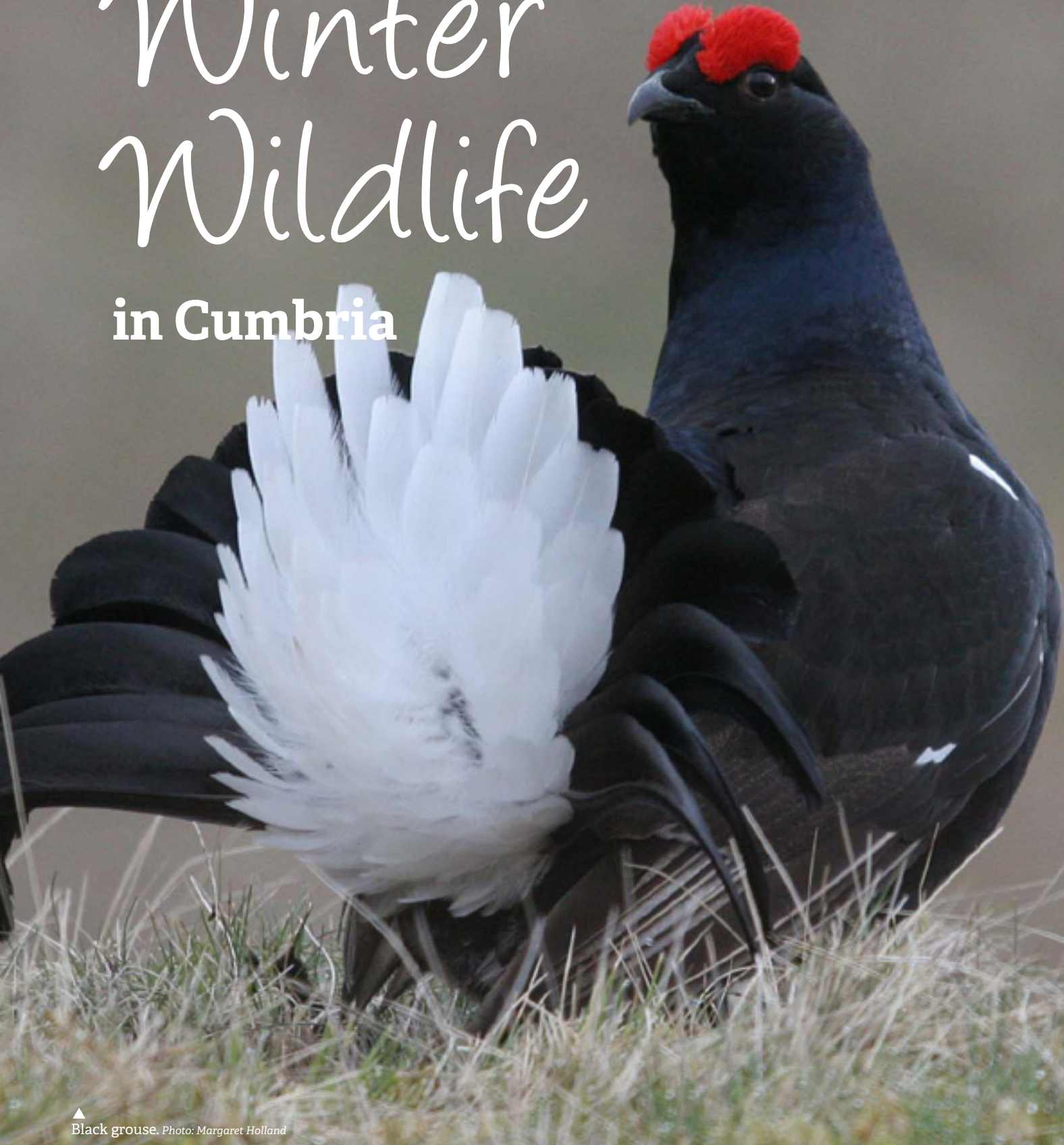


Great places to see  
Winter  
Wildlife  
in Cumbria



▲ Black grouse. Photo: Margaret Holland

# Great places to see winter wildlife in Cumbria

Winter is a time for rest and recovery for much of our wildlife but if you look carefully there is still plenty to enjoy. Look out for migratory birds which specialise in finding food during our mild winters. Winter is also a chance to enjoy the form of deciduous trees and the squirrels that hide in them.

