

## **A Ranger led walk to see the Scottish primrose.**

It is a privilege and a pleasure to lead people on guided walks and to share their pleasure and enjoyment in seeing or experiencing some aspect of nature, whether it be an exultation of leaping dolphins, a cacophony of breeding seabirds or an otter peeking cheekily from a swathe of kelp. It is a responsibility and challenge too, using our skill and knowledge to provide an experience which, not only will they enjoy and learn from, but they may also come to cherish the memory.

One particular event comes to mind; after receiving a call from the south of England about our Scottish primrose [*Primula scotica*] around Durness, and enquiring as to when it flowers and where can we see it? An elderly gentleman was planning a surprise trip to the north of Scotland for his wife [a botanist] to see this remarkable minute flower for their fiftieth wedding anniversary – would I get the date right? The Scottish primrose is one of the few species only found in Scotland, across the north coast and Orkney, but nowhere else in the world. Thought possibly to be a post-glacial relic, fossil remains of *P.Scotica* have been found in a Cambridgeshire peat bed. In the Durness area they are only found in quite specific habitats at certain times in the summer.

The suggested week arrived as did the couple; they were blessed with sunshine as I led them with some trepidation to one of the easily missed sites and there Lo and Behold! The darling little flower was in bloom, it was an emotional experience for them - and for me. This is what Rangers do.



High Life Highland is a charity and we depend on donations to allow us to run our varied outdoor activities programme of events and guided walks to encourage an interest in the environment, knowledge of the natural history of the Highlands and encourage health and wellbeing for all.

**Donald Mitchell**

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