

FAMILY WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

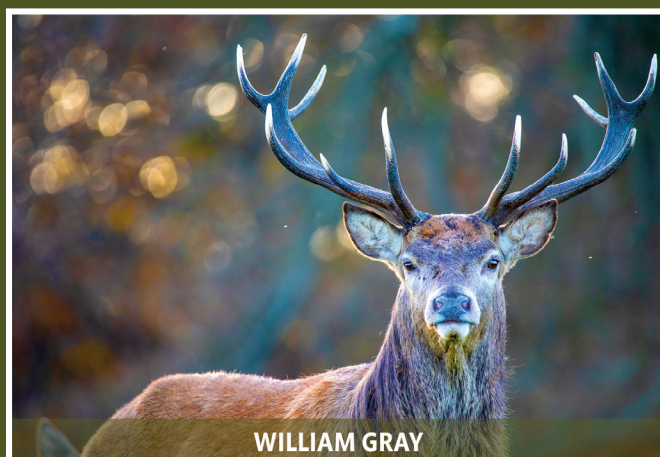
50 BREAKS IN SEARCH OF BRITAIN'S WILDLIFE BY WILLIAM GRAY

- The first dedicated guide to wildlife adventures in Britain *for families*
- A mixture of inspiration and information – full colour throughout
- Supported by a full PR and digital marketing campaign

Connecting with nature. Back to the real world. That's what this book is all about. From island-hopping in the Isles of Scilly to wild camping along Scotland's Whale Route, *Family Wildlife Adventures* is full of inspiration for exploring Britain's amazing wildlife with your children.

Family travel expert William Gray has your weekends and school holidays sorted with exciting ideas for adventures by canoe, bike, campervan, boat and more. From time travel along Dorset's Jurassic Coast to canoe-camping in the Norfolk Broads or sea kayaking in the Hebrides, you'll find 60 adventures in this book guaranteed to fuel any child's love of wildlife and adventure.

Some of them might reward you with sightings of puffins, otters, eagles or seals. Others may reveal small wonders, like dragonflies, blennies and lizards. But no matter which adventure you choose, you and your family will be transported to one of Britain's special wild places. Armed with all the practical information you need to plan a fun and safe day out, week or weekend away, this Bradt guide has something for all families keen to discover the natural wonders of Britain – and have unforgettable adventures along the way.



WILLIAM GRAY

FAMILY WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

50 BREAKS IN SEARCH OF BRITAIN'S WILDLIFE



Bradt GUIDES

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FAMILY WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

24 SEAL PUP SPOTTING

TAKE A BOAT TRIP OUT TO BLAKENEY POINT, HOME TO ENGLAND'S LARGEST BREEDING GREY SEAL COLONY

WHERE Blakeney Point, North Norfolk Coast

WHEN Boat trips operate daily Apr-Oct, plus regular departures throughout winter; grey seals pup Nov-Dec; harbour seals pup Jan-Apr; Boat trips last roughly an hour

HOW LONG All ages; a gentle adventure in small, open boats

ADVENTURE POTENTIAL Boat trips, beach walks, birdwatching

WILDLIFE WISHLIST Grey & harbour (common) seal, summer terns (Arctic, sandwich, common & little), oystercatcher, ringed plover, winter wildfowl (brent goose, teal, pintail & widgeon)

With their large, round eyes, soft fur and helpless expressions, few animals are more appealing to children than grey seal pups. They'll love you for taking them to see dozens of the endearing little fur-balls at Blakeney Point – the largest breeding grey seal colony in England. Open boats chug out to the end of the three-mile spit of sand and shingle from Morston Quay. The seals see

you coming. Naturally inquisitive, one or two will almost certainly surface near your boat, long before you reach the main haul-out and realise that the beach is littered with sausage-shaped bundles of fluff and blubber. Look closely and, depending on the time of year, you'll see cream-coloured pups lying among the darker, speckled adults.

Grey seals didn't start breeding here until the late 1980s, but now over 3,000 pups are born each winter. What's so special about Blakeney Point? Conservationists believe it gets a seal of approval due to its remote location and the sheltered, gently sloping beach (on rocky shores, seal pups are easily washed away in storms).

It's not only grey seals that breed here. Harbour (or common) seals give birth during summer. At any time of year, you can see both species and the best way to tell them apart is by peering at their noses – grey seal nostrils are like parallel lines, while harbour seals have V-shaped nostrils and more rounded faces.

Blakeney Point is also an internationally important nesting site for four species of tern – Arctic, common, little and sandwich. Spot them hovering over the sea, diving on small fish, then flying back to feed their partners or chicks at the shallow scrapes they've excavated in the shingle bank. Other summer nesting birds include oystercatchers and ringed plovers, while October sees the arrival of winter visitors like brent geese.

