Top things to do

**Spring/summer**
A busy time for nature and a great time for you to explore.

1. Experience the hustle and bustle of Rathlin’s seabird city as thousands of birds raise their chicks precariously on the cliff edges at the West Light Seabird Centre.
2. Enjoy a picnic at Knockans viewpoint – on a good day you can see all the way to Donegal!
3. Look out for beautiful wildflowers, including heath spotted-orchids, along the Roonivoolin trail.
4. Watch seals basking at Church Bay and Mill Bay.
5. Scan the sky for buzzards, peregrines and ravens. Listen for the ‘crex-crex’ call of the elusive corncrake.

**Autumn/winter**
Five things not to miss during the chillier months.

1. Enjoy Rathlin at its most tranquil.
2. Blow the cobwebs away with a bracing walk along the Roonivoolin trail.
3. Stormy weather and big waves bring great photo opportunities.
4. Listen for the “chow” call of choughs as they ride the sea breeze.
5. Keep your eyes peeled for one of our rarest mammals, the Irish hare.

Other local attractions:
- **Boathouse Museum, Rathlin Island**
  - Rathlin’s history.
  - Tel: 028 2076 2024
  - Contains a wealth of fascinating history.

**How to get here**

**Nearest town:** Ballycastle

**By boat:** Rathlin Island is accessible by ferry from Ballycastle and we recommend you book in advance. The ferry journey takes between 25 and 40 minutes. Cars by permit only. For information on ferry times and prices, please visit rathlinballycastleferry.com

**By bus and bike:** Once on the island, there are privately operated buses running from Church Bay to the Seabird Centre, as well as bicycles available for hire.

**Opening times**
The West Light Seabird Centre is open daily 24 March to 16 September 2018. March, April and September 11am-4pm and May to August 10am-5pm. Last admission is one hour before closing. Access to Roonivoolin and the other trails is available all year round.

**Admission charges**
Admission to the West Light Seabird Centre is free for RSPB members. For non-members there is a charge of £5 for adults and £2.50 for children and other concessions.

**RSPB Rathlin Island**
- **Rathlin Island, Ballycastle, County Antrim, BT54 6RT**
  - Tel: 028 2076 0062 (March to mid September) or 028 9049 1547 (mid September to March)
  - rspb.org.uk/rathlinisland

The RSPB is the country’s largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

**Helping to give nature a home**

- **Discover Northern Ireland’s largest seabird city**
  - Be waved by rugged coastal scenery.
  - Enjoy the island’s peace and tranquility.
  - Be drawn to the drama of the lighthouse location.

**Northern Ireland**
- **Rathlin West Light Seabird Centre and Nature Reserve**
  - Admire the stunning scenery and coastal views.
  - Experience the hustle and bustle of Rathlin’s seabird city.

**Other local attractions:**
- **Kebble National Nature Reserve,** (Western end of Rathlin Island)
  - Wading birds during the summer months.
  - Look out for orchids and bluey-purple flowers of the rare pyramidal bugle in late spring, and for the chickadee during October.

- **Kielder European Nature Reserve,** (in Cumbria)
  - Coasts and marshes
  - Wild flowers
  - Autumn and winter

**How to get here**

- **Top tips for birdwatching**
  - Be wowed by the island’s seabird colony – the sight and sound are unforgettable.
  - In summer, puffins, razorbills, fulmars, guillemots and kittiwakes gather in their thousands to jostle for position on the cliffs. Head to the West Light Seabird Centre for close-up views of this spectacle.
  - Experience the hustle and bustle of Rathlin’s seabird city as thousands of birds raise their chicks precariously on the cliff edges at the West Light Seabird Centre.

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Finding your way around

To discover what makes Rathlin Island such a special place for nature, start exploring today.

There are a total of seven trails criss-crossing the island, and full details can be found at walkni.com

Many of these routes will take you off-road, so remember to wear comfortable walking shoes and bring plenty of water.

Enjoy your day!

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**Roonivoolin trail**

The Roonivoolin trail leads you on a three-mile trip, from Church Bay towards the southern end of the island and back again. Allow at least three hours to enjoy it fully.

As you wander along the trail, keep a lookout for seals lounging in Mill Bay, and oystercatchers and ringed plovers scurrying along the stony beaches.

Once you get to Roonivoolin (which means “point of the gulls”) stop to enjoy the fantastic views, but don’t forget to look skywards – buzzards, choughs and skylarks may well be flying overhead.

Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times. Keep your distance from loose livestock.

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**West Light trail**

This four-mile trail will take you to the West Light Seabird Centre, home to Northern Ireland’s largest seabird colony. It takes about four hours to walk there and back including a one-hour visit to the Seabird Centre.

On the way, look for Knockans viewpoint, where you may spot Northern Ireland’s only pair of breeding choughs. Further along, you will pass through Kebble Nature Reserve, which is home to birds such as snipe and grebes, as well as peregrine falcons.

This trail is along a paved road and is uphill on the outward journey. A private bus operates between the harbour and the Seabird Centre.

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Keep your eyes peeled for Irish hares lolling in the fields along the Roonivoolin trail.

Look for Irish hares along the Roonivoolin trail

Beautiful heath spotted-orchids bloom in summer

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**Key**

- Water
- Grassland
- Picnic area
- Toilet
- Viewpoint
- Bus Stop
- Tea/Coffee and vending available

Please note that while the main visitor centre at the West Light Seabird Centre is accessible, there are 96 steps down the cliffs to the viewing platform and a further 64 steps to bottom floor of the lighthouse. Please visit rspb.org.uk/rathlinisland for more info.

RSPB NI is helping to give nature a home on Rathlin Island by managing the Roonivoolin, Knockans and Craigmacagan reserves and the West Light Seabird Centre.