

SPEYSIDE WILDLIFE

Bird and Wildlife Watching Holidays in the UK and Overseas **2019**





2019 holiday schedule

This is our 2019 schedule at a glance. Details of each holiday or experience, are given in full in this online version, just start turning the pages to find the destination that suits you. In addition, details are also on our website, where you'll also find photographs and feedback from guests who have been with us on previous trips. A "Holiday Highlights" trip report can also be downloaded from each holiday details web page. To ask about any of these, or for any other queries, don't hesitate to phone us on +44 (0) 1479 812498.



Simon Eaves, Goldeneye with Young, Speyside

Scotland

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WHAT MAKES A SPEYSIDE WILDLIFE HOLIDAY

When we started in 1991, running trips and holidays in Speyside in the Scottish Highlands, designated as the Cairngorms National Park in 2003, in recognition of how special this area is, we never dreamed that we would now be running holidays around the world from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Our ethos however remains the same, to deliver fun-filled holidays, packed with wildlife and our destinations have always been determined by this and by where you want to go next.

We pride ourselves on our high level of personal attention and won't race around in pursuit of big lists. We keep to small group sizes (normally 12). Our guides are experienced and their enthusiasm infectious. Whether you are a beginner or more experienced, young or old, we are happy to take the time, so you can enjoy the wildlife to the full. Our dedicated office team make sure everything runs smoothly before you arrive and our expert chef at the Steading in Speyside gets as much praise as the wildlife and can tailor meals to specific requirements.

"I recognise the quality of the housekeeper/cook and the special atmosphere created by small groups all sitting together to share meals and experiences. It feels comfortable and relaxed. I always feel welcome." Kathleen Murray



Cath Wright: The Steading

Fully Inclusive

Our holidays are just that - holidays. We'll fit in as many exciting and interesting activities as we can, but still give you completely relaxed enjoyment. You'll find little if any extra spending money is needed, as our holidays are all-inclusive - the price you see is the final price you pay and covers accommodation, meals, transport, boat and ferry costs and flights, as detailed with each destination.

Not included are travel insurance, visas, personal telephone calls, drinks etc. at the accommodation and items of a personal nature.

Typical Days Out

We generally breakfast about 8am to make the most of the morning's bird and wildlife activity, but often arrange optional pre-breakfast excursions. In tropical areas we'll start earlier to avoid the midday heat, but don't be frightened to lie-in - it is your holiday after all! We eat out during the day or take a picnic lunch in the field and, at the end of the day, return to freshen up before dinner, where we all eat together.

"I could do a lot of these trips myself, but your attention to detail with travel, accommodation and catering, coupled with the expertise of the guides, makes it far more enjoyable and successful to go with you."
Michael Pearcey

OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE:

To share outstanding fun-filled wildlife experiences, where you are always treated as an individual, not one of a crowd.

Relaxing afterwards, we'll run through the day's wildlife sightings and highlights, or perhaps arrange an optional dusk excursion.

We try and fit in as much gentle walking as we can during our days out. There may be more rigorous walks occasionally, but wherever possible we shall offer a less strenuous option. You'll require a moderate degree of fitness, but no more than average.

People find our holidays fun and informal, with guests, including both beginners and those more expert, adding to their experience. On each trip, we get a real mixture of singles and couples, spanning a range of age and ability. Our easy-going guides will make sure that your holiday is fun to be on.

Where We Stay

Wildlife watching often takes place in beautiful remote regions with beautiful remote accommodation to match. These places are often unique. We try and find the most friendly, rural, good quality, family-run accommodation with ensuite facilities. We blaze a trail by finding some terrific hotels away from the run of the mill tourist fare, places of character that others don't use. For us, great food and comfortable accommodation, with wildlife watching near at hand, are all vital ingredients for a successful holiday.

"My experience of holidays with you has been excellent every time. No reason to try any other birding company. I don't think they could do better." Helen Lomax

"I have been with Speyside many times before and know how excellent they are in every way." Sheila Turner



Roy Atkins, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Costa Rica

Easy To Get To

If you're holidaying with us in Speyside, Inverness airport is only a 1hr 30min flight from London and we can arrange an airport pick-up for you for a small charge. If you prefer to travel by train, we can collect you free of charge from Aviemore train station at 4:30pm, 6:30pm or 7:30pm and of course we'll return you to the station on departure.

All our holidays around Scotland start in Speyside, Inverness, Oban or Glasgow and we'll give you details of the meeting points for each. Again, if you prefer to travel by train, they all have stations.

If you're joining us on an overseas holiday, a map of the airport or train station, together with a meeting point and time, will be sent to you prior to the start of the holiday.



Christine Maughan, Raccoons, British Columbia

Photography

Our holidays are aimed at providing a great wildlife watching experience. While they are not designed as photography holidays, many guests do take the opportunity to capture wonderful photographs to add to their enjoyment (and often the enjoyment of other guests). Most of the pictures in this brochure have been taken by guests or guides and we are pleased to be able to use these to illustrate "what you see is what you get" - our guides really do have a knack of finding birds and animals.



Colin Scott, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellowstone

HOW TO BOOK

Bookings can be made manually, or you can visit our website to check availability and book and pay online. Full terms and conditions are also available online, along with details of each holiday.

Please feel free to call or email us and we'll be happy to advise you of the spaces remaining on your chosen holiday. We can also send you a "Holiday Highlights" trip report. These are also available on the website.

Whether booking online or sending in a booking form, payments for holidays can be made by bank transfer or cheque. In addition, we accept payment from the major credit and debit cards shown below via PayPal.

Phone	+44 (0) 1479 812498
Email	enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk
Web	www.speysidewildlife.co.uk
Post	Wester Camerorie Ballieward Grantown on Spey Cairngorms National Park PH26 3PR Scotland



MEET OUR GUIDES

"You couldn't ask for sharper eyed, more considerate guides and such good company, good humour and upbeat always. They made you enjoy the trip all the more."

Valerie Mulder 2018



Roy Atkins

We've known Roy for over 25 years. He's a great all-round naturalist and years' of experience in the world of teaching have made him a great people person. Our guests travel with him again and again to far-flung places such as Costa Rica, Argentina, Mongolia and British Columbia. His sense of fun and knowledge of birds, plants and animals make him a very popular leader.

Darren Rees

Darren is a great birder and quite simply fun to be with. He has led countless groups for us in Arizona, Texas, California, South Africa and Namibia. This year he will be taking guests to Arizona, Yellowstone, Nova Scotia and Botswana. He is also a talented artist: 'Bird Impressions' is his acclaimed collection of bird paintings; and his latest book 'Ice Bound' follows his exploits in Antarctica'.



"Extremely knowledgeable and good at spotting species at great distances; generous with the telescope viewing and infinitely patient with us less experienced bird lovers."

Ruth and Cyril Faulkner 2018

"Simon was a great expert in the field, also patient, approachable and always looking out for everyone."

Steve and Carolyn Hill 2018



Simon Eaves

Simon is one of Speyside's keenest birdwatchers. He knows as much as anyone about the wildlife of the Scottish Highlands and has a real interest in scarce birds, mammals and identification challenges - with him as your guide you'll learn a huge amount about Speyside. That doesn't stop him taking guests further afield for us however; to places such as Tarifa/Donana and the Isles of Scilly.

Craig Round

Craig loves Speyside and the Scottish Islands and has led tours in Scotland for nearly 25 years, taking our guests regularly to Mull, Shetland, Fair Isle and the Outer Hebrides. He has a great combination of field naturalist skills, outgoing personality and incredibly sharp eyes; along with an astonishing knowledge of birds, mammals and insects.



"We come because of the guides, specifically Craig Round, as his all round knowledge is great and his bird call recognition is amazing."

Paul and Caroline Hastilow 2018

"Duncan was absolutely superb. How can anybody have so much knowledge on so many subjects, not just wildlife, but history as well and deliver it with such enthusiasm and clarity."

Jenni Anderson 2018



Duncan Macdonald

With 20 years' experience leading wildlife watching groups in the Highlands, Duncan is spending more and more time taking our guests further afield to the Pyrenees, Yellowstone, Bulgaria and Extremadura. He has a background in environmental education and conservation, which gives him great guiding skills, as well as knowledge of a wide range of birds, mammals, butterflies and bugs!

Sharon Cairns

Sharon's food has won her great plaudits during the time she has been working with us, having started soon after we began our holidays in Glenfeshie. She has produced many of the wonderfully irresistible culinary creations that have expanded waistlines over the years and also manages the day-to-day workings of the Steading on our Speyside holidays.



"Sharon did a fantastic job! We all gave her a round of applause on the last night!"

Richard Atkins 2018

"Julian was excellent in his care for us, doing all he could to help find and see the hoped for birds and sharing his extensive knowledge of the area. Nothing is too much trouble for him!"
Dorothy Hutchinson 2018



Julian Sykes

A native Yorkshireman, Julian now divides his time between there and Spain, so is the perfect guide to take you on our Andujar, Extremadura and Pyrenees holidays. Not that this stops him from leading tours to British Columbia, India, Estonia and Nova Scotia. He has a lifelong interest in wildlife and his friendly outgoing nature makes him a very popular guide and ideal member of the team.

Sally Nowell

Sally has travelled extensively to pursue her interest in wildlife watching, particularly birds, and has been based in Speyside for the last 22 years, so has an excellent knowledge of Highland wildlife. Sally is a keen walker and loves to try and get off the beaten track to discover the hidden corners of the Highlands. She has recently retired from a career working in the NHS.



"Sally was fantastic, worked her socks off, couldn't have asked for more, her attention to detail was impressive. I appreciated her flower interest and knowledge."
Sheila Turner 2018

"Kate was so good, it was hard to believe it was her first time as a guide. She was a very quick spotter and very good at giving information."
Jose Passmore 2018



Kate Mennie

Kate grew up in North East Scotland and has had a passion for wildlife from a young age. Her first job involved combining childcare and forest school learning, before spending last summer volunteering with the ranger service on the Isle of Mull. Kate mainly runs our Evening Mammal Hide in the Cairngorms, but also can be found Day Guiding and co-leading some of our Scottish Holidays.

Peter Elford

Before coming to Speyside, he and his wife now live near Ferness, Peter previously lived on Skye and lead trips to watch White-tailed Eagles. He has a bit of a thing for dragonflies... Working for Speyside Wildlife he gets to share his passion for wildlife with visitors from all over the world - so what's not to love?! Peter leads some of our day guides in the Cairngorms and co-leads Speyside weeks.



"Professional, patient and very skilled birder, with a great sense of humour. We understood that plans often changed, but we were always given notice of what to plan for."
Paula Smith 2018

"Both guides were friendly, very knowledgeable and made sure everyone was included. We were informed about plans and updated regularly when necessary."
Eileen Knight 2018



James Stevens

His passion for nature started at the age of three, growing up in the Cotswolds, after he memorised all of the birds on a poster in his room! James creates the films you can see on our website, when not filming in remote areas around the world and also co-leads some of our Scottish holidays based at the Steading in Glenfeshie. He's not a bad artist either!

Jack Ward

Since moving to the Cairngorms in 2010 Jack has lived and worked across the Scottish Highlands, travelling throughout the Hebrides and the far North West. He has a love of all things wild, with expertise in all UK deer species and birds and loves to explore the relationships between wildlife and their environment. His enthusiasm for wildlife is rivalled only by his desire to share his wildlife experiences with others.



"Especially I appreciated the breadth and depth of Jack's knowledge..... from geology to natural history to cultural history... and he was also an excellent birder."
Jonathan Pope 2017

"Crammed a lot into eight hours, which was rewarding. We will remember it as one of the most memorable days of our 25 years of visiting Speyside."
David Smith 2017



Tim Drew

With 30 years' experience behind him, Tim is a passionate ornithologist and a keen all-round naturalist who was born with 'binoculars around his neck'. He enjoys nothing more than exploring places in search of birds, butterflies and all other beasts and sharing his knowledge with others. He has a soft spot for the Scottish Highlands and Islands but has also travelled widely throughout Europe and Asia.

MEET OUR OTHER "EXPERTS"

Our guides are the expert birders and naturalists who lead the tours, but behind them stands the invisible group of other "experts", who are just as essential in making sure that every holiday runs smoothly and guests have a great time. They include the people who plan, research and organise the individual holidays; who arrange the logistics, provide the meals, deal with queries and generally keep the show on the road.

"We have travelled with Speyside Wildlife before and appreciate the quality of the product and the professionalism of the leaders and staff."

Peter and Brenda Wilson 2018



Sally Dowden

Sally owns Speyside Wildlife and is still very much hands on in the organisation. Responsible for the smooth running and complex logistics of the business, she recently instigated a wildlife identification course, designed to fill the lack of 'on the ground' identification skills in the Cairngorms, which is run by two of our wildlife tour guides.

Lisa Gunn

Lisa has been with us for thirteen years now and is responsible for all the accounting and systems management. Along with the daily accounting processes, company pensions, wages, budgets, contribution schedules and VAT, she organises the hire and vehicle logistics, all of which help to keep her busier than ever!



"I emailed in sheer desperation, trying to get me and my dad squeezed on to a watch when there was only 1 place left. She accommodated us no bother at all. Absolutely excellent night."

Angie Davis 2018

"Tania, many thanks for such good arrangements and especially for making the extra arrangements for our extension via Toronto."

Margaret and Mike Betts 2017



Tania Pedersen

Tania is one of the voices you'll hear when you call our office. She deals with all aspects of administration to ensure you have all the information you need for your holiday. She shares responsibility for organising all our overseas holidays, dealing specifically with the complex logistics of the long-haul trips.

Susanne McCafferty

Susanne has been with us for over twelve years. Born and bred in Speyside, she deals with all aspects of a selection of our Scottish and UK holidays, such as Orkney, Wales, the Scillies, Northumberland, the Outer Hebrides and Mull, as well as organising the day guiding in the Cairngorms and further afield.



"Susanne's kind, faithful and efficient communication has been a blessing, without her I rather doubt my dreams of participation in this lovely experience could've come to fruition!"

Mollie Dodd 2017

"Cath was absolutely brilliant and quietly and calmly suggested an alternative plan, which she then proceeded to organise very efficiently."

David and Gillian Smith 2017



Cath Wright

Cath develops our increasing contact with guests through talks for bird clubs, plus our own events up and down the country. Her background in hospitality and marketing, means she is best placed to ensure we get to see as many of you as possible around the UK and she will often be your first point of contact.

Eliane Barton

Eliane joined us, having returned to her native Speyside with husband Dave and daughter Skye. She shares the responsibility for our Overseas and Scottish trips and undertakes all aspects of the administration for a selection of these. She has just returned to the office, having been on maternity leave following the birth of her second child.



"Very many thanks for all the revised information and for your efforts on our behalf – much appreciated. We hope that Christmas will be a special time for you and your family."

David and Mary Penton 2016

"Very good service, with phone calls where needed to arrange our airport pick-up and found that we could leave luggage at the station. This helped us spend the final day in Inverness."

Sandra Peel and Marjory Woods, 2018



Rebecca Mackellar

Rebecca has recently joined us as part of the office team to cover maternity leave for Eliane, although she will now be staying on. She has been assisting Tania and Susanne with the administration of your Overseas and Scottish holidays and undertook the organisation of our Steading holidays.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

We do all we can to ensure we offer the very best standard of service and quality to our clients. 80% of guests return their questionnaires at the end of their holiday, giving us not only very valuable feedback, but also a consistent 90% satisfaction rate. 70% of guests on our trips have been before and in our 25th year, we had over 25 guests who had taken 25 or more holidays with us, a statistic we're very proud of.

Our Financial Guarantee

Keeping your money safe and sound



When you book through us your money is safe and sound. We comply with British and European legislation in respect of the travel industry, in accordance with the Package Travel, Package Tours Regulations 1992, where all guests booking with Speyside Wildlife are fully protected against the loss of any monies paid to us for a non-flight based holiday or trip (and repatriation if required) due to insolvency, by way of a Trust Account.

The holidays with flights are ATOL Protected, as we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 4259. In the event of insolvency, the CAA will ensure you are not stranded and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking. For further information, visit the ATOL website at www.atol.org.uk.

On any flight-based holiday, CAA regulations dictate that all guests must have insurance. Proof of this cover must be forwarded before we can confirm your final payment, however we strongly advise guests to take out insurance cover on booking any holiday, in case you need to cancel prior to departure due to accident or illness. You are free to use the information sent by us, or to take out your own policy.

Cairngorms National Park

Increasing quality whilst reducing impact



We've been granted use of this Brand by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. This is only given to those businesses who have agreed to a set of quality standards in respect of their visitor experience, together with a commitment to reducing their impact on the natural environment.



OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE:

To share outstanding fun-filled wildlife experiences, where you are always treated as an individual and not one of a crowd.

VisitScotland

Quality Assurance Scheme (Wildlife Experience)



Speyside Wildlife was one of 40 wildlife businesses to be assessed under VisitScotland's quality assurance scheme for Wildlife Experiences, achieving four star status for our day tours. An accolade that we've kept each year since. Watch out for the designation throughout Scotland.

Green Business UK

Green Tourism Business Scheme (Tour Operator)



We have been assessed by Green Business UK for the environmental credentials operating throughout our business and are delighted to have achieved a Gold Green Tourism Award in 2016.

The assessment looks at all aspects of the business, awarding credit for different areas, from our recycling policies, through our virtual office set-up, to our increasing use of social media and our newly designed App, eliminating excess paper usage. Consequently, we scored an 'excellent' for the purchasing, travel & transport and nature & culture sections and an 'outstanding' for innovation!

Environmental Policy

Doing our best for the environment



We're all increasingly aware of our impact on the environment, so we're doing our bit to reduce our footprint. Not only are we adhering to the "recycle, re-use, reduce" ethos, but we're also making a contribution to carbon-offset.

Speyside Wildlife has linked up with 'RSPB Abernethy', who have a long-term vision to extend the Caledonian Pine Forest within the Reserve. For the travel and transport included in our holidays, we contribute to the RSPB to help fund their Abernethy Tree Nursery. Each hour of air travel is offset by $\frac{1}{4}$ of a tree and each 1,000 kms of car travel is offset by $\frac{1}{2}$ a tree.

DAY TRIPS



"Day guiding is a great way to show off the spectacular Cairngorms National Park and its wildlife. Whether you are looking for something specific, or a broad introduction to the area, we use our local knowledge to help you find the species you are looking for."
Sally Nowell

Dates	To suit you, subject to guide availability and preferred itinerary. Our website will show which days are available
Guides	We have local guides who know the wildlife of the Cairngorms and around Scotland, so can tailor the day to highlight your interests
Cost	£195 standard day if booked online (£250 if booked manually via our office) £250 extended day if booked online (£295 if booked manually via our office)
Included	Wildlife guide on an exclusive basis for you and up to 6 guests. Transport for the day in comfortable 8-seater minibus or car
Packages	Tailor-made packages, including meals, accommodation etc. can be arranged to suit your budget - just ask and we'll be delighted to put a quote together for you
Insects	Biting midges occur in summer
Weather	Weather varies from cold to warm and sunny (-5°-25°C), with less rainfall than much of Scotland but snow possible in the mountains
Walking	Most walks will be on wide sandy tracks, except in the Cairngorms, where terrain is more steep and uneven, so walking boots are essential. Your guide will discuss walking options with you beforehand

Just some of what you could see:

Red-throated Diver	Dipper
Black-throated Diver	Ring Ouzel
Slavonian Grebe	Crested Tit
Golden Eagle	Scottish Crossbill
White-tailed Eagle	Snow Bunting
Osprey	Red Squirrel
Merlin	Mountain Hare
Peregrine	Pine Marten
Ptarmigan	Badger
Black Grouse	Otter
Red Grouse	Red Deer
Capercaillie	Roe Deer
Dotterel	Bottlenose Dolphin

Jane Hope: Crested Tit, **James Stevens:** Landscape, **Simon Eaves:** Crossbill, **Colin Scott:** Ptarmigan
Duncan Macdonald: Redshank

If you've only a day or two to spare, or you'd like to see the wildlife of the Cairngorms but don't know where to start, then a day out with one of our wildlife guides is just for you.

- Our expert guides have a wealth of knowledge about the wildlife of Scotland
- Book your own private guide and comfortable minibus for up to seven guests
- Target the species you want to see in the Cairngorms National Park and wider area
- Collection from your accommodation or meeting place of your choice
- Combine this with an evening at our wildlife watching hide
- Ideal for families, small groups, couples or individuals
- Perfect gift for birthdays, anniversaries, retirement etc.

The Cairngorms National Park is home to some of our most iconic but elusive species of wildlife. Finding them in this vast and spectacular landscape can be a real challenge, especially if you have limited time or are unfamiliar with the area. Our expert local guides know the area intimately, so can take you to the best locations to help you find the species you'd most like to see. Your guide will use their experience and field skills including listening to bird calls and recognising animal tracks and signs to help you find and identify species. They can tell you about the behaviour and general biology of the species that you find in the Highlands,

We can provide an itinerary that matches your specific wildlife wishes. Alternatively, if you'd just like to see a diverse range of Highland species, then leave that to us. On the day, we'll judge the weather and decide where the wildlife can be found. In our comfortable 8-seater minibus we'll take you through different habitats, to find the best wildlife. The day can include as much, or as little walking as you'd like.

Two or three days before your day out, your guide will contact you to discuss what you'd like to see and any specific requests that you may have. They'll also agree a start time with you and the best place to meet, this may be from your accommodation in the Grantown-Aviemore-

Kingussie area, but it may be elsewhere, depending on the itinerary you decide upon. Standard days out last around eight hours (normally 9am-5pm) and extended days out last around ten hours, with an early start or later finish.

To help you choose the best day, we've given you our suggested itineraries, showing the different habitats you could visit and some of the species that can be found there. These are our favourites, but if you'd like to do something different or do a combination of different itineraries, then please email us or discuss it with your guide when they get in touch with you.

If you're staying outwith the Spey Valley, we can organise an exclusive day out, subject to mileage and guide availability and give you a specific price.



"A day with one of our guides makes a great gift for anyone with an interest in Scottish wildlife. I've taken people out for a special birthday gift, a retirement present or simply as a family treat. We try and cater for everyone's needs, whatever age or level of interest." Sally Nowell



Pine Forest - Visit the ancient Caledonian Pine Forest for Crested Tit, Scottish Crossbill and maybe even the chance of the elusive Capercaillie. Mammals may include Red Squirrel and Roe Deer. This itinerary involves a degree of walking on good tracks and trails through the forest. Wildlife can be found year round, but the best seasons can be autumn, winter and spring. Autumn and winter can be some of the best times to look for Capercaillie.

Cairngorm Mountains - Early morning in the spring is the time to see Black Grouse in the foothills of the Cairngorms but for Ptarmigan, Snow Bunting, Dotterel and Ring Ouzel we take the funicular railway up Cairngorm mountain and have special permission to go out from the top station on to the mountain and walk to the summit. The walk is on good paths, but does require walking shoes or boots and suitable clothing. Wildlife can be seen on the higher tops year-round. Ptarmigan, Snow Bunting and Mountain Hare are present all year; Ring Ouzels arrive from mid-March onwards and Dotterel are present from May until early August. A longer walk into the Cairngorms on lower tracks can also be taken dependent upon levels of fitness..

Moorland and Moray Firth - Explore vast open moorlands and windswept lochs for divers, Osprey, Merlin, Peregrine, Red Kite and Red Grouse, before heading to the Moray coast for Osprey (during the summer), seaduck (winter), waders and terns. Dependent on tide times, there's a chance of Bottlenose Dolphin. This itinerary involves more time driving, so may be suitable for the less

mobile. Divers can be found on freshwater lochs during the breeding season from April through to the end of September, when they relocate to the coast and winter on the sea. The winter months on the Moray Coast can be excellent for seaduck, including Common and Velvet Scoter and Long-tailed Duck, as well as wintering waders including Purple Sandpiper.

Highland Glen - Visit a spectacular local glen for Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Peregrine, Merlin, Ring Ouzel, Red Deer, Mountain Hare and Wild Goats. We drive through spectacular scenery into the heart of the mountains and then take a low level walk further into the glen on good gravel tracks. A broad range of wildlife, including the eagles, can be found all year. The Red Deer rut takes place from late September through October.

Woodland Walks - Local woods provide tranquil location to look and listen for Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and other woodland birds in the spring. Peregrine breed on crags and Ospreys are regularly seen throughout the spring/summer. We can walk to a viewpoint if you wish, to get stunning views across to the mountains and surrounding glens. This itinerary does require a reasonable degree of fitness. The best time to visit for migrant birds, is from late April through to August. We'll combine this habitat with other lowland woods throughout the Strath.

River Spey Walk - During spring or early summer the famous 'River Spey' will be teeming with birdlife; Dipper, Goosander, Grey Wagtail,

Goldeneye, Common Sandpiper and feeding Swifts, Swallows and martins with a chance of Otter. In summer the riverbanks can be good for butterflies, including Dark Green Fritillary. In winter, the river provides a calm and tranquil place for Red-breasted Merganser, Goldeneye and other resident birds.

Our Cairngorms National Park - If you've never been before and you want to see what makes this place special, from the landscape, to the wildlife, then just leave it to us. We know all the nooks and crannies in the Cairngorms and the best time of year to visit them. We'll make sure we target the Scottish specialities and leave more than enough room to drink in the scenery and marvel at the landscape. Golden Eagles in the glens, Red Deer on the hills, Ptarmigan on the mountains and Crested Tits in the forests; we can decide what's best for you..

Capercaillie Policy

Capercaillie can be found in the forests of the Cairngorms National Park, but they are, for whatever reason, a declining species that are easily disturbed. We minimise any disturbance at crucial times to help protect the birds, by adhering to the following policies:

We won't take guests to look specifically for Capercaillie before 9.00am during the lekking period (1 March - 31 May).

When going into Capercaillie habitat, we always stay on marked tracks and paths and never go looking off these.

When there is an alpha male (also known as a 'rogue' bird) in the area we won't go to see this bird. They are part of the lek, so we would be 'knowingly' disturbing them.

We suggest looking for Capercaillie through the autumn and winter months, when the birds can be easier to find. We won't be disturbing them then and young birds will have fledged and dispersed into the forests.



DUSK WATCH



"See some of Scotland's and the Cairngorms National Park's most iconic species, from our large and comfortable hide, allowing you to get within a couple of feet of Badgers and Pine Marten and of course, the Woodmice! An experience that will want you to come again and again"
Kate Mennie

Cost	£25.00 per adult, if booked online (£30.00 if booked manually via our office) £10.00 per child 8-14yrs, if booked online (£15.00 if booked manually via our office) Not suitable for children under 8yrs
Exclusive Use	£250.00 per evening, if booked online (£300.00 if booked manually via our office)
Opening Times	Nightly from Easter to October on an exclusive basis or as part of a group. From November to Easter on a request basis only for exclusive use or parties of 2 people or more. Pre-booking is essential. Start times vary with the seasons. In summer we don't start until 9:00pm, in winter we meet around 6:00pm
Group Size	Maximum 12 people in the hide
Insects	Biting midges possible during summer
Walking	A 10 minute walk on a wide sandy track from meeting point to hide
Access	Car access can be arranged in advance for those with limited mobility. The door is wide enough for wheelchair access with a ramp to it. Seating in the hide is at viewing level through large picture windows
Clothing	Warm, non-rustling, subdued outdoor clothing and walking boots or shoes. Advice on the "how to do it" of wildlife watching is provided on booking
Location	A meeting point map and meeting times are provided on booking. Use the map to find the meeting point, rather than "SatNav" which is unreliable. The hide is not located at our office
Photos	Excellent photographic opportunities for exclusive users and some incidental opportunities at other times. Flash photography is not permitted, but there is outside lighting
Kate Mennie: Pine Marten Jamie Sippitt: Badger	

Come and enjoy our famous "State of the Art" warm, comfortable hide in Speyside's Caledonian Pine Forest, for Pine Marten, Badger, plus Red and Roe Deer and more.

- Large, comfortable, purpose built hide, in the Cairngorms National Park
- We regularly see Pine Marten, Badger and much more!
- Red and Roe Deer are frequent visitors
- The animals come right up to the windows, you won't get any closer!
- You'll be accompanied throughout by our friendly, expert guide
- Hire exclusively and have the hide to yourselves
- Tawny Owl, Woodcock and Buzzard are occasionally seen

For a memorable wildlife encounter, spend an evening with our knowledgeable guide and watch the nocturnal creatures that visit our warm and comfortable, baited hide on the Rothiemurchus Estate in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park. Your guide will meet you just before dusk, at the location just outside Aviemore within the Caledonian Pine Forest and walk with you down the wide track to the hide.

Once there, they'll explain the habits and life cycles of the Pine Martens and Badgers that are the most frequently anticipated night-time visitors, while you sit back and relax and await their appearance. Whilst the animals are free and untamed and appear when they wish, years of understanding their nocturnal habits every night has ensured incredibly reliable sightings.

Red and Roe Deer may come to the viewing area whilst it's still light, but the visits by Pine Martens and Badgers will usually only occur once it is dark. The hide has outside spotlights however, allowing the animals to be seen clearly from the large picture windows without interference.

The hide has been designed to give the maximum viewing area possible for all the guests, without fear of disturbance to the nocturnal visitors. In addition, infra-red cameras give advance notice of

whatever animals are moving about in the forest around us. The animals will come to the viewing area at different times in an evening, but we expect that to occur within the 2-3 hours you will be in the hide.

Photographers prefer to take the hide on an exclusive basis. We'll meet you and take you into the hide and explain the anticipated behaviour of the animals and then leave you alone to capture the images you've always wanted. The outside lighting ensures flash isn't needed and indeed can't be used as it disturbs the wildlife.

The BBC have filmed here over the years for both The One Show and Springwatch and journalists from around the world have enjoyed the nocturnal antics of the animals that appear.



TAILORMADE TOURS



"All I can say is the trip went brilliantly. Thank you so much for all you and the team have done to accommodate us and be on hand to answer all our questions. You went out of your way to make things work out - whether that was the sorting birthday cakes or helping source moth traps or binoculars. The trip was a resounding success and all of us came back with stories and experiences that will last a life-time. Thank you for all you did to help." Nick Baker, Naturalist.
With a large group in Scotland, July 2017

Dates To suit you, subject to guide availability. We can advise on the best times of year to go to specific destinations, what can be seen at different times of year and where in the world is best for the wildlife you want to see

All of our holiday itineraries within the UK and overseas can be organised for private groups, with optional extensions and different levels of accommodation and meals available for most destinations

Guides We have a pool of guides, each with specific knowledge and interests, who have guided around Scotland and overseas

Cost All tailormade tours are individually priced according to the number of guests and your specific requirements

Included Your package can include any of the following: flights; ferries; trains; guides; accommodation; transport; meals; and any activities or entrance fees. We make all the arrangements, so you are left just to enjoy yourselves

Info All necessary information regarding travel, walking, weather, insects, meals, clothing and accommodation will be provided in advance of the tour, together with an appropriate species list, notebooks and pens

Perry Fairman: Guests in the Highlands, Arriving on Handa
Mary Braddock: Golden Eagle
Jane Hope: Red Squirrel

For bird clubs, tour operators and friends. Take the hassle out of your group trip and let us arrange all the details, whether in Scotland or overseas, at any time of the year.

- Design your own holiday the way you want it - anywhere you want it!
- Guiding, accommodation, meals, transport etc. can all be taken care of
- Birds, mammals, plants and insects can all be included in what you see
- Our guides have a wealth of knowledge, in Scotland and around the world
- Take exclusive use of our Steading in the Cairngorms National Park
- Combine wildlife watching with culture and heritage to suit your wishes
- Take the hassle out of the organisation and let us arrange it for you

Bird Clubs, groups of families or friends, school parties and tour operators come to us to organise private groups for them. Sometimes it's a specific itinerary based on what they'd like to see, sometimes they rely on us to design a tour. Either way, they want us to take the hassle out of organising their holiday, so they can concentrate on enjoying the wildlife.

For larger groups in Scotland, there is the option of staying at our exclusive Steading in Glen Feshie, in the Cairngorms National Park, allowing the days to be tailored specifically to your requirements. Smaller parties can rely on us to find them appropriate accommodation close to good birdwatching experiences. Wherever it is, our guides will seek out the wildlife you want to see and take you around in comfortable 8-seater minibuses.

Enjoy the spectacular mountains, moorlands and pine forests of the Cairngorms looking for all the grouse species, plus Dotterel, Ptarmigan,

Scottish Crossbill and Crested Tit, together with Red and Roe Deer; Red Squirrel and Pine Marten; experience the majesty of sea cliffs on Shetland for auks, Puffins and Gannets, combined with cetacean watching from land and sea and the night-time experience of Storm Petrels churring on Mousa; walk through the Machair of the Outer Hebrides, alive with the sounds of breeding waders and the distinctive call of the Corncrake, then seawatch for Long-tailed and Pomerine Skuas on their spring passage; sample the delights of intimate seabird encounters on the islands off Mull, whilst looking for White-tailed and Golden Eagles, the latter at their highest breeding density in Europe.

Let us know when you want to come, what type of accommodation you'd like and how many will be in the group and we'll do the rest. Our professional guides will take you through beautiful landscapes to show you the finest wildlife you'd like to see.



PREDATORS OF SOUTH EAST SPAIN



"This Southern Spanish holiday has it all, with a mouth-watering bird and mammal list outwith our two major target species, the rare and nocturnal European Genet and the much rarer and thankfully diurnal big cat, Iberian Lynx. Add to that the possibilities of Lammergeier, Greater Spotted Eagle and Great Bustard, how can you resist!" Julian Sykes

Dates	Wed 16 - Thu 24 Jan 2019
Price	£1,995
Deposit	£400 Single Supp £200
Leader	Julian Sykes
Flights	EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included Outbound: Morning Gatwick-Alicante Inbound: Afternoon, Malaga-Gatwick
Weather	The weather will be mixed (0°-20°C). Expect sun, showers and possibly snow, with cold winds on high exposed plains
Walking	Varied, from wide tracks, to forest paths. Walking boots are recommended
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 9
Insects	Not anticipated this early in the season
Accom	Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	7
Just some of what we hope to see:	
Iberian Lynx	Lammergeier
Genet	Black Vulture
Spanish Ibex	Purple Swamphen
Otter	Great Bustard
Mouflon	Slender-billed Gull
Black-necked Grebe	Black-bellied Sandgrouse
Glossy Ibis	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse
Greater Flamingo	Iberian Green Woodpecker
White-headed Duck	Calandra Lark
Golden Eagle	Bluethroat
Spanish Imperial Eagle	Rock Sparrow
Booted Eagle	Rock Bunting
Julian Sykes: Genet, Iberian Lynx, Great Bustards, Glossy Ibis, Mouflon, Greater Spotted Eagle Duncan Macdonald: Lammergeier	

Raptors, bustards, sandgrouse, waterbirds, mammals, along with a night time vigil for Genet, plus morning and evening searches for the rare endemic cat - Iberian Lynx

- Night visit to the mountain forest looking for Genet
- Sierra de Cazorla for Lammergeier, Spanish Ibex and Red Squirrel
- Beautiful remote hotels in a variety of habitats
- Steppe specialities: Great Bustard, Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse
- Glossy Ibis, Purple Swamphen, Greater Flamingo, Bluethroat
- Chance of the world's rarest cat - Iberian Lynx
- Spanish Imperial, Golden and Booted, plus chance of Greater Spotted Eagle

After a morning flight into Alicante we'll spend the afternoon in the Santa Pola area, visiting the salt pans and the excellent wetland of El Hondo. Waterbirds such as Greater Flamingo, Slender-billed Gull and Purple Swamphen are here, plus raptors which include Booted Eagle, Marsh Harrier and Osprey, but the real prize is one of the few Greater Spotted Eagles that over-winter here. Late afternoon we head inland to our charming rural base for the next three nights.

