

BIRDS BY BUS

Whether you're an avid birder or a novice wanting to see what you can spot, the Isle of Wight is one of the best places in the country to spend some time bird watching. This leaflet helps you find some of our favourite bird watching locations that are easy to get to by bus, though there are many more to discover.

You'll find there are things to see whatever time of year it is. In summer there are an assortment of resident birds and summer visitors. In winter there are lots of overwintering birds. In spring and autumn you can catch a vast array of migrants passing through on their way to and from their summer nesting sites.

So grab your bird book, binoculars and bus-pass and get exploring!



Image © Southern Vectis

All the sites listed in this leaflet are free to access!

Disclaimer: All information is believed to be correct at the time of going to print, however we strongly recommend you check details of bus times, routes and attraction opening times before travelling.

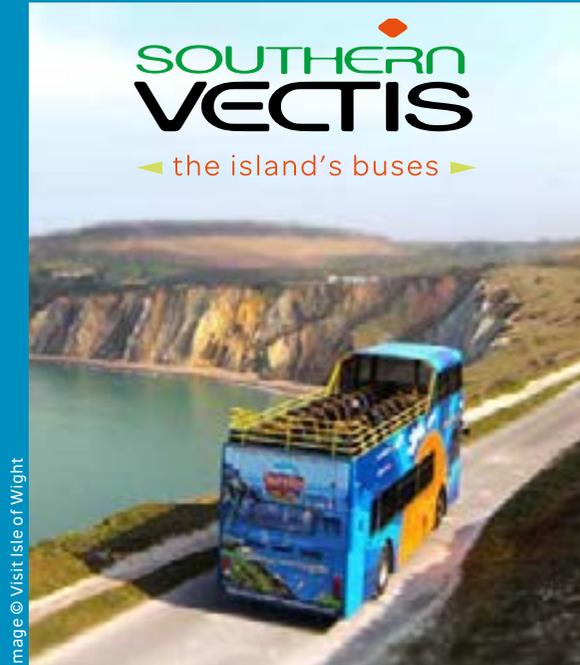


Image © Visit Isle of Wight

Southern Vectis run the local buses on the Isle of Wight with frequent services between the main towns and many of the villages around the Island.

For occasional travel you can buy single tickets onboard, but many visitors find the 24 and 48 hour Rover or seven day Freedom tickets are a better bet, offering unlimited travel for one price. You can buy them on any bus or from the Newport Travel Shop.

During the summer months additional services run in popular locations, including three open-top buses and the Island Coaster route which runs round the coast from Ryde to Yarmouth.

For full timetable information, latest travel information and details of current fares visit www.islandbuses.info or scan the QR code with your smartphone.



BEST BY BUS BIRDS BY BUS



Image © Carol Flux

A guide to some of the best places to see wild birds on the Isle of Wight



WESTERN YAR (INC. AFTON)



Routes: 7, Needles Breezer, Island Coaster
Stop: Yarmouth Bus Station



Other travel options: Wightlink ferry from Lymington



The Western Yar is one of the Island's two river Yars (we do it to confuse you!). It flows between Freshwater Bay and Yarmouth and is only about three miles long. Around sixty per cent of its length is tidal estuary; this makes for excellent feeding opportunities for wading birds in particular. There are many excellent places to see birds along the estuary, with the old railway line on the east side providing easy access for wheeled users. With the footpath on the west side this creates a circular walk with views over the estuary.

Species you are likely to spot on the estuary include: Curlew, Oystercatcher, Turnstone, Kingfisher, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Wigeon, Brent Goose and Redshank.

Follow the course of the river towards its source, along a bridleway from Freshwater causeway then cross Afton Road to enter Afton Marsh Local Nature Reserve. This Gift to Nature reserve has several types of wetland habitat and supports a variety of wildlife. Local woods support a wide range of birds.

Species you are likely to spot at Afton Marsh include: Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Cuckoo, Song Thrush, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, Long-Tailed Tit and Green Woodpecker.



We like the roaring fire at the Red Lion Pub on the causeway.

ST CATHERINE'S POINT (NITON)



Route: 6
Stop: Buddle Inn (not all services call here, please check timetable)

or

Routes: 6, Island Coaster
Stop: Church Street/ Rectory Road



Walk from stop: Ten minutes

Walk from stop: Twenty-five minutes



At the southern extremity of the Isle of Wight you'll find one of the best places in Britain to see migrating birds on their way to their summer breeding grounds. When the wind is blowing from the east or south the birds will often stop to feed here before continuing their journey. As well as the migrants various resident birds can be seen, including Fulmar, Kestrel and Peregrine.

