunt for winkles and mussels.

Where is it?

By car: From Workington and turn east just north of the train station along the south side of the harbour. There is parking at Town Quay, or drive out to the furthest easterly point where there is also parking.
By bicycle: The harbour lies on National Route 71 (C2C).
By public transport: It is 1 mile from Workington Train Station to the end of the harbour.