

A HEBRIDEAN ODYSSEY



"With incredible wildlife such as Hen Harriers, Short-eared Owls, Corncrakes, Golden and White-tailed Eagles, Otters, thousands of stunning passage and breeding waders, along with simply breathtaking scenery, even after over 20 years of visiting these wonderful islands, every visit is still a thrill. I can't wait to get back out there." Craig Round

Dates Sun 2 - Fri 14 Jun 2024
 Price £3,475
 Deposit £600 Single Supp £450

Leaders Craig Round and Simon Eaves
 Walking Coastal walks on uneven terrain of up to two miles. Walking boots recommended with trainers suitable on some occasions. Collapsible or telescopic walking poles could be useful
 Weather Though usually quite dry, these islands can experience all the seasons during one trip and can be windy (5°-20°C)
 Insects Biting insects are not usually a problem but bring repellent just in case
 Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 13
 Accom Double, twin, single rooms all ensuite

Just some of what we hope to see:

Corncrake	Rock Dove
Golden Eagle	Arctic Skua
White-tailed Eagle	Great Skua
Hen Harrier	Manx Shearwater
Merlin	Storm Petrel
Short-eared Owl	Red-necked Phalarope
Peregrine	Greenshank
Great Northern Diver	Golden Plover
Red-throated Diver	Red Grouse
Black-throated Diver	Corn Bunting
Eider	Twite
Whimbrel	Otter
Arctic Tern	Grey and Common Seals
Little Tern	dolphins and whales
Black Guillemot	Basking Shark

Jane Hope: Otter
 Alan Daniells: Harris Beach
 Stuart Housden: Callanish, Red-necked Phalarope
 Craig Round: Hen Harrier
 Mark Phillips: Short-eared Owl
 Steve Batt: Ruff

A journey through magical isles on the edge of the Atlantic. A diverse landscape of vast white beaches, rugged mountains, fertile machair and huge seascapes.

- Raptor watching with both eagles, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Merlin and Peregrine
- Summer-plumaged divers, including Red-throated and Great Northern
- Unspoilt and deserted white sand beaches with shallow crystal clear waters
- Unique machair habitat in bloom, full of nesting waders and birds
- Excellent chance of Corncrake amidst lush vegetation
- Otters plus the chance of cetaceans and Basking Shark
- World famous Callanish Standing Stones and ancient Dun Carloway Broch

Our adventure begins with a meal together in Inverness and a run through the trip itinerary.

2-3 We head southwest, through Lochaber, past Ben Nevis, to the port town of Oban where we shall catch our ferry to Barra.

Our journey to the Outer Hebrides takes us through the Sound of Mull and across the southern Minch. There's a sense of anticipation as we gather on deck for some sea-watching - auks, Gannets, skuas, shearwaters and divers are likely, plus a chance of Storm Petrel and cetaceans on the crossing.

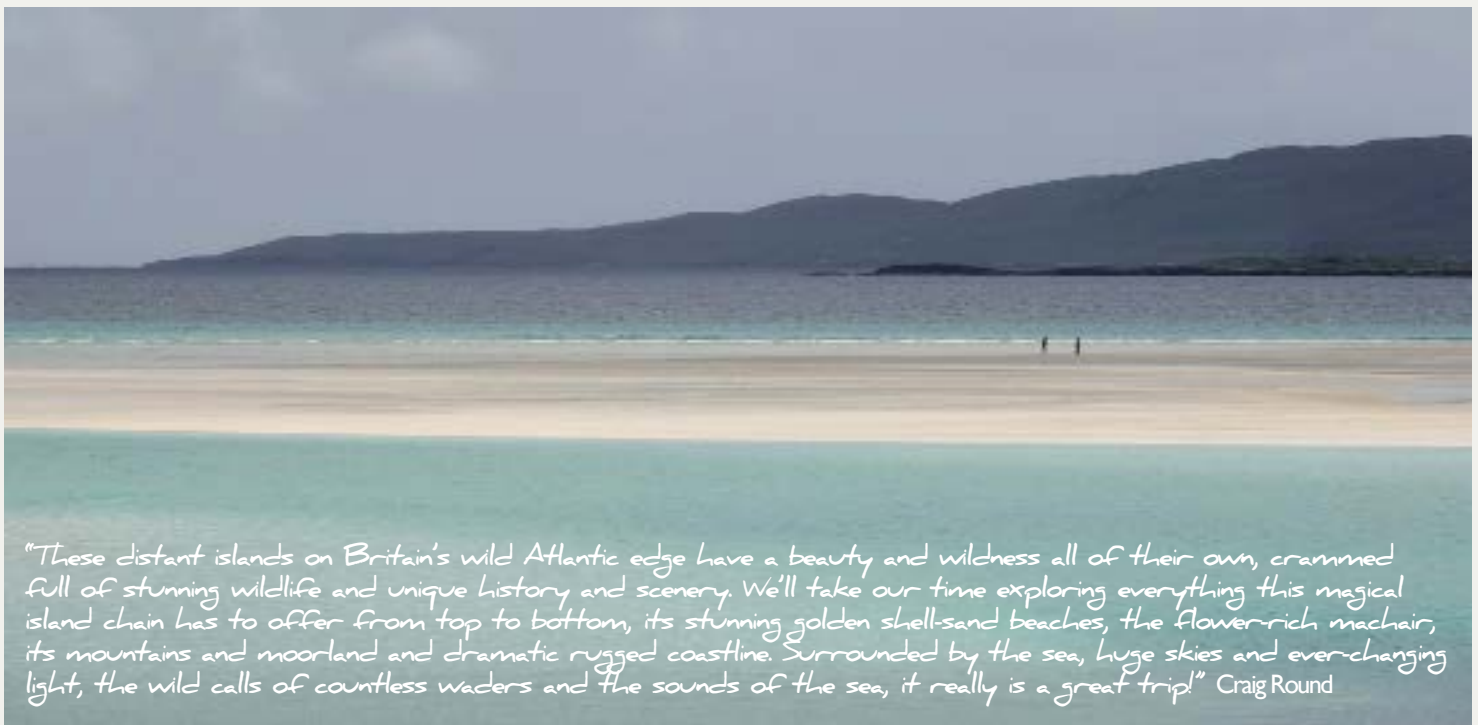
Barra and its adjoining island Vattersay are gentle islands and we start our Hebridean adventure among the white sands and croft lands looking for

