

Wildlife on the Canals

A canal boat holiday is an excellent way of getting a little bit closer to nature. Gliding gently along the UK's canal network you'll be treated to some spectacular encounters with some of Britain's best loved wildlife.

Fortunately canal towpaths have been relatively unscathed by farming and urban development, and so they remain an ideal habitat for flora and fauna to thrive. On your canal boat holiday you will be in a privileged position to drift past unspoilt landscapes full of wild treasures.

By travelling at a speed that is little more than walking pace, you become ideally placed to get a good look at wildlife you would otherwise miss, rushing past at life's usual frenetic pace. Sitting on the deck of your canal boat you will even find that some wildlife will come to you. British bats flying low over the water catching small insects in the early evening are just one of the natural delights that canal boaters enjoy.

During the day you will most likely see moorhens and coots nesting in the open. Dozens of species of wildflowers now lost to other areas of countryside still grace the sides of many canal banks. You might even be lucky enough to spot buzzards and other birds of prey swooping over farmland.

Sounds of the canals

The quieter pace of life on your canal boat holiday also means you can enjoy the many sights and sounds of the British countryside with little interruption. Relax and drink in the sound of owls hooting at dusk, the call of wild foxes and the gentle splashes of fish and frogs as they play in the water around you.

Wildlife equipment for canal boat holidays

To help with spotting wildlife on your canal boat holiday there are a few small items which are definitely worth packing.

- 1.** A set of binoculars gets you up close and personal to some of the shyer wildlife without disturbing them.
- 2.** A wildlife book comes in handy for settling disputes over the latest wildlife spot. (Essential for keeping the peace on your canal boat holiday).
- 3.** A small fishing net (similar to ones used for rock pooling) can help you get a closer look at some of the canals amphibian inhabitants.
- 4.** A notebook for keeping a record of what you've spotted and where, along with sketches. Useful for comparing wildlife spots on future canal boat holidays and to share your memories with friends.
- 5.** A camera to capture and remember really wild moment.

Common canal creatures

Canals are teeming with all sorts of life. Some of the more common wildlife to keep an eye out for during your canal boat holiday include:

Birds:

Swans, ducks, moorhens, coots, kingfishers, grebes, geese. Whilst passing by farmland you may also be lucky enough to see some of Britain's many birds of prey. Watch for buzzards, kestrels and sparrow hawks

Insects:

Dragonflies, butterflies, mayflies and damselflies.

Mammals:

Foxes, badgers, squirrels, rabbits, water voles, bats.

Amphibians:

Frogs, toads, newts.

Reptiles:

Grass snakes and terrapins. Though not native to Britain, terrapins have made their home in canals across the country after being discarded as pets. Experience all these creatures and doubtless many others on your canal boat holiday with us.