Our guide to **Great Places to see Winter Wildlife** in Cumbria features hills, valleys, woodland and the coast - your choice depending on the weather!

[www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk)  
Registered Charity No. 724133



Cladonia Lichen. Photo: Philip Precey

## ① Borrowdale National Trust

The Atlantic oakwoods of Borrowdale are one of the most important habitats in Europe for mosses, liverworts and lichens, especially old forest species. As a result of their rarity and diversity, all of the Borrowdale rainforest is protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

### Where is it?

*By car:* From Keswick head south on the B5289 (the Borrowdale Road), continuing down the side of the lake and beyond. Park at Grange.

*By bicycle:* From cycle routes at Keswick head south on the B5289 (the Borrowdale Road), continuing down the side of the lake and beyond until you reach Grange.

*By public transport:* Buses run from Keswick to Grange Bridge but the service is reduced during the winter months.



Exmoor ponies. Photo: Florence Acland

## ② Drumburgh Moss Nature Reserve Cumbria Wildlife Trust

The vast expanse of Drumburgh Moss gives a great winter wilderness experience. Our beautiful Exmoor ponies can be seen grazing the wet heath and deer venture onto the bog from the surrounding woodland to browse. The viewing platform offers great views over the bog and beyond. If you're lucky you may spot a hen harrier or short-eared owl hunting low over the moss.

### Where is it?

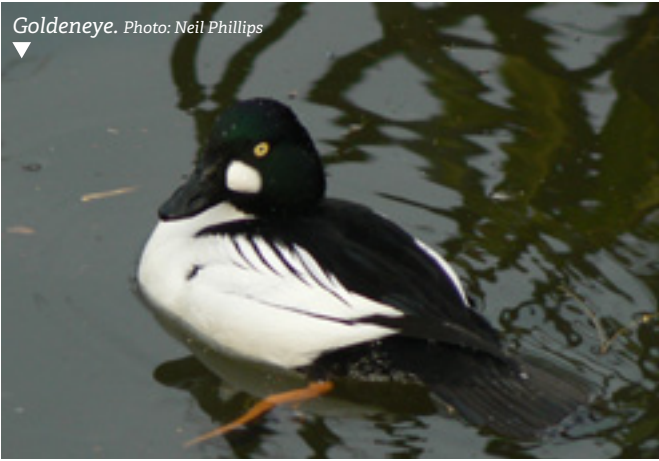
*By car:* From Carlisle head north west on the Burgh Road, passing through Burgh until you reach Drumburgh. Turn left in the village at the post office. Follow the track for 400m and park just beyond Moss Cottage.

*By bicycle:* The reserve is 400m from National Route 72 Hadrian's Cycleway.

*By public transport:* Buses run from Carlisle to Drumburgh village.



Goldeneye. Photo: Neil Phillips



③ **Eskmeals Dunes Nature Reserve**  
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Nothing beats a windswept winter walk in the dunes with the low sun over the sea. Eskmeals Dunes' sheltered estuary attracts many wintering birds including curlew, oystercatcher, widgeon and goldeneye. **Please ring in advance to check access times with the gun range – 01229 710022.**

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From the A595 at Waberthwaite, turn left through the village and continue for 1.5 miles. Under the viaduct the road swings left, park here on the left. **May not be passable at high tide.**  
*By bicycle:* The reserve is close to National Route 72 (Hadrian's Cycleway).  
*By public transport:* Trains run from Whitehaven and Millom to Ravenglass and Bootle.

Black grouse. Photo: Margaret Holland



④ **Geltsdale Nature Reserve**  
RSPB

Set in the beautiful North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Geltsdale is home to black grouse and birds of prey and is ideal for walking. At Geltsdale, black grouse can be seen in autumn, winter and early spring.

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From Brampton head east to the A69, turn right on to A69 and not long after turn left towards Milton. Continue through Milton and the nature reserve is a further mile.  
*By bicycle:* The reserve is 5 miles from National Route 72 (Hadrian's Cycleway).  
*By public transport:* Buses run from Carlisle to Hallbankgate.

Whooper swans at Siddick Ponds.



