

The Applecross Trust

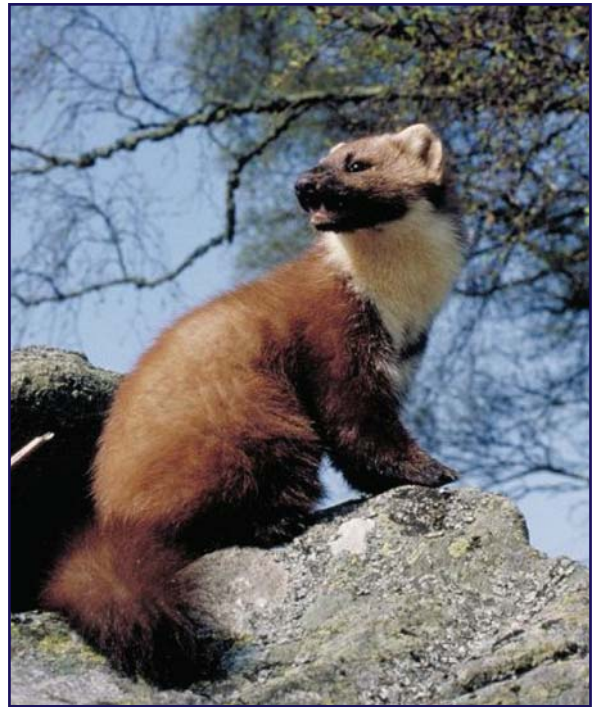


Fact Sheet 7

Pine Marten (*Martes martes*)

The pine marten is a carnivorous, tree living member of the weasel family, which was once widespread in Britain but is now considered nationally rare. The population in Applecross, and Wester Ross as a whole, is however quite healthy which is largely due to the presence of its favoured habitat which is coniferous or mixed woodland.

Pine martens are cat sized, with males measuring on average 68cm from nose to tail tip and females averaging slightly smaller, they are slender with long, dark chestnut brown fur, a distinctive creamy yellow throat and a bushy tail. The soles of their feet are covered in thick fur, helping them to move across snow covered ground in the winter.



They feed mainly on small birds and mammals, and can be a serious threat to poultry, plus beetles, caterpillars, birds' eggs, berries and carrion. A favourite food around here is the rowan berry and the piles of spraint containing rowan berries are a good way of telling they are present.

The pine marten is largely nocturnal, hunting through the night especially at dusk, usually alone. They are rarely seen in daylight, preferring to spend their time sleeping in dens hidden in rock crevices or in hollows under tree roots.

Pine martens only breed once a year with a litter of about 3 young born in late March or April, the young then spend at least 6 weeks in the den before venturing out and will stay together as a family until they are about 6 months old.

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