

Name of entrant: Jack White

## My favourite wildlife experience

My favourite wildlife experience happened while on a holiday in the Ardnamurchan peninsula in western Scotland. I and my mother were in a car driving along a fairly remote road along Loch Mudle. It was a warm day for Scotland, however there was not enough wind to prevent the midges gathering around one's face.

The croaking of Ravens was the most prominent sound other than the hum of the car's engine. Every few seconds the car would jerk violently in one direction as we twisted round a tight bend. On one side of the road was the shining loch and the other, a commercial timber plantation. I spotted a moving object in the distance and went reached for my binoculars, however, a sudden turn prevented me from getting them.

I stared ahead again the object was clearer now, it looked like a brown-coloured bird flying over another plantation across the loch. Being about half a kilometre away from me, I quickly realised this bird must be absolutely gigantic. I pointed the bird out to my mum, who quickly saw it as well. She flashed the headlights at the car in front, who were with us on a wildlife tour. Their car suddenly started driving faster, they had evidently seen this bird as well.

Now we were speeding along the road in the direction of this unknown bird. As we became closer and closer to it, the slow, confident wingbeats became obvious. Soon after we could see it was a bird of prey, when it began circling above like a kite in the wind. Without warning a raging cloud of the black, croaking ravens pursued the giant, looking ridiculously small when flying next to an eagle!

We stopped the car at a suitable spot on the side of the road and climbed out to watch. The tour guide from the car in front said it was a juvenile White-tailed eagle, the UK's largest bird of prey. We stared in amazement as the little ravens continued to dive on the eagle, but they appeared to only irritate the giant.

After a short while everyone climbed back in their cars and drove round to the other side to try and get a better view. On the other side for the first few seconds there was nothing, until two eagles appeared over the trees! The guide suspected these were siblings from the nest nearby. Now with two eagles, the ravens were forced to give up and scattered in all directions.

Both young White-tailed eagles played with each other, they flipped onto their backs and did a freefall with spinning high above the ground, talons out. It appeared to be the eagle equivalent of play-fighting, although sometimes it did look a bit like they were trying to kill each other. I was elated to see such an amazing sight in person, it was like seeing a documentary in real life!