

HAPPY RETURN BIRDS

Of all the various aspects of nature photography we are involved with, it has been bird photography which has always been my own driving passion. Leading groups to photograph orchids, insects, fungi and woodlands etc often depends upon the time of year and locations, but bird photography depends largely upon opportunities. At the Happy Return we have been creating such opportunities by baiting birds in winter for over 26 years and have built up a considerable following of avian visitors. We can regularly expect up to 50 species to be available for photography during the course of a winter. Some are totally reliable including such birds as bullfinch, coal tit, goldfinch, great-spotted woodpecker, jay, long-tailed tit, marsh tit, nuthatch, pheasant, moorhen, siskin, treecreeper and yellowhammer. Others, although pretty much guaranteed, require a more specific approach and include buzzard, fieldfare, green woodpecker, pied and grey wagtails, tawny owl and redwing. More unusual species which have been photographed over the last couple of winters at the Happy Return have included brambling, kingfisher, meadow pipit, redpoll, snipe, sparrowhawk and water rail. While it is not possible to actually guarantee any specific species the range of wild birds available here during winter months is always plentiful.

The permanent hides have been set up here specifically for bird photography. In addition, we can erect temporary hides to cover any particular behaviour we notice during the winter. For example, this would include such behaviour as feeding on apples or certain seedheads, or during spells of cold weather which can bring more unusual species to our streams and ponds.

The hides are available at the rate of £15 per hour per person, with Colin on hand to arrange for perches, baits and any temporary hide requirements. We can accommodate individuals or groups of up to six persons. Booking in advance is essential and we would require a non-returnable deposit of £20 per session.

Please check with us in advance by phoning Colin or Susy on 01308 488341 or by e-mail to thehappyreturn@hotmail.com