2-3 The next two days are very different, with the highlight being an evening visit to the Muela de Cortes National Reserve, for the incredibly elusive and nocturnal Genet. The earlier part of the day will be spent around the nearby Albufera d'Valencia - a huge wetland with vast numbers of waterbirds and wildfowl, including Glossy Ibis, Great White Egret,

wildfowl and waders. This area always tends to produce a surprise or two, with Black Stork being a regular winter visitor; along with Common Crane and Ferruginous Duck - you never know!

The next day will be spent on the Albacete Plains, where we hope to have a fabulous time getting close views of Great Bustard, along with chances of Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, plus flocks of Calandra Larks, Rock Sparrows and Corn Buntings. With all these birds you are never too far from a patrolling raptor; with Merlin, Hen Harrier; or our first Golden Eagle being a distinct possibility.

4-5 Today we head south into Northern Andalucia, passing through some prime plains habitat and with luck could find more roadside steppe species such as bustards, sandgrouse and larks. We continue over the mountains of the regional northern border of



"I really look forward to getting back to my adopted corner of Spain in January, to beat the 'Winter Blues' of the U.K. The climate can be lovely and to feel the warmth of the midday sun as we are searching these fantastic areas is so uplifting and a real pleasure to be part of. This climate is also conducive to flowers blooming, butterflies appearing, reptiles basking and amphibians vocalising, which enhances any wildlife tour." Julian Sykes



Andalucia and on to our hotel near the Sierra de Cazorla.

The next morning will be spent exploring the mountain Reserve and with our limited time, we hope to see one of their famous Lammergeiers, part of a very successful re-introduction several years ago. We shall climb the mountain roads to Rambla Seca - a dramatic place where the weather and cattle grazing mould the vegetation and landscape.

Birds of prey cruise the limestone ridges, where lots of Griffon Vultures patrol. Golden Eagle and Peregrine might join them and there's always the chance of a Lammergeier, which now breeds here after 30 years' absence! We shall also stop at known watchpoints to look for Spanish Ibex that can be found picking their way with ease over the treacherous rocks and scree slopes.

6-8 After breakfast we drive to the Sierra de Andujar, which is arguably the best place in the world to see the incredibly rare Iberian Lynx. Our timing will ensure we have our first try for this exquisite mammal that afternoon, in the mountains of this wonderful Reserve.

The next two days will be spent exploring the Sierra, a contrasting Regional Park, with some of the best representations of true Mediterranean Forest still surviving in Europe. The area forms part of the Sierra Morena Mountains and has a landscape of hills and mountains formed from granite, quartz and slate, which is bordered by two rivers - the Jandula and the Yeguas. Only 400

or so Iberian Lynx remain in the wild, so we shall spend every early morning and late afternoon searching for this secretive animal from strategic watchpoints.

The rest of the time will be spent walking and driving the roads and tracks within the Reserve, along with time to relax in the afternoon around the hotel before our evening vigil. This Natural Park is also home to the rare and magnificent Spanish Imperial Eagle, along with many other raptors including Golden Eagle, Goshawk and Black and Griffon Vultures.

The tranquil rivers, separating a series of reservoirs with dramatic dam walls, that attract Rock Sparrow, Blue Rock Thrush and Crag Martin, with Otters fishing the river below, will be in marked contrast to the lush vegetation of the rest of the trip. Everywhere we look there will be Firecrests, Iberian Magpies, Nuthatches, Short-toed Treecreepers and Crested Tits. If time allows, we shall even take a drive up to the Santuario Virgen de la Cabeza - a dramatic and historic building that's perched on top of a mountain in the centre of the Reserve.

9 On our final morning there could be another opportunity to go out early to look for Lynx. However, after breakfast we shall load the minibus and drive to Malaga, possibly stopping enroute, before our flight home.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Day 1 | Fly to Alicante.
Exploration of El Hondo Reserve
3 nights at Casas de Benali, Valencia |
| Days 2-3 | An exploration of Albufera d'Valencia wetlands and the Albacete Plains.
Evening visit to Muela de Cortes Natural Reserve |
| Day 4 | Transfer to Andalucia
1 night at Sans Julian Hotel Rural |
| Day 5 | Exploration of the Sierra de Cazorla before transferring to the Sierra de Andujar
4 nights at La Caracola Hotel Rural |
| Days 6-8 | Exploration of the Sierra early morning and late evening for Iberian Lynx |
| Day 9 | Transfer to Malaga for flight home |



ANDUJAR LYNX



"I have been incredibly lucky to see the rare and sometimes elusive Iberian Lynx on many occasions and the thrill just does not lessen. For over 10 years I have been visiting the Sierra de Andujar and have come to know it intimately, having spent hours scanning this beautiful landscape for a glimpse of this stunning big cat." Julian Sykes

Dates Fri 25 - Tue 29 Jan 2019

Price £1,295

Deposit £250 **Single Supp** £100

Leader Julian Sykes

Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Malaga
Inbound: Afternoon, Malaga-Gatwick

Weather Probably a mixture of sun and showers (5°-20°C), warmer in lowland areas but can be cool in the mountains

Walking There will be some short walks up to 2km on level paths, slightly rockier in the mountains

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 5

Insects Biting insects are not usually a problem

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 7

Day 1 Fly to Malaga and transfer to our base on the edge of the Natural Park, stopping enroute at Laguna Dulce
4 nights at La Caracola Hotel Rural

Days 2-4 Birdwatching and wildlife exploration in Sierra de Andujar

Day 5 Transfer to Malaga for our flight to the UK, with time at the Guadalhorce Estuary

Just some of what we hope to see:

Iberian Lynx	Spanish Imperial Eagle
Otter	Golden Eagle
Wild Boar	Goshawk
Mouflon	Little Owl
Spanish Ibex	Iberian Green Woodpecker
Greater Flamingo	Iberian Magpie
Black Vulture	Hawfinch

Julian Sykes: Iberian Lynx, Spanish Imperial Eagle

Andujar holds Spain's most thriving population of Lynx, the world's most endangered cat and yet it's one of its best kept secrets.

- Perfectly placed accommodation in the Natural Park
- Spanish Imperial Eagle, Golden Eagle, Black Vulture
- Visit local wetlands for wildfowl and Greater Flamingos
- Iberian Magpie, Hawfinch, Hoopoe, Firecrest
- Bats, Otters, Wild Boar, Red and Fallow Deer
- Beautiful scenery with remnants of true Mediterranean Forest
- Fine Spanish cuisine at the end of each day

After our morning flight to Malaga, we drive north to the Laguna Dulce where we shall spend a little time looking at wildfowl, which could include White-headed Duck and Red Crested Pochard. Greater Flamingos feed in the shallow waters and occasionally Purple Swampheens can be found moving through the extensive reedbeds. We shall enjoy lunch overlooking open fields and hope to see Merlin, Hen Harrier and Calandra Lark, later driving on to our charming hotel in the heart of the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where our rooms overlook deciduous woodland, with a small bird hide on site. Birds around the hotel include Azure-winged Magpie, Firecrest and Short-toed Treecreeper. If time allows, we might make our first visit to one of the viewing areas in the hope of finding an Iberian Lynx.

2-4 Three full days will be spent in the Sierra de Andujar, a contrasting region with some of the best representations of Mediterranean Forest still surviving in Europe. It forms part of the Sierra Morena Mountains and has a landscape of hills and mountains formed from granite, quartz and slate, which is bordered by the Jandula and Yeguas rivers. This Natural Park is home to the elusive and highly endangered Iberian Lynx, of which only 400 or so remain in the wild. We shall spend early mornings and late afternoons searching for this secretive animal from strategic points around the sierra. The rest of the time will be spent walking and driving within the Reserve, along with time to relax in the

afternoon at our hotel before our evening vigils. This Natural Park is also home to the magnificent Spanish Imperial Eagle and many other sought-after raptors, including Golden Eagle, Black Vulture and Goshawk. The tranquil rivers, separated by a series of reservoirs, with dramatic dam walls, attract Rock Bunting, Rock Sparrow, Crag Martin and Blue Rock Thrush, with the possibility of Otters fishing the river below. We shall also hope to see Iberian Magpies, Short-toed Treecreepers, Firecrests, Nuthatches and Crested Tits.

5 On our final day, we have an optional early start to look for Lynx. After breakfast we'll make our way back to Malaga Airport, visiting the nearby Mediterranean coastline. Here we hope to find Western Yellow-legged and Mediterranean Gulls, Gannets and possibly Common Scoter offshore, with Booted Eagle and Marsh Harrier over the nearby Nature Reserve. We then take our flight back to the UK.





Cameron Taylor

Pine Marten at Our Hide. Details page 12



Sue and Bill Gill

Snow Bunting, Spring Birds. Holiday details page 48

*Just a few of the images
guests and guides have taken
on Speyside Wildlife trips*



David Petts

Arctic Tern, Outer Hebrides Details page 46



Terry Swainbank

Otter Watching, Andujar. Holiday details page 16



Chris Piper

Pale-billed Woodpecker, Costa Rica. Holiday details page 24



David Petts

Ruff, Outer Hebrides. Holiday details page 46

MORAY FIRTH IN WINTER



"I am a little bit obsessed with Mountain Hare, they are not always easy to find but when you do, they never fail to bring a smile to everyone's face. At this time of year we seek them out in their glorious white winter pelage, along with white winter plumage Ptarmigan, just so beautiful."
Sally Nowell

Dates Mon 28 Jan - Fri 1 Feb 2019

Price £1,075

Deposit £200 Single Supp £300

Leaders Sally Nowell and Duncan Macdonald

Weather The weather will be mixed (0-10°C). Expect sun and showers, snow in the mountains and gusty wind on exposed headlands

Walking Varied, from wide forest tracks, to beaches and rocky shorelines. Walking boots are recommended

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5

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:

Long-tailed Duck	Red Kite
Scaup	Bar-tailed Godwit
Common Scoter	Knot
Whooper Swan	Purple Sandpiper
Red-throated Diver	Ptarmigan
Black-throated Diver	Snow Bunting
Great Northern Diver	Crested Tit
Red-breasted Merganser	Waxwing
Pink-footed Goose	Red Deer
Golden Eagle	Red Squirrel
White-tailed Eagle	Mountain Hare
Peregrine	Bottlenose Dolphin

Need to get away after a hectic Christmas to relax in the Scottish Highlands? We have just the thing for you. Fabulous winter seawatching and the Cairngorms in all their winter glory.

- Rafts of seaduck, including Common Scoter and Long-tailed Duck
- Red-throated, Black-throated and Great Northern Diver
- Huge flocks of geese, ducks and swans
- Good raptor list including Golden and White-tailed Eagle, Peregrine and Merlin
- Cairngorm Mountain for Snow Bunting and Ptarmigan
- Mountain Hare, Red Deer, Bottlenose Dolphin and much more
- Charming hotel with pool and spa, overlooking the Moray Firth

We meet at our hotel overlooking the Moray Firth in time for dinner and a chat about the coming days. As the days are shorter, there will be no early starts and plenty of time for rest and relaxation at the end of each day. The hotel has a spa for those who wish to indulge.

We shall keep the itinerary flexible to maximise our birdwatching opportunities, but often on the rocky shoreline in front of the hotel, Purple Sandpiper can be seen and a small population of Pale-bellied Brent Geese, probably from the Svalbard population, have made the place their home. Even Snow Bunting can spend the winter on the beach.

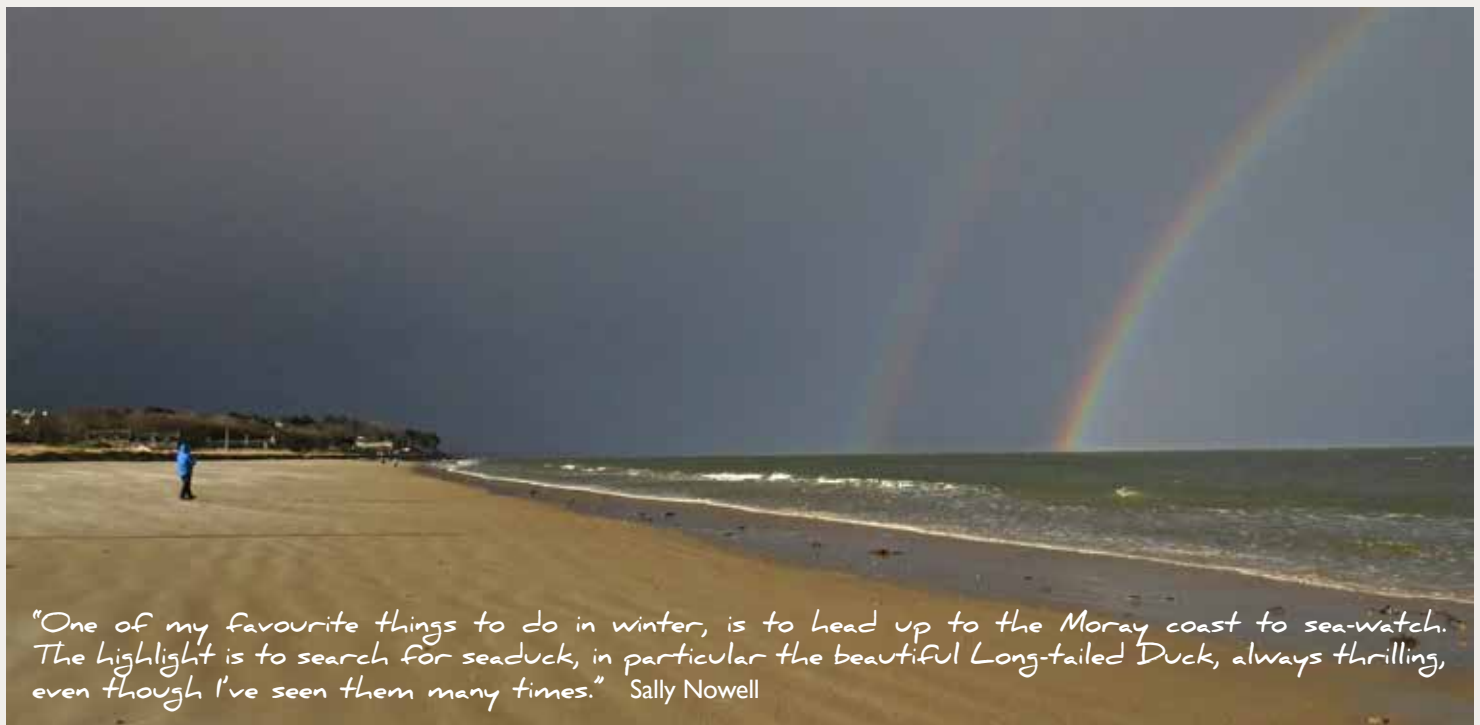
2-4 On the Moray Firth, Britain's finest gathering of seaduck can be seen - vast rafts of Common with Velvet Scoter and

parties of Scaup and Red-breasted Merganser. Long-tailed Duck and Eider are common and there'll be Slavonian Grebe and Red-throated and Black-throated Diver.

Each day out will take us in a different direction. On one we'll explore the fields, harbours and inlets of the Moray Firth. Under bright, wide skies, estuaries and beaches are strewn with Oystercatcher, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Wigeon and Pintail. Noisy skeins of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese, constantly on the move, feed in barley fields, often with Barnacle Geese or Greenland White-fronted amongst them.

This season can bring scarce shorebirds, with beautiful seaduck and divers coming into the harbours, where more Purple Sandpipers





"One of my favourite things to do in winter, is to head up to the Moray coast to sea-watch. The highlight is to search for seaduck, in particular the beautiful Long-tailed Duck, always thrilling, even though I've seen them many times." Sally Nowell

can be seen. Rare gulls include Glaucous and Iceland, which often follow the fishing boats and Little Auk can be driven down from the north.

Venturing further north along the firth, we'll spend time on the the beautiful and slightly milder Black Isle, including the picturesque village of Cromarty. The Black Isle and Inner Moray Firth have one of the driest climates in Scotland. The rolling farmland is interspersed with plantation and scrub. It is also nearly surrounded by shallow firths that provide excellent habitat for the internationally important wintering wildfowl and waders. The farmland is rich habitat for Linnet and Twite, Yellowhammer and Skylark, Red Kite circle above and there is always the chance of something rarer.

The food-rich waters are important for seals and Otter and there's an excellent chance of Bottlenose Dolphins, (the largest in size in Europe!) close inshore, as they hunt for salmon on the turn of the tide.

We'll drive further north to scan the vast, internationally important inlet that is Udale Bay, where, like grains from a pepper pot, seaduck, grebes and divers can be seen scattered across the sea like nowhere else in Britain and Whooper Swans look glorious in the winter sun. We'll be looking all the time for rare ducks such as King Eider and Surf Scoter.

Weather permitting, we'll venture into the mountains of the Cairngorms National Park,

looking for all things white! Snow Bunting may be picking amongst the boulders of the ski area car park, as we scan for white Ptarmigan amongst the snow-covered tundra of the Cairngorms plateau!

On the moors Red Grouse form small parties, where Mountain Hare hide amongst the boulder fields and winter thrushes and scarce Waxwing regularly appear on berry bushes.

It's a fabulous season for close Golden Eagle encounters as they hunt low in the glens, while scavenging Raven flocks may harass one of our wintering immature White-tailed Eagles. With luck we may have closer views of Red Deer than we manage in summer, as they usually head to the lower hills in the winter:

This season, when the 'Northern Lights' can appear in the sky, is special for bird rarities and over the years we've found White-billed Diver, King Eider, Surf Scoter, American Wigeon, Waxwing, Little Auk, Long-tailed Skua, Northern Grey Shrike and many more.

5 After breakfast on our last day, with a final scan of the rocky shoreline in front of us, we shall say our goodbyes.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive Nairn
4 nights at The GolfView Hotel
- Days 2-4** An exploration of the Moray Firth, its harbours, estuaries and beaches, the Black Isle, Cromarty and Udale Bay, the Cairngorms National Park and local moors and glens
- Day 5** Depart after breakfast

Jane Hope: Ptarmigan, Nairn Beach, Brent Geese, Mountain Hare, Purple Sandpiper
Mark Denman: Long-tailed Duck, Snow Bunting
Craig Round: Whooper Swans



SOUTHERN INDIA



"There are many reasons to join this tour, from the possibility of 11 owl species, to Indian Pitta and other fantastic endemic or near-endemic bird species, plus Asian Elephant. However, my favourite is the chance of seeing the gorgeous Lion-tailed Macaque."

Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 2 - Sun 17 Feb 2019
Price £4,255
Deposit £950 Single Supp £500

Leaders Julian Sykes and local guides
Flights British Airways, scheduled
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Bangalore
Inbound: Morning, Bangalore-Heathrow
Internal, IndiGo Air: Bangalore-Kochi
Weather This is the dry season, but there is always a chance of some rain in the mountains. Days can be hot but cooler at night, especially at higher altitudes 10°-30°C
Walking Easy to moderate, on good tracks and roads, some of reasonable length but not too strenuous
Meals All included from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16
Only local cuisine at some hotels
Insects Can be a nuisance, so bring repellent
Accom Twin and single rooms/cottages all ensuite
Visa/Fees India Tourist Visa to be obtained before travel, additional cost is £60 online or £120 in person at local visa centre. There are charges to use cameras and video cameras in the Parks, payable locally. Additional cost is around 50 Rupees per camera and 300 Rupees per video camera, per visit. This could total 5,000 Rupee (approx £55)
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Asian Elephant	White-bellied Woodpecker
Lion-tailed Macaque	Malabar Barbet
Nilgiri Tahr	Indian Pitta
Malabar Giant Squirrel	Malabar Grey Hornbill
Black Baza	White-bellied Shortwing
Mountain Imperial Pigeon	Malabar Trogon
Spot-bellied Eagle Owl	Nilgiri Blue Robin
Oriental Bay Owl	Nilgiri Thrush
Jerdon's Nightjar	Malabar Parakeet
Sri Lanka Frogmouth	Malabar Whistling-thrush

The regions of Kerala and Karnataka hold some fantastic and unique wildlife of the Indian Sub-continent, with lots of endemic or near-endemic species

- Asian Elephant, Malabar Giant Squirrel, Nilgiri Tahr
- Many sought-after and mouthwatering endemic species
- The awesome Lion-tailed Macaque at Valparai
- Spectacular views of Southern India's highest peak – Anamudi
- Indian Pitta, Black Baza, the gorgeous Black-and-orange Flycatcher
- An incredible 11 species of owl are possible!!!
- Fantastic cuisine within a colourful and vibrant culture

1-2 Overnight flight to Bangalore, then an internal flight to Kochi. We then travel to Thattekkad, where we have the rest of the day to explore local birding sites.

3-4 Thattekkad is home to most of the endemics of the Western Ghats. Over the next two full days, with a bit of luck, we could see White-bellied Treepie, Rufous Babbler, Crimson-backed Sunbird, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, Wynaad Laughingthrush, Malabar Parakeet and Malabar Grey Hornbill. There are an absolute host of owls, including Mottled Wood, Oriental Bay, Oriental Scops, Spot-bellied Eagle and Brown Fish - not a bad line-up! Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Red Spurfowl, Indian Pitta and the Grey-headed Fish Eagle are all likely. In the evening Jerdon's Nightjar is likely at Charupara, along with one or two other potential nocturnal species.

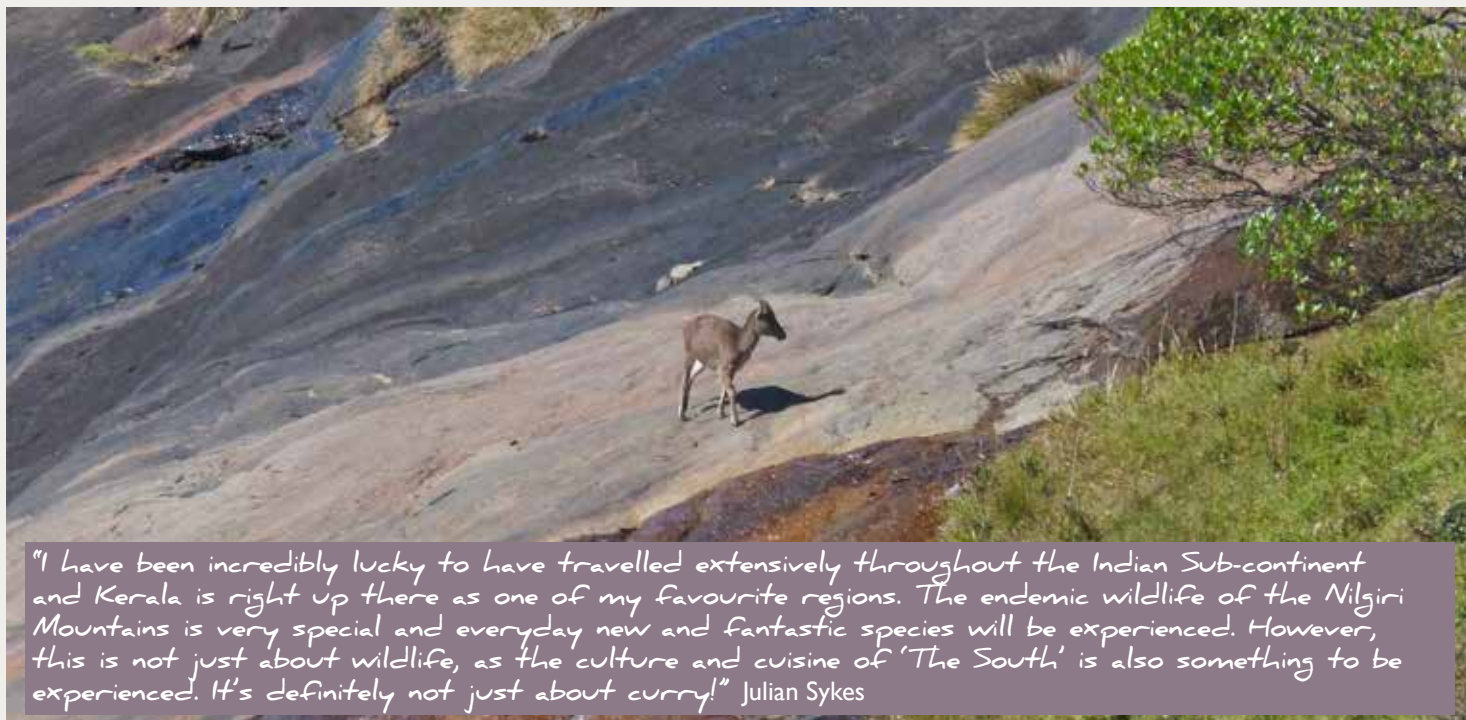


Thattekkad also boasts a good mammal list too, including Asian Elephant and Malabar Giant Squirrel.

5-6 We drive through to Periyar, where the fantastic National Park contains a variety of habitats, from grassland and dry deciduous forest, to extensive evergreen and riverine scrub. We shall spend a full day searching for some very special species, including the hard to find Wynaad Laughingthrush.

Other things to look out for are Brown-backed Needletails, soaring Black Eagles, the incredibly striking Black Baza, plus Pompadour Green and Mountain Imperial Pigeons, Chestnut-winged Cuckoo and the spectacular Asian Fairy Bluebird. Mammals possible here are the endemic Nilgiri Langur amongst plenty of Bonnet Macaques.





"I have been incredibly lucky to have travelled extensively throughout the Indian Sub-continent and Kerala is right up there as one of my favourite regions. The endemic wildlife of the Nilgiri Mountains is very special and everyday new and fantastic species will be experienced. However, this is not just about wildlife, as the culture and cuisine of 'The South' is also something to be experienced. It's definitely not just about curry!" Julian Sykes

7-8 Our journey through this fantastic region continues to the Bodi Ghats, looking for the rare Yellow-throated Bulbul, plus Blue-faced and Sirkeer Malkohas, along with Short-toed Eagle. Finally we proceed to Munnar expecting to arrive by lunchtime, leaving the afternoon to explore this new place. Rajamalai is likely to be closed for the Nilgiri Tahr breeding season, but you can see this target mammal in other nearby locations, along with lots more target birds. The next day we shall explore the sholas (high altitude montane forests) and grasslands searching for Nilgiri Pipit, Painted Bush Quail, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Black-and-orange Flycatcher, Nilgiri Flycatcher and White-bellied Shortwing, to name a few.

9-10 Today we head down to the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the rain-shadow areas of the southern Western Ghats in Kerala. It was declared a Sanctuary in 1984 due to its ecological, floral and geomorphological significance. We should see Asian Elephant, Sambar and Gaur (Indian Bison), along with White-naped Woodpecker, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Jungle Bush Quail and Blue-faced and Sirkeer Malkohas. This forest is also home to the Grizzled Giant Squirrel, which is very difficult to see, but you can also see both Brown Fish and Spot-bellied Eagle Owls along the river, if we are lucky.

After a few hours we shall set course for Valparai, arriving later in the day and possibly getting our first look at the stunning Lion-tailed Macaques. The next morning we can try again for this endemic

Nilgiri mammal, before driving off to Ooty, which is a hill station in the Nilgiri Mountains.

11-13 After a morning spent at the Cairnhill Forest Reserve, where the endemic Nilgiri Laughingthrush is present, along with Black-and-orange, Rusty-tailed and Nilgiri Flycatchers, we set off for the Kallatti Ghats to our accommodation at Mudumalai. This is one of the many Reserves located between the Western Ghats and the Nilgiri Mountains and the terrain is varied, with gorgeous ravines, watercourses, swamps and dry deciduous and scrub forests - an ideal birding habitat. Here we should see Jerdon's Bushlark, White-bellied Minivet, Sirkeer Malkoha, Indian Blue Robin and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch.

14 Today we finally drive towards Mysore, birding along the way, including some small roadside wetlands and with any time remaining, it may be possible to explore this historic city.

15 We set off for the city of Bangalore, with the prospect of a great birding stop enroute. We shall visit the famous heronry and explore (by boat) the islands on the Cauvery River at the Ranganathittu Wildlife Sanctuary. The boat enables close-up views of Painted Stork, Spot-billed Pelican, Indian River Tern, Great Thick-knee and many other species such as Marsh Crocodile. Following this, we continue through to our final destination Bangalore, for an overnight stay.

16 We catch our early flight back to London, arriving in the afternoon.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-4** Overnight flight to Bangalore, then on to Kochi and transfer to Thattekkad
3 nights Hornbill Camp
- Days 5-6** Transfer to the Periyar area for birdwatching and wildlife exploration, with owls as our focus here
2 nights Tree Top Hotel
- Days 7-8** Transfer to Munnar, wildlife watching in the Bodi Ghats looking for Nilgiri Tahr - 2 nights Tea County Hotel
- Days 9-10** Travelling days, as we make a detour for the wonderful Lion-tailed Macaque
1 night Stanmore Bungalow
1 night Taj Savoy Hotel
- Days 11-13** Transfer to Mudumalai, near the Nilgiri Hills - 3 nights Jungle Hut Hotel
- Day 14** Leave for Mysore
1 night Metropole Hotel
- Day 15** Travel to Bangalore, with a boat trip enroute - 1 night Chancery Hotel
- Day 16** Early flight back to London

Julian Sykes: Lion-tailed Macaque, Asian Elephant, Black-chinned Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Tahr, Madras Giant Squirrel, Sri Lanka Frogmouths



COLOMBIA



"Colombia is *THE* birding destination in South America with over 1,900 species recorded. What an array of hummingbirds, tanagers, parrots and so much more. All your Christmases in one!!"
Duncan Macdonald

Dates Sat 9 - Mon 25 Feb 2019

Price £6,395

Deposit £1,250 Single Supp £750

Leaders Duncan Macdonald plus local guide

Flights Avianca/British Airways, scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow-Bogotá
Inbound: Overnight, Bogotá-Heathrow
Outbound and Inbound go via Madrid
Internal: Pereira-Bogotá-Barranquilla,
Santa Marta-Bogotá

Weather It is the dry season but there can be showers in the mountain forests. Cool in the mountains, hot and humid on the Caribbean coast (12°- 35°C)

Walking Generally easy, with some steeper uphill sections and steps in the mountains. Flat easy walking on the coast

Altitude We shall be spending some time at high altitude, around 4,200m, so if you are susceptible to altitude sickness please consult your doctor for medical advice

Pace This is a multi-centre holiday with early mornings and some late finishes, so a good level of fitness is required

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 16

Insects Biting insects can be a nuisance, primarily on the coast, so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 10

Just some of what we hope to see:

Sword-billed Hummingbird	Fuente's Parrot
Shining Sunbeam	Colombian Screech Owl
Golden-headed Quetzal	Multicolored Tanager
Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan	Aplomado Falcon
Masked Saltator	Vermilion Cardinal
Orinoco Saltator	Golden-fronted Whitestart
Military Macaw	Lyre-tailed Nightjar
Santa Marta Parakeet	Blue-naped Chlorophonia
	Andean Condor

Duncan Macdonald: Blue-naped Chlorophonia
Sunset, White-tailed Starfrontlet, Santa Marta Toucanet
Joseph C Boone: Sword-billed Hummingbird
Patricia Frochaux: Andean Condors

With 20% of the world's bird species and a wealth of mammals, butterflies and orchids, Colombia is an extraordinary wildlife destination; a must on anyone's list.

- Incredible variety of birds from tiny hummingbirds to mighty condors
- Stunning scenery in high Andes with mountains all around
- Enormous hummingbird list including metaltails and the bizarre Sword-billed
- Great raptors - Savannah Hawk, Snail Kite, Black Hawk-Eagle and Andean Condor
- Antpittas galore! Chance to see several of this extremely elusive family
- Quetzals, toucans, parrots, tanagers, cotingas, manakins, fruiteaters, trogons.....
- Night-birding for Scissor-tailed and Lyre-tailed Nightjars plus several owl species

Famed for its diversity of wildlife, Colombia has more bird species than anywhere - 1,978 species to date! With 467 mammals, 623 amphibians and over 51,000 species of plants, we can't do it all, so our adventure will focus on the Andes, Santa Marta and the Guajira Peninsula. We start in Bogotá, where we spend our first night - then be prepared for a full-on experience!

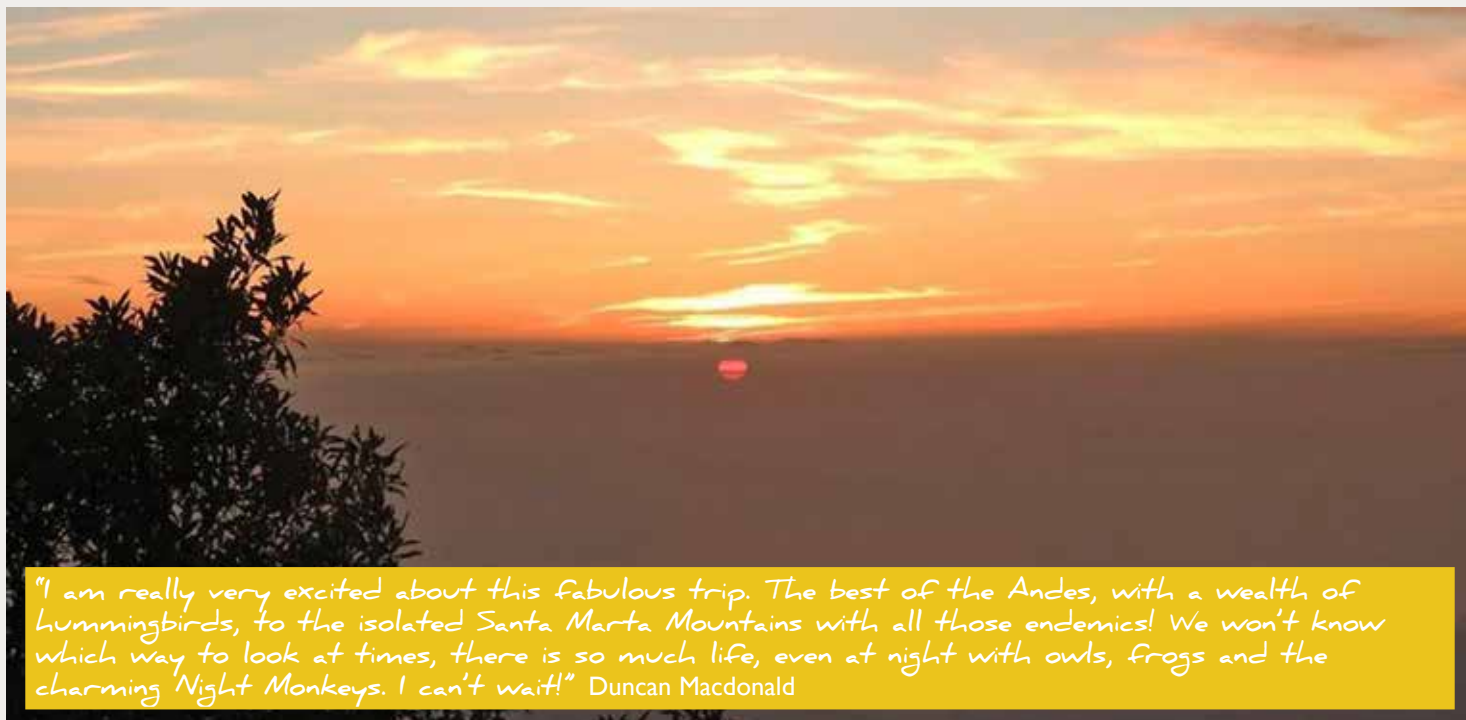
2-3 We leave very early for Chingaza National Park, where atmospheric mid-altitude forest holds a wonderful selection of birds including Black-billed Mountain Toucan, Plush-capped Finch and Golden-fronted Whitestart, but the stars may be the hummingbirds, such as Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Glowing Puffleg, Blue-throated Starfrontlet and the astonishing Sword-billed Hummingbird - a must see bird! The spectacular cloud-forests of Los Nevados National Park are incredibly bird-rich with toucans, parrots, tanagers, warblers, tapaculos, jays, doves and

more. Highlights may be Golden-crowned Redstart, Ocellated Tapaculo, Black-collared Jay and Masked Saltator - it may be a late return to our hotel.