Golden and White-tailed Eagles and Corncrake near the internationally famous airport, where planes land on the beach of Traigh Mor!

4-7 We leave Barra and take the short crossing to Eriskay, connected by causeway to South Uist. We shall explore North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay from our wonderful hotel. Birds seem to be everywhere and we shall visit the unique machair, alive with waders, Corn Bunting, Skylark and Twite.

The RSPB Reserve at Balranald is a gem and gives us our best chance of Corncrake, calling from the iris beds. The Uists are wonderful for raptors and the chance of eagles is ever present, with Short-eared Owls and Hen Harriers quartering the peatlands, often seen from the hotel!





"These distant islands on Britain's wild Atlantic edge have a beauty and wildness all of their own, crammed full of stunning wildlife and unique history and scenery. We'll take our time exploring everything this magical island chain has to offer from top to bottom, its stunning golden shell-sand beaches, the flower-rich machair, its mountains and moorland and dramatic rugged coastline. Surrounded by the sea, huge skies and ever-changing light, the wild calls of countless waders and the sounds of the sea, it really is a great trip!" Craig Round

The beaches and shallow bays of the west coast are fished by Common, Arctic and Little Terns, Great Northern Divers and a very healthy Otter population. Red-necked Phalaropes breed here and there is always the chance of finding a rarity. We've recorded Snowy Owl, Woodchat Shrike and Subalpine Warbler on previous trips - anything is possible!

8-11 We'll spend four days exploring the islands of Lewis and Harris - two very different islands with wide expanses of peat moor, wild coastlines and incredible bare-rock scenery. Some of our most iconic raptors hunt these vast landscapes and we shall follow the Hebridean Bird of Prey Trail for Golden and White-tailed Eagles, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owls, Merlin, Kestrel and Peregrine.

We shall explore the wild Atlantic edge along the northwestern coast of Lewis up to the Butt of Lewis. This windswept and spectacular place is one of the best locations in the UK for sea-watching for both birds and cetaceans.

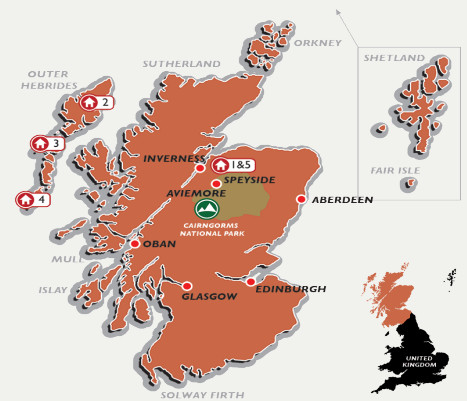
Though not common, Minke Whale, Common or even Risso's Dolphin and other species are possible. The shallow lochs of the west coast are a refuge for wildfowl, waders and scarce migrants with the possibility of a vagrant American Wader if we're lucky. The sea lochs and beaches of the rugged south west coast of Lewis are a wild, remote and under-watched habitat for Otters, eagles and divers, including Red-throated and Great Northern and we should find Cuckoo and Twite here.

The Standing Stones of Callanish are archaeologically world famous and a stunning example of a circle and cruciform arrangement with almost 50 still standing. Walking amongst them ignites the imagination. We shall also visit Dun Carloway, one of the best-preserved Iron Age brochs in Scotland.

Harris is conjoined to Lewis, but the habitat and feel is very different. The north is a rugged mountainous moonscape, whereas the west coast has open machair and vast spectacular and deserted beaches. We shall walk on one of the world's great beaches at Luskentyre, which is simply stunning and a superb location for Golden Eagles. We shall visit North Harris Eagle observatory, with a good chance of Merlin too, which regularly nest close by.

12 The ferry from Stornoway across the fertile waters of The Minch to Ullapool provides more chances of Minke Whale, Basking Shark and seabirds - then from Ullapool we head back to Inverness for our evening meal and to reflect on our adventure.

13 After breakfast on Friday we say our fond farewells.



Outline Itinerary	
Day 1	Meet in Inverness for overnight stay 1 night at Premier Inn
Days 2-3	Travel south west to Oban to catch the ferry to Barra Birding and wildlife exploration of Barra 2 nights at Castlebay Hotel
Days 4-7	Ferry crossing from Barra to Eriskay Birding and wildlife exploration on Berneray, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay. 4 nights at Orasay Inn
Days 8-11	Ferry to Leverburgh. Birding and wildlife exploration around Lewis and Harris 4 nights at Caladh Hotel
Day 12	Ferry crossing from Stornoway to Ullapool then journey back to Inverness. 1 night at Premier Inn
Day 13	After breakfast we say our farewells