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SEAL PUP SPOTTING | CHAPTER 24
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ACTION PLAN

Getting there

Blakeney Point is part of the Blakeney National Nature Reserve managed by the National Trust (nationaltrust.org.uk) and is accessed by boat trips from Morston Quay (GCN25 7841, off the A149 Clemer to Hunstanton road). The Coast Hopper bus stops in Morston village; a 5-minute walk to the quay.

Boat trips

It is not possible to walk to see the seals at Blakeney Point. Boat trips are available with Beavis Boats (01263.740505) & beavisboats.co.uk, Bishopp's Boats (01263.740753) & bishopsboats.co.uk, Plumridge Seal Trips (01263.740792) & blakeneypointsealtrips.co.uk and Temples Seal Trips (01263.740791) & whelp.co.uk. Lasting around an hour, some trips spend an additional 30-60 minutes landing on Blakeney Point where you can walk to bird hides and the old lifeboat station.

What to take

Most trips operate in traditional clinker-built boats with little protection from the elements, so remember to take warm, weatherproof clothing. Although you'll get close to the seals, don't forget binoculars for birdwatching.

More adventure

Both the Norfolk Coast Path and cycle route NCN20 run along this section of coast, so you could include a seal watching trip in a cycling or walking weekend. Alternatively, make it part of a Norfolk wildlife odyssey, touring nearby nature reserves like Cley Marshes and Holmeau. About an hour's drive southeast along the coast, Herringfleet hosts another large colony of grey seals. Be sure to remain behind the roped-off path in the dunes to avoid disturbing the seals on the beach below – and keep dogs on short leads.

Also consider

Isles of Scilly See *Island Hopping Scilly*, page xxx

Farne Islands See *Puffins and Seal Spotting*, page xxx

Orkney Islands See *Orkney Wildlife Adventure*, page xxx

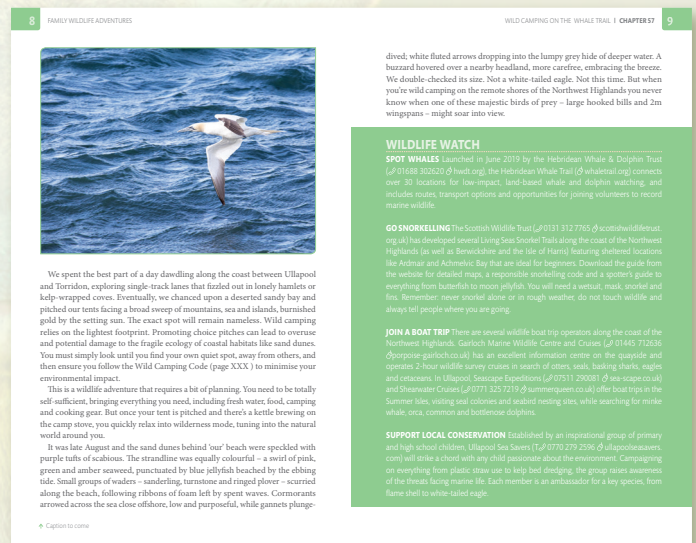
If you find a seal on the beach...

Do not approach – seals can give a nasty bite (or you could scare it back into the sea). If the pup looks healthy (fat and with no visible ticks), monitor it from a safe distance for 24 hours – seal pups are weaned at three to four weeks old and may not have been abandoned. If you think the pup is injured or distressed, contact the RSPCA (0300.1234.567) or Norfolk's Seal and Shore Watch (07498.557448).

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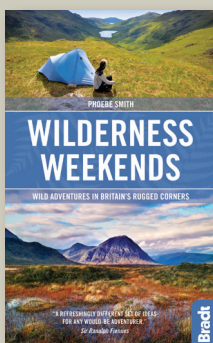
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- Main adventure
chapter: 6-8 pages
- Mini adventure
chapter: 4 pages

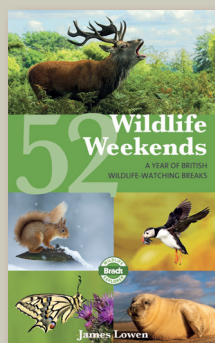


A zoologist, conservationist and award-winning journalist and photographer, William Gray has 30 years' experience writing features for newspapers and magazines. He's also the author of several guidebooks to wildlife and family travel. After devoting countless weekends and school holidays to travelling the length and breadth of Britain with his twin children in search of nature and wild places, *Family Wildlife Adventures* is the result. Will's message is simple: "More than ever, we need to nurture and encourage our children's instinctive empathy and enthusiasm for nature – and what better way to inspire the next generation of conservationists than by filling their childhood with adventures in search of wildlife."

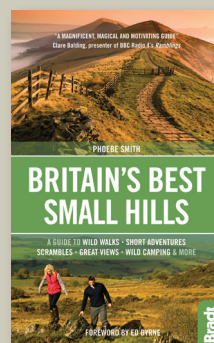
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