4-5 Heading into the Andes we'll visit Alto de la Linea mountain pass, to search for high altitude species such as Fuente's Parrot, Golden-plumed Parakeet and Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan. We then drop down to our hotel at Otun Quimbaya on the western slope, before an owling walk in search of the very rare Colombian Screech Owl. We spend a full day exploring the wetlands, plantations and natural sub-Andean forest of Otun Quimbaya Reserve, enjoying species such as Golden-headed Quetzal, Multicolored Tanager, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Hooded Antpitta, Andean Solitaire and Red-ruffed Fruitcrow.

6-8 We head to Manizales and the nearby Rio Blanco Reserve alive with birds!





"I am really very excited about this fabulous trip. The best of the Andes, with a wealth of hummingbirds, to the isolated Santa Marta Mountains with all those endemics! We won't know which way to look at times, there is so much life, even at night with owls, frogs and the charming Night Monkeys. I can't wait!" Duncan Macdonald

It is hard to choose highlights - but elusive Antpittas come to feeders here, including Brown-banded, Bicolored, Chestnut-crowned and Slate-colored. We hope for Powerful Woodpecker, plus Barred and Green-and-Black Fruiteaters, Chestnut-crested Cotinga and Bronzy Inca hummingbirds. At dusk we'll search for spectacular Scissor-tailed and Lyre-tailed Nightjars plus Rufous-banded Owl. Next day we go up into the paramo, a fascinating high-altitude habitat in spectacular scenery, where we hope for Andean Condor, Andean Duck, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and a host of hummingbirds such as Viridian Metaltail, Shining Sunbeam, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Buffy Helmetcrest and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill.

9 This morning we visit Tinamou Reserve to look for - well tinamous of course, with Little Tinamou possible and Moustached Antpitta, plus more hummingbirds and tanagers at the feeders - our last Andean birding before our flight to Barranquilla in the lowlands.

10 An early start sees us heading to the Caribbean Coast and habitats ranging from mangroves, flooded forests and freshwater and brackish wetlands. We are into a completely different range of birds such as Savannah Hawk, Limpkin, Snail Kite, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Large-billed Tern and Green Ibis. We continue our birding enroute to Riohacha.

11 We visit Los Flamencos Reserve with its American Flamingos, but it is a great place for herons and egrets plus shorebirds, Aplomado Falcon, Burrowing Owl, Orinoco Saltator, Chestnut Piculet, Vermillion Cardinal and endemic Tocuyo Sparrow. After lunch we drive to Minca and more

incredible birding - the list of possible birds is huge, mouth-watering and impossible to sum up in such a small space! Black Hawk-Eagle soar overhead, Military Macaws screech in the trees, there is a huge variety of hummingbirds plus woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, flowerpiercers, toucans and North American warblers that winter here. From Minca we use 4x4 vehicles to travel to El Dorado Lodge in the Santa Marta mountains.

12-13 We now have two full days exploring the unique wildlife of this mountain range with many endemics, including several with the epithet Santa Marta - such as Santa Marta Parakeet, -Sabrewing, -Brush-Finch, -Blossomcrown, -Wood-Wren and more. Other great birds include Emerald Toucanet, Masked Trogon, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Slate-throated Redstart and beautiful Blue-naped Chlorophonia amongst a massive possible list.

14 We travel back to Minca and switching back to our regular vehicle, bird our way to the town of Santa Marta where we spend the night.

15 Tayrona National Park is a transition zone between the Santa Marta foothills and the Caribbean coast, with a variety of interesting habitats. Lance-tailed Manakin, Boat-billed Heron, White-necked Puffbird, Crimson-backed Tanager, Greater Ani and many more are likely, before we drag ourselves away for our flight to Bogotá and a farewell dinner.

16-17 We transfer to the airport for our overnight flight to London.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly to Bogotá, via Madrid
1 night Dann Norte Hotel
- Days 2-3** Travel to Chingaza NP for mid-altitude birding then a day in the cloud-forest at Los Nevados NP
2 nights Iguaima Campestre Hotel
- Days 4-5** High altitude birding at Alto de la Linea mountain pass then lower down at Otún Quimbaya Reserve
2 nights Yarumo Blanco Lodge
- Days 6-8** Day and a half exploring Rio Blanco Reserve then at high altitude in the high Andes at Los Nevados NP
3 nights Varuna Hotel
- Day 9** Visit Tinamou Reserve then fly to Barranquilla - 1 night Plaza Hotel
- Day 10** Birding on the Caribbean Coast and nearby wetlands - 1 night Taroa Hotel
- Days 11-13** Birding around Santa Marta Mountains
3 nights El Dorado Lodge
- Day 14** Drive via Minca to Santa Marta
1 night GHL Costa Azul Hotel
- Day 15** Birding Tayrona NP then flight to Bogotá - 1 night Dann Norte Hotel
- Days 16-17** Overnight flight back home, via Madrid, arrive UK on Day 17



COSTA RICA NORTH



"If you want to experience a real taste of the tropics without the discomfort of some rainforest destinations, then this is the place - easy-going and beautiful, with stunning rainforest wildlife and superb lodges. Our local guide Paco, has an unrivalled depth of knowledge, while being fun and friendly." Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 23 Feb - Sun 10 Mar 2019

Price £5,395

Deposit £1,000 Single Supp £650

Leaders Roy Atkins and Paco Madrigal

Flights British Airways scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-San José
Inbound: Overnight, San José-Gatwick

Weather It's the dry season, but there could be occasional showers (or prolonged downpours) in humid rainforests. Can be cool in the mountains and cloud forest, hot on the coast (12°-35°C)

Walking Generally easy level paths, up to two miles at a slow pace. There may be occasional uphill sections and some steps. Although distances are short you will be standing and scanning for periods of time

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 15

Delicious local food at hotels and restaurants, some buffets, some menus. Rice and beans (the national dish) available everywhere, but not compulsory

Cool drinks and tropical fruit provided

Insects On occasion biting insects can be a nuisance - bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Great Tinamou	Resplendent Quetzal
Great Curassow	Keel-billed Toucan
Jabiru	Great Potoo
Sunbittern	Snowy Cotinga
Sungrebe	Hummingbirds galore
Swallow-tailed Kite	Monkeys
Scarlet Macaw	Three-toed Sloth
Spectacled Owl	White-nosed Coati

Approachable Central America, Costa Rica is a very friendly bite-size chunk of exotic rainforest adventure.....without the rough edges!

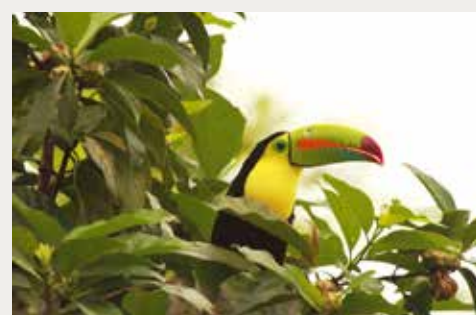
- Friendly, safe country, with 5% of the earth's entire species
- Around 400 bird species likely and a huge variety of other wildlife
- Resplendent Quetzal, Sungrebe, hummingbirds, toucans and macaws
- Sloths, howler monkeys, orchids and Arenal Volcano
- Lodges and hotels you won't want to leave
- The very best guides who'll make it extra-special
- Itinerary perfected by years' of experience - including Tortuguero!

Arriving in the afternoon we'll overnight at Heredia, near San José.

overhead and we've seen fabulous raptors here, such as Swallow-tailed and Grey-headed Kites.

2-3 After some exciting pre-breakfast birding in the hotel gardens, we journey to Tortuguero National Park by boat. Our lodge has beautiful gardens with trogons, toucans and nesting Oropendolas and the sea just yards away. We travel in covered boats to explore the labyrinth of waterways in this atmospheric Reserve - a wonderfully relaxing way to see the birds and mammals here. The forests are teeming with wildlife and boast specialties including Sungrebe, Agami Heron, Green-and-Rufous and American Pygmy Kingfishers, Green Ibis and enormous Blue Morpho butterflies. Three species of monkey are here, including South American Spider and we should see sloths - perhaps even two species! Mixed flocks of toucans call noisily, parrots screech

4-6 The forested grounds of Hotel Hacienda Sueño Azul, in the Caribbean lowland rainforest of Sarapiquí, host skulking forest-dwellers such as wrens, jacamars, ant-tanagers, woodcreepers and Antbirds. Nearby La Selva Biological Station, one of the most famous tropical research facilities, is a must-visit site, where lowland tropical forest, swamp, pasture, rivers and creeks support an outstanding abundance of wildlife. More than 420 bird species have been recorded here, 500 butterflies, 55 snakes and 120 species of mammals! This is where your Tinamou dreams may come true, since three species are here and we hope for trogons, caticues, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Snowy Cotinga and impressive Great Green Macaw. We may find peccaries, agoutis, sloths and monkeys too.



"Sitting on our own little boat slowly going down the channels of Tortuguero is such a wonderful experience. Monkeys and parrots in the trees above our heads, a Sungrebe picking insects from overhanging leaves, beautiful herons and egrets along the banks and the flash of kingfishers zipping past, from tiny American Pygmy to enormous Ringed Kingfishers, all make for a visit never to be forgotten - and that is only one of the places we visit!" Roy Atkins



7-8 Arenal is one of Costa Rica's active volcanoes, though it has gone rather quiet lately, so chances of seeing 'fireworks' may now be slim. Our accommodation provides fabulous views of the volcano, weather permitting and excellent birding opportunities in the gardens, while trails through the surrounding forests host Crimson-collared Tanager, Long-billed Gnatwren, Spotted Antbird, White Hawk, Great Curassow and three species of toucan. Feeders here attract colourful tanagers, woodpeckers, honeycreepers and oropendolas, plus remarkably tame White-nosed Coatis, a delightful relation of the Raccoon with a tail like a lemur! This is a fabulous place for hummingbirds, with seven species or more likely.

9 Dry tropical forests of the Guanacaste area create an almost vanished habitat, with Turquoise-browed Motmot, Mantled Howler Monkeys, White-throated Magpie-jay, plus orioles found nowhere else in Costa Rica. We'll visit a large cattle ranch where Limpkins and Snail Kites search for Apple Snails amongst the wet grasslands. Wood Storks, Jacanas, Muscovy and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks and a host of herons and egrets are found. The real speciality is the enormous Jabiru, one of the biggest and most spectacular storks in the world.

10-12 We'll enjoy more birding around the dry forest and salt pans here before leaving this idyllic place, then we travel down to the Pacific coast, making stops for birding enroute. Carara Biological Reserve, where humid tropical forest meets drier lowlands, has broad, bird-rich forest trails that are captivating at dawn,



with antbirds, parrots, pigeons, warblers and four species of trogon. We'll search for Royal Flycatcher, Orange-collared and Long-tailed Manakins, vivid Scarlet Macaws fly over our hotel and the grounds hold orioles, tanagers, antshrikes, woodcreepers, buntings, seedeaters and toucans, perhaps including Fiery-billed Aracari. Our boat trip on the Tarcoles River is a relaxed way to watch enormous numbers of herons, egrets, frigatebirds, pelicans and shorebirds, including Boat-billed Heron, Roseate Spoonbill and kingfishers, with American Crocodiles basking on the shore. We'll look for mangrove specialities such as Mangrove Black Hawk, Mangrove Warbler and Mangrove Vireo in the mangroves.... well obviously!

13-14 We head up into the misty highland cloud-forest, pausing at a wonderful spot where we hope to find one of the most exciting birds of the trip - the Resplendent Quetzal. There are new birds everywhere, with Slaty Flowerpiercer, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Yellow-thighed Finch, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Flame-throated Warbler and Fiery-throated Hummingbird, to name but a few. Near our hotel, more new species come thick and fast, Flame-coloured Tanager, Acorn Woodpecker, Collared Redstart, Torrent Tyrannulet, Sooty Thrush, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Ruddy Treerunner, plus a host of hummingbirds at the feeders, including Volcano, Scintillant, Stripe-tailed and Magnificent Hummingbirds. This place is simply idyllic!

15-16 We travel back across country to the airport, before our flight back home, arriving in London on Day 16.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Day 1 | Fly to San José
1 night at Hotel Bougainvillea, Heredia |
| Days 2-3 | Transfer to Tortuguero National Park
2 nights at Laguna Lodge |
| Days 4-6 | Transfer to Sarapiquí
3 nights at Hotel Hacienda Sueño Azul |
| Days 7-8 | Transfer to Arenal
2 nights at Arenal Observatory Lodge |
| Day 9 | Transfer to Guanacaste, birding
at Solimar
1 night at Rancho Humo |
| Days 10-12 | Transfer to Carara National Park area
3 nights at Hotel Villa Lapas, Tarcoles |
| Days 13-14 | Birdwatching and wildlife
at Finca Mirador de Quetzals
2 nights at Hotel de Montaña Suria |
| Days 15-16 | Easy day travelling back to San José
and the airport for our flight, arriving
in the UK on the morning of Day 16 |

Mark Denman: Sungrebe
Roy Atkins: Tortuguero, Resplendent Quetzal,
Green Violetear Hummingbird
Roy Cowley: Keel-billed Toucan
Ann & Gerald Turley: Two-toed Sloth



"If you are new to neo-tropical birding, or fancy revisiting it, this is a fantastic place to be. Less well-known and so less visited, Belize combines fabulous birding in a pocket-sized, warm and friendly country, with a stunning coastline and magnificent 183 mile-long reef."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 23 Feb - Sun 10 Mar 2019

Price £6,995

Deposit £1,350 **Single Supp** £750

Leaders Sally Nowell plus local guide

Flights British Airways scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow-Cancun
Inbound: Overnight, Cancun-Heathrow
Internal, Tropic Air:
Cancun-Belize City-Cancun

Weather It's the dry season, but there could be occasional showers (or prolonged downpours) in humid rainforests. Can be cool in the mountains, hot on the coast (12°-35°C)

Walking Generally easy level paths, up to two miles at a slow pace. There may be occasional uphill sections and some steps. Although distances are short you will be standing and scanning for periods of time

Meals All included from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 15

Insects Mosquitoes and other biting insects are likely at some places so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Jabiru Stork	Red-capped Manakin
King Vulture	Lovely Cotinga
Ornate Hawk-Eagle	Yacatan Jay
Orange-breasted Falcon	Black Catbird
Ocellated Turkey	Crimson-collared Tanager
Scarlet Macaw	West Indian Manatee
Stygian Owl	Baird's Tapir
Yucatan Poorwill	Yucatan Flycatcher
Black-crested Coquet	Yucatan Vireo
Cinnamon Hummingbird	Yucatan Nightjar
Tody Motmot	Yellow-headed Parrot
Keel-Billed Toucan	Yellow-lored Parrot
Dot-winged Antwren	Caribbean Elaenia
Vermilian Flycatcher	Botteri's Sparrow
Royal Flycatcher	

A fabulous, safe and welcoming Central America country, with a conservation driven heart and diverse habitats heaving with wildlife!

- Small country with a big birdlist - over 570 bird species recorded!
- Fabulous accommodation and spectacular habitats
- All areas visited within easy reach of our bases
- First-class birding, with species such as Scarlet Macaw, Keel-billed Toucan, Jabiru Stork
- Boat trip out to a beautiful reef, with option to snorkel in tropical waters
- Hummingbirds, manakins, toucans, parrots, owls, tanagers, raptors and so much more
- Visit to Mayan ruins in Guatemala

1-4 We fly into Cancun and spend the night here before our onward flight to Belize City the next day. Here we meet our local guide and drive through savannah, open farmland and hardwood forest, on the lookout for Short-tailed Hawk, Gray Hawk, Laughing Falcon and Fork-tailed flycatchers, enroute to Chan Chich Lodge. The lodge lies nestled in the forest of northwest Belize and is considered by many, one of the best birding properties in the world. Walking through magnificent forest and trails around the lodge, we search for Rose-throated Tanager, Olive-backed Euphonia, Green Honeycreeper, Dot-winged Antwren, Black-throated Shrike-Tanager and Black-faced Antthrush. We'll have fingers crossed for bigger targets too, such as Ocellated Turkey, Great Curassow, Great Tinamou and Ornate Hawk-Eagle - it is a birders' paradise!



We also hope to see some of the mammals here such as Spider Monkey and White-nosed Coatis and we'll take a night walk in search of Northern Potoo and Vermiculated Screech and Mottled Owl. Early morning birding may be accompanied by the calls of Howler Monkeys and hummingbirds may include Purple-crown Fairy and Long-billed Hermit.

5-7 We leave Chan Chich, taking a quiet back road route to maximize our chances of seeing other wildlife such as Red Brocket Deer, Peccaries and birds such as Crested Guan, Black Hawk-Eagle and Brown-hooded Parrot.

We shall be based for the next three nights at the family run Crystal Paradise Lodge, from where we'll visit the beautiful Mountain Pine Ridge in the foothills of the Maya mountains. It will be a little cooler at the higher elevation as we explore areas of mixed





habitats, where Rufous-capped Warbler, Acorn Woodpecker, Yellow-backed Oriole, Golden-hooded Tanager and Black-headed Siskin may be seen. There are good chances of Orange-breasted Falcon here, plus brilliantly coloured Lovely Cotinga and with luck, perhaps Ornate and Black-and-white Hawk-Eagles. We'll make a day trip into neighbouring Guatemala to see the incredible Mayan ruins of Tikal, a huge Classic Period Maya site and a UNESCO World Heritage Site - but also home to Ocellated Turkey, Crested Guan, Tody Motmot and Salty-tailed Trogon.

8-10 We travel to Blue Hole Reserve, famed for its caves and unique geological features, where we'll search for birds such as White Hawk, Keel-billed Toucan, Spotted Wood Quail, Emerald Toucanet and Red-legged Honeycreeper. Then we drive on to our accommodation in the heart of Mayflower Bocawina National Park, 7,000 acres of pristine tropical rainforest full of waterfalls, lush vegetation and a wide variety of birds, including the Keel-billed and Tody Motmot.

We'll visit Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, the world's first Jaguar Reserve. This humid, tropical forest area has a maze of trails, where we'll look for animal tracks, as well as birds such as Crested Guans, Great Curassow, Chestnut-head Oropendola and White-collared and Red-capped Manakin. With a dense population of Jaguar here, we shall always be hopeful of seeing one of these elusive but magnificent cats - but we would need to be lucky indeed!

11-12 We move on to the 16,400 acre Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, where our lagoon-side lodge offers comfortable air-conditioned accommodation. With 3000 acres of lagoon, swamp and marsh, waterbirds are our main target here, particularly the huge Jabiru Stork and 12 species of heron, plus Savannah Hawk, Snail Kite, American Purple Gallinule and an array of kingfishers, plus smaller birds such as Vermillion Flycatcher, Rufous-browed Pepper Shrike, Yucatan Jay and Yucatan Woodpecker. Our relaxed boat ride is a wonderful way to search for Sungrebe, as it picks insects from branches overhanging the water; plus elusive Agami Heron and roosting Boat-billed Herons. We'll also make an exciting night tour in search of Yucatan Poorwill, Northern Potoo and owls.

13-16 We head to Belize City Marine Terminal to catch the boat to Caye Caulker, our final destination. It's a change of pace for you to relax and soak up a bit of Caribbean calm, as we visit this tropical island, looking for Cinnamon Hummingbird, Yucatan Vireo, Mangrove Warbler and Black Catbird, with Magnificent Frigatebird and Brown Pelican overhead. The barrier reef is teeming with life and we'll take a boat trip, with optional snorkelling, in the crystal-clear waters over the reef, home for turtles, colourful fish, rays, sharks and other marine life.

On our final morning we transfer from Caye Caulker to Belize City, then it's a short drive to the airport for our flight to Cancun. We then take an overnight flight back to the UK, arriving in London on Day 16.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly from London to Cancun for an overnight stay
1 night Marriott Courtyard Cancun
- Days 2-4** Afternoon flight to Belize City and transfer to Chan Chich, birding the surrounding private Reserve
3 nights Chan Chich Lodge
- Days 5-7** Transfer to accommodation at San Ignacio. Visit Mountain Pine Ridge Reserve and Tikal Mayan ruins
3 nights Crystal Paradise Resort
- Days 8-10** Visit to Blue Hole National Park, Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary and Mayflower Bocawina National Park
3 nights Bocawina Resort
- Days 11-12** Travel to Birding Crooked Tree Reserve, with a lagoon boat trip
2 nights Bird's Eye View Lodge
- Days 13-14** Transfer to Belize City for a 45 minute boat to Caye Caulker. Visit to Caye Caulker Reserve and boat trip onto reef
2 nights Seaside Cabanas
- Days 15-16** Travel to Belize City for our flight to Cancun, then an overnight flight back to the UK, arriving on Day 16

Bob Gress: Yucatan Jay, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Ocellated Turkey

Alan Eickson: Golden-hooded Tanager, Orange-breasted Falcon

Roy Cowley: Howler Monkey



ESTONIA



"The forests of Estonia make you realise what we are missing in our forests - they have an atmosphere! Fallen trees are scattered on the ground and leaning on standing trees, providing wonderful opportunities for scarce woodpeckers such as White-backed and Three-toed, as well as owls such as Ural and Pygmy." Roy Atkins

Dates Thur 21 - Tue 26 March 2019
Price £1,895
Deposit £350 Single Supp £200

Leaders Roy Atkins plus local guides
Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Tallinn
Inbound: Afternoon, Tallinn-Gatwick
Weather Likely to be mixed weather, we have had lovely sunshine in the past, but it is a little unpredictable - expect cold with the possibility of snow (-10° to 10°C)
Walking Easy walking on level tracks, but waterproof walking boots are recommended
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 6
Insects Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Steller's Eider	Three-toed Woodpecker
Long-tailed Duck	Black Woodpecker
Scaup	White-backed Woodpecker
Velvet Scoter	Grey-headed Woodpecker
Bean Goose	Middle-spotted Woodpecker
White-fronted Goose	Nutcracker
Barnacle Goose	Goshawk
Red-throated Diver	Parrot Crossbill
Golden Eagle	Common Crossbill
White-tailed Eagle	Crested Tit
Ural Owl	Waxwing
Pygmy Owl	Great Grey Shrike
Hazel Grouse	Bearded Tit
Capercaillie	Penduline Tit
Black Grouse	Meally Redpoll
Common Crane	Snow Bunting
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Elk

Excellent birding in a little-known Baltic country with a wonderful range of habitats, from enormous marshes and wetlands to primeval forests and beautiful islands.

- Steller's Eider and other seaduck on their wintering grounds
- Woodland Grouse - chance of Hazel Grouse, Capercaillie and Black Grouse
- Up to 7 species of woodpecker likely including White-backed and Three-toed
- Atmospheric pine forests - home to Ural and Pygmy Owls and Elk
- Nutcracker, White-tailed Eagle, Rough-legged Buzzard, Great Grey Shrike
- Large flocks of Bean, White-fronted and Barnacle Geese
- Huge reedbeds at famous Matsalu National Park

1 Arriving in Tallin we are greeted by our Estonian guide and head to our hotel in south-west Estonia. The pine forests nearby are wonderfully atmospheric and depending on time we may search for Ural Owls along the forest edge, with a chance of Pygmy Owl too, or with luck even Elk or Raccoon Dog is possible!

2 Early morning finds us exploring Soomaa National Park where natural woodlands mix with swamps and rivers, making it perfect habitat for many Western Taiga forest specialities. This is a stronghold for Capercaillie and with luck we may find them collecting grit at the roadside or in nearby trees, or sometimes even lekking on the road! As the sunrise continues we shall search for woodpeckers, as this is the time of year they are drumming. This is a great place for Grey-headed, while Black,

White-backed and other woodpecker species are also regularly spotted. These same forests harbour Hazel Grouse, their thin whistled calls drawing attention to their presence, though they can be very elusive, but we hope to glimpse one crossing the path. After a refreshing lunch and some rest, the late evening will be spent looking for owls. Pygmy and Ural Owl have good breeding populations here and we hope to find mammals too, with chances of Raccoon Dogs or perhaps Elk - though early morning can be better for these.

3 We head over to delightful Saaremaa Island - a lovely place where Steller's Eiders spend the winter. Up to a thousand of these birds winter here, though at any one location around 300 birds is more likely. They often behave synchronously, all swimming and diving together in a tight flock



"Steller's Eiders pack incredibly tightly together in their wintering flocks off Saaremaa Island - then they all dive and surface at the same time! Meanwhile, scattered around the bay are Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, divers and plenty more, while the island has lovely woodlands for Nutcracker and woodpeckers - what a wonderful place!" Roy Atkins



and though they can be distant we have been lucky in the past to find birds close to shore too. They are joined here by flocks of beautiful Long-tailed Ducks, both Common and Velvet Scoters and other seaduck including Scaup, sometimes in large numbers. Divers pass offshore, as do flocks of migrating swans and geese, while White-tailed Eagles scan the shoreline from small islands off the coast. The woodlands on the island can be good for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and where the trees are more mixed Nutcrackers and Jays are possible, calling raucously from the trees. Great Grey Shrike and Rough-legged Buzzard can be seen on our way to Undva. After lunch at the guesthouse and a short rest we may go for an owling session, with chances to hear and hopefully see Tengmalm's and Pygmy Owl in Viidumäe Nature Reserve.

4-5 After breakfast we return to the mainland and head to north-west Estonia. After an enjoyable lunch at Haapsalu town we shall take a walk on the promenade and visit the bird-tower on the edge of the lake, where we have a fantastic view from the top and where several White-tailed Eagles may be seen, along with hundreds of Whooper and Bewick's Swans and plenty more.

We shall visit Põõsaspea, a small north-stretching spit of land and one of the best places for observing Arctic wildfowl migration. Thousands of Long-tailed Duck, scoter, Scaup, Goldeneye, Goosanders and other species pass here, often

with White-tailed Eagles nearby. Atmospheric pine forests hold Crested Tit, Willow Tit, Goldcrest, Hazel Grouse and Black Woodpecker.

We shall also visit Matsalu National Park, the oldest Ramsar area in Estonia and the most famous birdwatching area in the country, known as one of the most important breeding and stop-over sites for waterfowl and shorebirds in the whole of Northern Europe. Over 40 sq km, this Reserve consists of large open floodplains and coastal meadows, riparian and coastal woodlands, river delta and marshlands and shallow Matsalu Bay, with 3,000 hectares of reedbeds, numerous islands and seven birdwatching towers. Thousands of Whooper and Bewick's Swans and Bean, Greylag, Barnacle and White-fronted Geese are likely here, harvesting the grass of local meadows and fields. We hope to find White-tailed Eagles and have the chance of Bearded and Penduline Tits, plus a variety of ducks and perhaps early waders.

6 We head back to Tallinn, where we shall meet a local guide for a guided tour of the old town, with some of the best medieval architecture in Europe. Then, after lunch in a restaurant here, we return to the airport for our flight back to London.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Fly to Tallinn and drive to our hotel, then following day explore Soomaa National Park
2 nights Vanaõue Holiday Center
- Day 3** Travel to Saaremaa Island in search of Steller's Eider, Nutcracker and more
1 night Loona Manor Guesthouse
- Days 4-5** Drive to north-west Estonia for birding around Põõsaspea Peninsula and Matsalu National Park
2 nights Roosta Holiday Center
- Day 6** Transfer to Tallinn for a short tour of the city before our flight home

Sven Zacek: Ural Owl, White-backed Woodpecker
Remo Savisaar: Hazel Grouse
Mati Martinson: Steller's Eiders
Roy Atkins: Penduline Tit
Tarvo Valker: Nutcrackers
Mary Braddock: Great Grey Shrike



NORTH EAST 250



"This new route explores everything from Caledonian Pine forest, through mountain passes, to the diverse seascape of the north east of Scotland, full of birds, mammals and possible cetaceans!"
Kate Mennie

Dates	Sat 23 - Sat 30 March 2019
Price	£1695
Deposit	£300 Single Supp £200
Leaders	Julian Sykes and Kate Mennie
Weather	Weather can be extremely variable at this time of year so come prepared for everything from rain and wind to calm early spring sunshine!
Walking	Mostly easy walking on level paths up to 2 miles or perhaps a little more if rarities require it! We may be on our feet for a lot of the day even if not walking far
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects	Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year
Accom	Double, twin and single ensuite
Group	12
Just some of what we hope to see:	
Ptarmigan	Golden Plover
Black Grouse	Purple Sandpiper
Red-throated Diver	Bar-tailed Godwit
Great Northern Diver	Iceland Gull
Slavonian Grebe	Glaucous Gull
Red-necked Grebe	Short-eared Owl
Whooper Swan	Redwing
Pink-footed Goose	Fieldfare
Velvet Scoter	Waxwing
Long-tailed Duck	Crossbill
Red Kite	Snow Bunting
Hen Harrier	Mountain Hare
Golden Eagle	Otter
Peregrine	Bottlenose Dolphin

We'll visit some of the wonderful landscapes of north east Scotland, from Royal Deeside, to the rugged and varied coastline of the Moray Firth, through to Aberdeen Harbour

- Classic forests, upland moors, lochs and estuaries
- Chance of Mountain Hare, Otter, Bottlenose Dolphin
- Only Scottish mainland colony of Gannets
- Spectacle of UK's largest Eider population
- Gorgeous geese and divers in breeding plumage
- Breathtaking views around Royal Deeside and Balmoral
- Black Grouse, Ptarmigan, Golden Eagle, Snow Bunting all possible

1 We meet up in The Granite City and head inland to our lovely accommodation in Braemar, situated in the heart of Royal Deeside. Enroute we shall take the minor road from Aboyne through Glen Tanar; where roadside stops and a potential short walk, could produce some Caledonian Forest species, which with luck, could include our first crossbills. Early evening we shall reach our hotel where we spend the next three nights.

2-3 Royal Deeside offers some wonderful areas of ancient Caledonian Forest, upland moor and mountain. We shall be visiting the best of them, including the skiing area of Glenshee, where from the station car park we shall scan the surrounding mountainside for Ptarmigan, which should still be in their 'white' winter finery. Here

we could encounter Golden Eagles and Peregrine overhead and if we are lucky, a few Snow Buntings around the parking area itself. We shall spend time at the Muir of Dinnet and hopefully make a short walk around the stunningly beautiful Loch Kinord. We'll wander through Birch woodland looking for Siskin, Redpoll, tits and thrushes, with the loch possibly holding a few Goldeneye and maybe even an early Red-throated Diver. One morning we'll make a pre-breakfast visit for Black Grouse nearby and if successful, this could be one of the highlights of the week. However, this is not all about wildlife as we shall also see the historic castles of Braemar and Balmoral – who knows royalty might be an added bonus!

4-5 This is where we leave the forested mountains behind us and make our



"The NE250 follows a route of diverse landscapes through Royal Deeside, before hugging the coastline from Moray to Aberdeen. With views of moorland birds and mammals, plus seabirds on the dramatic coastline and waders on estuaries, this trip will encompass it all." Kate Mennie



way north to the Moray coast, stopping along the way at spectacular viewpoints. Our hotel is perfectly positioned at Cullen Bay so we can explore this wonderful area west towards Inverness. This whole stretch of coastline is riddled with fabulous bays and headlands, from Burghead to Spey Bay and beyond and is home to breeding pairs of Crested Tits.

This is a haven for wintering seaduck such as Common and Velvet Scoter, Long-tailed Duck and Red-breasted Merganser. We shall scan these flocks for scarcer species such as Great Northern Diver, Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes. The Moray Firth is famous for its Bottlenose Dolphins and we'll look for dorsal fins breaking the surface, as pods patrol these fish-rich waters all the time. The beautiful beaches should be quiet, so at low tide we shall search for waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Purple Sandpiper, Redshank, Grey and Ringed Plovers, making for a wonderful contrast to our earlier mountain days.

6-7 The next day we shall meander slowly along the coast to our final accommodation inland from Peterhead. Our first port of call is the famous RSPB Loch of Strathbeg, which is the UK's largest dune slack lake. This is a magnet for migrants and over-wintering Scottish waterbirds. The shallow pools attract waders and hordes of wildfowl, with an awesome track record for rare and scarce species turning up. In the surrounding fields there could be Yellowhammer or Corn Bunting, along with Pink-footed Geese

and within the huge flocks we might be lucky to find Barnacle or White-front. Further around the coast we shall stop off at a couple of headlands such as Fraserburgh and Rattray Head.

These make ideal watch-points to observe seabirds and at this time of year Gannets, Kittiwakes and auks can stream by. It is also a fabulous coastline for gulls, with all the commoner species well represented, but this is a good time of year to find an odd 'white-winged' such as Glaucous or Iceland.

Our final full day will be spent around the fabulous Ythan Estuary – this is the perfect early spring location, with large numbers of waders taking advantage of the intertidal mud and sand flats. Most of these will have over-wintered, but we may see the vanguard of northward moving migrants, arriving to fuel up on their epic journey. Large numbers of common waders such as Dunlin, Redshank, Knot, Golden and Ringed Plover wheel and turn above the estuary and amongst them we hope to find scarcer species such as Greenshank, Whimbrel and Ruff. It's the perfect place to get to grips with wader identification.

8 After breakfast we shall load the minibus for one final time and return south to Aberdeen where we shall say farewell to the NE 250.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Meet in Aberdeen and drive to our hotel in Braemar, hopefully stopping enroute at Glen Tanar. Full days in the beautiful Royal Deeside, with possible visits to Glenshee, Muir of Dinnet, Balmoral and Linn of Dee
3 nights Braemar Hotel
- Days 4-5** Drive out of the mountains, north towards the coast, where we stop for the next two nights, visiting the coastal sites of Spey Bay, Burghead and Rosemarkie
2 nights Cullen Bay Hotel
- Days 6-7** Travel to our final hotel stopping at Loch of Strathbeg Reserve, Fraserburgh and Rattray Head. Last day around some of the classic east coast sites such as the Ythan Estuary and Blackdog
2 nights Saplinsbrae Hotel
- Day 8** Travel back to Aberdeen

Mark Denman: Long-tailed Ducks
Mary Braddock: Golden Eagle
Jane Hope: Black Grouse, Cairngorms
Duncan Macdonald: Common Scoter
Roy Atkins: Pink-footed Geese



CYPRUS



"Many trips have lots of specific targets, but this one is different - we spend a lot of time simply going out birdwatching to see what we can find! I love the feeling of visiting migration hotspots, with no idea when we might find something exciting - we have found some real star birds in the past." Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 30 Mar - Sat 6 April 2019
Price £1,855
Deposit £350 Single Supp £150

Leaders Roy Atkins and Duncan Macdonald
Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Paphos
Inbound: Afternoon, Paphos-Gatwick
Weather A mixture of sunshine and showers (sometimes heavy!) is likely. Daytime temperatures are usually pleasant and warm, but it can be cold in the early morning and evening (12°-25°C)
Walking Easy walking on good tracks up to a mile or so
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
Insects Mosquitoes can be a problem at some sites so bring repellent
Accom Rural hotel with double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Cyprus Warbler	Red-throated Pipit
Cyprus Pied Wheatear	Black-headed Wagtail
Cyprus Scops Owl	Pallid Harrier
Black Francolin	Red-rumped Swallow
Bonelli's Eagle	Collared Flycatcher
Masked Shrike	Marsh Sandpiper
Cretzschmar's Bunting	Roller
Rüppell's Warbler	Long-legged Buzzard
Great Spotted Cuckoo	Isabelline Wheatear
Spur-winged Plover	Eastern Bonelli's Warbler

With thousands of migrants heading north into Eastern Europe anything can turn up - warblers, flycatchers, shrikes, waders, raptors - perhaps even something really rare!