Species you are likely to spot include: Whitethroat, Wimbrel, Kittiwake, Common Scoter, Bar-Tailed Godwit, Skua, Tern, various diver species, various shearwater species, Wheatear, Whinchat, Yellow Wagtail, Peregrine and Raven.



We like St Catherine's Lighthouse tours check website for dates and times.
www.trinityhouse.co.uk/lighthouses/lighthouse_list/st_catherines.html

OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

- The Island's rural south-west coast is very varied, from chalk cliffs to chines providing a wide range of habitats for birds. Bus: Island Coaster, 7, 6.
- St Helens Duver has sand dunes, beach, tidal harbour and former mill pond providing a range of habitats. Bus: 8.

Better by bus

Hopping on a bus is a great way to see the Isle of Wight, whether you're popping over as a foot passenger on one of the fast-ferries, looking for a car-free holiday or just fancy leaving the car behind for a relaxed day out. You can get to some great places and see plenty on the way, with some of the best views you'll find from the top deck of a bus.

Get on board

Bus stops are located outside ferry terminals at Yarmouth, Cowes, East Cowes and Ryde Hoverport. From Fishbourne there is a ten minute walk to the nearest stop. If you arrive at Ryde Pier Head you can either stroll down the pier or catch the train to the bus station. Wightlink, Red Funnel and Hovertravel sell combined ferry and bus tickets from their mainland ticket offices. Pick up a bus timetable from Yarmouth, Newport or Ryde bus stations or download one at islandbuses.info

Extra summer services

During the summer Southern Vectis runs a number of visitor-focused extra services; three open-top buses - Downs Breezer, Shanklin Steamer and Needles Breezer plus the Island Coaster bus which runs along most of the Island's coasts. Check timetables for the dates these services run.

Try the train

Some destinations in the leaflet are accessible by train, look out for the train icon.

Visitor information

Visit visitisleofwight.co.uk 01983 813813 or drop into the Visitor Information Centre, Guildhall, Newport.

This leaflet is one of a series, look out for **Beaches by Bus**, **Beasts by Bus** and **Beauty by Bus**. They have been produced by Natural Enterprise to help you explore the Island by sustainable means. Find out more at naturenterprise.co.uk.

MEDINA ESTUARY



Route: 1 (For Dodnor Creek local nature reserve)
Stop: Stag Inn (Walk down Stag Lane and turn right onto cycle path)



Walk from stop: Fifteen minutes
 Alternatively from Newport Bus station it is a ten minute walk to Newport Quay, from where you can walk up either side of the Medina Estuary

The Medina Estuary is such an important area for nature conservation that it is protected by six different designations under national and international law. It is particularly recognised for its importance for birds, with its large areas of mudflats providing vital feeding grounds for a variety of species.

A cycleway provides access along the west bank of the estuary, while a cycleway also runs along the east side from Newport to Island Harbour and then a footpath continues to the Folly Inn (north of this the footpath turns inland).

Dodnor Creek Local Nature Reserve provides an opportunity to see birds in a wide range of habitats close together. From the cycle track bridge you can enjoy good views of the old mill pond and the Medina Estuary. Following the path under the bridge into the site will take you through fen and scrub into an area of woodland and a pond. There is a path along the bank of the estuary between Dodnor Creek and Medina Riverside Park, both nature reserves on the estuary which are managed by Gift to Nature.



Image © Marie Hale

We like watching oystercatchers on the boat pontoons!

Species you are likely to spot include: Oystercatcher, Curlew, Little Egret, Heron, Cormorant, Moorhen, Swan, Robin, Various Tits, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Coot, Little Grebe, Water Rail, Reed Warbler, Reed Bunting and various gulls, perhaps even a Barn Owl if you visit in the evening.

RYDE SANDS



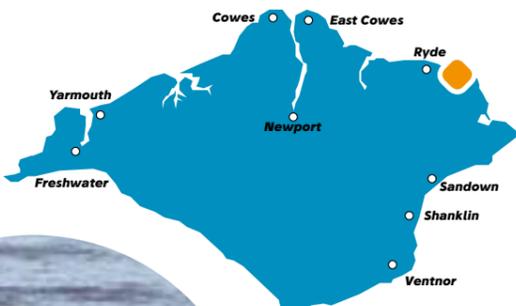
Routes: 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 37
Stop: Ryde Bus Station



Walk from stop: Two minutes



Other travel options: Island Line (Ryde Esplanade Station), Hovertravel (Hovercraft from Southsea), Wightlink Fastcat (high speed passenger ferry from Portsmouth)



Ryde Sands is an incredibly important site for overwintering birds. It's well worth taking the time to walk along the beach as the birds you are likely to see vary as you move between different habitats along the beach. The area around Ryde pier provides something of a hot-spot for bird activity, with rich feeding grounds under and around the pier itself.

