



Seals by Jeroen Stiel (rspb-images.com)

“You don't have to be an avid birdwatcher to enjoy this. The sounds, the scenery... everything is just amazing.”  
Vogue Williams,  
BBC NI / RTE Getaways

# Welcome



Lying off Antrim's Causeway Coast, Rathlin Island has a rare, untamed beauty and is home to a spectacular array of wildlife. Even the ferry trip to the island is an unforgettable experience. Look out for gannets, gulls and guillemots during your crossing. Keep your eyes peeled for seals and eider ducks too – they can often be seen lazing around the harbour. 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 spectacular seabird colony – the sight and sound will take your breath away. Our team can help you identify birds and provide binoculars and telescopes. Don't miss a tour of the 'upside down' lighthouse followed by refreshments back at the visitor centre.

At the south of the island, you'll find the Roonivoolin trail, where Irish hares often loll across the fields. Peregrines and buzzards are also a regular sight.

With spectacular scenery and an abundance of wildlife, a visit to Rathlin Island is a wonderful day out for the whole family.

## In this area...

Other local attractions:

**Boathouse Museum, Rathlin Island**

Tel: 028 2076 2024

This small visitor centre and museum, located in Church Bay, contains a wealth of fascinating artefacts, photographs and information about Rathlin's history.

**Kebble National Nature Reserve, Rathlin Island**

(Western end of Rathlin Island) Look out for orchids and the bluey-purple flowers of the rare pyramidal bugle in late spring, and for wading birds during the summer months.

**Fair Head and Murlough Bay, County Antrim** (3 miles east of Ballycastle)

Murlough Bay is a beautiful wooded site that leads to Fair Head, one of Northern Ireland's most dramatic headlands. Enjoy a stroll along the coastline and take in the beautiful views across to Rathlin Island and the Mull of Kintyre.

For dates, prices and full details about all our events, ask a member of our team or visit [rspb.org.uk/rathlinisland](http://rspb.org.uk/rathlinisland)

Seabird Centre staying for a minimum of two-weeks engagement residential volunteer at the West Light If you'd like to spend time on Rathlin as a visitor

Get involved

Join us in spring and summer for a series of guided walks, boat trips or a photography session to learn more about this fascinating place and the wildlife that calls it home.

Events

## Take part with us

## 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.

## 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](http://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](http://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



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giving nature a home

Northern Ireland

# Rathlin West Light Seabird Centre and Nature Reserve



## Discover Northern Ireland's largest seabird city

Be wowed by rugged coastal scenery

Enjoy the island's peace and tranquility

Be drawn to the drama of the lighthouse location

# Rathlin Island

## 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](http://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!

### 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.

### 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.



Look for Irish hares along the Roonivoolin trail

Beautiful heath spotted-orchids bloom in summer

