

THE RED KITE

Red Kites are truly such beautiful birds! To see one on a bright spring morning cruising in a leisurely fashion along a valley, or circling lazily in a thermal, is always a sight to lift the spirits. Its long, forked and ever twisting tail, rich rufous plumage and easy, elegant and lazy flight make the bird unmistakable.

Unfortunately it is not a sight we see very often right out at the end of the Marloes/Dale peninsula as they do not breed here. Red Kites are birds which like to nest in secluded and undisturbed wooded valleys with plenty of open country nearby. They have been breeding in Pembrokeshire since 2003 and their stronghold is in the Gwaun Valley. However they are doing well and are now frequently seen near Walwyn's Castle and at Sandy Haven so they may soon be breeding, or perhaps are already doing so, quite nearby.



We have only twice seen Red Kites from our garden – most recently a few weeks ago when a pair were lazily cruising around over the meadows behind our house. They circled several times quite low down and we had terrific views of the two birds, which were in impeccable plumage. Whilst flying, one bird was eating what looked like a vole which it held in its talons.

I seem to remember that during spring, Red Kites are often seen in unusual places, often in quite big groups – I am sure I remember reading about a group of six circling over Ramsey. I presume these

must be young birds, not yet breeding, but investigating all the local possibilities.