- Eastern migrants such as Rüppell's Warbler, Isabelline Wheatear and Masked Shrike
- Delightful traditional inn in the Dhiarizos Valley - with Swallows nesting in the bar!
- Cyprus specialities - Cyprus Warbler, Cyprus Wheatear and Cyprus Scops Owl
- Bonelli's Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Lesser Kestrel and Pallid Harrier
- Birding around the Roman ruins and mosaics at Paphos Headland
- Day in the Troodos Mountains including visit to Kykkos Monastery
- Spur-winged Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Black Francolin, Great Spotted Cuckoo

Arriving at our hotel in the Dhiarizos Valley we'll be keen to explore and a short walk takes us into a scrubby riverbed, where Cyprus Pied Wheatear sings its buzzy song and Sardinian Warblers scold us from the bushes. We'll search for migrants making their way up the valley, with the chance of Cretzschmar's Buntings, Collared Flycatcher or other migrants - we've seen 15 species of warbler here! At dusk Cyprus Scops Owl, which has recently been split from Eurasian Scops Owl, may be found in the hotel garden, making its distinctive two note call.

2-7 Waves of small migrants pass through the island in early spring, creating that exciting feeling of not knowing what we'll find as we search any suitable habitat near the coast. In coastal fields, amongst Northern Wheatears and Short-toed Larks, we'll check for Red-throated and

Tawny Pipits, Isabelline and Black-eared Wheatears, plus flocks of Yellow Wagtails of various sub-species - including stunning Black-headed Wagtail.

We'll visit the area around Paphos Headland and enjoy the beautiful Roman mosaics here and ruins of the amphitheatre and houses. The low bushes, scattered trees, wildflowers and crumbling ruins can be the first landfall for many birds - anything can turn up! Amongst Lesser Whitethroats and Blackcaps we'll hope to find Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Rüppell's and Subalpine Warbler, Wryneck or perhaps a Collared Flycatcher - but it is all very unpredictable and weather dependent - that's part of the fun.

Heading up towards the hills, we reach Asprokremnos and Evretou Dams, which may hold more migrants in trees by the reservoir;



"Our hotel is just delightful and perfectly situated to get to several excellent migrant traps in minutes. The valley behind the hotel can have different birds passing through each day depending on the weather, while Cyprus Scops Owls nest in the garden and Swallows in the bar." Roy Atkins



as well as resident birds such as Chukar, Stone Curlew, Zitting Cisticola and Black Francolin. This can be a good spot for Cyprus Warbler; a species declining apparently, with the increase of Sardinian Warblers on the island. We'll check favoured spots for Little Crake and rocky slopes are the haunt of Great Spotted Cuckoo, Long-legged Buzzard and Cretzschmar's Buntings. Higher still, we'll scan the skies for Bonelli's Eagle and Lesser Kestrels and search for elusive Rock Thrush or Roller. Alpine Swifts are passing through amongst the Common Swifts and there is a chance of Pallids too.

We'll drive snaking roads, past scenic views, high into the Troodos Mountains, where there may still be a scattering of snow amongst the pines. Here, endemic races of Coal Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Jay and crossbill are found and Masked Shrikes breed. We'll make a visit to Kykkos Monastery - the most famous monastery in Cyprus, with its breathtakingly ornate, gold decorated church and dozens of wall murals depicting scenes from the bible.

More birds await at the wetlands around Phassouri, Akrotiri and Lamaka. Squacco Heron and Great White Egret are likely and Greater Flamingos feed out on the salt lakes. The extensive reedbeds may hold Great Reed Warbler; while Spectacled Warbler nest in the low saline scrub. If the water levels are good, there may be many waders and we'll check through the more common waders such as Ruff, Little Stint and Kentish Plover; for highlights including Marsh Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt and Spur-winged Plover. Garganey are passing through and we'll

look out for Slender-billed Gulls and maybe the last of the Baltic, Armenian or Caspian Gulls before they head north.

If the weather is warm and sunny, we'll enjoy Alpine Swifts circling above coastal cliffs, with a chance of Griffon Vulture or, if we are really lucky, the first Eleanora's Falcon. If it is rainy, then expect more migrants in bushes near the coast - some real rarities have turned up in the past, such as Hooded Wheatear and Desert Warbler and we've found rarities including Great Snipe, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and even Sociable Lapwing in recent years - the fun is in searching for them!

If time allows, we may visit the Akamas Peninsula, an area of unspoilt scenery with a different 'feel' to the rest of the island. Trails pass through Mediterranean scrub, where stands of taller trees can hold flycatchers and warblers. Starred Agama and Snake-eyed Lizards scuttle away from our feet and the rocky slopes are covered in flowers, while butterflies may include the local race of Orange-tip, Swallowtail or endemic Paphos Blue.

8 After a morning birding we return to the airport for our flight back to London.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly to Paphos, then a short drive to our hotel and depending on timing perhaps some birding in the afternoon
7 nights Vasilias Nikoklis Inn
- Days 2-7** Exploration of the island in search of migrants and other interesting birds, including days at wetlands, coastal plains, migrant hotspots and higher slopes and mountains. We'll also visit the mosaics and ruins at Paphos Headland and the famous Kykkos Monastery
- Day 8** After a morning birding we transfer to Paphos for our flight back to Gatwick

Roy Atkins: Cyprus Warbler, Paphos Headland, Masked Shrike, Marsh Sandpiper, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Lesser Kestrel

Roy Cowley: Black Francolin



TARIFA AND DONANA



"Teaming up with our friend Manuel of Birding Tarifa we shall have local access and knowledge to find the specialities of each habitat, including scarce localised birds such as Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bald Ibis, Little Swift and Common Bulbul. I can't wait to go back."
Simon Eaves

Dates Mon 01 - Wed 10 Apr 2019
Price £2,295
Deposit £450 Single Supp £200

Leaders Simon Eaves and Manuel Morales
Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Afternoon, Gatwick-Seville
Inbound: Afternoon, Seville-Gatwick
Weather Variable in spring, a mixture of sun and showers (15°-30°C)
Walking There will be some short walks up to 2km, with plenty of breaks
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 10
Lunches will mostly be picnics, with some taken at local restaurants
Insects Biting insects may occasionally be a nuisance, so bring repellent
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Spanish Imperial Eagle	Northern Bald Ibis
Short-toed Eagle	Squacco Heron
Bonelli's Eagle	Glossy Ibis
Booted Eagle	Purple Heron
Osprey	Little Bittern
Black-winged Kite	Night Heron
Egyptian Vulture	Great Reed Warbler
Little Owl	Gull-billed Tern
Black Stork	Caspian Tern
Marbled Teal	Collared Pratincole
White-headed Duck	Stone Curlew
Purple Swampphen	Little Bustard
Red-knobbed Coot	European Bee-eater
Slender-billed Gull	Little Swift
Little Tern	

Tarifa is one of Western Europe's premier migration watch points for both raptors and songbirds, whilst Doñana National Park is host to a myriad of birdlife and even a small population of Iberian Lynx.

- Montagu's and Marsh Harriers, Little Owl, Calandra Lark, Zitting Cisticola, Little Bustard
- Egyptian and Griffon Vulture, Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle and Spanish Imperial Eagle
- Glossy Ibis, Little Swift, Lesser Crested Tern, Caspian Tern and Red-knobbed Coot
- Pilot and Sperm Whales, plus Striped, Bottlenose and Common dolphins
- Best places to watch birds, Iberian Lynx, cetaceans and wildlife in Western Andalucía
- Private access to the countryside of rice fields, wild Olive trees and pastureland
- Small typical local hotels, in great birding locations with fine Spanish fare

We fly from Gatwick to Seville, arriving late afternoon and then drive south to our base for the next five days, a quiet hotel close to Los Lances Beach in Tarifa. If time allows, we can stop enroute to birdwatch.

2-6 Our time here will be split between the best viewpoints for raptor migration and the private areas around Tarifa for Spanish specialities such as Glossy Ibis, Little Bustard, Little Swift, Red-knobbed Coot and Spanish Imperial Eagle. Our first short walk however will be along Los Lances beach for waders, terns and gulls, before setting off for our first raptor viewpoint.

We shall choose the best of these between Tarifa, Algeciras and Sierra de la Plata depending on the weather. Anything is possible, but our target species will be Egyptian and Griffon Vulture, Booted Eagle,



Short-toed Eagle, Black Stork, Black Kite, Bee-eater, Alpine Swift and passerines. Lunch each day will be either a picnic, or a small taverna lunch. A cliff walk will also give us the chance of more passerines and can be amazing for vultures and other raptors.

Our guide Manuel has public and private access to the areas of rice fields, wild olive trees and pasture around the wetlands of La Janda, so we shall spend a full day here looking for Montagu's and Marsh Harriers, Little Owl, Calandra Lark, Zitting Cisticola and Turtle Dove.

Weather permitting, we shall take a boat trip out into the Straits of Gibraltar for cetaceans such as Pilot and Sperm Whales, Striped, Bottlenose and Common Dolphins and pelagic birds including Cory's and Balearic Shearwater and Mediterranean Gull. After lunch, there will be time



"Tarifa is one of Western Europe's premier migration watch points in spring for both raptors and songbirds, plus there's the chance of Pilot and Sperm Whales, dolphins and seabirds on our boat trip. With the Coto Doñana National Park, renowned as one of Europe's top birding areas, we could amass an astonishing bird and mammal list." Simon Eaves



for a local walk in Tarifa and its surroundings, with the chance of Common Bulbul, Lesser Kestrel and more raptor migration!

A site close to Barbate holds a small Bald Ibis colony, so we shall spend time here and on the nearby coastal marshes, before moving out into the Medina Sidonia countryside. Access to private land will give further chances of Spanish Imperial Eagle, plus Collared Pratincole, Osprey, Short-toed Lark, Woodchat Shrike, Little Tern, Stone Curlew, Little Owl, Little Bustard, Cuckoo and many passerines including Nightingale and Melodious Warbler.

We'll drive up into the Ojen Valley to Los Alcornocales (Cork Oak Forest) Natural Park, before taking a short walk through El Tiradero Stream for passerines, butterflies and flowers. We'll visit the Barbate reservoir for Osprey and the Lesser Kestrel colony in Alcalá de los Gazules. Target species will include Bonelli's Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Short-toed Treecreeper, Lesser Kestrel, Osprey, orchids, Iberian Chiffchaff, Thekla Lark and other migrant and breeding passerines.

7 Today we transfer to Doñana. At our first lakeside stop, there will be a good chance of Red-knobbed Coot and waterfowl such as White-headed Duck, Marbled Teal and Greater Flamingo. At Chipiona harbour, La Jara (Rockrose) beach, the El Colorado lakes and Bonanza marshes, we'll look for Little Swift, Lesser Crested Tern, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Little Tern, Kentish Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit. Heading towards Doñana National

Park, we shall visit Corta Olivillos for herons and waterfowl, then cross the Guadalquivir River by boat to get to El Rocío, our base for the next three nights.

8-10 The marshes of Doñana National Park, the Guadiana River, the plains and Dehesa de Abajo Lake, will bring many highlights over the next couple of days, such as Squacco, Purple and Night Heron, Glossy Ibis, Little Bittern, Great Reed Warbler, Garganey, Ferruginous Duck, Marbled Teal, Black-necked Grebe, Bee-eater, Spoonbill, Red-crested Pochard, Lesser Kestrel, Hoopoe and Cuckoo and we'll spend our first day exploring these areas, finishing in the afternoon at La Dehesa de Abajo Lake, leaving us time to go out in the evening for a short walk to look for Iberian Lynx.

We'll have a second chance for Iberian Lynx the next day on an early morning walk close to the hotel, with the chance of raptors and passerines as well. The rest of the morning will be spent around the El Rocío marshes and La Rocina pinewood and lakes. The afternoon we'll be in and around El Acebuche (Wild Olive Tree) Visitor Centre and Lakes, the best places for Iberian Magpie. Other birds can include Crested Tit, Garganey, Spotted Woodpecker, Iberian Chiffchaff, Garganey, Golden Oriole, Dartford Warbler, Bee-eater, Woodchat Shrike, Tree Sparrow, Booted Eagle and Marsh Harrier.

The last morning will be spent birdwatching if time allows, before making our way back to Seville for an afternoon flight to Gatwick, arriving in the early evening.



Outline Itinerary

Day 1	Fly Gatwick to Seville and transfer to our hotel on Los Lances Beach near Tarifa
Days 2-6	6 nights Hotel la Codorniz Exploration of migration hotspots around Tarifa, together with private access to bird-rich areas inland such as La Janda, the Ojen Valley and the estuaries and marshes around Medina Sidonia
Day 7	Transfer to Doñana National Park via Chipiona Harbour, El Colorado lakes and Bonanza marshes, plus a crossing of the Guadalquivir River
Days 8-9	3 nights Hotel Doñana 51 Exploration of Doñana including the Guadiana River and Dehesa de Abajo Lake, plus early morning and late evening watching for Iberian Lynx
Day 10	Travel back to Seville for flight back to Gatwick

Brooke Miller: Collared Pratincole, Spanish Imperial Eagle
Cath Wright: Glossy Ibis
Simon Eaves: Northern Bald Ibis, White-headed Duck
Mary Braddock: Bee-eaters



EXTREMADURA



"The Spanish steppes are magical in spring with the flower-studded plains hosting Great Bustards displaying and Montagu's Harriers sky-dancing - all to the soundtrack of Calandra and Crested Lark in song flight. With the spring sun on your face, all is well with the world!" Darren Rees

Dates	Sat 06 - Sat 13 Apr 2019
Price	£1,995
Deposit	£400 Single Supp £150
Leaders	Darren Rees and Julian Sykes
Flights	EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Madrid Inbound: Afternoon, Madrid-Gatwick Other UK airports may be available
Weather	Variable in spring, a mixture of sun and showers (12°-25°C) – can be cool on the plains
Walking	Some short easy walks on level ground
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8. Simple, interesting Spanish fare at the hotel and at local restaurants
Insects	Not a problem
Accom	Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	12

Just some of what we hope to see:	
White Stork	Purple Swamphen
Black Stork	Eagle Owl
Spanish Imperial Eagle	Scop's Owl
Short-toed Eagle	Little Bustard
Bonelli's Eagle	Great Bustard
Black-shouldered Kite	Black-bellied Sandgrouse
Montagu's Harrier	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse
Lesser Kestrel	Bee-eater
Black Vulture	Roller
Griffon Vulture	Hoopoe

The best place for birds of prey in Western Europe
- Griffon colonies and five breeding eagle species, as well as displaying bustards, sandgrouse and other special birds.

- Over twenty years' experience and 45 tours, we know this place well!
- Early Spring for Great and Little Bustards displaying
- Three vulture, three kite and five eagle species possible
- Difficult-to-see birds such as Eagle Owl and sandgrouse
- White Storks and Lesser Kestrels over medieval Trujillo
- Superb accommodation, amidst fabulous grounds, in the Lagares mountains
- Fabulous wetlands with a wealth of waterbirds

Extremadura is one of the least developed yet most spectacular provinces in Spain, and after our flight to Madrid we'll make our way to our base at Vina Las Torres, close to Trujillo, at its very heart. This charming traditional style accommodation is off the beaten track and our hosts and friends Juan Pedro and Belen will ensure a week to remember.

With wonderful views over the surrounding countryside of small fields, Holm Oak woodland and mountain ridges, the grounds and lanes around our guesthouse abound with birds: White Stork, Black Kite, Hoopoe, Bee-eater, Sardinian Warbler, Iberian Grey Shrike and immaculate Azure-winged Magpies. Scops Owl might be calling at night and we may not want to leave!

2-7 The rolling open country of Extremadura is a favourite place to watch birds in spring and this is the time of peak activity amongst the aristocratic Great Bustards that strut across the plains. We shall witness one of the most spectacular bird displays on earth, as huge males literally turn themselves inside out in an attempt to attract a mate! Smaller Little Bustard males prefer blowing raspberries and nodding their heads to attract their females.

On Caceres Plain, relic areas of steppeland can be covered in a delightful carpet of small flowers, while the air above is thick with the sound of Calandra and Crested Larks. Rocky outcrops hide Stone Curlews and Little Owls; flocks of Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse chase around the skyline and elegant Montagu's Harriers





"Monfrague National Park is a spectacular place for birds of prey. The air can be filled with Griffons that nest in busy colonies on the rugged cliffs and kites are always patrolling the wooded hillsides. Five eagle species nest here, including the world's rarest - Spanish Imperial Eagle." Darren Rees

move back to their breeding grounds. Watching their graceful sky-dancing display will be a tour highlight.

Birds of prey are a big part of the wildlife spectacle and both kites and vultures seem to be always on the wing. Magical Monfrague National Park is one of Europe's finest raptor hot-spots and its mix of wooded hillsides and deep rocky gorges is home to all five species of Spanish eagles: powerful Golden; smaller Booted; hovering Short-toed; scarce Bonelli's and the critically endangered Spanish Imperial.

Rare Black Vultures nest in good numbers and at precipitous Pena Falcon rock, there is a colony of Griffon Vultures, with many on ledges tending young, while others soar overhead amongst Egyptian Vulture, Peregrine and the unusual Black Stork. Smaller birds are welcome co-stars: Crag Martin, Hawfinch, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Redstart, Subalpine Warbler and Rock Bunting. Here, we'll also make a special dusk visit as the vultures return to roost and the Nightingales start their evening chorus, where we'll hope to see charismatic Eagle Owl – fingers crossed!

Rich wetlands in this region, such as Embalse de Arrocampo and Embalse de Alcollarin, are havens for aquatic wildlife. Marsh Harriers drift over reedbeds where we could find Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Purple Swampphen and Savi's, Cetti's and Great Reed Warblers. Gull-billed Terns fly over water dotted with grebes

and rimmed with egrets and occasional Spoonbills. The area is also home for one of Europe's rare breeding birds– sensational Black-shouldered Kites hunt over surrounding fields and woodland edge.

We'll visit medieval Trujillo, with its delightful narrow streets, charming old churches and busy Plaza Major. White Storks nest on many of the towers, newly arrived Pallid Swifts chase around the sky and at the town's bullring we can watch Lesser Kestrels and Spotless Starlings going in and out of the red-tiled roof. The rice fields in the south are also worth exploring, another different habitat attracting interesting species: small populations of Red Avadavat and Common Waxbill work the field margins; vivid blue Rollers and buoyant Collared Pratincoles (half tern, half wader) are found here, along with Little Ringed Plover and Tree and Spanish Sparrows.

All the while, in the land that time forgot, Corn Buntings sing from every perch, Woodlarks give their melodic song, Dartford Warblers and Woodchat Shrikes chatter in the bushes and Red-rumped Swallows dash by.....sadly so will our time here!

8 Time allowing, we'll birdwatch on the final morning, before returning to Madrid for our flight back to the UK.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Day 1 | Fly to Madrid
3 hour transfer to Trujillo
7 nights at Viña Las Torres |
| Days 2-7 | Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of the steppes, woodlands, wetlands and mountain regions of one of Spain's premier birding locations, including Monfrague National Park, Embalse de Arrocampo and Caceres Plain |
| Day 8 | Transfer to Madrid for flight to Gatwick |

Brooke Miller: Little Bustard, Azure-winged Magpies, Spanish Imperial Eagle and Griffon Vulture
Sally Dowden: Trujillo
Roy Atkins: Hoopoe, Roller
Simon Eaves: Great Bustards





David Petts

Dunlin, Outer Hebrides. Holiday details page 46



Sue and Bill Gill

Ospreys, Spring Birds. Holiday details page 48

Just a few of the images
guests and guides have taken
on Speyside Wildlife trips



Andrew Hoyne

Dotterel, Spring Birds. Holiday details pg 48



Richard Stacey

Guests on The Outer Hebrides. Holiday details page 46



Yves Gisseleire

Souslik, Romania. Holiday details page 86



Terry Swainbank

Iberian Lynx, Andujar. Holiday details page 16



Richard Stacey

Corncrake, The Outer Hebrides. Holiday details page 46



Brooke Miller

Black Storks, Extremadura. Holiday details page 36



Colin Scott

Red Squirrel, Spring Birds. Holiday details page 48



Chris Piper

Macaws, Costa Rica. Holiday details page 24



Steve Dutton

Ptarmigan, Cairngorms. Details page 10



John Grierson

Guests on Speyside 24/7. Holiday details page 44

ARIZONA



"Brilliant hummingbirds, exquisite warblers, bizarre roadrunners and huge condors all vie for our attention. Along with the landscape of your dreams and wonderful American hospitality, it's a trip to treasure."
Darren Rees

Dates Sat 20 Apr - Sat 4 May 2019
Price £4,795
Deposit £950 **Single Supp** £800

Leaders Darren Rees and Duncan Macdonald
Flights British Airways, scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow-Phoenix
Inbound: Overnight, Phoenix-Heathrow
Weather Warm and sunny with the outside chance of showers. Grand Canyon is at altitude, so may be much cooler (15°-30°C)
Walking 2-3 miles on tracks, occasionally steep and stony
Walking boots recommended and sandals useful
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 14
A variety of restaurants, from diners to homely guesthouse ranches
Insects Uncommon, but may be encountered so bring repellent
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

California Condor	Zone-tailed Hawk
Anna's Hummingbird	Greater Roadrunner
Costa's Hummingbird	Elegant Trogon
Magnificent Hummingbird	Vermillion Flycatcher
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Buff-breasted Flycatcher
Lucifer Hummingbird	Painted Redstart
Whiskered Screech Owl	Red-faced Warbler
Great Horned Owl	Cactus Wren
Elf Owl	Lazuli Bunting
Burrowing Owl	Pygmy Nuthatch
Mexican Spotted Owl	Hooded Skunk
Gambel's Quail	Ringtail
Montezuma's Quail	Coyote
Black Hawk	Gunnison's Prairie Dog

A stunning desert landscape and the Grandest of all Canyons. Join us on our tenth tour for magical scenery, colourful trogons, dazzling hummingbirds, vivid warblers and fantastic roadrunners.

- Inspiring landscapes, with 'mesas', 'buttes' and rugged 'sky islands'
- Fabulous Saguaro cacti and a desert in bloom
- Arizona specialities: Roadrunner, Painted Redstart and Red-faced Warbler
- Brilliant hummingbirds, expect ten species, including Magnificent and Lucifer
- Fantastic owls (nine species possible) and night critters (skunks and ringtails)
- Fabulous rural guesthouse ranches, with excellent locations
- The wonder of the Grand Canyon, with soaring condors!

1-3 After our flight to Phoenix we head for our nearby hotel. Refreshed, our Arizona adventure starts by exploring the Sonoran Desert west of Tucson, where incredible stands of Saguaro Cacti dominate the landscape. We'll see Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Gila Woodpecker, Gambel's Quail and Curve-billed Thrasher and maybe local Burrowing Owl.

Green Valley is our base near the Santa Rita Mountains – one of Arizona's famed 'sky islands'. At Florida Wash we'll see more birds of the arid mesquite scrub including Lucy's Warbler, Black-throated Sparrow, Costa's Hummingbird or rare Rufous-winged Sparrow. Higher, in Madera Canyon, we'll check the hummingbird feeders – Arizona has more "hummer" species than anywhere in North America. Expect Black-chinned, Broad-billed and Magnificent for starters.



Shady wooded trails lead us to other special birds such as the exquisite Painted Redstart, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Arizona Woodpecker. An evening visit to the foothills is accompanied by the churrs of Lesser Nighthawks and the chuckles of Elf Owls - there are Great Horned and Whiskered Screech Owls too. We've even seen Coyote, Bobcat and Black Bear!

4-6 We drive east with birding breaks at Willcox Pools, where we'll scan the assorted shorebirds for American Avocet, Wilson's Phalarope or Long-billed Dowitcher. Arriving at scenic Cave Creek Ranch, we'll be entertained by the local wildlife at feeders right outside our cabins – both night and day!

We have two days to explore the beautiful Chiricahua Mountains, searching the ponderosa



"The Grand Canyon inspires, bewilders and humbles in equal measure. Standing on the South Rim, it's as if the Earth's crust has been ripped open before your very feet and you are left struggling to comprehend its vastness." Darren Rees



for colourful Grace's and Olive Warbler and specialities such as Mexican Chickadee and Pygmy Nuthatch. At Cave Creek, luxuriant sycamores underneath towering red cliffs host much-prized Elegant Trogons and the bird feeders around our cabins are busy with more stunning hummingbirds, including dainty Broad-tailed and remarkable Blue-throated. Night time can be fun too, when those critters come looking for scraps – we've seen Striped and Hooded Skunks and beautiful Ringtails.

7-9 Our next base is the delightful Casa de San Pedro. Set alongside the San Pedro River, there's great birding within walking distance of our guesthouse, with Gray Hawk, Yellow-breasted Chat and brilliant Vermillion Flycatcher. The cottonwood trees along the river are busy with migrant birds such as Hooded Oriole, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and Ash-throated Flycatcher, while Black Phoebe hawk for insects. Nearby, the Huachuca Mountains are classic 'sky islands', where cool forested mountains rise from the surrounding desert.

At Miller Canyon we'll search for Montezuma's Quail, Red-faced Warbler, Buff-bellied Flycatcher, or maybe a roosting Spotted Owl, whilst Ash Canyon has Wild Turkey and rare "hummers" such as Lucifer or White-eared. Close to the Mexican border at Patagonia are the famous Paton's feeders. Rare Violet-crowned Hummingbirds will be a target species and we're sure to see colourful Lazuli Buntings, Lesser Goldfinch and Bullock's Orioles. We pass through the high grasslands

of Sonoita, where we'll look for Pronghorn, Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon.

10 The long drive north takes us to the red rock country of scenic Sedona, where spectacular buttes and spires rise from green valleys – home to Brown-crested Flycatcher, American Dipper and rare Black Hawk.

11-13 We head further north through wonderful Oak Creek Canyon to lakes near Flagstaff, to see majestic Bald Eagles, as well as waterbirds including Western Grebe, Ruddy Duck and Green-winged Teal. We'll check the local Prairie Dog colony too! Late afternoon we arrive at our final base at Grand Canyon village, in time to watch the sunset over one of Earth's true wonders.

We have two full days to explore the incredible Grand Canyon - we can also arrange a scenic flight (optional extra). Here, birds are small players on a vast stage, but we'll look for huge winged California Condor amongst the many Turkey Vultures. A small re-introduced population of this, the largest North American bird, has been established in Grand Canyon National Park. Along trails through the Kaibab Forest of the South Rim, we'll find Juniper Titmouse, Rock Wren, Mountain Chickadee, Steller's Jay and Clark's Nutcracker.

14-15 We shall bird the San Francisco Mountains for Mountain Bluebird and Red Crossbill, enroute to Phoenix for our return flight, arriving in the UK on day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly to Phoenix and transfer to our nearby hotel - 1 night Ramada Tempe
- Days 2-3** Birding the Sonoran desert enroute to Green Valley
Exploration of the Santa Rita Mountains
2 nights Best Western Green Valley
- Days 4-6** Transfer to the Chiricahua Mountains
3 nights Cave Creek Ranch
- Days 7-9** Drive west to Sierra Vista, two days to explore the Huachuca mountains
3 nights Casa de San Pedro
- Day 10** Drive north to red rock country at Sedona - 1 night Arabella Hotel
- Days 11-13** Two full days exploring the Grand Canyon South Rim
3 nights Thunderbird Lodge
- Days 14-15** Transfer to Phoenix airport for our flight arriving in the UK on the morning of Day 15

Mark Denman: Vermillion Flycatcher, Phainopepla, Elegant Trogon, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird
Liz and Keith Barton: Grand Canyon



THE DORDOGNE, FRANCE



"This relaxed and pleasant trip is perfect for the naturalist who enjoys all that we find - whether it be birds, wild flowers, butterflies, frogs, lizards or anything else that catches our eye. All in beautiful scenery and hopefully lovely weather!"
Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 27 Apr - Sat 4 May 2019

Price £1,995

Deposit £400 Single Supp £250

Leader Roy Atkins and David Simpson

Flights Flybe, scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon
Southampton-Bergerac
Inbound: Afternoon
Bergerac-Southampton
Other UK airports may be available, train travel also possible, please ask for details

Weather Can be sunny and warm (even hot) but may be changeable, so best to wear layers of outdoor clothing (5°-20°C)

Walking Easy, short walks generally less than a mile and many shorter

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
Lunches will be a mixture of picnics and sit-in at local restaurants, all other meals provided by the hotel

Insects Unlikely to be a nuisance at this time of year but bring repellent just in case

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Black Kite	Cirl Bunting
Black-winged Kite	Serin
Hen Harrier	Rock Sparrow
Stone Curlew	Hobby
Turtle Dove	Nightjar
Golden Oriole	Crested Lark
Hoopoe	Crag Martin
Woodlark	Dartford Warbler
Bonelli's Warbler	Crested Tit
Zitting Cisticola	Short-toed Treecreeper
Melodious Warbler	Red-backed Shrike
Nightingale	many species of orchid
Firecrest	and butterfly

A relaxed holiday with some very enjoyable birdwatching, plus other wildlife, including exciting orchids and butterflies, all in the beautiful limestone scenery of the Dordogne.

- Relaxed birding - Golden Oriole, Firecrest, Cirl Bunting, Bonelli's Warbler and more
- Butterflies abound in this region, with many species possible
- Great diversity of orchids with 20 species likely, plus typically rich limestone flora
- Beautiful scenery, including limestone cliffs along the river and sandy plateaux
- Delightful hotel beside the River Dordogne
- Chance to see astonishing prehistoric cave paintings and engravings at Rouffignac Cave
- Top local guide, David Simpson, with many years' experience of the area

We arrive in Bergerac and meet our local guide, David, before travelling to our hotel in Mauzac-et-Grand-Castang, the base for our holiday. A typical old Dordogne Périgordine stone house, with modern annexe, sitting on the banks of the River Dordogne, this is the perfect setting, with a flower-filled garden attracting butterflies, Black Redstart singing from the rooftops and a long, covered terrace, for eating outside in good weather. It is a short walk to marshland below the nearby dam, with egrets and herons along the river, Nightingale and Melodious Warbler in the scrub and Black Kites cruising overhead - heaven! David's book: Crossbill Guide to the wildlife of the Dordogne region has just been published (April 2018).

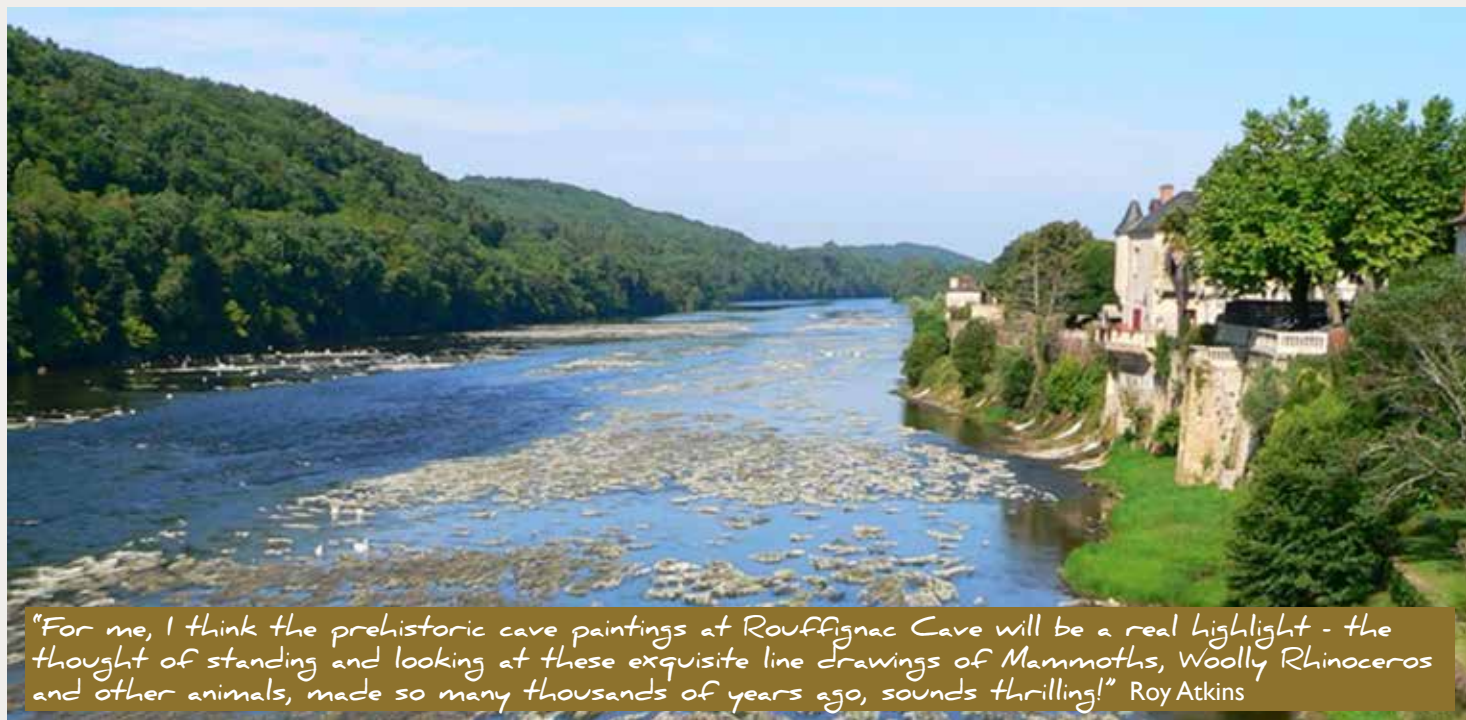
2-7 We shall spend the week exploring the area's beautiful scenery of well-wooded



hills, with mixed farming and ancient villages, with chateaux of honey-coloured stone that are scattered throughout the landscape. Dordogne's geology is generally limestone, but with sandy plateaux as well, providing a fascinating contrast. The majestic River Dordogne, with its cliffs and tributaries, is a major feature in a landscape that feels familiar to UK visitors, yet different too, with a fair sprinkling of exotic species due to the Mediterranean influence.

We'll start locally at Trémolat viewpoint, looking out over the River Dordogne, scanning the skies for Black Kite and other raptors. Fields and woodlands in this area produce a fine list of orchids such as Green-winged, Early Spider, Small Spider, Burnt-tip, Yellow Bee, Long-lipped Tongue, Tongue and Fly, with perhaps the spectacular Violet Limodore amongst the best of the many other flowers, typical of the limestone flora here.





"For me, I think the prehistoric cave paintings at Rouffignac Cave will be a real highlight - the thought of standing and looking at these exquisite line drawings of Mammoths, Woolly Rhinoceros and other animals, made so many thousands of years ago, sounds thrilling!" Roy Atkins

Other woodlands include Bessède Forest on a sandy plateau, where the purring of Turtle Doves may be our soundtrack and forestry activities have created heathland habitat suitable for Hen Harrier, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler; Crested Tit, Golden Oriole, Wryneck, Wood and Bonelli's Warbler and perhaps Black and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers, are possible in the trees.

