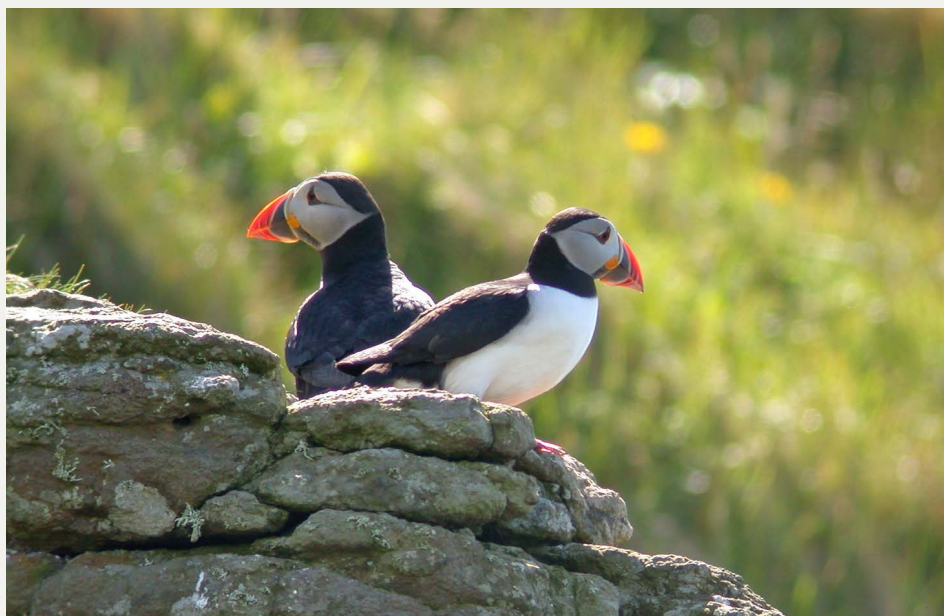


# WEST WALES



*"Skomer was where I first experienced the wonder of our seabird colonies and I'll never forget the feeling of being transported to another world – birds stuffed onto cliff ledges and the cacophony of croaks, grunts and cries; carpets of flowers and the smell of guano adding to the sensory overload. You won't forget it either."*  
Darren Rees

Dates Fri 15 - Fri 22 Jun 18

Price £1,895

Deposit £350 Single Supp £200

Leaders Darren Rees and Roy Atkins

Weather The weather will be mixed (10-20C). Expect sun and showers, with gusty wind on exposed headlands

Walking Varied, from wide forest tracks, to clifftop paths, so a reasonable degree of fitness is required. Walking boots are recommended

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8

Boat Trips We shall take two short 15-20 minute ferry trips to Skomer and Ramsey Islands. Our trip around Grassholm Island takes over 2 hours

Insects Not anticipated this early in the season

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Chough	Red Kite
Gannet	Short-eared Owl
Puffin	Little Owl
Razorbill	Whinchat
Guillemot	Wood Warbler
Fulmar	Otter
Manx Shearwater	Grey Seal
Peregrine	

## A week in the beautiful Pembrokeshire National Park, including visits to the spectacular seabird islands of Skomer, Ramsey and a chartered boat cruise around amazing Grassholm

- Aukfest! Guillemots, Razorbills and Puffins galore
- Little Owls and Short-eared Owls on Skomer Island
- Choughs and Grey Seals on Ramsey Island
- Gannet colony on Grassholm Island – 70,000 Gannets can't be wrong!
- Woodland and moorland birds at Mynydd Preseli
- Beautiful coastal walks at Stackpole, Dinas and St David's Head
- Historic St David's Cathedral and Bishop's Palace

We meet at our base, the charming Wolfscastle Country Hotel at Haverfordwest in time for dinner, and a chance to discuss the coming week ahead.