Ryde is a particularly good place to see Sanderling, often found in large groups near the seafront café next to the boating lake. They run about like clockwork toys at the edge of the water and when the tide is in can be easily seen from the esplanade. Sanderling are sensitive to disturbance so please don't get too close.

With an esplanade walkway running from just west of Ryde Pier all the way to Puckpool this must be one of the most accessible spots you will find to view such a great range of birds. The bus station is at the foot of the pier so you can be spotting birds almost as soon as you step off the bus.

There are toilets and cafés along the esplanade and the main shopping street runs up the hill from the bus station with a wide range of pubs, cafés and restaurants giving you the chance to recharge and warm up.

Species you are likely to spot include: Brent Goose, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Mediterranean Gull, Sanderling, Curlew, Dunlin, Bar-Tailed Godwit and Redshank.



We like watching the birds watch the hovercraft – they are not fazed in the least!

HERSEY NATURE RESERVE



Route: 8
Stop: Ryde Road (Seaview)



Walk from stop: Ten minutes



Image © Martin Gibson

Just along from Ryde Sands this is a great place to visit on its own or along with a trip to Ryde. Lying between Puckpool Park and the seaside village of Seaview, the reserve has a circular walking route through it, a viewing hide and an open-air viewing area. It was created when new sea defences were installed and quickly became one of the best places to spot water birds. The site consists of a small lake with surrounding marshland and reedbeds and supports a diverse range of birds and other wildlife.

Seaview has a range of places to eat, or in the other direction there is a pub next to Puckpool Park and two cafés inside the park. You'll also find public toilets at Puckpool.

The closest bus stop is in Seaview but as an alternative you can take any bus to Ryde bus station and then walk for two miles along the seafront, taking in the bird life along Ryde Sands on the way.

Species you are likely to spot include: Tufted Duck, Little Grebe, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Oystercatcher, Kingfisher, Greenshank, Teal, Water Rail, Common Sandpiper, Mediterranean Gull, Shelduck, Swallow, martins, Reed Warbler and Sedge Warbler.

We like finishing the day with a local ale at Seaview – overlooking the Solent.

BRADING MARSHES



Routes: 2, 3, Downs Breezer
Stop: Bull Ring (Brading)



Walk from stop: Ten minutes



Other travel options: Island Line (Brading Station)



Acquired in 2001 by the RSPB, Brading Marshes is their only reserve on the Island. This area was once a harbour, but over the centuries the land has been reclaimed, with the coming of the railway in the 1880s completing the enclosure of the estuary. Since taking over the site the RSPB have worked to reverse the drainage of much of this area, creating improved habitat for birds again. Lapwings visit in large numbers during the winter with some staying to breed in the summer. If you're lucky you might spot an overwintering Bittern, one of the UK's most threatened birds.

Brading Station acts as a gateway to the reserve with information leaflets available, there is also a heritage centre open during the summer. Access to the reserve is a short walk from the station. A number of public footpaths cross the site and the former Bembridge Branch Line, now a footpath and cycle track, provides some good vantage points.

Species you are likely to spot include: Meadow Pippit, Teal, Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Shoveler, Wigeon, Curlew, Black Tailed Godwit, Coot, Moorhen, Swan, Canada Goose, Cetti's Warbler, Sedge Warbler and Buzzard.



We like stopping for a cup of tea in Brading Station Heritage Centre.

VENTNOR DOWNS



Route: 3
Stop: York Road

Routes: 3, Island Coaster
Stop: Bonchurch Car Park



Walk from stop: Twenty to Thirty minutes

Walk from stop: Twenty minutes



The downs above Ventnor provide a great vantage point for viewing migrating birds but also for watching birds of prey. As well as being a great spot for birds the downs have some fabulous views across the Island and over Ventnor to the English Channel. Ventnor Downs also played a key role in the Battle of Britain with its radar station providing essential early warning of enemy aircraft attack. You can still see parts of the radar station on top of the hill.

You can access Ventnor Downs from Upper Ventnor (York Road Stop) and walking up Down Lane, or from Bonchurch – follow the path up the hill opposite the car park. Either route will involve a steep climb but you stand a good chance of seeing birds along most of the walk and the views at the top will reward your efforts! The route from Upper Ventnor is on a surfaced access road, from Bonchurch on grass paths.

Species you are likely to spot include: Hobby, Flycatchers, Buzzard, Peregrine, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Ring Ouzel, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Redstart, Wheatear, Swallow, Swift, Stonechat, martins, Willow Warbler and Whitethroat.



We like the stunning 360-degree views of the Island's countryside.