We'll also visit Faux Plateau, where arable farmland can hold Crested Lark, Stone Curlew, Rock Sparrow, Hoopoe, Cirl and Corn Buntings, Melodious Warbler and shrikes. There is a one particular target bird here - Black-winged Kite - a wonderfully elegant raptor that has recently colonised this area. There are orchids here as well, but the highlight may be the butterflies, as many species are found including Pearly Heath, Adonis Blue, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Map, Marsh Fritillary, swallowtails and many more.

The many prehistoric sites in Dordogne give the area the nickname of the 'cradle of prehistory'. The famous Rouffignac Cave is well worth a visit and we shall take a tour via a small electric train, into the cave system, stopping to make a short walk to view engravings and paintings dating back 13,000 years. Images are mainly of mammoth, but also bison, horse, ibex and woolly rhinoceros can be seen - beautiful works of art, the meaning of which we can only guess at.

We shall also see hibernating bear pits and bear scratching marks on the rock walls, all of which pre-date man's activities in the cave. The geological features seen in the cave system enroute to the

paintings, add even more interest to the visit. If time allows, we shall also visit a typical local market on our travels.

Peregrines, Ravens and Crag Martins nest on the cliffs along the Vézère valley, where Golden Oriole, Bonelli's Warbler; Firecrest and Short-toed Treecreeper are common in the adjacent woodlands. We'll visit the Causse de Daglan, an exceptional area for flora and fauna, as it lies on more ancient, white Jurassic limestone.

Dry slopes here have a limestone flora rather different from the rest of the Dordogne and butterflies can be superb, with a good chance of Cleopatra, Scarce Swallowtail, Provencal Short-tailed Blue, Red-underwing Skipper; Duke-of-Burgundy, Sooty Copper; Glanville Fritillary, Pearly Heath and many more. Orchids can include Pyramidal, Lady and Sword-leaved Heleborine.

There are wetlands to explore, with bird species including Great White Egret, Dipper and Fan-tailed Warbler and if river conditions allow, we may take a short river cruise. On one evening we'll also go out in search of Nightjars.

8 After taking our leave of this lovely area, we head to the airport and our flight back to Southampton.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Fly to Bergerac and travel to our hotel overlooking the River Dordogne
- 7 nights Le Barrage Hotel, Mauzac
- Days 2-7 Exploration of the local area for birds, butterflies, orchids and other wildlife, with the opportunity to visit Rouffignac Cave to see prehistoric cave art
- Day 8 Travel to Bergerac for our flight back to Southampton

David Simpson: Black-winged Kite, Dordogne River, Queen of Spain, Long-lipped Tongue Orchid
Kate McCusker: Melodious Warbler
Cave Painter: Rouffignac Cave
Frank Jouandouet: Hoopoe





"A fabulous introduction to the best wildlife Scotland has to offer, from the beautiful Mountain Hare to the magnificent Golden Eagle. In 2018 we were entertained by dolphins, saw rafts of Long-tailed Duck and had breathtaking views of White-tailed Eagle."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 27 Apr - Sat 4 May 2019

Price £1150

Deposit £200 Single Supp £100

Leaders Two from our Speyside team

Weather Varies from cold to warm and sunny (8°-15°C), with less rainfall than much of Scotland but snow possible in the mountains

Walking Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 5 miles

We can now take groups on to the Cairngorms plateau from the funicular railway summit to see Ptarmigan, therefore it may be necessary to take a walk on paths over uneven and occasionally undulating rocky terrain. Low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed on the holiday

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

Insects Not a problem at this time of year

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at the Steading in Glenfeshie

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Golden Eagle	Curlew
Kestrel	Redshank
White-tailed Eagle	Sandwich Tern
Osprey	Black Guillemot
Crested Tit	Dipper
Capercaillie	Velvet Scoter
Black Grouse	Long-tailed Duck
Black-throated Diver	Pine Marten
Red-throated Diver	Red Squirrel
Slavonian Grebe	Mountain Hare
Scottish Crossbill	Red Deer
Oystercatcher	Bottlenose Dolphin
Golden Plover	European Beaver
Lapwing	Badger
Dunlin	
Bar-tailed Godwit	

Twenty four of the best birds, seven of the best mammals - all in one action-packed week - around the mountains and forests of Speyside, plus the West Coast of Scotland.

- Kick off your year's wildlife quest in style with the Highland specialities
- See 7 - and more - of the most sought-after Scottish mammals
- Dusk visits to our hide for Pine Marten and Badger
- 24 premier birds including Golden Eagle, Crested Tit, crossbills and Black Grouse
- West Coast day for White-tailed Eagle, Black Guillemot, Otter and much more
- On the Moray Firth and Black Isle coast - divers, seaduck, terns and dolphins
- Visit to Tayside to see European Beaver at dusk

Our action-packed week starts with dinner together on Saturday evening, followed by a chat about the coming week.

2-7 From our base in Glen Feshie there is plenty to see close to home and we may start with a walk down the river or visit the beautiful Caledonian Pine forest nearby. Here, amongst the ancient pines, we shall search out delightful Crested Tit and parties of Scottish Crossbill - which we'll need to check carefully, as both Common and Parrot Crossbills have also nested in the area in recent years.

Redstarts, Tree Pipits, Siskins and countless Willow Warblers are singing in the forest clearings and Cuckoos call from the wooded slopes. Red Squirrels scamper through the branches and we'll visit our own baited hide for fabulous

close up views of Pine Martens and Badgers, with Woodcock roding above the trees. An early start one morning takes us to see Black Grouse as they strut, bubble and flutter at each other. It is a wonderful sight to see this behaviour:

Nearby lochans hold beautiful Slavonian Grebes, with golden plumes in their breeding finery and this is a great time of year to see displaying Golden Eagle or Osprey, the latter just returning to nests, including our very own pair so close to the Steading. In recent years a pair of White-tailed Eagle has taken up residence and you never know your luck!

The Black Isle and Moray Coast have a few of the Long-tailed Duck, Scaup and perhaps Common and Velvet Scoters that winter here amongst the Eiders and other seaduck. We'll visit Udale





"European Beaver in the wild in Britain! Pine Marten at close quarters, the magnificent scenery of Scotland's north west coast and the thrill of being on Cairngorm mountain, all from the comfort of our accommodation in the centre of the Cairngorms National Park." Sally Nowell

Bay, where passage waders may include Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit and more. Flocks of wintering geese may include Pink-footed, still lingering before they head north and there may be hundreds of Wigeon with Teal and other duck, including a few Pintail. Flocks of Golden Plover feed in nearby fields and we'll look out for farmland birds such as Tree Sparrow and Yellowhammer.

We'll make a special effort to see the resident group of Bottlenose Dolphins at a headland on the Black Isle, where they can often come remarkably close to shore, as they hunt fish moving in on the rising tide - with luck perhaps we'll see some acrobatics!

One evening we have the exciting chance to see Scotland's newest mammal - European Beaver. Introduced into Tayside they are doing well and are showing regularly at certain sites. We shall learn how they are affecting the landscape and hopefully get to see one or two as they come out to feed at dusk. Using a bat detector we shall see what species are flitting around the trees - Pipistrelle is most likely but other species such as Daubenton's are possible too.

We have our own places to find camouflaged Mountain Hare, as Red Deer watch us from the skyline - and we shall keep an eye on the sky for hunting Golden Eagle or Peregrine. Raven pass overhead and we hope for Hen Harrier; Merlin or Short-eared Owl hunting over the moorland where cackling Red Grouse display.

Weather permitting we'll venture onto the arctic

tundra of Cairngorm in search of Ptarmigan amongst the skiers - easy now we can use the Funicular Railway to get there!

We'll have a wonderful day amidst the dramatic mountain peaks and shores of the West Coast. As we drive west, the scenery becomes more and more impressive and the beach at Mellon Udrigle is beautiful and so peaceful. It is a great chance to see Great Northern and Black-throated Divers in breeding plumage just offshore, before they move to their nesting sites.

Wild Rock Doves nest on the cliffs and we'll look out for Ravens, Twite and Black Guillemot, plus Common Seals loafing on the rocks. Along the seaweed strewn shoreline we'll search for Otters, as they hunt for butterfish and crabs, while another big target here are the resident White-tailed Eagles - huge and impressive as they soar over Scottish Islands. So much to see - it'll be a busy week!

8

We say our farewells after breakfast.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Glen Feshie in time for an evening meal and a chat about what we shall do for the coming week.
7 nights at the Steading
- Days 2-7** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Abernethy Forest, Dava Moor, Loch of the Lowes, the Cairngorms, the Moray Firth and West Coast
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells

Colin Scott: Slavonian Grebe
Jane Hope: Lochindorb, Red Squirrel
Simon Eaves: Crossbill, Osprey
Mark Denman: Crested Tit
Jessie Brown: Bottlenose Dolphin



THE OUTER HEBRIDES



"Arriving on these magical islands is like stepping back in time. With a beauty all of their own and with incredible birdlife that has been lost nowadays from much of mainland Britain, there is nowhere else quite like the Outer Hebrides and these fabulous islands are somewhere I look forward to returning to again and again!" Craig Round

Dates Fri 3 - Sat 11 May 2019
Price £1,995
Deposit £350 **Single Supp** £200

Leaders Craig Round and Sally Nowell

Weather Though usually quite dry, these islands can experience all the seasons during one trip and can be windy (5°-20°C)

Walking Coastal walks on uneven terrain of up to 2 miles. Walking boots recommended with trainers suitable on some occasions. Collapsible/telescopic walking poles could be useful for this trip.

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9

Insects Biting insects are unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Corncrake	Black Guillemot
Golden Eagle	Rock Dove
Hen Harrier	Eider
Merlin	Arctic Skua
Short-eared Owl	Great Skua
White-tailed Eagle	Pomarine Skua
Peregrine	Long-tailed Skua
Long-tailed Duck	Manx Shearwater
Great Northern Diver	Red-necked Phalarope
Red-throated Diver	Greylag Goose
Great Northern Diver	Greenshank
Whooper Swan	Golden Plover
Whimbrel	Otter
Purple Sandpiper	Grey Seal
Arctic Tern	Common Seal
Little Tern	dolphins

Craig Round: Pomarine Skua, Balranald, Corncrake, Machair Flowers

Kevin Tappenden: Great Northern Diver, Short-eared Owl

Louise Darby: Otter

Corncrakes rasp from fields and Snipe drum overhead, in a watery landscape that the modern world has passed by, on these timeless low-lying islands at Britain's Atlantic edge.

- Successful Corncrake watching every time, on over 40 trips!
- Nesting waders in farmland that's vanished elsewhere
- Mile after mile of unspoilt white beaches and azure seas
- Wonderful for raptors, rare skuas and Short-eared Owl
- Summer plumage Great Northern and other divers
- White-tailed Eagle, Dotterel, Pomarine Skua and Otter
- With our own two expert guides to the Western Isles

1-2 We overnight on Friday in Inverness, to give us an early start for our journey down through the Great Glen and across the Isle of Skye to Uig, before catching a ferry to Lochmaddy on North Uist.

The crossing gives us a chance to do some sea-watching, with a great diversity of seabirds to be seen, as we make our way across the Minch, including Arctic Tern, Puffin, Guillemot, Razorbill, Kittiwake, Gannet, Great and Arctic Skuas, Manx Shearwaters and various cetaceans, even before we reach the islands! Arriving on North Uist the bustle of modern life seems far away.

3-7 Our hotel on North Uist has glorious views out to the west and over Baile Sear 'machair' dunes and meadows - formed

by wind-blown shell sand and in the evening the sunsets from the hotel can be truly beautiful, with a backdrop chorus of 'drumming' displaying Snipe and calling Redshank overhead.

The Uists are one of the last strongholds for one of Britain's rarest breeding birds the Corncrake and newly arrived territorial males can be seen before the vegetation grows tall, as they give their incredible rasping calls from open cover. Here too Twite feed, Skylark sing and Corn Bunting still give their jangling songs from rusty fences.

Cultivated 'machair' at Stilligarry and Rubha Ardvue, sown with oats and potatoes, is alive with waders in the spring, all vigorously displaying, including numerous Lapwing, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Ringed Plover and Dunlin. Beautiful freshwater



"These incredible islands hold an amazing array of birdlife and our visit is timed to catch the spring migration at its best. With golden shell sand beaches stretching into the distance, literally carpeted in thousands of restless waders, all in their spring finery at this time of year, the numbers of birds passing through the islands is simply staggering! Corncrakes rasp from nettlebeds and iris patches and the islands hold a fantastic array of raptors including Hen Harrier and Golden and White-tailed Eagle. Last year I had to rub my eyes as a Short-eared Owl wafted down the middle of the road at dusk, right outside the hotel!" Craig Round



lochs stud the landscape. All have beds of sedge and flowering bogbean and Flag Iris alive with nesting Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Wigeon, Curlew and Redshank. A few elusive Red-necked Phalaropes arrive in mid-May and birding is always full of surprises - perhaps a summering Whooper Swan, or displaying Ruff, or Wood Sandpiper:

Around the beautiful, unspoilt shell sand beaches and tidal bays, Common, Arctic and Little Tern can be seen. They also hold large numbers of passage waders bound for the Arctic. Most are in stunning summer plumage at this time of year and include Whimbrel, Dunlin, Sanderling and Purple Sandpiper; whilst closer scrutiny may reveal a hidden gem such as Curlew Sandpiper or Little Stint!

On rocky headlands there are Black Guillemot, Shag and Rock Dove, with Red-breasted Merganser, Eider, Long-tailed Duck and Great Northern Diver offshore - the latter in breeding plumage. There's a healthy Otter population and we regularly see them, plus Grey and Common Seals and dolphin species.

Optional early morning sea-watching from Aird an Runair is renowned, but dependent on weather; for the passage of rare Pomarine and Long-tailed Skuas, plus Manx Shearwater, Gannet and Arctic and Great Skua. We have also recorded other unusual migrants including Snowy Owl, Great White Egret, Glaucous and Iceland Gull, Woodchat Shrike, Garganey, Golden Oriole,

Subalpine Warbler; Grey-headed Wagtail, Hoopoe and Dotterel - the latter almost annually.

Eastward, the land sweeps up from sea level to moors, peaty pools and soaring mountains. Red-throated Divers give their mournful wail and truly wild Greylag Geese nest at Loch Druidibeg, joined by Common Sandpipers and Greenshank.

The islanders stack peats to dry, where Dunlin and Golden Plover display, alongside Red Grouse and Wheatear. Golden Eagle, Buzzard, Peregrine and Raven soar together over the dramatic hills. Hen Harrier, Merlin and Short-eared Owl commonly hunt the wild moors and we have a very good chance of seeing that most magnificent of predators, White-tailed Eagle.



8-9 Our last morning gives us a chance to once more experience the sights and sounds of the 'machair' and wonderful coastline, before catching a midday ferry back to Skye and making our way back to Inverness for our final overnight stay.

On Saturday morning, after breakfast, we say our goodbyes.

Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet in Inverness for overnight stay
1 night at Premier Inn
- Day 2** Travel down the Great Glen and across Skye before catching ferry to Lochmaddy and making the short journey to our hotel
6 nights at Temple View Hotel
- Days 3-7** Birdwatching and wildlife exploration around North and South Uist and Benbecula
- Day 8** After morning birdwatching, we catch a ferry from Lochmaddy to Uig, journey back across Skye and make our way back to Inverness
1 night at Premier Inn
- Day 9** After breakfast we say our goodbyes



SPRING BIRDS IN SPEYSIDE



"In a Highland spring the wildlife is constantly changing, some winter species remain, but summer visitors arrive and resident birds are breeding. Ptarmigan and Mountain Hare are in their transitional plumage and pelage. It's my favourite time to be in the Highlands, everything takes on a beautiful freshness." Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 4 - Sat 11 May 2019
Sat 18 - Sat 25 May 2019
Sat 25 May - Sat 1 June 2019

Price £1175

Deposit £200 **Single Supp** £100

Leaders Two from our Speyside team

Weather Varies from cold to warm and sunny (8°-20°C), with less rainfall than much of Scotland but snow possible in the mountains

Walking Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 4 miles

Our Cairngorms walk is more steep and uneven, but low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed

Boat Trip Our boat trip to Handa is over sheltered waters and lasts about 15 minutes

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

Insects In June, biting midges occasionally occur on sheltered loch shores

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at the Steading in Glenfeshie. Last single room approx 50 m from Steading

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Black-throated Diver	Crested Tit
Slavonian Grebe	Scottish Crossbill
Fulmar	Dunlin
Golden Eagle	Snipe
Osprey	Curlew
Ptarmigan	Redshank
Black Grouse	Arctic Skua
Goldeneye	Great Skua
Red-breasted Merganser	Black Guillemot
Capercaillie	Pine Marten
Dotterel	Badger
Puffin	Common Seal

Our classic signature week, perfected over 25 years, with all Speyside's special birds at their most active, including Capercaillie and Black Grouse - and time for great mammals too.

- Bird specialties of the ancient Pine Forest of the Highlands of Scotland
- A west coast trip to fabulous Handa Island in north-west Sutherland
- The Moray Firth, alive with seaduck, terns and migrants
- Divers and grebes in spectacular breeding plumage
- A day for mountain birds in the high tops of the Cairngorms
- An evening for Pine Martens and Badgers too, at our baited hide
- Come by train or plane and enjoy the wonders of the Cairngorms National Park

1 Dinner together on Saturday evening starts the holiday.

2-7 Based in our delightful accommodation in Glen Feshie, we'll start the week with walks in the local area, perhaps along the river or around beautiful lochans surrounded by forest nearby. Ospreys are at local loch-side eyries, plus more at nearby Loch Insh. The RSPB have extensive Reserves here and we'll visit the ancient pines of Abernethy Forest, a remnant of the 'Great Wood of Caledon', in search of dainty Crested Tits and parties of Scottish Crossbill.

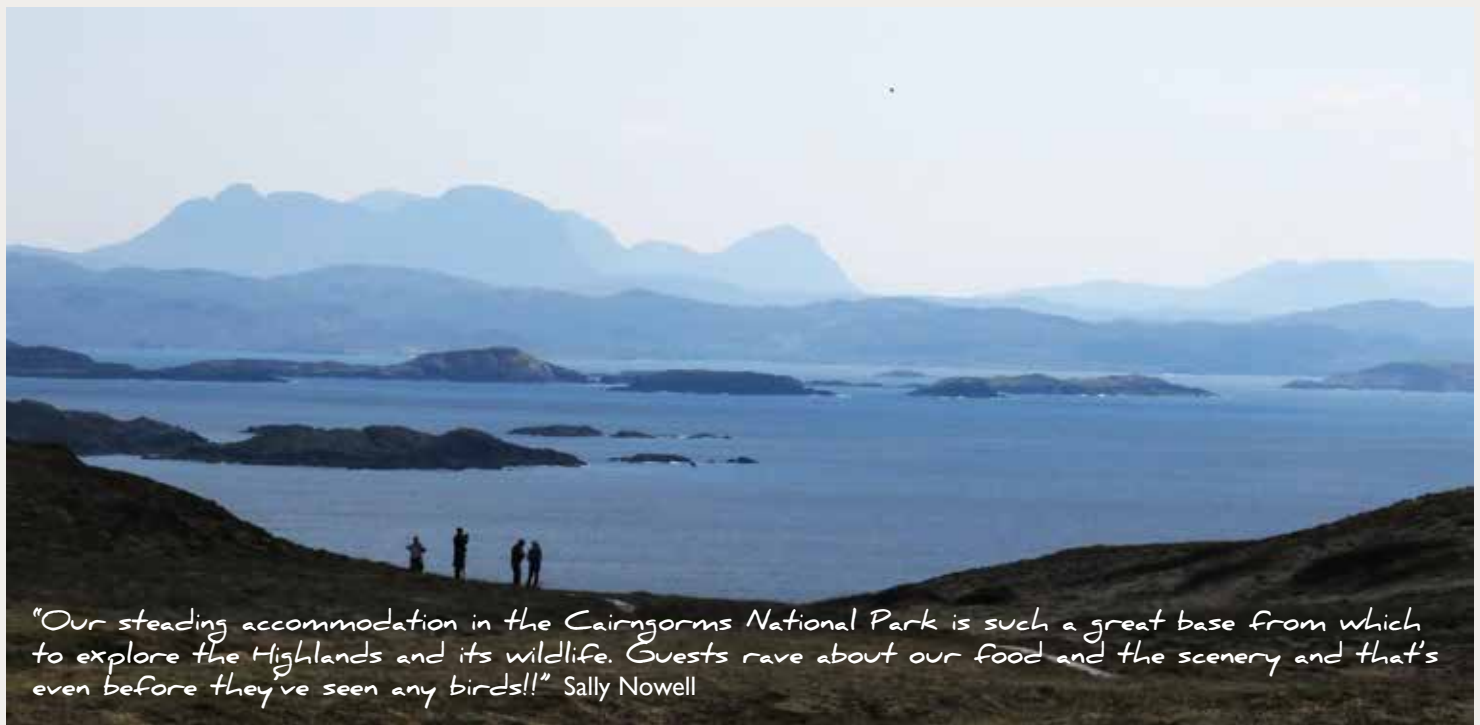
We'll need to check them carefully, as in recent years both Common and Parrot Crossbills have taken up residence in the area. We'll keep alert for wary Capercaillie feeding in the shadows - a clatter of wings often the first sign of their presence. We'll also make a special effort to see

Black Grouse as they 'bubble and coo' at dawn - a fabulous spectacle. Red Squirrels are still abundant in the forest with Redstart, Siskin, Tree Pipit and countless Willow Warblers singing in the clearings.

On one evening we'll visit our baited hide to look for Pine Marten and Badger, with Woodcock roding over the trees. Sparkling forest lochans hold exquisitely plumed Slavonian Grebe - a wonderful chance to see them in their breeding finery. Recently even White-tailed Eagles have begun to nest and we'll look out for these and Golden Eagles too.

The arctic-tundra plateau of the Cairngorms is unique in Britain and weather permitting, we'll head up on the funicular railway to seek out camouflaged Ptarmigan as they feed quietly amongst the boulders. From mid-May we may encounter beautiful Dotterel too and there is always





"Our steading accommodation in the Cairngorms National Park is such a great base from which to explore the Highlands and its wildlife. Guests rave about our food and the scenery and that's even before they've seen any birds!!" Sally Nowell

a chance of Snow Bunting. The River Spey winds its way through the valley with nesting Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Goosander and noisy Common Sandpiper, while Curlew, Redshank, Lapwing, Oystercatcher and Snipe display over marshes in river valleys and around Lochindorb and Insh.

On tranquil waters beautiful Red-throated Divers give their haunting wail and we'll take you to remote glens where Golden Eagle hunt Mountain Hares. We'll search for Raven, Ring Ouzel and Peregrine, with Red Deer on the skyline and even Wild Goats. We may find Hen Harrier, Merlin or Short-eared Owl hunting the open moorland, where we'll hear cackling Red Grouse and the mournful piping of Golden Plover.

Along the coast and tidal bays of the Moray Firth a few Long-tailed Duck and Common or Velvet Scoter may linger with the local Eider. The shingle shores are busy with Arctic, Common and Sandwich Tern and we hope to see fishing Ospreys and perhaps even a Great Northern Diver offshore. Red Kite circle lazily above the rolling farmland and we'll search out some of the farmland birds found such as Tree Sparrow, Corn Bunting and Yellowhammer. We shall look out for our resident Bottlenose Dolphins, which may come remarkably close to shore and harbour.

We'll enjoy a wonderful day travelling through stunning scenery on our way to the far north west of the Scottish Highlands on our day visit to Handa Island. We'll pause to look for Black-throated Diver enroute and there is always the chance of Golden Eagle or perhaps a Greenshank, as a small number

breed this far north. Black Guillemots bob on the water close to the boat as we make our ten minute crossing, then we walk across the island enjoying fantastic views of nesting Great and Arctic Skuas as we go - the Arctic Skuas often chasing each other in their exhilarating display.

Gannets pass by offshore and we'll look out for Rock Dove, Raven and Twite as well. On the far side of the island, towering cliffs and stacks host a seabird city, with thousands of Guillemots and smaller numbers of Razorbills, Kittiwakes and Fulmars. A few delightful Puffins nest on top of the stack - but don't forget to look back towards the mainland where the scenery ... well it's simply breathtaking!

8 On Saturday after breakfast we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Glen Feshie in time for an evening meal and a chat about our plans for the coming week.
7 nights at the Steading
- Days 2-7** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Abernethy Forest, Dava Moor, the Cairngorms, the Moray Firth and West Coast
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells

John Grierson: Osprey
Roy Atkins: View from Handa
Mark Denman: Dotterel
Jane Hope: Black Grouse, Crested Tit
Colin Scott: Great Skua
Simon Eaves: Crossbill



CATALUNYA



"This trip is simply mouthwatering. The range of birds possible is staggering, from high mountain species such as Lammergeier and Citril Finch to bustards, sandgrouse and larks on the steppes and, to cap it all, the Ebro Delta stuffed with flamingos, herons, terns and a host of others!" Duncan Macdonald

Dates Sat 11 - Sat 18 May 2019
Price £1,695
Deposit £400 Single Supp £250

Leaders Duncan Macdonald and Ricard Gutiérrez
Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Barcelona
Inbound: Afternoon, Barcelona-Gatwick
Weather It will be warm on the steppes and in the Ebro but we could encounter snow in the mountains, 0°-25°C
Walking Walks will be on good tracks and paths, with some steeper sections in the mountains
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
Insects Mosquitoes can be encountered in the Ebro Delta, especially in the evening, so bring repellent
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Little Bittern	Tengmalm's Owl
Purple Heron	Red-necked Nightjar
Squacco Heron	Alpine Swift
Lammergeier	European Roller
Black Vulture	Black Woodpecker
Egyptian Vulture	Thekla Lark
Short-toed Eagle	Lesser Short-toed Lark
Lesser Kestrel	Red-rumped Swallow
Purple Swampphen	Black Wheatear
Little Bustard	Black-eared Wheatear
Black-winged Stilt	Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush
Collared Pratincole	Western Orphean Warbler
Audouin's Gull	Lesser Grey Shrike
Whiskered Tern	Citril Finch
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	"Witherby's" Reed Bunting

Catalunya is the richest region in Spain for birds. This tour takes in the very best that it has to offer, from the Pyrenees to the sea, in the company of Catalunya's leading ornithologist.

- The Pyrenees for Citril Finch, Lammergeier and Tengmalm's Owl
- Steppes for six species of lark, Little Bustard and Lesser Grey Shrike
- The Ebro Delta for a mesmerising array of terns, ducks, herons and more
- Roller, Black Wheatear, Western Orphean Warbler and Eagle Owl
- Exclusive visit to a private vulture feeding site with all four species likely
- Fantastic Catalan hospitality and a trip to a pre-historic cave dwelling
- The expertise of Ricard Gutiérrez, creator of www.rarebirdspain.net

We fly to Barcelona where we meet Ricard Gutiérrez, before journeying to the Pyrenees. Our base will be in the charming village of Llavorsí, surrounded by forest-clad mountains and straddling the beautiful river La Noguera Pallarosa. If time permits we shall explore the village for Crag Martin and Dipper.

2-3 This beautiful corner of the Pyrenees resembles the Swiss Alps and Llavorsí is perfectly located to explore the variety of habitats. We shall look for raptors here, with Lammergeier, Golden and Short-toed Eagles, Griffon Vulture and maybe Northern Goshawk. Honey Buzzards pass through, but also breed here.

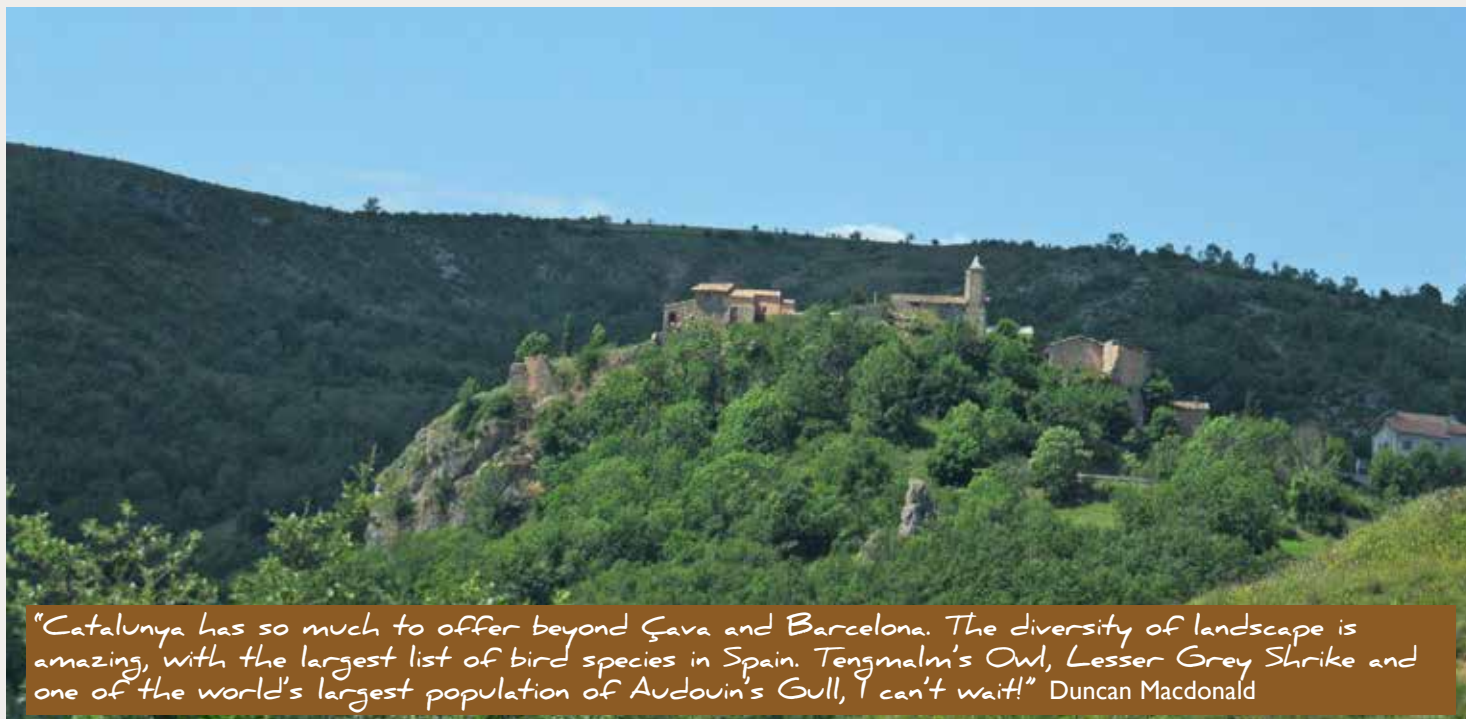
Pine forests hold Black Woodpecker, Firecrest and Crested Tit, with Short-toed and Eurasian Treecreepers and this part of Catalunya has the

largest population of Tengmalm's Owl in Spain. Capercaillie exist here but we shall be exceptionally lucky to find one.

Alpine meadows and rocky slopes are home to both Red-billed and Alpine Chough, Water Pipit, Citril Finch and Rock Bunting. The sunnier slopes hold Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Ring Ouzel and Red-backed Shrike. Broad-leafed woodlands hold Hawfinch and Bonelli's Warblers. Raptors overhead may include Egyptian Vulture, as we explore some of the more Mediterranean habitats for Rock Sparrow, Subalpine Warbler and Ortolan Bunting.

The mountains here are the last refuge of Brown Bear in Catalunya, as well as the Pyrenean Chamois or Isard.





"Catalunya has so much to offer beyond Çava and Barcelona. The diversity of landscape is amazing, with the largest list of bird species in Spain. Tengmalm's Owl, Lesser Grey Shrike and one of the world's largest population of Audouin's Gull, I can't wait!" Duncan Macdonald

4 Leaving the mountains we head south. We shall stop to look for raptors, Blue Rock Thrush and Alpine Swift at Collegats Gorge. The Montsec mountains are dramatic and here we may find Woodlark, Cirl and Ortolan Buntings, Subalpine, Western Orphea and Dartford Warblers. This a great area for raptors, with Peregrine, Golden Eagle, Red Kite, Griffon Vulture and Lammergeier regularly seen.

Our destination is Lleida, where we shall stay for the next two nights and if time allows, on arrival, we shall visit Mitjana Park, for the chance of species such as Nightingale, Golden Oriole and Iberian Woodpecker:

5-6 The steppes south and east of Lleida are the best areas in Catalunya for sought after species such as Little Bustard and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse. Six species of lark are possible, with Montagu's Harrier and Stone Curlew, but the whole area is bird-rich with White Stork, Lesser Kestrel, Roller and Red-necked Nightjar. The last remaining Lesser Grey Shrikes in Spain breed here and with luck we shall find them.

The wetlands and lagoons of Utxesa and Ivars hold species such as Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Water Rail, Great Reed Warbler, Bearded Tit and the odd Moustached Warbler. We shall look for the endemic sub-species of Reed Bunting - Witherby's Reed Bunting. At Ivars Lagoon terns, herons, waders and species such as Penduline Tit and Melodious Warbler will keep us busy. The nearby cave of El Cogul with remarkable

cave paintings, is likely to be a highlight, with Black Wheatear, Bee-eater, Blue Rock Thrush, Red-rumped Swallow and Tawny Pipit nearby.

We journey to the Ebro Delta on Day 6 where, if time allows, we shall visit a busy heronry.

7 The Ebro Delta is a birding paradise and internationally important. We shall make the most of our time here, looking for species such as Night Heron, Little Bittern, Glossy Ibis, Greater Flamingo and Squacco Heron. The delta holds one of the largest colonies of Audouin's Gull, as well as Yellow-legged and Slender Billed Gulls and terns including Gull-billed, Little, Common, Sandwich and the odd over-summering non-breeding Caspian. Collared Pratincole breed and Great Reed, Reed and Savi's Warblers will serenade us from the reeds. Waders include local breeders such as Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and Kentish Plover and the last northbound migrants that may include Little Stint, plovers or shanks, but this is the time of year when anything could turn up and if it does, then we shall be perfectly placed to go for it!

8 We travel to Barcelona to catch our return flight to the UK, birding at Llobregat Delta if time allows.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Fly to Barcelona, then a 3 hour transfer to Llavorsí. Birdwatching in the Pyrenees, taking in both National and Natural Parks of mountain, forest, lakes and meadows
3 nights Hotel Lamoga, Llavorsí
- Days 4-5** Transfer to Lleida. Birdwatching enroute in pre-Pyrenees mountains and gorges, plus steppe, grasslands and wetlands south of Lleida. Visit to cave with prehistoric paintings
2 nights at a Lleida hotel
- Days 6-7** Birdwatching grasslands and wetlands to east of Lleida. Transfer to Ebro Delta for birdwatching in the north and south of the river
2 nights Delta Hotel, Ebro Delta
- Day 8** Birdwatching at Llobregat Delta if time allows. Transfer to Barcelona for flight to Gatwick

Steve Batt: Lammergeier
Jane Hope: Foothills of the Pyrenees
James Shooter: Citril Finch
Roy Atkins: Lesser Grey Shrike
Brooke A Miller: Little Bustard, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse



NORTH WALES



"We hope to see some great raptors, with opportunities to see Hen Harrier, Osprey, Red Kite, Goshawk, Peregrine and with luck Merlin and Marsh Harrier too – then add displaying Black Grouse and Chough, plus at this time of year a chance rarity is always possible too!"
Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 11 - Sat 18 May 2019

Price £1,625

Deposit £250 Single Supp £200

Leaders Darren Rees plus one from the team.