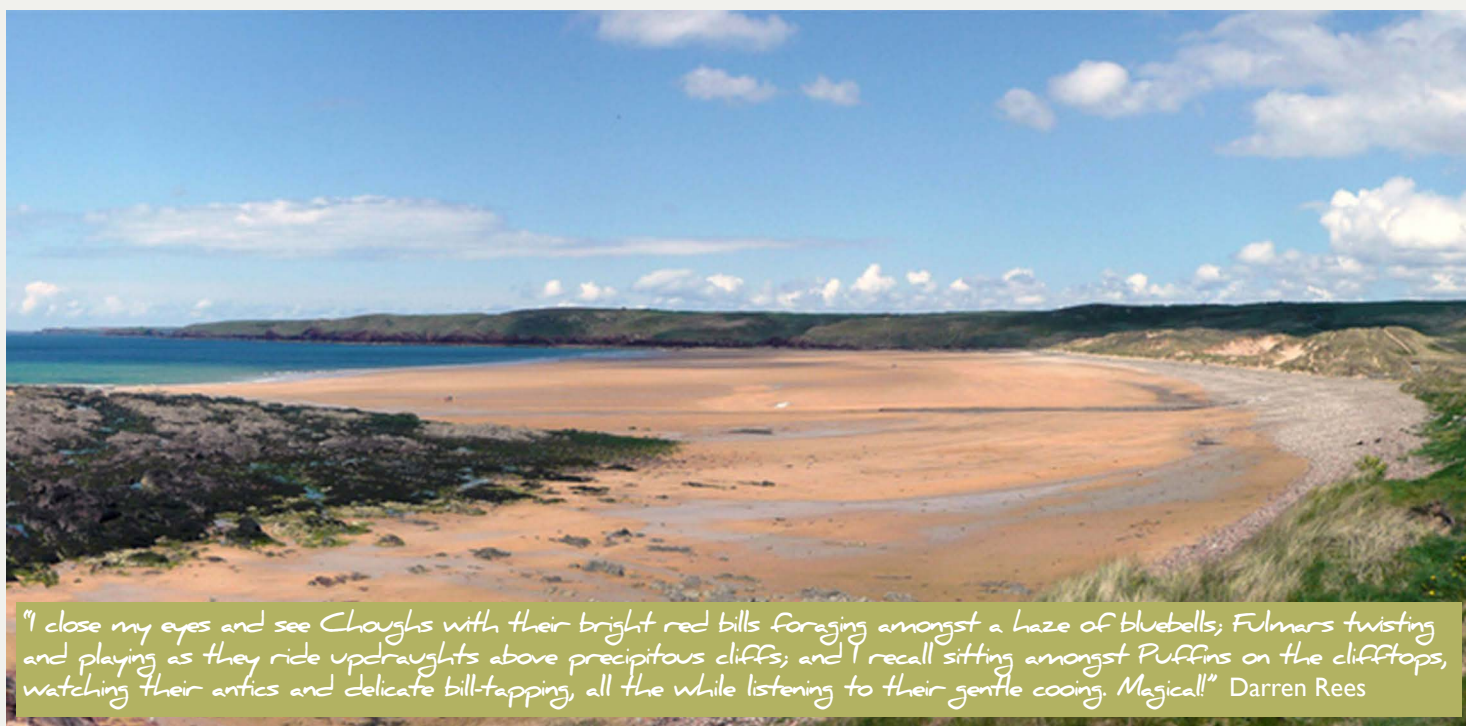
**2-7** The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the only coastal National Park in the UK and covering 236sqm between St Dogmaels and Amroth, there is plenty to explore! Here we shall find some of the most beautiful and unspoilt coastlines in Britain, with beautiful sandy beaches and stunning clifftop walks, with carpets of coastal flowers such as Thrift, Sea Campion and Spring Squill.

This wild corner of West Wales is a haven for birdlife and includes magical islands that are just a short boat trip away - yet another world away in other respects - and these may be a highlight of our time here.

