

AN ORKNEY ODYSSEY



"This holiday really is a great mix, taking in Orkney's great wildlife, seabirds and landscape, along with its world-class archeological sites. We'll also be visiting during the height of autumn bird migration, a fantastic time to visit these beautiful islands. It really is a trip not to be missed!" Craig Round

Dates Sat 28 Aug - Mon 6 Sept 2027

Price £4,095

Deposit £750 Single Supp £500

Leader Craig Round

Weather The weather can vary enormously. During a typical week in this season we would expect mixed sun and showers with temperatures of 10-20°C. It may be cooler round the coast and though we could see unbroken sunshine and settled weather, Orkney can also be wet and windy. Bring layers and water proofs and sunscreen too!

Walking Walking will generally be very relaxed and easy. Walking boots essential

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10

Insects Biting insects should not be a problem but you may wish to bring repellent

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms

Group 6

Just some of what we hope to see:

Hen Harrier	Bar-tailed Godwit
White-tailed Eagle	Ruff
Short-eared Owl	Gannet
Merlin	Rock Dove
Great Skua	Twite
Arctic Skua	common and maybe
Manx Shearwater	rarer autumn migrants
Sooty Shearwater	Otters
Red-throated Diver	dolphins
Black Guillemot	Minke Whale
Eider	Harbour Porpoise
Golden Plover	seals
Sanderling	
Black-tailed Godwit	

We have extended our classic Orkney trip, with the extra days and extra islands of Hoy and Westray, adding to the wonderful selection of birding and archaeological sites we'll visit.

- Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar, Maes Howe
- The Island of Hoy - plus Scapa Flow Museum
- Visit to Westray where Gannets may still be present on spectacular Noup Head
- Broch of Gurness - Iron Age broch village
- Autumn migration - perhaps a Wryneck, Red-backed Shrike or something rarer!
- Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier, Red-throated Divers and skuas - and maybe Otters
- The Loons RSPB Reserve, Yesnaby Cliffs and, if time permits, the Brough of Birsay

1 We meet in Inverness in time for dinner in our overnight hotel, giving us time to chat about the coming exciting trip.

2 From Inverness, we follow the coast road north to our ferry from Scrabster to Orkney. We'll look out for Sandwich and Arctic Terns fishing offshore, plus colourful Eiders and with luck Long-tailed Ducks or scoters. We may be lucky enough to see Red Kite circling above the rich farmland of Easter Ross.

The crossing, on a large modern, fully equipped ferry, takes us across The Pentland Firth, famous for its tidal race and its wildlife and we'll look out for cetaceans, Storm Petrel, Manx Shearwater, skuas and dolphins with Sooty Shearwater and Grey Phalarope possible at this time of year.

The ferry passes the impressive cliffs of Hoy and we shall get a view of the Old Man. We land at the picturesque harbour of Stromness, where the great author George Mackay-Brown lived.

3-8 The landscape of Orkney has broad coastal vistas, interspersed with ancient archaeological wonders set amidst the genteel farmland, which characterises inland Orkney. The pastures are home to Brown Hare, Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl, which quarter the moors and meadows looking for Orkney Vole. Autumn migration is just beginning, so there's a good chance of migrants, especially waders and seabirds, but anything is possible!

Any visit to Orkney would not be complete without including the many astonishing archaeological





"Our visit is timed to witness the autumn bird migration with scarce drift migrants such as Red-backed Shrike and Red-breasted Flycatcher, all found on previous trips. If the winds are in the east, who knows what we'll find! With visits to take in Orkney's ancient past at sites such as Maeshowe, Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar and stunning Skara Brae, this really is a great trip." Craig Round

treasures the islands are so famous for: Several are exceptional, including Maes Howe - a Neolithic chambered cairn and passage grave built around 2800BC and still in excellent condition. Perhaps the most famous is Skara Brae - Europe's most complete Neolithic village, consisting of eight clustered houses, occupied around 3180 to 2500BC.

We shall also visit the Ring of Brodgar, Stones of Stenness and the lesser known Broch of Gurness, an Iron Age broch village situated in the north of mainland Orkney. The farmland around these sites is ideal hunting ground for Hen Harrier, Merlin and Short-eared Owl and the Loch of Stenness is often home to Otters and Red-throated Divers.

We may go sightseeing in the UK's most northerly city - Kirkwall and its smaller neighbour Stromness and visit the museum and Cathedral with time to wander round the shops. For whisky aficionados there is the chance to take a tour round the northern island's only distillery.

On another day we shall take the ferry over to the island of Westray, where we'll spend time enjoying lovely scenery and search for migrants. At the northern tip is Noup Head, which in summer has a spectacular Gannet colony on the impressive cliffs and there are likely to still be some birds here, though perhaps not in the big numbers of summer.

There is a half hour ferry crossing to Hoy, Orkney's most 'mountainous' island, and we shall cross with the minibus - with eyes to the skies for the

possibility of Great Skua, or gigantic White-tailed Eagle which now breeds on Hoy.

The newly refurbished Scapa Flow Museum, dedicated to the history of Scapa Flow during the two world wars, is worth visiting and we'll make the half mile walk out to the Dwarfie Stone, a megalithic chambered tomb carved from a titanic block of old red sandstone.

Time permitting, there is plenty more to show you - and we hope to include the impressive Yesnaby Cliffs, The Loons RSPB Reserve, where birding can be excellent, the last unrestored 'firehouse' in northern Europe at Kirkbister Museum and head out over the causeway to the Brough of Birsay - a fascinating island, with so much to see, with both wildlife and archaeology.

9 As our time on the islands comes to an end, we scan for birds and dolphins once again as we take the ferry back to Scrabster, then drive to Inverness for an evening meal together at the Premier Inn.

10 After breakfast we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

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| Day 1 | Gather in Inverness for dinner
1 night at Premier Inn |
| Day 2 | Travel from Inverness to Scrabster through Easter Ross, taking the ferry to Orkney we then settle in to our hotel at Harray
7 nights at Merkister Hotel |
| Days 3-8 | Exploration of the islands of this exciting archipelago - including mainland Orkney, Hoy and Westray for excellent birding and visits to a wide selection of archaeological sites |
| Day 9 | Ferry back to Scrabster across the Pentland Firth, then drive back to Inverness
1 night at Premier Inn |
| Day 10 | After breakfast we say farewell |

Jane Hope: Short-eared Owl
Steve Batt: Ring of Brodgar, Italian Chapel, Skara Brae
Rob Martin: Arctic Skua
Lesley Gadsden: Old Man of Hoy