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

Walking Varied, from wide forest tracks, to clifftop paths. Walking boots are recommended

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

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	Razorbill
Hen Harrier	Puffin
Peregrine	Great Egret
Red Kite	Avocet
Osprey	Black-tailed Godwit
Arctic Tern	Dipper
Black Grouse	Lesser Whitethroat
Redstart	Whinchat
Pied Flycatcher	Black Guillemot
Wood Warbler	Red Squirrel
Ring Ouzel	
Guillemot	

Come and explore the rugged mountains, wild moorlands, 'hanging oak' woods and busy seabird colonies of North Wales - all from our base in beautiful Snowdonia

- Anglesey for tern colonies, plus South Stack for Choughs, Puffins and seabirds
- Welsh 'hanging oaks' at Ynys-hir for Wood Warbler, Redstart and Pied Flycatcher
- Based in beautiful Snowdonia National Park
- Classic upland species: Dipper, Ring Ouzel, Peregrine, Wheatear
- Traditional stronghold of Red Kites - plus new kids on the block - Ospreys!
- Early start for some of UK's biggest Black Grouse leks
- Chance of sky-dancing Hen Harriers on the Ruabon Moors

We meet at our hotel in Betws-y-Coed, in the heart of Snowdonia National Park, where Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Goosander and Common Sandpiper can be seen on the river just over the road. The scenic woodland walks close by may yield Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Nuthatch and assorted tits. Snowdonia is an ancient land of wild mountains and wooded valleys; of rocky cwms and tumbling streams, with a bird list that spans woodland and montane species.

2-7 We may start our exploration of North Wales on Anglesey. The RSPB's South Stack Reserve offers spectacular cliff scenery and we'll get great views of the seabird colonies, with masses of Guillemots and Razorbills and a few delightful Puffins, as well as Fulmar,

Peregrines, Ravens and sought-after Chough. Adders are also a possibility here, as we enjoy the coastal flowers such as Thrift, Sea Campion and the lovely Spring Squill.

Elsewhere on Anglesey, at Cemlyn Bay we'll enjoy the comings and goings of the tern colonies, busy with Sandwich, Common and Arctic Terns - Roseate is a rare bird here now, but you never know your luck - we've also seen Mediterranean Gulls on our visits. We'll follow in the footsteps of famous artist Charles Tunnicliffe at the delightful Cefni estuary, looking for Whimbrel and Black-tailed Godwits and at nearby Newborough Warren we hope to see cheeky Red Squirrels.

One day will be spent on the Dee Estuary, one of the UK's premier birding locations for wetland and shorebirds and we'll spend time exploring its





"We'll make at least two visits to Anglesey - a wonderful place, famous for Reserves such as South Stack with its seabird cliffs and Cemlyn Bay with its tern colony, but there are some extras on this island, with some great marshland, where we have seen Garganey and Wood Sandpiper in the past and forests home to Red Squirrels." Roy Atkins

marshes, busy with Avocet, Lapwing and Redshank, plus wildfowl such as Shoveler, Teal and Gadwall. In May we've been lucky with Garganey, Spoonbill and Wood Sandpiper and Great Egrets seem to be making this their home these days. On our round-up of the north shore we'll also visit Gronant beach, the site of Wales' only Little Tern colony.

We'll need an early morning start when we drive to the Ruabon Moors to watch Black Grouse at their lek. The males will be vying with each other in the hope of attracting the females, at some of the biggest leks in the UK. These and other moors such as Migneint, also support populations of Red Grouse, Curlew, Skylark, Wheatear, Stonechat and Merlin. Perhaps our greatest prize though, will be a glimpse of Hen Harriers, that still cling on as a rare breeder in Wales and we shall spend time scanning hunting areas and if very lucky, may even see them performing their spectacular sky-dancing.

The rugged slopes of the Ogwen valley and Aber Falls are home to Ring Ouzels, as well as rare breeding Twite and at the Conwy estuary, there are more wetland birds to be found, so expect Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Shelduck and Red-breasted Merganser amongst many others. Nearby, the distinctive headland of the Great Orme is always worth a visit for its resident Choughs (and feral goats) and seabird ledges, and there's always the possibility of an unusual migrant – maybe a Whinchat or Yellow Wagtail?

We'll have a long day to the southern perimeter of Snowdonia and the Dyfi estuary. The RSPB's Ynys-hir Reserve has a picturesque mix of woodland and saltmarsh, with birds such as Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler and Redstart, as well as waders and wildfowl including Little Egret, Lapwing, Snipe, Redshank and Teal.

Ospreys now breed nearby too, a wonderful addition to the list of birds of prey, that includes Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and for many people the most Welsh of birds, the Red Kite. The Kite's tale is one of conservation success, with re-introduced birds now seen across the UK. However, we'll take time to look for some of the original population that have always called Mid-Wales their home. What better sight than this elegant red-tailed raptor soaring over the 'hanging oaks' of Wales.

8 After breakfast we bid our fond farewells to this delightful area.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Day 1 | Arrive Betws-y-Coed.
7 nights at The Royal Oak Hotel |
| Days 2-7 | An exploration of North Wales to include South Stack and Newbrough on Anglesey, the Dee Estuary and its marshes, Conwy valley and estuary, moors of north east Wales, plus the RSPB's Ynys-hir Reserve |
| Day 8 | Depart after breakfast |

Jane Hope: Black Grouse
Roy Atkins: Red Kites, Puffins
Colin Scott: Dipper
Mary Braddock: Hen Harrier
Dave Kjaer: Ring Ouzel
Chris Piper: Sedge Warbler, Snowdonia





"With a reputation for stunning scenery, beautiful arrays of flowers and some endemic species adding that little extra spice, I have always wanted to visit this island, so I am very much looking forward to exploring - it sounds like there is plenty to enjoy!"
Roy Atkins

Dates	Sun 12 - Sun 19 May 2019
Price	£1,995
Deposit	£350 Single Supp £400
Leader	Roy Atkins
Flights	Air Corsica, scheduled Outbound: Afternoon, Stansted-Bastia Inbound: Morning, Bastia-Stansted
Weather	Likely to be pleasant and sunny, though often strong winds and may be colder high in the mountains, 10°-25°C. Storms are also possible with occasional downpours
Walking	This is a recce trip so we have not been before and therefore we are not sure how strenuous walking will be - but given we shall be on tracks on mountainous limestone areas, it may be uneven terrain and on slopes, so a degree of fitness is required
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
Insects	There may be a few mosquitoes so bring repellent
Accom	Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	7

Just some of what we hope to see:

Corsican Nuthatch	Crossbill (Corsican race)
Corsican Citril Finch	Red-crested Pochard
Marmora's Warbler	Squacco Heron
Moltoni's Warbler	Alpine Chough
Mediterranean Flycatcher	Orchids
Scopoli's Shearwater	Migrants
Yelkouan Shearwater	Bee-eater
Lammergeier	Pallid Swift
Golden Eagle	Scops Owl
Eleanora's Falcon	Golden Oriole
Audouin's Gull	Crag Martin
Blue Rock Thrush	Sardinian Warbler
Woodchat Shrike	Firecrest
(badius race)	Cirl Bunting
Alpine Swift	Water Pipit

This beautiful island has breathtaking scenery and a great collection of birds, including endemic and eastern Mediterranean species, plus migrants and some beautiful orchids and butterflies.

- Corsican Nuthatch in mountainous Corsican Pine forests
- Stunning mountain scenery and beautiful coastline
- Corsican Citril Finch, Marmora's Warbler, Italian Sparrow, Moltoni's Warbler
- Orchids and other beautiful flowers, it is not known as the 'Scented Isle' for nothing!
- Chance of Scopoli's and Yelkouan Shearwaters from headlands
- Lammergeier, Golden Eagle and migrant raptors such as Eleanora's Falcon
- Migrants including warblers, flycatchers, chats and shrikes

We have had interest in Corsica for a while, so wanted to put a holiday together and knew that would involve a recce. Rather than Roy going by himself, we thought you'd like to join him. He knows exactly where he wants to go and what he expects to see, but he'll be exploring other unknown areas, so what each day involves will be kept completely flexible. We just know that the birds are good, the scenery fabulous and the people welcoming.

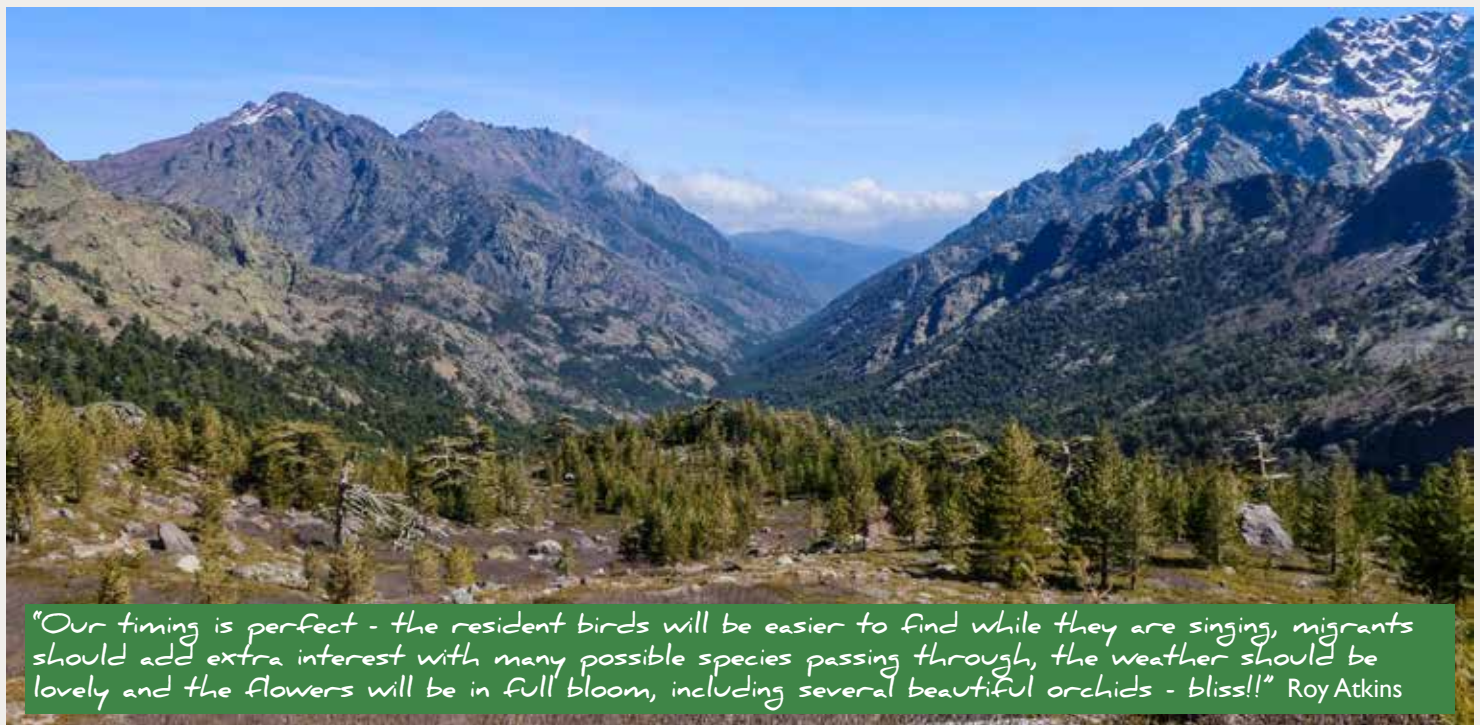
Our flight takes us to Bastia, from where we'll enjoy our first taste of the island as we travel to our hotel in the Restonica Valley. It is a beautiful, mountainous island with exciting birds including endemics, resident species and at this time of year the chance of migrants and we shall be keen to get out exploring - starting near the hotel in our 'home' valley, if time allows.

The 'Scented Isle' is so called because of the masses of wild flowers - including some exciting

orchids and we shall enjoy these too, but do bear in mind that we have not been here before, so on this recce trip we shall be exploring new places.

2-4 Our base near the centre of the island is the perfect spot to explore the rugged mountains and valleys. Winding roads weave through spectacular scenery and flowers are everywhere, as we travel into the Restonica and Asco Valleys. These are great sites to start our search for the most sought-after species on the island - Corsican Nuthatch. Found in the higher Corsican Pines, they can be elusive, but we'll surely find one eventually and can look out for plenty of other species whilst we explore. This area has Corsican Citril Finch and a host of higher altitude species such as Alpine Chough, Alpine Swift, Golden Eagle, Water Pipit, Blue Rock Thrush, Firecrest and with luck even Lammergeier - a bird harder to find now as numbers decline. The roads are not always for the faint-hearted but will be worth it for the birds and views.





"Our timing is perfect - the resident birds will be easier to find while they are singing, migrants should add extra interest with many possible species passing through, the weather should be lovely and the flowers will be in full bloom, including several beautiful orchids - bliss!!" Roy Atkins

We hope for weather that will bring migrants and there are plenty of places to search for flycatchers, warblers, shrikes and more. We hope to find the local race of Woodchat Shrike (badius), with little white in the wings and a thick bill, a potential future split. Lower down we shall walk through groves of trees and maquis full of flowers with plenty of orchids to look for - Pink Butterfly, Lady, Barton's, Green-winged and Tongue and perhaps the spectacular Violet Limadore are possible and migrants may include Bee-eaters, Red-backed Shrike and raptors.

We shall search the maquis for 'scrubby' warblers, including the near endemic Marmora's and Moltoni's. The first is now split from the Balearic Warbler of Majorca and Moltoni's is split from Subalpine Warbler, with a very limited range. Dartford Warbler is likely and if we are very lucky Spectacled as well. With Red Kites overhead we'll look out for Rock Sparrow, Cirl Bunting and Crag Martin and chequered Tyrrhenian Wall Lizards on the rocks. A host of exciting butterflies include endemic Corsican Swallowtail and Wall Brown and with luck Corsican Red-underwing Skipper. At the coast we'll look for Yellow-legged and Audouin's Gull and out at sea, passing terns and Scopoli's and Yellouan Shearwaters.

5-7 We move on to our second hotel, lower down and closer to the best wetland sites and the Cap Corse peninsula. Here we can explore different habitats, including the Etang de Biguglia, where we'll search for Red-crested Pochard, Audouin's Gull, herons and egrets including, with luck, Squacco and Purple Herons and Great Egret.

We'll also visit Cape Corse, which can be very good for migrants and we can scan from the coast for shearwaters and Mediterranean race of Shag. We'll check dryer areas for Stone Curlew and any passage wheatears, while poplars on the trails by the lake may have Cetti's Warbler and Penduline Tit, with Zitting Cisticola calling from ditches and reedy patches. This can be a good area for migrants as well as more orchids, wonderful flowers and butterflies.

We pass through delightful little villages as we travel and may stop for coffee here and there - and we'll look out for Italian Sparrow, now considered a true species in its own right and no longer thought to be a hybrid. Spotless Starling is common and we hope for Mediterranean Flycatcher - the new split from Spotted Flycatcher, with a less streaked plumage. Scrubby areas may hold Tawny Pipit, Woodlark and perhaps migrant Golden Orioles, while we are serenaded by the gorgeous song of Nightingales. Migrants are always a possibility and, as well as song-birds, these may include Eleanor's Falcon, Hobby, Marsh Harrier, Black Kite, Hoopoe, Red-backed Shrike or even rarer flycatchers - Collared and Semi-collared are sometimes seen and scarcer warblers are possible. One evening we shall go out in search of Scop's Owl.

8 We travel to the airport for our flight back to the UK.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Day 1 | Fly from London to Bastia then drive to our hotel in the Restonica Valley
4 nights Hotel Arena |
| Days 2-4 | Exploration of the mountainous centre of the island and perhaps some of the coast too |
| Days 5-7 | Move to a hotel further north on the island, to explore the wetlands and northern peninsula
3 nights Hotel Castel Brando |
| Day 8 | Flight back from Bastia to London |

Mary Braddock: Corsican Nuthatch, Barton's Orchid
Mike Prince: Asco Valley, Tyrrhenian Wall Lizard, Corsican Finch
John Oates: Lammergeier
Francesca Veronesi: Marmora's Warbler



NORTH COAST 500



"Always a highlight, we'll visit the incredible seabird island of Handa, with its dramatic sea cliffs and huge seabird colonies, all set against a stunning backdrop of mountains and azure sea. Here, Great and Arctic Skuas patrol overhead and the cliff ledges are crammed with thousands of jostling seabirds, with around 55,000 Guillemots alone!"
Craig Round

Dates Fri 17- Sun 26 May 2019
Price £1,995
Deposit £350 Single Supp £350

Leaders Simon Eaves and Craig Round
Weather Late May can be beautifully settled, although wind and rain is possible and snow can still be on the highest tops (10°-25°C)
Walking Walks will be up to 5 miles on good tracks and paths, but some sections are rough and steep
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10
Insects Should not be a problem
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12
Route The Official North Coast 500 route begins and ends at Inverness Castle. Created in 2014, the route brings together just over 500 miles of stunning coastal scenery, naturally following the main roads across the coastal edges of the North Highlands

Just some of what we hope to see:

Eider	Great Skua
Common Scoter	Arctic Skua
Goldeneye	Arctic Tern
Ptarmigan	Puffin
Black-throated Diver	Black Guillemot
Great Northern Diver	Rock Dove
Manx Shearwater	Cuckoo
Gannet	Short-eared Owl
White-tailed Eagle	Whinchat
Osprey	Ring Ouzel
Golden Eagle	Common Whitethroat
Hen Harrier	Hooded Crow
Merlin	Twite
Golden Plover	Otter
Greenshank	Grey Seal
Black-tailed Godwit	cetaceans
Whimbrel	

The NC500 encapsulates everything that is special about the wild Highlands in one superb road trip, as it follows a spectacular coastal route.

- Breathtaking scenery with vast mountainous views, on the most scenic roads
- Huge seascapes from wild headlands, with good chances of Otters and cetaceans
- Thriving seabird and skua colonies on Handa Island and Dunnet Head
- Excellent habitat for raptors including Golden and White-tailed Eagles
- Pristine and deserted white sand beaches
- The highest mountain pass in the UK, with a good chance of Ptarmigan at the top
- All three divers in summer plumage

We meet in Inverness for dinner and to discuss the route and itinerary.

2-3 Heading north, we shall stop under the Kessock Bridge to scan the Moray and Beaulie Firths for Otter and dolphins. Continuing up the coast, we shall visit the RSPB's Reserve at Nigg Bay for waders, wildfowl and maybe some late Pink-footed Geese.

We shall stop at Loch Fleet for breeding Osprey, as well as a reliable site for Greenshank. We'll continue to stop and scan the bays as we head towards John O'Groats and the most north-easterly point on the UK mainland, Duncansby Head. Our hotel is near Dunnet Bay and we'll spend the next day exploring the rich wildlife of Caithness. The small Reserve at St John's Pool

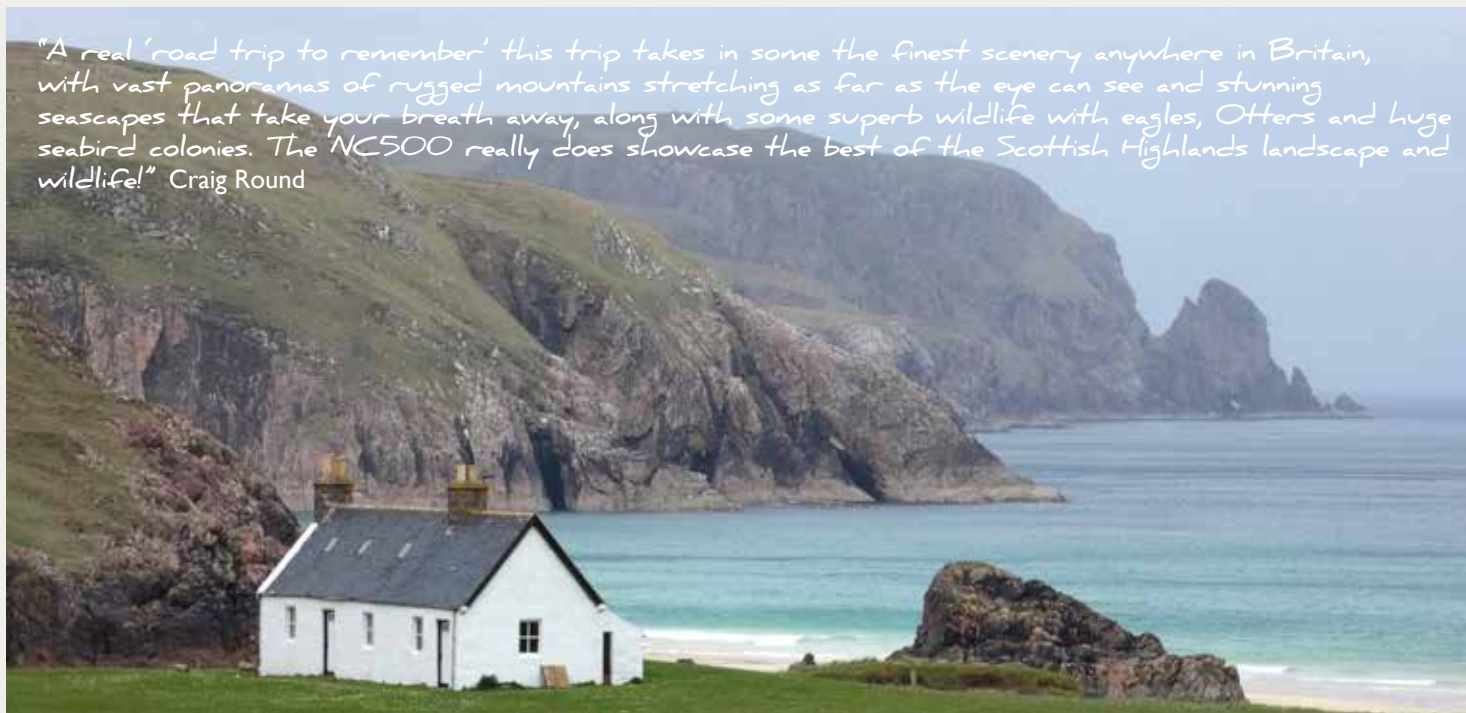
is an absolute gem, with an enviable list of rarities as well as breeding terns, waders and wildfowl. Nearby Dunnet Head has spectacular views over the Pentland Firth and the island of Hoy. Gannets and auks fish in the Firth and recently there have been regular sightings of Orcas.

The RSPB's new Reserve at Broubster Leans, is on a natural floodplain and is a fantastic habitat for Short-eared Owls and Hen Harriers. We shall visit this Reserve in the evening, to look for hunting raptors as the light fades.

4-6 Continuing along the north coast towards north-west Sutherland, the scenery becomes very dramatic, with vast seascapes and towering mountains. We'll visit Strathy Point, where the seawatching can be excellent, with



"A real 'road trip to remember' this trip takes in some the finest scenery anywhere in Britain, with vast panoramas of rugged mountains stretching as far as the eye can see and stunning seascapes that take your breath away, along with some superb wildlife with eagles, Otters and huge seabird colonies. The NC500 really does showcase the best of the Scottish Highlands landscape and wildlife!" Craig Round



Kittiwakes, Shags, auks and maybe cetaceans. We have seen a vagrant White-billed Diver here, so anything's possible!

Further along the coast, we shall stop at the Kyle of Tongue, overshadowed by the dramatic peaks of Ben Loyal. This is eagle and Otter country, with a supporting cast of all three divers, Mergansers and breeding waders.

Our journey continues around the shores of Loch Eriboll and on towards the village of Scourie, where our hotel is perfectly positioned overlooking Badcall Bay. There's a good chance of Otters from the hotel and we shall visit Scourie Bay where calling Corncrake can occasionally be heard.

The next day we shall explore Balnakeil with its beautiful beach. Some of the land at Balnakeil is managed for Corncrakes and we'll look and listen for them amongst the nettle beds. The marsh at Balnakeil is little known and can be excellent, with scarce birds always possible.

The next day will be spent exploring the fabulous Reserve of Handa Island. The 'Bonxies' own Handa and their ever present shapes patrol the skies. Arctic Skuas also breed and we shall get to within a few feet of these birds, but there is much more to Handa, with huge seabird colonies on vertical cliffs. Hundreds of thousands of auks, Fulmars and Kittiwakes breed here and the sights, sounds and smells of Handa are simply incredible.

Our journey continues south through the wilds of Assynt. A famed landscape, with the iconic

peaks of Suilven and Quinag rising from tracts of bare moorland and blanket bog. There are breeding divers and Greenshank here and the chance of Golden Eagle is ever present. Seals haul out on skerries and there is always the chance of Otter. We shall spend the night in the scenic port of Ullapool.

7-8 The dramatic scenery continues as we visit Gruinard Bay, overshadowed by the huge rock walls of An Teallach. This is White-tailed Eagle territory and we shall scan the islands and peaks for eagles and other wildlife. The route takes us through some incredible vistas, before running along the shores of Loch Maree Nature Reserve.

We shall stay for two nights in Shieldaig, where White-tailed Eagles regularly breed on an island in front of the hotel. The next day we'll explore the Applecross peninsula and drive over the spectacular Bealach Na Ba, the highest pass in the UK. The views from the top to Skye are breathtaking and we shall walk to one of the summits for Ptarmigan.

9 Our final day takes us along the shores of Loch Kishorn towards Inverness. Once we have completed the route, we shall have the opportunity to explore and look for wildlife around Inverness and the Black Isle.

10 After breakfast we say our goodbyes.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** We meet for dinner at our hotel.
1 night Inverness
- Days 2-3** Travel to Caithness via John O'Groats and Duncansby Head. During our time here we'll visit the UK's most northerly point, Dunnet Head; St John's Pool and the RSPB's Broubster Leans.
2 nights Castletown Hotel, Thurso
- Days 4-5** Travel to Sutherland visiting Loch Eriboll, Balnakeil Bay and Scourie.
2 nights Edrachillies Hotel, Scourie
- Day 6** Full day on Handa Island and then travel through Assynt to Ullapool.
1 night The Ceilidh Place, Ullapool
- Days 7-8** Travel to Gruinard Bay, Poolewe, Loch Maree and Torridon. Exploration of the Bealach na Ba and Applecross peninsula.
2 nights Tigh an Eilean Hotel, Shieldaig.
- Day 9** Travel back to Inverness via Lochs Kishorn and Carron. Visit the Black Isle area. 1 night Inverness
- Day 10** Depart Inverness

Simon Eaves: Puffins, Arctic Skua
Simon Pawsey: Cape Wrath
Duncan Macdonald: Grey Seal, Short-eared Owl
Roy Cowley: Gannet



WILD HEBRIDES



"These islands are on the edge of Western Europe - a migration flyway that brings daily surprises! The pattern of land use, managed in a traditional way and in harmony with nature, is rich in breeding birds, wildflowers and rare bees. Add to that the history, stunning seabird colonies and white sands, there is nowhere else in the UK that compares!"
Stuart Housden OBE

Dates Sat 25 May - Tue 4 Jun 2019

Price £2,595

Deposit £500 Single Supp £300

Leaders Stuart Housden OBE and Roy Atkins

Weather Though usually quite dry, these islands can experience all the seasons during one trip and can be windy (5°-20°C)

Walking Coastal walks on uneven terrain of up to three miles - walking boots recommended, but trainers or even sandals suitable on some occasions. Collapsible/telescopic walking poles could be useful for this trip

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11

Insects Biting insects unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 11

Just some of what we hope to see:

Corncrake	Arctic Skua
Red-necked Phalarope	Great Skua
Golden Eagle	Pomarine Skua
Hen Harrier	Long-tailed Skua
Merlin	Manx Shearwater
Short-eared Owl	Black Guillemot
White-tailed Eagle	Puffin
Great Northern Diver	Twite
Black-throated Diver	Golden Plover
Red-throated Diver	Hebridean Orchid
Whimbrel	Otter
Little Tern	

This holiday has been designed by Stuart, who spent 23 years as Director of RSPB Scotland. His extensive knowledge of these islands and understanding of the conservation stories here, is exceptional.

- We visit North and South Uist, Benbecula, Harris, Lewis and the island of Vallay
- A chartered boat trip to the Shiant, Puffins galore affording very close viewing
- Corncrake and Red-necked Phalarope - excellent chance of these elusive birds
- Peak time for skua and wader migration with Long-tailed and Pomarine possible
- Otters, three species of diver, Hen Harrier and Golden and White-tailed Eagles
- Beautiful machair flora, including the endemic Hebridean Orchid
- Standing stones of Callanish, Dun Carloway Broch and Flora MacDonald's croft

1-2 We overnight in Inverness, to give us an early start for our journey through the Great Glen and across the Isle of Skye to Uig and the ferry to Lochmaddy on North Uist. Arctic Tern, Puffin, Guillemot, Razorbill, Kittiwake, Gannet, Great and Arctic Skuas, Manx Shearwater and with luck even cetaceans are possible from the ferry. Arriving on North Uist the bustle of modern life seems far behind us as we head to our hotel.

3-6 Stuart has visited these islands many times in his role with RSPB Scotland and we are thrilled to have him lead this trip - his expert knowledge and experience of the islands and their conservation issues adding enormously to the holiday. Our exploration may start in the south with shallow lochs, rocky headlands, dunes and our first machair - a beautiful habitat with

stunning flora including the endemic Hebridean Orchid, with purple flowers and heavily blotched purple leaves. The wealth of flowers may attract Moss Carder and Great Yellow Bumble Bee, a rare species confined to north and west Scotland.

Migration is still in full swing and late parties of Whimbrel or Black-tailed Godwits enroute to Iceland can drop in anywhere, while tidal strands have summer plumaged Sanderling and Turnstones. At 'stinky bay', with rotting seaweed on the foreshore, many waders occur and divers and seaduck are sometimes just offshore. We shall scan for Red-necked Phalarope at a reliable site, while keeping an eye open for Hen Harrier and Golden Eagle, with Otter possible whenever we are on the coast. Flora MacDonald was born on South Uist and we'll visit her birthplace.





"There is so much to be excited about on this trip!! First there is the chance of migrating skuas - Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas must be two of the most stunning birds we see in the UK! Then add in Corncrake and Red-necked Phalarope, stunning scenery, Otters, a boat trip to the Shiant Islands and even an endemic orchid and what more could you want!" Darren Rees

The RSPB Reserve at Balranald provides our best chance of Corncrake, calling from the iris beds and we'll work on getting good views. Twite feed, Skylark sing overhead, Corn Bunting still give their jangling song and summer plumage waders are on the beach. Sea-watching from Aird an Runair is renowned but weather dependent, so north-westerlies may bring passage skuas, including rare Pomarine and Long-tailed amongst the more common Arctic and Great Skuas. Breeding waders are everywhere including Lapwing, Oystercatcher, Snipe, Ringed Plover and Dunlin. Beautiful freshwater lochs, edged with flowering Bog-bean and Flag Iris, stud the landscape, holding nesting Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Wigeon, Curlew and Redshank.

We shall visit the remote and uninhabited island of Vallay using a 4x4 vehicle to cross the dazzling 1km of white strand. This is a gem of a place and a rare and special opportunity not offered on other tours. Nesting Corncrake, waders and terns are here on the organic croft managed in partnership with the RSPB. Merlin and Peregrine are occasionally seen and wild Rock Doves frequent the ploughed fields. Impressive ruined houses show how profitable local farming and seaweed production was in the early 19th century.

7-9 We head via Berneray to the ferry across to Harris with its rugged and forbidding mountains. A healthy population of Golden Eagle means we'll keep our eyes peeled wherever we travel. We'll visit Rodel, a beautiful

15th century church built for the chiefs of Clan Macleod. It is well preserved, with fine statues and we'll check the area for migrants, while the machair at Northton can be alive with waders and has nesting Little Terns. This is one of the last areas for Corncrake on Harris and they often call from crofters' gardens!

We shall enjoy an exclusive boat trip to the Shiant Isles, six miles off Harris in the middle of the Minch. This truly spectacular experience will be an adventure to remember! The islands support over 100,000 pairs of seabirds, including 10% of all UK's Puffins! Though we won't land on these uninhabited islands, we'll get close views of the birds and may see Manx Shearwaters, seals and perhaps dolphins. We shall get stunningly close to rafts of Puffins and other auks allowing fantastic photography opportunities.

Harris is conjoined to Lewis, but the habitat and feel is very different and we'll drive up through moorland to the Standing Stones of Callanish - world famous and a stunning example of a circle and cruciform arrangement, with almost 50 standing stones. If time permits we may also visit Dun Carloway, one of the best preserved iron age brochs in Scotland and Loch na Muilne RSPB Reserve nearby.

10-11 We say goodbye to these wonderful islands and make our way back to Inverness, birding as we go, for our last night together before going our separate ways.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Day 1 | Meet up in Inverness for overnight stay - 1 night Premier Inn |
| Day 2 | Travel down the Great Glen and across Skye, before catching ferry to Lochmaddy and making the short journey to our hotel. 5 nights at Orasay Inn or B&B nearby |
| Days 3-6 | Birdwatching, botany and wildlife exploration of North and South Uist, Benbecula and visit to the small island of Vallay, in search of Corncrake, waders, seabirds and raptors |
| Days 7-9 | Take ferry to Harris and Lewis birding these two very different islands. We shall also take a boat trip to the Shiant Isles and visit Callanish Standing Stones and Dun Carloway Broch 3 nights Hotel Hebrides in Tarbert |
| Day 10 | Travel back to Inverness 1 night Premier Inn |
| Day 11 | Depart after breakfast |

Craig Round: North Uist panorama
Colin Scott: White-tailed Eagle
Simon Eaves: Red-necked Phalarope, Puffins
Chris Hind: Hebridean Orchid
Kevin Tappenden: Great Northern Diver
Richard Stacey: Corncrake





Colin Scott

Osprey, Spring Birds. Holiday details page 448



Brooke Miller

Nightingale, Extremadura. Holiday details page 36

*Just a few of the images
guests and guides have taken
on Speyside Wildlife trips*



David and Franky Perry

Cairngorms, Spring Birds. Holiday details page 48



David Petts

Hen Harrier, Outer Hebrides. Holiday details page 46



John Oates

Black-eared Kite, Mongolia Holiday details page 76



Angela Land

Bottlenose Dolphins, Scottish Mammals in Summer. Holiday details page 80



Roy Atkins

Guests in Mongolia. Holiday details page 76



Adam Moan

Puffin, Shetland. Holiday details page 66



John Oates

Daurian Shrike, Mongolia. Holiday details pg 76



David and Franky Perry

White-tailed Eagle, Mull. Holiday details page 62



Norman De Ath

Great Skuas, Spring Birds in Speyside. Holiday details page 48



Roy Cowley

Northern Harrier, Nova Scotia. Holiday details page 84

MULL AND KINTYRE



"Round every corner you don't quite know what you might find, Mull must be one of the most exciting places to watch wildlife in the UK! Add to that the chance of Beaver in Kintyre and this trip covers lots of Scotland's majestic wildlife."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sun 2 - Tue 11 June 2019
Price £2,095
Deposit £400 Single Supp £200

Leaders Julian Sykes and Sally Nowell

Weather Mixture of sun and showers, but cooler on boat trips and in the mountains (10°- 25°C)

Walking Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 4 miles. Walks on Lunga and Staffa, although approx only 1 mile long, are more challenging and only suitable for those with good mobility and balance. Walking boots will be needed.

Boat Trips Our boat trip to Lunga lasts 6 hours, including 3 hours onshore. Our trip to Iona is a short 10 min ferry ride.

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11.

Insects Biting midges will be encountered.

Accom Grey Gull Hotel, Isle of Mull Hotel and The Inn on Loch Lomond - double, twin and single rooms all ensuite.