⑤ **Siddick Ponds**  
Allerdale Borough Council

Siddick Ponds is one of Cumbria's most important bird sites. Over-wintering birds include teal, goldeneye, pochard, tufted duck, shoveler and occasional parties of whooper swan. The nature reserve is undoubtedly the best location in Cumbria to see the secretive bittern.

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From the A596 between Workington and Siddick, park in the Dunmail Park (Asda) car park. Head for the old mineral railway embankment (now a cyclepath) to the right of Edgar's car showrooms.  
*By bicycle:* Siddick Ponds is on National Route 72 (Hadrian's Cycleway).  
*By public transport:* Buses run regularly from Workington to Dunmail Park.

Dipper. Photo: Stefan Johansson



⑥ **Smardale Gill Nature Reserve**  
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

With more snowy days than its more westerly counterparts, Smardale Gill is an amazing winter wonderland when the landscape is picked out by lying snow. Look for dipper in the beck, buzzard, green woodpecker and winter tit flocks in the woods. Abundant fruit and berries always make for a great winter wildlife spectacle.

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From the A685, 1 mile south of Kirkby Stephen, take the turning for Smardale. Cross over the railway and turn left at the junction. Ignore the sign for Smardale and cross the disused railway. Turn left and left again for the car park.  
*By bicycle:* The reserve is 3 miles from National Route 70 (Walney to Wear).  
*By public transport:* Buses run from Kendal, Sedbergh and Brough to Kirkby Stephen.



**7 Solway Coast**  
AONB

The Solway Coast stretches from Rockcliffe in the North to Maryport in the South and is a great area to see winter migrants. Look out for ducks and waders such as barnacle and pink-footed geese which come to enjoy our mild winters. The entire Svalbard population of around 26,000 barnacle geese travel to the Solway Coast along with pink-footed geese which leave their breeding grounds in Spitsbergen, Iceland and Greenland to feed on the creatures in the muddy estuary.

**Where is it?**

For more information about spotting wildlife on the Solway Coast visit the Solway Coast Discovery Centre on Liddell Street, Silloth-on-Solway, Cumbria CA7 4DD.



**9 Whinlatter**  
Forestry Commission

Wrap up your small children or grandchildren and take them to Whinlatter to walk the Squirrel Scurry trail. Buy a map from the visitor centre to start your journey and follow Teasel the Red Squirrel around the trail to learn more about Whinlatter's red squirrels. Look out for real thing at the squirrel feeding stations.

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From Keswick, head west on the A66 and turn left at Braitwaite onto B5292. Drive for 2.5 miles to reach Whinlatter.  
*By bicycle:* The forest is located 2.5 miles from National Route 71.  
*By public transport:* Buses run from Keswick to Whinlatter every hour.



**8 South Walney Nature Reserve**  
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

In winter, the salt marshes and mud flats of Morecambe Bay attract thousands of migratory birds, and South Walney is the perfect place to see them. Look for great flocks of oystercatcher, redshank, dunlin and knot roosting at high tide or wheeling around in the low sunlight. Grey seals haul out on the spit and can be seen playing in the Walney Channel.

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From Jubille Bridge in Barrow follow the brown signs turning left at the traffic lights. Follow this road for 0.5 miles and turn left onto Carr Lane. Pass Biggar Village and follow the road to the South End Caravan Site. Follow the road for a further 0.5 miles.  
*By bicycle:* The reserve is 3 miles from National Route 72 (Walney to Wear).



**10 Whitbarrow - Hervey Memorial Reserve**  
Cumbria Wildlife Trust

From the summit at Lord's Seat the majestic central Lakeland fells rise to the north, while the often sun-kissed expanse of Morecambe Bay spreads out to the south. When the sun hits the Whitbarrow massif in the winter, the white trunks of thousands of birch trees are caught in the light. Look for huge flocks of redwing and fieldfare when the yew berries are ripe.

**Where is it?**

*By car:* From A590 near Kendal, take the road signed for Witherslack. Go through the village, past the school and continue for 1 mile. Park where a footpath leaves the road on the right-hand side. Follow this path for half a mile to reach the nature reserve.  
*By bicycle:* The reserve is 3 miles from the National Route 72.  
*By public transport:* Buses run from Barrow, Ulverston and Kendal to Witherslack