Skomer is a seabird island reserve managed by the Wildlife Trusts and one of the most magical places on earth (it was Darren's first seabird island so he's unashamedly biased!). A short boat trip from Martin's Haven takes us to this seabird paradise and we have a whole day to fully appreciate its treasures. Cliff-faces will be brimming with birds, with Kittiwakes, Shags and Guillemots on the lower ledges and Fulmars and Razorbills peering down from the upper tiers.

At the Wick we can spend time with colourful Puffins, bill-tapping and walking like clockwork through the carpet of Sea Campion and Pink Thrift - enough to make anyone smile. Curlews and Oystercatchers call from the stone walls that weave across an interior coloured by Red Campion and Bluebells. Lesser Black-backed Gulls nest in large loose colonies, but we'll be on the look-out for Short-eared and Little Owls that





*"I close my eyes and see Choughs with their bright red bills foraging amongst a haze of bluebells; Fulmars twisting and playing as they ride updraughts above precipitous cliffs; and I recall sitting amongst Puffins on the clifftops, watching their antics and delicate bill-tapping, all the while listening to their gentle cooing. Magical!" Darren Rees*

occur on the island. Choughs and Peregrines are here too and we might run out of time looking for all of Skomer's gems!

Another special island we visit is Ramsey, now an RSPB reserve of 640 acres, similarly stuffed full of birds at this time of year. Clifftop walks will take us around the island perimeter; where we can peer into rock faces busy with Guillemots, Razorbills, Kittiwakes and Fulmars. Choughs and Ravens bound across the sky, and looking down on secluded coves we may see some of the many Grey Seals in the area - later in the year they give birth to pups on Ramsey's quiet beaches.

Our private chartered boat trip around Grassholm will be another highlight. Lying eight miles off the coast, this imposing rock buttress is covered with 35,000 pairs of Gannets. Our boat will cruise slowly around the island, giving us the opportunity to look at birds both on land and sea. We'll see Gannets re-enforcing the pair bond, with sky-pointing and wing-stretching displays, whilst around the boat we'll witness birds plunge-diving into the water in truly spectacular fashion! There is always the chance of Manx Shearwater here and the crossing could yield some of the cetaceans of the Irish Sea - Bottlenose Dolphin or Harbour Porpoise perhaps?

Elsewhere we'll be walking sections of the stunning coastal path of Pembrokeshire National Park. The pleasing mix of habitats of Stackpole Head Nature Reserve and adjacent Bosherton Pools include dunes, beaches, rugged headlands,

woodland and the celebrated lily-ponds, home to abundant dragonflies as well as birds and we may see its famous Otters. We'll look for Red-billed Choughs and Peregrines at scenic St David's Head and look out to sea in the hope of Manx Shearwaters, especially if we are there later in the day when thousands may be passing.

We'll make time to walk around St David's itself, the smallest city in the UK. Here is one of the most important religious sites in Wales, dating back to the 6th century, with its monumental cathedral and nearby Bishop's palace dating back to the 12th century.

Further north, inland from Dinas Head, are the steep wooded valleys of the Mynydd Preselli and these give us our best chance of catching up with breeding birds such as Redstart, Wood Warbler and Pied Flycatcher. The surrounding open moorland country might yield Stonechat, Tree Pipit, Cuckoo, Wheatear, Whinchat, Buzzard and Red Kite, whilst Dipper and Grey Wagtails feed along the streams.

8 After breakfast we shall say our fond farewells to this lovely part of Wales.



### Outline Itinerary

Day 1 Arrival and introductions at our base near Haverfordwest. 7 nights at Wolfscastle Country Hotel

Days 2-7 Our week will be flexible as some activities are boat-based. We shall visit the islands of Skomer and Ramsey; spend a day around St David's Head and St David's cathedral; visit Dinas Head and Mynydd Preselli; spend a day at Stackpole Head and Bosherton Pools; and charter a boat trip to Grassholm Island

Day 8 Depart after breakfast

**Simon Eaves:** Puffins, Razorbill Padyer: Landscape  
**Jane Hope:** Guillemots Steve Zamek: Peregrine  
**Menno Van Duijn:** Whinchat  
**Ian Tulloch:** Choughs