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Red-throated Diver	Hen Harrier
Wood Warbler	Short-eared Owl
Common Tree Pipit	Kestrel
Osprey	Raven
White-tailed Eagle	Peregrine
Golden Eagle	Great Skua
Common Sandpiper	Manx Shearwater
Wheatear	Storm Petrel
Oystercatcher	European Beaver
Sparrowhawk	Common Seal
Greenshank	Common Dolphin
Bar-tailed Godwit	Otter
Dunlin	Minke Whale

Unknown Argyll, with hidden corners and the chance of Beaver, through the majesty of Mull with its high density of eagles, to the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond!

- See both Golden and White-tailed Eagles amongst stunning scenery
- Look for Otters along beautiful rocky shores
- Possibility of Red-throated, Black-throated and Great Northern Divers
- Explore wild remote areas in search of rich and varied wildlife
- Set sail for the amazing basalt columns of Staffa enroute to Lunga
- See Puffins closer than you can ever imagine
- Waterside hotels in three charming locations

We meet up in Glasgow and head off through Argyll to the west coast and our base for the next three nights in the lochside town of Lochgilphead, arriving in time for dinner.

2-3 Over the next two full days we shall enjoy some of the fantastic wildlife on offer in Argyll & Bute. One day we'll travel south to the wonderful Kintyre Peninsula visiting the Sound of Gigha, Campbeltown Loch and the famous Machrihanish Bird Observatory. On our journey we hope to find breeding seabirds along the coast, Red-throated and possibly Black-throated Divers, waders and wildfowl, plus we'll stop at the famous Mull of Kintyre.

The next day we shall head inland, stopping at Tainish NNR for classic woodland species such as Wood Warbler; Common Redstart

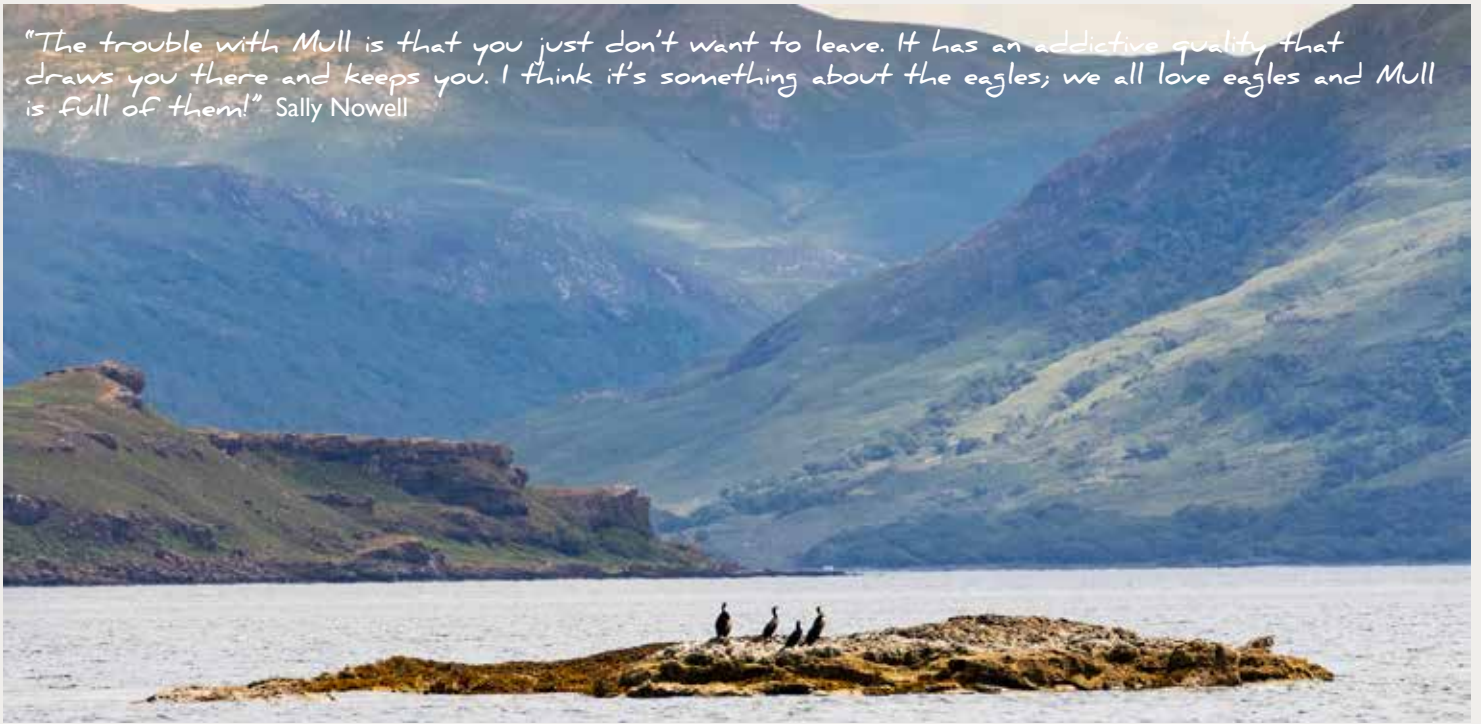
and Tree Pipit, plus a look at one of the many lochs in this area for Osprey, divers and wildfowl. After an early dinner we shall visit Knapdale and walk the Beaver Trail. We'll take our chances with sightings, but will experience this fantastic Reserve and who knows our luck!

4-9 We'll travel slowly up the west coast, stopping at inlets and coastal woodlands, then take the ferry from Oban to Craignure and our shoreside hotel base for the next five nights. From there, Gannets and Arctic Terns go by and nearby, meadows are sprinkled with orchids and play host to Snipe, Curlew, Whinchat and Redpoll.

The mighty White-tailed Eagle is a real highlight here, together with majestic Golden Eagle, both busy feeding young now. Mull is probably 'the' best place in Britain to see eagles.



"The trouble with Mull is that you just don't want to leave. It has an addictive quality that draws you there and keeps you. I think it's something about the eagles; we all love eagles and Mull is full of them!" Sally Nowell



With around 16 pairs of White-tailed Eagles and 24 pairs of Golden Eagles, the island's breeding birds are at their highest density anywhere in Europe.

Nearby, piping Common Sandpipers, fledged Wheatear and noisy 'leeping' Oystercatcher are on weedy shores, where Common Seals haul out, with mottled drake Eider and resting Red-throated Divers offshore. Birch and oak woodland can hold Redstart, Tree Pipit and Wood Warbler; as well as Sparrowhawk overhead. Here and in moorland glens, are some of our favourite places to see Golden Eagle, whilst Merlin nest in the boggy upland glens. Estuaries have waders such as Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit and Dunlin, whilst offshore the myriad skerries hold noisy Common Gull and Common and Arctic Terns. Peaty burns by freshwater lochs are home to Dipper and Grey Wagtail, whilst coniferous woodland has Siskin and sometimes Common Crossbill.

A short distance away on rugged shorelines, we have often been lucky with fine views of Otters; engaging animals, as easy to see here as anywhere in Scotland. As we watch, Hooded Crow pick along the shore. Red-breasted Merganser and the occasional Black-throated Diver occur; whilst Kestrel, Raven and Peregrine patrol the forbidding basalt cliffs. In the dramatic folds of inland glens, Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl hunt over the moorland and young coniferous plantations, where Whitethroat give their scratchy song.



Journeying along the croft land on the Ross of Mull, Buzzards adorn every telegraph pole and we'll take the short passenger ferry to the beautiful white sandy beaches and azure blue seas of Iona. The white cottages and famous Abbey are surrounded by tall hay meadows, where good numbers of calling Corncrake reside, but can be difficult to see at this time of year, whilst Rock Dove and Twite are more obvious.

A trip highlight will be our boat journey to the seabird spectacle of the Treshnish Isles, alert to possible Minke Whales or Common Dolphins as we go. We'll watch for Black Guillemot and Great Skua, Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel on the crossing. We take in the island of Staffa and the basalt columns of 'Fingal's Cave', before landing on the incredible island of Lunga. We have several hours to wander right amongst Puffins that greet us, whilst green-eyed Shag squawk their disapproval and an incredible throng of Guillemot and Razorbill roar in a cacophony. Fulmar cackle, Kittiwake cries echo up from narrow chasms and Arctic Skuas patrol offshore, amongst the flocks of wheeling seabirds ... it's a wonderful place!

10-11 Tearing ourselves away from Mull, we'll travel inland through Glencoe and over Rannoch Moor; to our final base on the banks of Loch Lomond for our last night. The next morning we'll return everyone to Glasgow where we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive in Glasgow
3 nights at Grey Gull Hotel
- Days 2-3 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration throughout Argyll & Bute
- Day 4 Journey through stunning scenery, before catching the ferry to Mull
5 nights at Isle of Mull Hotel
- Days 5-9 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration on Mull, including a boat trip to the Treshnish Isles
- Day 10 Ferry back to mainland then drive to Loch Lomond birdwatching enroute
1 night at the Inn on Loch Lomond
- Day 11 Leave Loch Lomond for Glasgow

Jane Hope: Otter, Loch na Keal, Black Guillemot, Curlew
Duncan Macdonald: European Beaver
Simon Eaves: Puffins

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 9 - Fri 21 June 2019

Price £2,765

Deposit £500 Single Supp £300

Leaders Roy Atkins and one from the team

Walking Coastal walks on uneven terrain of up to 2 miles. Walking boots recommended with trainers suitable on some occasions. Collapsible or telescopic walking poles could be useful for this trip

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

Group 12

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	Green Shank
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

Craig Round: Short-eared Owl, North Uist, Corncrake, Red-necked Phalarope
Mary Braddock: Black Guillemot
John & Josie Russell: Red-throated Diver
Mike Grimshaw: Twite

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.

2-5 We head north west through dramatic mountain scenery to Ullapool and the ferry to Lewis. 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.

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 north western coast of Lewis up to the Butt of Lewis. This windswept and spectacular place is one of the best locations in the UK for seawatching 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 underwatched habitat for Otters, eagles and divers, including Red-throated and Great Northern and we should find Cuckoo and Twite here.





"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 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.

6-9 We leave Harris and weave our way by ferry through an archipelago of skerries, a rich feeding area for divers, seaduck and White-tailed Eagles, to beautiful Berneray and the Uists. We shall explore North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay. 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.

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!

10-11 We take the ferry from Eriskay across the Sound to Barra and Vatersay, both linked by a causeway. These are gentle, peaceful islands and a relaxing end to our Hebridean adventure. Basking Sharks are frequently seen from land and Golden Eagles and Merlin breed. We shall visit Traigh Mor, a beautiful beach and the spectacular site of Barra's amazing airport.

12 The ferry from Barra across the fertile waters of The Minch to Oban provides more chances of Minke Whale, Basking Shark and seabirds - then from Oban 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
- Day 2** Travel north west to Ullapool to catch the ferry to Stornoway on Lewis
4 nights at The Royal Hotel
- Days 3-5** Birding and wildlife exploration around Lewis and Harris
- Days 6-9** Ferry crossing from Harris to Berneray. Birding and wildlife exploration on Berneray, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay
4 nights at Temple View Hotel
- Days 10-11** Ferry crossing from Eriskay to Barra. Birding and wildlife exploration of Barra and Vatersay
2 nights at Isle of Barra Beach Hotel
- Day 12** Ferry crossing from Barra to Oban then journey north east to Inverness
1 night at Premier Inn
- Day 13** After breakfast we say our farewells



SHETLAND ISLES



"Last year, as we stood taking in the stunning views out to the Lighthouse on Muckle Flugga, with the calls of Great Skuas all around us, a Peregrine appeared out of nowhere, scything through a sky full of Bonxies, before disappearing out over the sea!"
Craig Round

Dates Sat 22 - Sat 29 Jun 2019

Price £2,175

Deposit £400 Single Supp £250

Leaders Craig Round and Tim Drew

Flights Loganair, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Aberdeen-Sumburgh
Inbound: Afternoon, Sumburgh-Aberdeen

Weather During a typical week we expect mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range 10-20°C

Walking Walking is generally very relaxed and easy, but on at least two of the days we may take walks of up to 3-4 miles on rough grassland and small coastal paths

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8

Insects Biting insects are not a problem

Accom Saxa Vord, Unst - double, twin ensuite, single non-ensuite rooms in individual houses. Please note that single rooms will be sharing a bathroom with one other guest unless a further supplement is paid

Busta House Hotel - double, twin and single ensuite rooms

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Red-necked Phalarope	Dunlin
Whimbrel	Golden Plover
Storm Petrel	Twite
Red-throated Diver	Rock Dove
Great Northern Diver	Raven
Long-tailed Duck	Twite
Whooper Swan	Otter
Great Skua	Minke Whale
Arctic Skua	White-beaked Dolphin
Gannet	White-sided Dolphin
Puffin	Killer Whale
Black Guillemot	Harbour Porpoise
Common Tern	Harbour Seal
Arctic Tern	Grey Seal

Just 6° south of the Arctic Circle - far northern isles and world-class wildlife, huge seabird colonies and delightful Red-necked Phalaropes, at the Simmer Dim.

- Islands at the 'Simmer Dim' when the sun barely sets
- Easy flight to Shetland rather than the 14-hour ferry
- Mousa's Storm Petrels, Fetlar's Red-necked Phalaropes
- The spectacular seabird cities of Noss, Hermaness and Sumburgh
- Otters and offshore whales and dolphins
- Regular rarities and summering scarce breeders
- Closer to Norway than to mainland Scotland

Flying from Aberdeen, we arrive in Shetland and drive north over Mainland. Crossing by ferries to the low-lying island of Yell, we go on to our base on Unst, the northernmost inhabited island of the British Isles. Great Skuas pass overhead and the surrounding meadows echo to the wild calls of Curlew and Whimbrel. It really does feel like a different world.

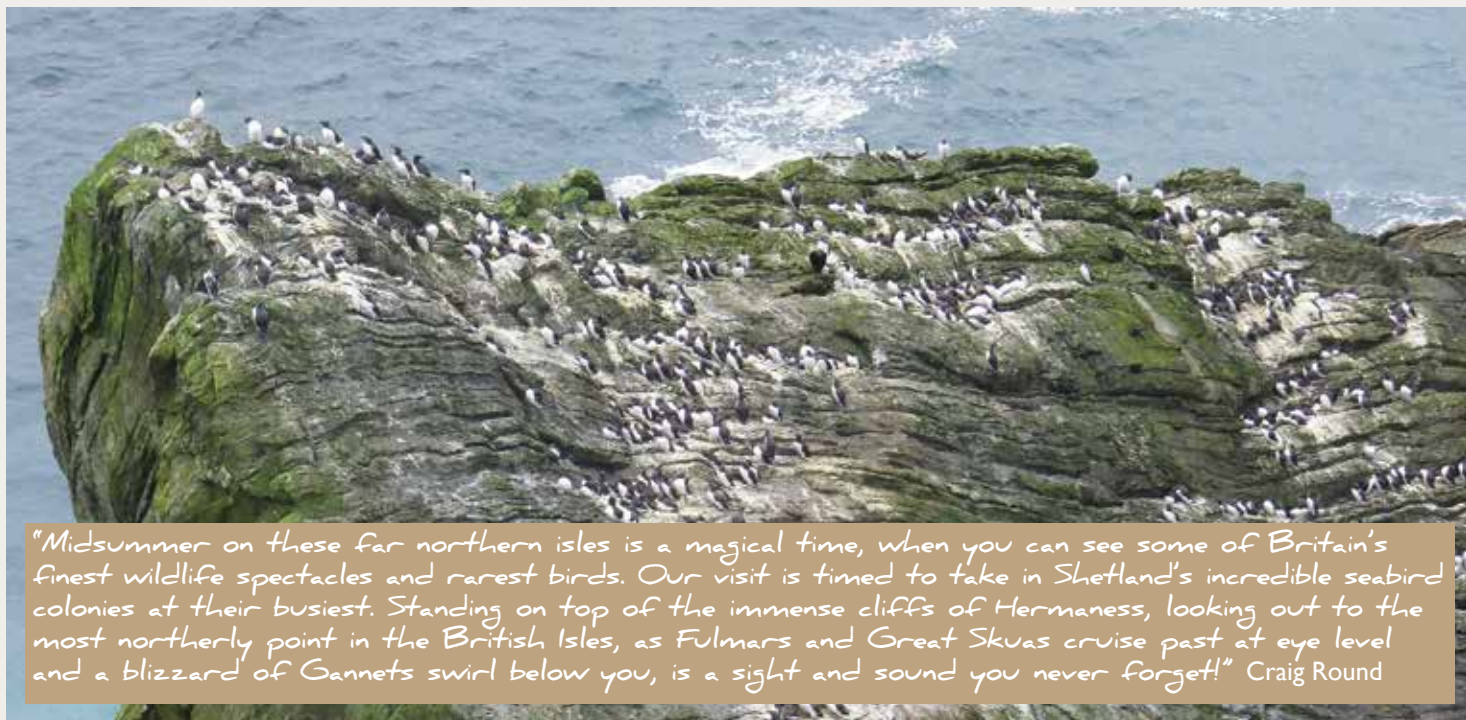
2-3 On our walk across the moorland to the wild and dramatic cliffs of Hermaness, the skies are full of soaring and displaying Great Skuas (in Shetland called Bonxies, meaning 'dumpy bird'). Breeding Snipe, Dunlin and Meadow Pipit display overhead and the plaintive call of Golden Plover can be heard. Unst also supports Wheatear, Twite and Whimbrel. As we reach the vast seabird cliffs and gannetry at Saito, a blizzard of gannets rides the updrafts, a sight that really does take your breath away! Puffins emerge

from their burrows and scurry around our feet, as we look out to Muckle Flugga lighthouse and the small rocky island of 'Oootsta' or Out Stack— after which there is no more Britain!

On our regular short ferry crossings between islands, Gannets can be seen diving in synchronised teams and the small harbours are a favourite haunt of Otters. Marauding Arctic Skuas harry passing Arctic Terns and Puffins, Guillemots and Razorbills stream through the narrow sounds between the islands. We shall be alert to the sight of fins breaking the surface, betraying a Porpoise close inshore, or maybe even Killer Whales!

Another inter-island boat journey takes us to Fetlar; from the Viking for 'fat or fertile land' and the fourth largest island in the Shetland Isles. It is a stronghold for stunning Red-necked Phalaropes, as they delicately spin on small lochans, picking





"Midsummer on these far northern isles is a magical time, when you can see some of Britain's finest wildlife spectacles and rarest birds. Our visit is timed to take in Shetland's incredible seabird colonies at their busiest. Standing on top of the immense cliffs of Hermaness, looking out to the most northerly point in the British Isles, as Fulmars and Great Skuas cruise past at eye level and a blizzard of Gannets swirl below you, is a sight and sound you never forget!" Craig Round

insects from the waterside stones. Fetlar is also a great place to see and hear the weird courtship cries of Red-throated Divers, which at this time of year may have young.

Arctic Skua, Golden Plover, Dunlin and Whimbrel, or 'peerie whap' in Shetland meaning small Curlew, can also be seen on the tundra-like heath of Fetlar and their 'rippling' calls can be heard across the land. The island also supports Lapwing, Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover, with Curlew, Snipe and Redshank in the colourful flower-filled meadows.

North Shetland, renowned for Otters, is probably the UK's premier location for this elusive mammal and we have been lucky with fine views. Along the shores we see Red-breasted Merganser and Eider or (Dunter) and further inland, coastal species nest everywhere, including Arctic Skuas (Skootie Alan) and Fulmar (Maalies) – we shall really be learning our Shetland bird names!

4-7 Leaving the north and its islands and skerries behind us, we venture south to explore Mainland Shetland. Great Northern Diver and Long-tailed Duck all over-summer here and a few pairs of Whooper Swans now breed. We'll also see Rock Dove, Raven and perhaps Peregrine. Sumburgh Head, close to the dramatic Viking settlement of Jarlshoff, can be a great place to look for passing cetaceans and over the years we've seen White-beaked and White-sided Dolphins and watched Humpback, Minke and predatory Killer Whales!

A trip highlight for many is our dusk visit to the island of Mousa. Once inside the tower of the 2,000-year-old Iron Age Broch, we are enveloped in silence, until the rhythmic 'churring' of Storm Petrels amongst the stones brings these ancient walls alive, a moment of real 'Shetland magic'! It's a real privilege to watch these tiny ocean-going seabirds flicking in low off the sea, returning to their nest sites in the walls of the Broch and swirling like bats around our heads, before fluttering in to land. In the fiery sunset of the 'simmer dim', the real world seems a million miles away.

The island of Noss is one of the finest seabird islands in Europe. On our boat trip around the island, we'll cruise under the sheer seabird cliffs of the Noup, dwarfing our boat and towering some 590ft above us, it's a truly awesome sight and sound! These are the largest cliffs on Shetland's east coast and home to almost 9,000 pairs of Gannet! The great bird city also holds Guillemot, Razorbill, Kittiwake, Fulmar, Shag and we'll see the delightful Black Guillemot (Tystie).

8 We should have some time to birdwatch on the final morning, before taking an afternoon flight back to Aberdeen.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly into Sumburgh and travel north to our base at Saxa Vord on Unst
- Days 2-3** Exploration of Unst, including the wild cliffs of Hermaness and the small island of Fetlar
- Day 4** Travel south on the ferry to our base on the Mainland
- Days 5-7** Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of south Mainland, including a visit to Noss, the Viking settlement of Jarlshoff and a night visit to Mousa
- Day 8** Depart in the afternoon, after a morning spent bird and wildlife watching, on a flight back to Aberdeen

Craig Round: Storm Petrel, Great Skua, Red-necked Phalarope, Minke Whale
Sally Dowden: Guillemots
Simon Eaves: Puffins
Kevin Tappenden: Great Northern Diver



WILDLIFE BONANZA



"For the general naturalist wanting to see the Scottish specialities this is the perfect week, with northern dragonflies on the wing, some butterflies and many really special flowers - not forgetting the localised birds and mammals too! With good weather it can be remarkable, with an astonishing range of species." Duncan Macdonald

Dates Sat 29 Jun - Sat 6 Jul 2019

Price £1125

Deposit £200 **Single Supp** £100

Leaders Duncan Macdonald and James Stevens

Weather The weather can vary enormously. During a typical week in this season we would expect mixed sun and showers with temperatures in the range of 10-25°C.

Walking There'll be some short easy strolls on wide paths but also two longer more strenuous but unrushed walks, including an "at-your-pace" 3 mile round trip walk into the Cairngorms and a walk around the 'yellow route' to Coire Lochan in Glen Affric. Walking boots are recommended.

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

Insects Biting midges can occasionally be a nuisance by lochs and shores, especially in the west.

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at our very special, delightfully furnished converted barn, the Steading.

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Northern Emerald	Frog Orchid
White-faced Darter	Lesser Twayblade
Northern Damselfly	Globe Flower
Northern Brown Argus	Starry Saxifrage
Large Heath	Dwarf Cornel
Brilliant Emerald	Pine Marten
Azure Hawker	Red Squirrel
Dark-green Fritillary	Golden Eagle
Twinflower	White-tailed Eagle
Common Wintergreen	Black-throated Diver
Serrated-leaved Wintergreen	Crested Tit
Lesser Butterfly Orchid	Scottish Crossbill
Heath Fragrant Orchid	Slavonian Grebe
Small White Orchid	Osprey

The special northern dragonflies, butterflies and wild flowers are our focus, with the chance of some Highland birds and mammals too, on our much requested Highland Full Monty!

- Special and scarce, Highland butterflies and dragonflies
- Walk in Glen Affric to beautiful, dragonfly rich, Coire Lochan
- A dozen species of orchid likely, including Small White and Lesser Twayblade
- Relaxed Cairngorm walk for alpine flowers as well as Frog Orchid
- A great list of Scottish birds and mammals too
- Based at our fabulous Steading with our outstanding chefs
- The perfect holiday for the 'all-round' naturalist

Our action-packed week starts with dinner together at the Steading on Saturday evening.

On this week, more than any other, our itinerary is dictated by the weather! If the sun is shining we shall head to lochans and streams for dragonflies and flowery meadows or moorland for butterflies. Some of these species need sunshine to be on the wing, so we may need to grab these times if the forecast is not so good. If it is raining - well the flowers will look fabulous whatever the weather!

2-7 Our focus this week is the special Highland species of dragonflies, butterflies and flowers, so we may start locally visiting ancient Caledonian Pines, where delicate Twinflower spread in patches on the forest floor - their tiny paired flowers are

exquisite and surely one of the most beautiful of the flowers we shall see this week. Common, Intermediate and Serrated-leaved Wintergreen are here too, while boggy pools hold Four-spotted Chaser and Common Hawker, plus rare Northern Damselfly and White-faced Darter. Orchid meadows host Small White, Greater and Lesser Butterfly, Northern Marsh and Heath Fragrant Orchids and we'll search for Lesser Twayblade, always tricky with its habit of growing under the heather! On slopes dotted with Rockrose, we'll hunt for Northern Brown Argus in its full Scottish form - with white dots on the forewings. Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Large Heath are on the wing and we'll also run a moth trap whenever we can. The forests provide the chance of Red Squirrel, Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill, though we shall need to check these carefully as both





"I am always amazed how many species of orchid we see on this week, from rich purple Northern Marsh Orchids, through more delicate Small White Orchids, scented Heath Fragrant Orchids and furry flowered Creeping Ladies Tresses, right down to the minute flowers of Lesser Twayblade and Coralroot Orchid... then add delicate Twinflowers and wintergreens and a smattering of alpine flowers and it is a wonderful week for any botanist." Duncan Macdonald

Common and Parrot Crossbill now breed here too. We'll also make a visit to our mammal hide, with fingers crossed for close up views of Badger and delightful Pine Martens!

The Findhorn Valley provides a chance of Golden Eagle and Mountain Hare, plus Red Deer, Dipper and Peregrine. Mountain Pansy, Stagshorn Clubmoss, Alpine Bistort and Bearberry are likely as we cross the moorland to Loch Ruthven, the stronghold of beautiful Slavonian Grebe, here in colourful breeding plumage. There is always a chance of fishing Osprey here and we may find Water Lobelia – a beautiful plant with submerged leaves and white flowers. If the sun is out we'll make a dash to beautiful Loch Bran, where the rare, metallic green Brilliant Emerald and other dragonflies such as Highland Darter may be on the wing.

We'll spend a whole day walking in beautiful Glen Affric, following a trail that will lead us to a lily-studded lochan where Downy Emerald, Golden-ringed Dragonfly and White-faced Darter can be found, along with some of the more common damselflies. Our walk includes some steeper sections, but we can take it slowly - and one section of wide track holds Common Hawker and sometimes the 'holy grail' of northern dragonflies - Azure Hawker - with slim chances of Highland Darter and Dark-green Fritillary too.

Further west, we'll visit sea lochs where White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Rock Dove, Black Guillemot and Red-throated and

Black-throated Divers are possible. Common Seals haul out on the rocks, Great Skua cruise over the islands and Arctic Terns breed, but the real focus is Loch Maree, in the heart of Torridon, where we have our best chance to find Azure Hawker and Northern Emerald Dragonflies - two real Highland specialties. Great and Round-leaved Sundews trap midges here, as does Butterwort and we'll see other typical moorland species like Bog Asphodel, Lousewort and Bog Myrtle.

Our route up into the alpine world of the Cairngorm Corries is not too steep and we can stop for rests to enjoy the flowers on the way. We can compare up to six berry-bearing bushes as we walk, including Bog Bilberry, Crowberry, Bearberry and Cloudberry. The beautiful alpine flowers include Starry Saxifrage, Dwarf Cornel, Globe Flower and Trailing Azalea as we gain height. We'll get excited about club-mosses with Fir, Interrupted and Alpine, then as we get higher, we hope to find more alpine flowers, including Alpine Ladies Mantle, Alpine Sawwort, Alpine Meadow Rue, Roseroot and perhaps the rare Alpine Speedwell - with tiny deep blue flowers. We have found patches of Frog Orchid in the past and if we have time to get beyond the large boulders in the corrie, we may even add Moss Champion and Arctic Mouse-ear.



We say our farewells after breakfast on Saturday.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Glen Feshie in time for an evening meal and a chat about our plans for the coming week. 7 nights at the Steading.
- Days 2-7** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Abernethy Forest, the Cairngorms, Loch Maree, Glen Affric and West Coast.
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells and depart.

Roy Atkins: Northern Brown Argus, Twinflower, Common Wintergreen, Fragrant Orchid and Burnet Moth, Roseroot
Steve Dudley: Azure Hawker, White-fronted Darter



YORKSHIRE IN SUMMER



"Julian and I have loved showing off our native county and its rich and varied wildlife on our autumn trip and so are delighted to be visiting Yorkshire again in summer, when it takes on a very different and more relaxed feel."

Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 29 Jun - Sat 6 Jul 2019

Price £1,650

Deposit £300 Single Supp £250

Leaders Sally Nowell and Julian Sykes

Weather The weather can be changeable, but in the main the temperature should not be below 15 °C and it can be warm or even hot. Please be prepared however for wet and windy weather as well.

Walking Mostly easy walking on level paths up to 3 miles, with perhaps a little more if rarities require it!

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

Insects Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

A transfer can be arranged from York train station

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Gannet	Curlew
Fulmar	Golden Plover
Puffin	Lapwing
Guillemot	Red Grouse
Razorbill	Yellowhammer
Red Kite	Skylark
Honey Buzzard	Corn Bunting
Peregrine Falcon	Tree Sparrow
Hobby	Bearded Tit
Turtle Dove	Cetti's Warbler
Avocet	Water Rail
Barn Owl	Bittern
Tawny Owl	Spoonbill
Little Owl	

Many folk don't quite know what wildlife diversity Yorkshire has to offer, so we'll take you into its hidden forests, along the magnificent coast and into the heart of the Yorkshire Wolds.

- Just being in Yorkshire!
- Varied habitats, coast, grassland, forest and moorland
- Comfortable accommodation and great food
- Possibly Honey Buzzard, Bittern, Bearded Tit
- Bempton RSPB seabird cliffs from above and below
- Experience wildlife through the eyes of artist Robert Fuller
- A relaxed holiday exploring the Yorkshire Nature Triangle

We arrive at our comfortable hotel in time for dinner and meet up with those who have arrived by train at York station.

Yorkshire is fast becoming one of the best wildlife watching destinations in the country, with the focus on a 'Nature Triangle' which offers some of the best of British wildlife. We shall be exploring a wide variety of habitats in the week ahead.

2-3 We shall visit Blacktoft Sands Reserve, where we hope to catch sight of Bearded Tit along the reedbed edges and with luck perhaps Bittern and Water Rail. Marsh Harriers, once a rarity, have really made the reedbeds here their home and so we shall be hoping to get some great views of these fabulous birds both here and along the reedbeds elsewhere in the area.

North Cave Wetlands is just one of 97 Reserves managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and



was developed out of a sand and gravel quarry. With some fantastic and innovative hides, it now hosts a large population of delightful breeding Avocets, but it also provides some varied habitats for warblers, ducks and grassland species. With luck we might catch sight of a Hobby feeding on the plentiful dragonfly population, or Water Vole feeding quietly in the waterways.

We shall also visit the town of Beverley and its magnificent Minster, an amazing feat of construction, but now also host to a family of Peregrines who we hope to spot above and around the majestic towers dating back to 1250 AD.

Along the quiet country lanes and disused railway tracks now reclaimed by nature, we shall be looking out for farmland bird species and butterflies, such as Marbled White flitting amongst the native plants typical of chalky soils.





"Yorkshire is great at any time of year but now this county is really celebrating its varied habitats and fabulous wildlife, we shall take you to visit some of the highlights of Yorkshire's Nature Triangle."
Sally Nowell

We shall make our way a little further north towards Malton, stopping enroute in the Yorkshire Wolds, where a highlight is our visit to Robert Fuller's famous art gallery and fantastic wildlife garden. Robert appears on various TV programmes and happily shares his boundless enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment to his local area and its mammals.

The Wolds are an exceptionally beautiful area and home to soaring Red Kites, Peregrine, Corn Bunting and other grassland birds. Barn Owls frequent some of these valleys too, so as we enjoy the gentle rolling landscape captured in David Hockney's recent paintings of this area, we shall be scanning the hillsides and hedgerows for these silent and efficient hunters.

4-7 We transfer to our hotel near Malton, known as Yorkshire's food capital. Our stunning country hotel is our base for the next four nights, from where we shall visit the delightful tapestry landscape of the North Yorkshire Moors. This area is often over-shadowed by the better known Yorkshire Dales, but in this gentle landscape we shall be looking for Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Curlew and Lapwing.

We shall also be getting access to forested areas looking for Nightjar in the late evening, along with Honey Buzzard and Turtle Dove during the day, all tricky species to catch up with, but in scenery such as this the hunt can be part of the pleasure. If time allows we may also take a trip to charming Robin Hood's Bay to take in some sea air and perhaps look for fossils and even do a bit of rock-pooling!

This is a great time of year to visit the soaring cliffs of the East Yorkshire coast and a highlight of this holiday will undoubtedly be our visit to Bempton, viewing it from above on the cliff tops, but then getting up close and personal below as we take a boat trip along the coast. The cliffs are host to Europe's largest mainland population of Gannets, which can number over 20,000 in spring and summer; so be prepared to be amazed!. As well as Gannets we expect to see significant numbers of Razorbills, Guillemots, Fulmar, Kittiwake and Puffin and on the grasslands Whitethroats and Tree Sparrows are often also present.

8 After our farewells we shall transfer back to York for trains, or back to our original hotel to collect cars.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at our hotel. Transfers from York Station can be arranged.
3 nights Willerby Manor Hotel
- Days 2-3** Explore East Yorkshire area, visiting Blacktoft Sands and North Cave Wetlands as well as the Yorkshire Wolds and the historic town of Beverley
- Days 4-7** Transfer to our stunning hotel near Malton

Visit Bempton Cliffs and the North Yorkshire Moors, Dalby and Cropton Forest.
4 nights Burythorpe House, Malton
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells.

We shall travel back to our first hotel for those who have left cars.

A transfer to York Station can also be arranged or extend your holiday with a weekend in this beautiful city.

Pauline Potheary: Gannets
Sally Nowell: Flamborough Head
Chrissie Nicholson: Razorbill and Puffin
Mary Braddock: Tree Sparrow
Colin Scott: Yellowhammer
Roy Cowley: Marsh Harrier



ARGENTINA ECLIPSE



"The total eclipse we witnessed in 2017 blew me away - it was far more impressive than I ever expected and I can't wait to witness another, as I am told every one is different! Add to this some of the most spectacular scenery in Argentina and this is going to be a remarkable trip!" Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 29 Jun - Mon 15 Jul 2019

Price £6,995

Deposit £1,350 **Single Supp** £700

Leaders Roy Atkins and local guide

Flights British Airways, scheduled.
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Buenos Aires
Inbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Buenos Aires
Internal, local airline: Buenos Aires-Córdoba, Salta-Buenos Aires

Weather This trip runs in the middle of the southern hemisphere winter. Expect cold weather at night, early mornings, on cloudy days and especially in the last part of the trip, as we are going to be in high elevations
0-18°C (possibly -5°C in high Puna)

Walking This is an easy pace trip with no long walks. There may be occasional uphill sections and some steps. Although distances are short you will be standing and scanning for periods of time

Meals All included from lunch on day 2 to lunch on day 16
Typical local food but also some Italian style food. Argentina is the land of beef!

