

Wildlife – above and below the waves!

Nessie isn't the only creature to choose Loch Ness as her home, it's a popular location for a variety of wildlife that have settled in its cold, pitch-black depths and sparkling shallows.

In spite of low nutrient levels in the water, there are tough survivors laying in its darkest depths, including the Arctic charr, a relative of the salmon and an Ice Age relic with an ability to adapt quickly to its environment.

Closer to the surface, the Atlantic salmon hugs the shore of Loch Ness on the way to its spawning grounds in gravel-floored streams. Another cousin, the brown trout, enjoys basking in the warmer(!) shallow inshore waters alongside minnows and sticklebacks dining on invertebrates, all of which are closely watched by common sandpipers, grey wagtails and low-flying swallows. The brook lamprey can also be found hiding amongst stones here - a primitive eel-like creature with a sucker disc-shaped mouth.

And wherever there's shallow waters full of fish, you can be sure that goosanders and red-breasted merganser ducks won't be far away. Both of these species as well as resident otters create distinctive wakes on the Loch when it is calm - a mischievous practice that can be blamed for some mistaken sightings of Nessie!

The ostentatious osprey shares its winged acquaintances' love of fish and can be found gliding gracefully around the Loch in search of its next feast - an increasingly regular sight thanks to a growth in its local population.

So, even if Nessie decides not to make an appearance during your cruise, keep a close watch on the skies, shores and surface of Loch Ness for her neighbours.