Insects Not a big issue at this time of year

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Total Solar Eclipse!	Torrent Duck
Andean Avocet	Rufous-throated Dipper
Puna, Andean and	Giant Coot
Chilean Flamingos	Whistling Heron
Andean Condor	Puna Plover
Andean Goose	Andean Negrito
Red-tailed Comet	Burrowing Parrot
Giant Hummingbird	White Monjita
Black-legged Seriema	Ornate Tinamou
Black-necked Swan	Spot-winged Falconet
Comb Duck	Vicuña

Witness a total eclipse of the sun under the blue skies of Argentina, with fabulous birding and incredible sandstone scenery, desert cacti, soaring condors, beautiful flamingos and Andean Avocets

- Total eclipse of the sun in the Chepes area of Argentina
- Spectacular scenery at Ischigualasto National Park and Humahuaca Canyon
- Fabulous variety of habitats from desert, through cloud-forest to high Andes Puna
- Andean, Chilean and Puna Flamingo, Andean Avocet, Andean Goose and Vicuña
- From hummingbirds, such as stunning Red-tailed Comet, to mighty soaring Andean Condors
- Burrowing Parrot, Black-legged Seriema, Comb and Torrent Ducks, Rufous-throated Dipper
- Incredible sandstone rock formations at Quebrada de Las Conchas and Talampaya

1-2 After an overnight flight we arrive in time for lunch in Buenos Aires then visit the famous Costanera Sur Reserve in the middle of town. This wonderful wetland Reserve will get us off to a great start, with the chance of birds such as Coscoroba and Black-necked Swan, Masked Gnatcatcher, Monk Parakeet, Yellow-billed Cardinal and even cute Lesser Cavy - a small wild guinea pig!

3 After our morning flight to Córdoba we drive to the town of Chepes, birding enroute, as we want to be in the right area and somewhere with cloudless skies for the big day!

4 Today is the big day!!! A complete solar eclipse is like nothing else - it is truly spectacular in a way that an almost total eclipse just isn't! During totality, expect a sudden drop in temperature, stars, rays of light beaming out into the dark space around the sun,

maybe even visible solar flares! It is truly beautiful and awe-inspiring and our aim today is to make sure we are in just the right spot to witness this spectacular event. Having said all that - we shall do some birding too, as there is great birding around the salt-lands and mountain ranges here - home to Burrowing Parrot, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Spot-winged Falconet, White-fronted Woodpecker and many other species.

5-6 We shall gain height as we head up into the Andes mountains, with our first chance of Andean Condor, as well as spectacular Red-tailed Comet and perhaps Giant Hummingbird! We'll visit two of the most spectacular National Parks in Argentina's Central Andes: Talampaya and Ischigualasto. The Talampaya National Park is one of eleven UNESCO sites in Argentina and has incredible red rock formations of towering sandstone. Ischigualasto National Park



"This is an absolutely first-rate wildlife and scenic holiday, before you even think about the solar eclipse and an area I was already looking into before the obvious opportunity arose. The diversity of habitats and altitude, from cloud-forest through desert to the high Andes, makes for an exceptional diversity of birds, including some fabulous species - I am very excited!" Roy Atkins



is home to many paleontological discoveries and is nicknamed "Valley of the Moon" because of its unique landscape and scenery.

7-8 We'll find plenty of birds enroute to our next destination, Cafayate - a wine growing region between two rivers. Wines from here have been attracting the world's attention for the quality of the full-bodied whites made from Torrontés Riojano, as well as its fruity reds made from Cabernet Sauvignon and Tannat, so we shall go wine tasting as well as birding in this region, where Green-barred Woodpecker, Spectacled Tyrant, Tufted Tit-spinetail and endemic Sandy Gallito are all to be found.

9-10 Our journey north takes us through one of the most spectacular rock formations in Argentina: Quebrada de Las Conchas. Every turn of the road here offers astonishing views of colourful mountains and canyons, ranging from red to brown, green and yellow, with chances for the elusive Black-legged Seriema. We then spend a full day exploring the dry Chaco habitats east of San Lorenzo, looking for some characteristic species of this habitat such as Comb Duck, Chaco Chachalaca, Roadside Hawk, Scaly-headed Parrot, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Suiriri Flycatcher and Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, plus Masked Gnatcatcher, Black-capped Warbling Finch and Many-colored Chaco Finch.

11-12 We visit Yungas cloud-forest, Andean lagoons and grasslands on our way to Santa Laura Pass, with plenty of birds to look out for such as Whistling Heron, White Monjita, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Rufous-browed

Peppershrike, Purple-throated Euphonia, Crested Oropendola and inquisitive Plush-crested Jays - and even King Vulture is possible. We then have a full day in the high Puna desert - where the Lake Pozuelos Natural Monument is a mountain-ringed basin with shallow brackish water, located roughly 90 kilometres north of Abra Pampa. This area hosts a huge population of Andean, Chilean and Puna Flamingos and we'll see large concentrations amidst the solitude and grandeur of this unique high Andean landscape. Depending on the water level, chances are high for other Puna specialties such as Andean Avocet, Andean Goose, Crested Duck, Puna Teal, Andean, Horned and Giant Coots and Puna Plover. There should be plenty of delightful Vicuñas and other local birds including Andean Gull, Mountain Caracara, Andean Flicker, Golden-spotted Ground Dove and Ornate Tinamou.

13-14 We travel to Purmamarca through more wonderful geology - then spend the rest of the day and all of the next day searching for specialties of the dry Andean foothills, such as Andean Swift, Andean Lapwing, Rufous-banded and Puna Miners and Andean Negrito. We'll also visit Yala, where rushing rivers hold striking Torrent Duck and scarce Rufous-throated Dipper.

15-17 We drive to Salta for an afternoon flight back to Buenos Aires, where we shall overnight, giving us a relaxed morning before our overnight flight back to London, arriving early on Day 17.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Overnight flight to Buenos Aires, then birding at Costanera Sur
1 night Hotel Cyan Recoleta
- Days 3-4** Fly to Córdoba then drive to Chepes area for birding and to view the total eclipse on Day 4
2 nights Motel Aca Chepes
- Days 5-6** Drive to Chilecito, visit Talampaya and Ischigualasto NPs for birding and stunning sandstone scenery
2 nights Posada Las Marías
- Days 7-8** Travel to Cafayate for birding and exploration, plus a visit to a winery
2 nights Viñas de Cafayate Wine Resort
- Days 9-10** Travel to San Lorenzo, passing through Quebrada de Las Conchas
2 nights Posada Don Numas
- Days 11-12** Drive to Humahuaca, then a full day in the high Puna desert
2 nights Hotel Huacalera
- Days 13-14** Visit the area of Pucará de Tilcara, an old pre-Incan citadel
2 nights Hotel La Comarca
- Day 15** Fly from Salta to Buenos Aires
1 night Hotel Cyan Recoleta
- Days 16-17** Afternoon flight back to London, arriving on Day 17

Julian Sykes: Solar Eclipse
Lucas Marti: Pucará de Tilcara
Luis Segura: Andean Avocet, Burrowing Parrots, Vicuña
Pablo Petracci: Andean Flamingos



THE FARNE ISLANDS



"It might be titled 'Farnes' but this tour is far(ne) more than just that, despite a visit to this fantastic island group being a major highlight. I love reacquainting myself with coastal Northumberland each year, as there's always a surprise or two involved." Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 6 Jul - Sat 13 Jul 2019
Price £1,695
Deposit £300 Single Supp £200

Leader Julian Sykes

Weather Variable, with a good chance of sunshine, (10°-20°C) but on the boat trips waterproofs, warm clothing and walking boots are needed

Walking Walks of up to two miles, mainly on level tracks around Reserves

Boat Trips Our trip to the Farne Islands lasts 6 hrs, including 2 hrs onshore on both Staple and Inner Farne. Trip to Coquet Island lasts 1 hr. Our evening White-beaked Dolphin trip lasts 4 hrs

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

Insects Could be a problem, especially on the inland day

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 7

Just some of what we hope to see:

Puffin	Red-throated Diver
Kittiwake	Little Egret
Arctic Tern	Avocet
Common Tern	Tree Sparrow
Sandwich Tern	Yellowhammer
Roseate Tern	Stonechat
Little Tern	Osprey
Mediterranean Gull	White-beaked Dolphin
Eider	Harbour Porpoise
Crossbill	Common Seal
Goshawk	Grey Seal
Red Grouse	Red Squirrel

Fabulous summer birdwatching, as we explore the coastlines, forests and moorlands of this corner of historic Northumberland, around the famous Farne Islands.

- Full day visiting two Farne Islands looking at seabird colonies - not to be missed!
- Day in the famous Kielder Forest for Red Squirrel, Osprey and crossbill
- South to Teeside for Common Seal, waders and wildfowl
- Beautiful coastline with long sandy beaches, jagged rocks and migrant waders
- Boat trip out into the North Sea, with possibly White-beaked Dolphins
- A trip out to Coquet Island to watch Roseate Terns and Grey Seals
- Comfortable hotel to return to each day

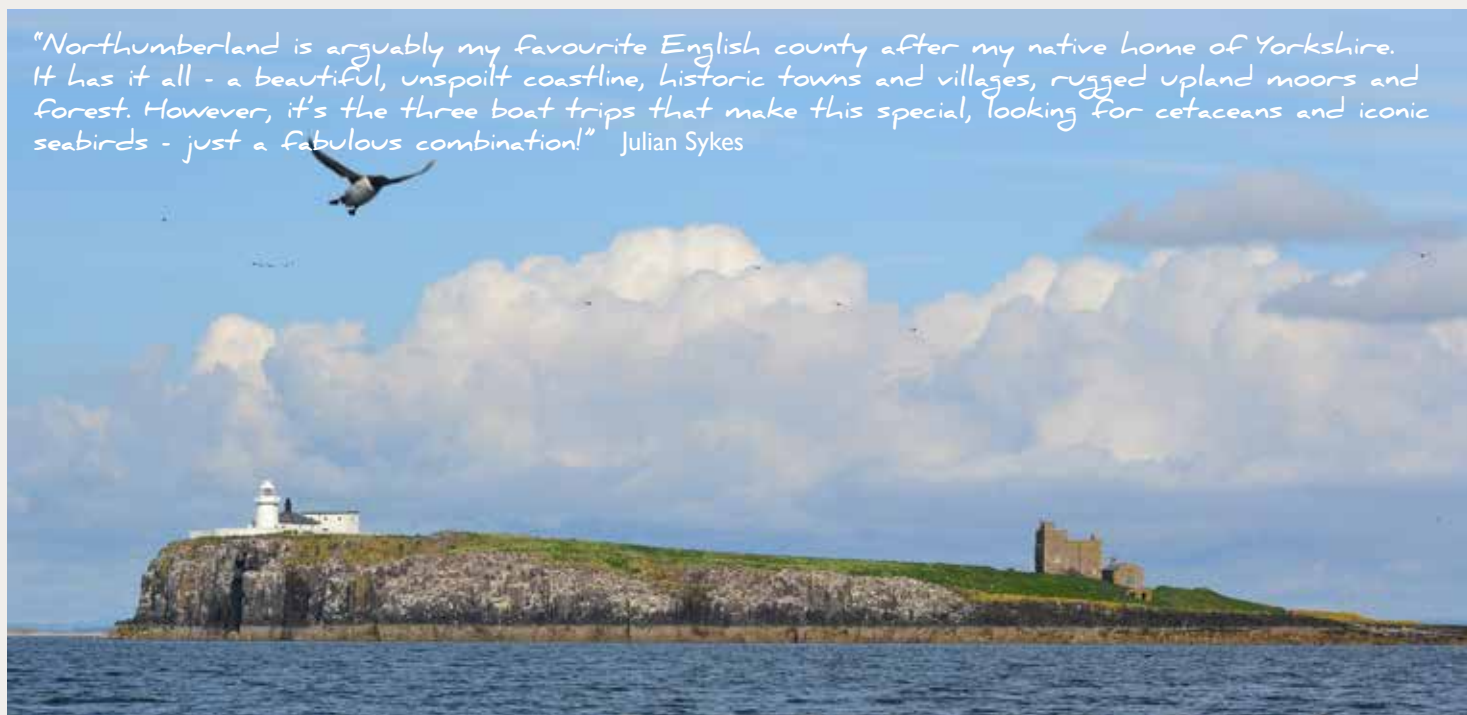
We are based in the beautiful seaside village of Seahouses, perfectly placed to explore the wonderful scenery and wildlife of this fabulous north east county. The hotel is noted for its excellent local and wholesome cuisine, with portions to satisfy the keenest of appetites. Depending on time of arrival, we will hopefully have time to take a walk along the coast, where we can kick start our holiday with a variety of gulls loafing on the beach, with Eider and possibly some waders, such as Turnstone and Oystercatcher around the harbour. Later that evening we have dinner, followed by a look at the planned itinerary, which will be weather and tide dependent.

2-7 This is a full and diverse week, where a certain amount of flexibility is required, due to the uncertainty of the weather and wildlife on offer, with a possibility

of scarce and rare migrants. Our lovely hotel is within easy reach of the North Sea and an easy walk along the many coastal paths can produce Northern Wheatear, Linnet, singing Reed Bunting and possibly Yellow Wagtail. Offshore we shall find Eider, or the local 'Cuddy Ducks' (after St Cuthbert's) loafing around the bays, along with Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant, Guillemot and possibly Common Scoter. North of Alnwick is Newton by the Sea, where a stop overlooking the North Sea can produce a Little Tern fishing in the shallows. There are some excellent pools here that are always worthy of investigation, as migrant waders tend to make a stop here on their journey south. Our longest drive is into the adjacent county of Teeside (bring your passport!), to a couple of their flagship Reserves along the River Tees – Seal Sands NR and Saltholme RSPB Reserve. Both are excellent and both very different, with the former being



"Northumberland is arguably my favourite English county after my native home of Yorkshire. It has it all - a beautiful, unspoilt coastline, historic towns and villages, rugged upland moors and forest. However, it's the three boat trips that make this special, looking for cetaceans and iconic seabirds - just a fabulous combination!" Julian Sykes



notable for Common Seals hauled out on the rivers edge and the latter for its breeding Avocets, along with plenty of other wildfowl and waders. This is also an area that can produce an avian surprise or two, especially since waders such as Black-tailed Godwit and Greenshank are moving south from their breeding grounds. Thousands of seabirds breed in Northumberland and we'll enjoy special boat trips to see them astonishingly close up. A visit to the Farne Islands needs no introduction and will be one of the highlights of the week. Our day here includes landings on both Inner Farne and Staple and we shall see birds at incredibly close range - expect Kittiwakes, Guillemots, Razorbills, Puffins, Shags and Eider at your feet - a photographer's dream! Arctic Terns nest beside the paths and dive-bomb you as you walk - a good hat or a stick held aloft will keep us safe from their sharp bills!

Colonies of Sandwich and Common Terns are here too and inquisitive Grey Seals lift their heads from the water as we pass. A second boat trip takes us to RSPB Coquet Island (no landing) where 90% of the UK's Roseate Terns breed. It's a great opportunity to see this scarce breeding species fishing and loafing around on the rocks adjacent to their nesting boxes.

The target of our third boat trip is to glimpse one of the small groups of White-beaked Dolphins in these waters. This little known cetacean spends its summer along the Northumberland coastline, feeding in the fish-rich waters and trying to avoid their

larger cousins who they see as a threat. This tour takes us out into deeper water and as a consequence we have a chance to see Gannets fishing, Red-throated Diver and possibly Manx Shearwater.

Our coastal hopscotch day is punctuated with visits to the pools and wetlands just inland from Druridge Bay. Reed and Sedge Warblers sing from the extensive phragmite beds, along with the more difficult Grasshopper Warbler. We hope to encounter the UK's most northerly breeding Avocets at one of the Reserves, along with Common Snipe, Redshank, Dunlin and Green Sandpiper. There are usually a few surprises, with Little Gull, Mediterranean Gull or Whimbrel distinct possibilities.

One day we drive inland to the mighty Kielder Water - a huge reservoir that's surrounded by coniferous forest. Due to the construction of platforms, it offers the chance of finding the nest of an Osprey and if our luck is in, one fishing in the lake itself. A stop enroute could also produce Grey Wagtail in the river and we shall also be keeping an eye out for game birds on the drive across the moorland. Typical pine forest species all breed in Kielder and we shall look for Common Crossbill and Red Squirrel in this vast forest - there's always a chance of finding a Goshawk here too.

8 After our last 'full English' breakfast we say our fond farewells and conclude this 'canny' visit to the north east.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 We meet at Bamburgh Castle Inn for a 7 night stay
- Days 2-7 Exploration of the coast, forest and moorland, including 3 boat trips for The Farne Islands, White-beaked Dolphins and Coquet Island
- Day 8 We say our farewells and depart after breakfast

Tim Drew: Puffin, Inner Farne
Simon Eaves: Arctic Tern, Guillemot
Chrissie Nicholson: Seal, Lindesfarne
Mark Denman: Kittiwake and Sandwich Tern





"Our first Rewilding week was a real adventure, finding out about initiatives across Scotland. On our travels we saw amazing wildlife, from White-tailed Eagles and Hen Harriers, to Beavers and Black-throated Divers, with some fabulous plants and insects too."

Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 27 Jul - Sat 3 Aug 2019

Price £1250

Deposit £200 Single Supp £100

Leaders Sally Nowell and Kate Mennie

Weather The weather can vary enormously. During a typical week in this season we would expect mixed sun and showers with temperatures in the range of 10-25°C

Walking Time will be spent patiently watching and waiting, with only occasional gentle walks of up to 1-2 miles. Walking boots are recommended, but walking shoes are fine

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

Insects Biting midges can occasionally be a nuisance by lochs and shores, so bring repellent

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at the Steading in Glenfeshie

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

White-tailed Eagle	Black Grouse
Golden Eagle	European Beaver
Red Kite	Red Deer
Osprey	Red Squirrel
Black-throated Diver	Pine Marten
Red-throated Diver	Mountain Hare
Scottish Crossbill	Ring Ouzel
Crested Tit	Ptarmigan

Jane Hope: Wild Cat, Heather Moor,
Wild Boar Duncan Macdonald: Water Vole
Craig Round: White-tailed Eagle
Simon Eaves: Osprey
Mike Hems: Pine Martens

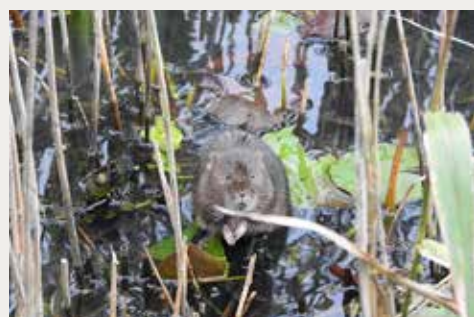
Rewilding is all about exciting and innovative ideas for developing our wild places for wildlife. Find out more about what's happening in the Scottish Highlands on this exciting new holiday.

- Spend a week in the stunning Cairngorms National Park
- Meet with those who are leading the way in Rewilding initiatives across Scotland
- Hear about the challenges, rewards and successes of re-introduction of species
- Spend time on the stunning West Coast looking for White-tailed Eagle
- Look for gems such as Golden Eagle, Crested Tit, Capercaillie and Pine Marten
- Visit Aigas Field Centre to hear about their Beaver and Wildcat projects
- Meet with RSPB Abernethy to learn about the 200 year forest expansion project

After arriving at our comfortable accommodation we shall have dinner and then, as an introduction to the concept of rewilding, we shall hear from Pete Cairns, a professional photographer and leading figure in the project 'Scotland's Big Picture,' who will share his knowledge about the exciting subject of rewilding and illustrate his talk with some stunning images. This should whet our appetites and get our brains buzzing for the rest of the week.

2-7 We shall spend the week immersing ourselves in the very best of Highland wildlife and habitat, to give you a fascinating insight into the new ideas and developments to conserve and expand Scotland's wild areas.

Our days will be necessarily flexible depending on the weather, but we intend to start with a visit to the RSPB's Reserve at Abernethy Forest. Here at



Forest Lodge, Scotland's largest wooden building, we'll meet a member of the Abernethy team, who will talk us through the plans to expand the remaining remnants of the Caledonian Pine forest.

We know you will be itching to get out, so we shall walk from Forest Lodge into this beautiful area, to see the work being undertaken, but also to look for the Pine Forest specialities such as Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill. This is an excellent site for Red Squirrel and Pine Marten, but our best chance of the latter will be on a visit to our mammal hide one evening, where we hope to see these superb animals at close quarters and our resident Badgers as well!

We shall spend time in a beautiful Scottish Glen, where there are chances of Golden Eagle and other mountain residents. White-tailed Eagles are becoming more frequent here, as their territory





"At last, a real chance to see Snow Leopard without too much roughing it! Although we shall be in high mountains, the terrain is ok for anyone with a reasonable level of fitness and we shall be sleeping in comfortable yurts. Fingers, toes and everything else crossed we actually get to see one."
Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 28 Jul - Tue 13 Aug 2019

Price £7,195

Deposit £1,400 **Single Supp** £600

Leaders Roy Atkins and Ecotours guide

Flights Korean Airlines, scheduled
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Ulaanbaatar
Inbound: Overnight, Ulaanbaatar-Heathrow
(outbound and inbound are via Seoul)
Internal: Ulaanbaatar-Dalandzadgad
-Ulaanbaatar-Khovd-Ulaanbaatar

Weather Generally warm or hot during the day, but can be chilly at night and early morning. It can be cold at higher altitudes and rain is possible any time. Day temperatures 15-25°C, while night-time temperatures in the mountains can drop significantly

Walking From short easy walks to moderate ones in the mountains. While looking for Snow Leopards there may be long periods of waiting and scanning. We can limit the walking by using 4x4s, depending on the terrain (often rough), however medium distances over uneven, rocky terrain may be encountered

Meals All included from dinner on Day 2 to dinner on Day 16

Insects Mosquitoes can be a nuisance, so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms/yurts, ensuite at hotels and Steppe Nomads Camp, shared facilities at other Ger camps

Visa To be obtained before travel, additional £120

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Snow Leopard	Steppe Eagle
Oriental Plover	Amur Falcon
White-naped Crane	Saiga Antelope
Demoiselle Crane	Siberian Jerboas
Pallas's Sandgrouse	Güldenstädt's Redstart
Mongolian Ground Jay	Altai Snowcock
Azure Tit	Swan Goose
Lammergeier	

Your chance to see the holy grail of big cats - Snow Leopard!
Plus we have kept all the best bits from our last trip
- the Gobi Desert, vast steppes and alkaline lakes.

- Snow Leopard!! Good chance of seeing this enigmatic and beautiful big cat
- Incredible scenery with barren mountains, vast open steppes and deserts
- Lammergeier, Steppe Eagle, Amur and Saker Falcons and Upland Buzzard
- A mix of hotels and comfortable traditional yurts - we think you'll love 'em!
- Wetlands with White-naped and Demoiselle Cranes, chance of eastern waders
- Saiga Antelope, Mongolian and Goitered Gazelles, Corsac Fox and Siberian Ibex
- Henderson's Ground Jay, Güldenstädt's Redstart, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Mongolian Finch

1-3 After our flight, via Seoul, to Ulaanbaatar; we rest before our onward flight to Dalandzadgad. Here is our first taste of Mongolia as we drive to Yolyn Am - 'Valley of the Lammergeier'. In the Gobi-Altai, we follow a small stream into a superb gorge where Mongolian Finch, Snowfinch, 'Eastern' Black Redstart, Common and Beautiful Rosefinch, Kozlov's and Brown Accentors may come to drink. Souliks, Gerbils and Pikas are everywhere and Lammergeier and Black Vulture cruise overhead.

4-5 In the morning we'll visit a small plantation - a magnet for migrants, looking for the first warblers, shrikes and flycatchers heading south. Our best chance for Oriental Plover is on our long drive through the immense rocky desert to our ger (yurt) camp by Mongolia's biggest sand dunes, the Khongorin Els. The drive is astonishing - through wonderful scenery of vast steppes and the Altai Mountains.



Arrival times are unpredictable on this trip, with big distances and frequent stops to see wildlife - today, perhaps our first Mongolian Gazelles, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Steppe Eagle or Saker Falcon. Our camp has stunning views of the sand dunes with Henderson's Ground Jay nearby. We'll visit Saxaul 'forest' which has Steppe Grey Shrike, Asian Desert Warbler, Desert Wheatear and Great Gerbil. The nearby river draws in migrants and waders and we'll search with torches at night for Siberian Jerboas and Long-eared Hedgehogs.

6-8 We return to Dalandzadgad, birding the following morning at a valley where Wallcreeper and Pacific Swifts nest. Bushes may hold Beautiful Rosefinch and warblers, while a nearby wetland provides the chance of eastern waders, with Red-necked Stint or Greater Sand Plover possible before our flight to Ulaanbaatar. The next day we head out through beautiful steppe-lands, pausing at superb alkaline lakes where





"We have kept many of the best bits from our previous Mongolia trip, making this a fabulous birding holiday as well - with chances of some truly superb birds, such as White-naped Crane, Oriental Plover, Mongolian Ground Jay, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Amur Falcon, Pallas's Gull and Azure Tit to name but a few!" Roy Atkins

Demoiselle Cranes and exciting eastern waders are possible - we have seen Red-necked Stint, Asian Dowitcher, Sharp-tailed, Terek and Marsh Sandpipers here. Other wetlands hold White-naped Crane plus Bar-headed Goose, Mongolian Gull, Ruddy Shelduck, Mongolian Lark and perhaps Meadow Bunting, with Targaban Marmots, Corsac Fox and Long-tailed Ground Squirrels.

9 Returning to Ulaanbaatar, we visit the Tuul River in search of Azure Tit, Long-tailed Rosefinch and White-capped Penduline Tit, with Amur Falcons overhead. We fly to Khovd, then drive to our remote ger camp in the foothills of the mountains, operated by a local wildlife protection community. Facilities are shared and basic, but our local team is keen to provide everything we need, with shower and flush toilet yurts for men and women and a generator providing hot water. We may see no-one else while we are here!

10-14 For five days we'll explore this amazing area. We'll head into the incredible scenery of the mountains in search of elusive Snow Leopards! Local scouts will be searching for signs - they know the best areas, so are our best chance of seeing this beautiful cat in such remote country. If they find one, it is likely to stay around, giving us time to get there and see it for ourselves - an exciting moment indeed. We also put in time scanning these vast areas ourselves, hoping to spot our own! Walking is unpredictable and may be on rocky, uneven or steep terrain, however, many observation points can be reached by 4x4 vehicle. We shall need patience, but the

slow pace allows time to admire the breathtaking scenery and soaring raptors such as Lammergeier, Steppe and Golden Eagle. We may find elusive Argali Sheep or Siberian Ibex, Altai Snowcocks and Güldenstädt's Redstart.

We shall also visit nearby wetlands with the chance of Pallas's Gull, Spoonbill, Black-throated Diver and eastern waders - perhaps Long-toed Stint or Lesser Sand Plover. Pallas's Reed Bunting, Citrine and white-headed Yellow Wagtails are possible and we'll return across plains where Saiga Antelope may be found.

15-17 We return to Khovd for our flight to Ulaanbaatar, pausing at a huge lake, where ducks include White-headed Duck and Red-crested Pochard, plus White-winged, Whiskered and Caspian Terns and last time massive flocks of hirundines including Pale Martins. The following day, if flight times allow, we may visit Terelj NP, where Yellow-browed and Dusky Warbler, Pine Bunting, Daurian Redstart, Eastern Buzzard and Booted Eagle are possible, plus Siberian Chipmunk. We return to Ulaanbaatar for our flight home, arriving back on Day 17.

A donation will be made on your behalf towards the local NGO, led by two locals, who work with villagers to protect Snow Leopards around Jargalant NR. They are continuously out on patrol talking to local herders and the village community about the importance of conservation, discussing various issues including sheep grazing and hunting. As well as Snow Leopard protection, they do anti-poaching work on the Snow Leopards' prey, as Siberian Ibex in particular are still illegally hunted here.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Overnight flight to Ulaanbaatar, via Seoul, 1 night Corporate Hotel
- Day 3** Fly to Dalandzadgad and visit Yolín Am for birding in this beautiful mountain and semi-desert scenery
1 night Khan-Uul Hotel
- Days 4-5** After local birding, a long drive across rocky desert to our Ger (yurt) camp at Khongorin Els
2 nights Juulchin Gobi-2 Camp
- Days 6-7** Return to Dalandzadgad birding enroute, the next day we fly to Ulaanbaatar
1 night Khan-Uul Hotel, Dalandzadgad
1 night Corporate Hotel, Ulaanbaatar
- Day 8** We drive to our ger camp at Gun Galuut - 1 night Steppe Nomads Camp
- Days 9-14** Return to Ulaanbaatar for flight to Khovd, drive to remote Ger camp. Five days looking for Snow Leopard
6 nights Snow Leopard Camp
- Days 15-17** Fly to Ulaanbaatar for an overnight stay, then catch our flight back home, arriving in the UK Day 17

Marcel Langthim: Snow Leopard
Ecotours: White-naped Crane, Siberian Jerboa
John Oates: Pallas's Sandgrouse, Khongorin Els
Andrew Dodd: Henderson's Ground Jay



Christine Maughan

Great Blue Heron, British Columbia. Details page 96



John Osborne

Eider, Autumn Wildlife in Speyside. Holiday details page 104

*Just a few of the images
guests and guides have taken
on Speyside Wildlife trips*



David and Franky Perry

White-tailed Eagle, Mull. Details page 62



John Hind

Guests, Mongolia. Holiday details page 76



Roy Cowley

Great White Egret, East Yorkshire. Holiday details page 106



Yves Gisseleire

Marsh Harrier, Romania. Holiday details page 86



John Osborne

Red Squirrel, Autumn Wildlife in Speyside. Holiday details page 104



Christine Maughan

Song Sparrow, British Columbia. Details pg 96



John Osborne

Gannet, Autumn Wildlife. Holiday details page 104



Keith Stedman

Bactrian Camels, Mongolia. Holiday details page 76



Steve Barr

Wood Duck, British Columbia. Holiday details page 96



Ian Tulloch

Bison, Yellowstone. Holiday details page 100

SCOTTISH MAMMALS IN SUMMER



"High summer in the Highlands is a great time to look for mammals; with Pine Marten, Badger, Fox, Brown and Mountain Hare, Roe and Red Deer all possible, as well as Otters, seals and cetaceans around the coasts. This really is a great all round trip!"
Craig Round

Dates Sat 3 - Sat 10 Aug 2019
Price £1295
Deposit £250 Single Supp £100

Leaders Craig Round and Kate Mennie

Weather The weather can vary enormously. During a typical week in this season we would expect mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range of 15-25°C. It could be cooler on the boat trips. You may want to bring sunscreen.

Walking Time will be spent patiently watching and waiting with only occasional gentle walks of up to 1-2 miles. Walking boots are recommended, but walking shoes are fine

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

Insects Biting midges can occasionally be a nuisance by lochs and shores, especially in the west

Boats Boat trips are in relatively sheltered waters and last 2 hrs (Moray Firth), 2½ hrs (West Coast)

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at our very special, delightfully furnished converted barn, the Steading.

General Most days will finish very late - when our target mammals are most active - but will be compensated by late breakfasts

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Pine Marten	Red Deer
Badger	Roe Deer
Otter	Harbour Porpoise
Common Seal	Golden Eagle
Bottlenose Dolphin	Crested Tit
Minke Whale	Osprey
Red Squirrel	Black-throated Diver
Mountain Hare	Great Spotted Woodpecker
Pipistrelle Bat	
Mountain Goat	

The first holiday of its kind and you tell us, still the best - with an evening hide visit, chance to see Beaver and two boat trips. We won't leave out other special wildlife of the Highlands either.

- A superb selection of Scottish mammals and other wildlife
- Exclusive use of our evening wildlife watching hide for Pine Marten and Badger
- An inshore boat trip on the Cromarty Firth for Bottlenose Dolphins
- Exciting evening trip to see our newest mammal - European Beaver!
- A West Coast boat trip for Minke Whale, Harbour Porpoise, seals and more
- Skuas, divers, shearwaters and a good chance of Otter
- Eagles, Ospreys, Crested Tit, crossbills and Red Squirrels in Speyside

Dinner together on Saturday evening starts the holiday, followed by coffee as we discuss the coming week.

2-7 We may start the week with walks near our delightful Steading accommodation, where pale-tailed Red Squirrels can be busy in the tree-tops, and confiding Roe Deer often browse in the meadows. Or we may head up into the wild uplands in search of Mountain Hare. They are grey-brown at this time of year but may keep white feet or ears! Small groups of ancient Wild Goats are here and Golden Eagles hunt the mountain slopes while on the skyline the dramatic silhouette of Red Deer antlers encapsulate so much about the grandeur of the Highlands.

After dinner on the second day, we'll visit our baited hide to see elusive Pine Marten. Full of

character, this cat-sized member of the stoat family emerges from the forest, revealing bushy tail and cream-coloured bib - a wonderful animal and a highlight of the week. This is also a chance to enjoy Badgers at very close quarters and perhaps deer too.

In the ancient pines of Abernethy Forest we'll look for Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill, with the chance of Common or Parrot Crossbill too, but Capercaillie and Black Grouse are very elusive at this time of year as they are mid-moult.

On Cairngorm's slopes, we'll have a close encounter with Reindeer. Reintroduced many years ago, we will walk in with a guide to feed these delightful and friendly animals, while learning about their adaptations to the cold climate in which they live.



"Our boat trip off the West Coast to look for cetaceans is always one of the highlights of the week and we'll be on the lookout for Minke Whale, Common Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise. Offshore we're sure to see plenty of seabirds too, including shearwaters, skuas and auks set against a stunning backdrop of Hebridean islands and breathtaking West Coast scenery." Craig Round



One evening we have the exciting chance to see Scotland's newest mammal - European Beaver. Introduced into Tayside they are doing well and are showing regularly at certain sites. We will learn how they are affecting the landscape and hopefully get to see one or two as they come out to feed at dusk. Using a bat detector we will see what species are flitting around the trees - Pipistrelle is most likely but other species such as Daubenton's are possible too.

On another day we will visit a private Estate for a fascinating insight into how such an area survives these days. This includes a visit to a large area of moorland, where we'll see Red Deer and Red Grouse - both important species for such an estate and a focus on land management.

We'll spend a day on the Black Isle in search of Bottlenose Dolphins, both from land and on an exciting two hour boat trip. There's nothing more thrilling than the sight of these powerful mammals breaching clear of the water and we stand good chances as they frequently come very close to shore at Chanonry Point and on our boat ride. We have a fast and very powerful boat, able to cover large distances if the animals are some distance away, and sometimes they seem to enjoy following in the wake or bow-riding. We'll also watch for Common Seal, Harbour Porpoise and numerous seabirds, including various tern species, Eider and auks.

Otters are at home in both fresh and seawater and we'll search for signs and wait patiently

at favoured lochs for a sighting of these sleek, playful creatures. While we know of a good freshwater loch near the Moray Coast, the tranquil West Coast sea-lochs offer our best chance. The scenery becomes more and more spectacular as you travel west and Otter activity here is linked more to the tides than the time of day, making them likely to be out in daylight. We have enjoyed wonderful sightings when they catch something too big to handle at sea and they bring it ashore to deal with. Birds such as Black-throated Diver and White-tailed Eagle are also likely here, plus Rock Dove, Twite, Raven and maybe Golden Eagle too.

On this special West Coast day we'll also experience an exciting boat journey into the realm of the Minke Whale. Heading out to sea to the north of Skye the scenery all around is breathtaking and we'll surely see hundreds of Manx Shearwater plus Gannets, Kittiwakes and Guillemots. We're likely to see Harbour Porpoise and both Grey and Common Seals too - but we'll look out for 'hurries' of Kittiwakes and other birds over the water signifying a mass of fish below the surface and this is often where a Minke Whale may be found - a thrilling experience.

8 After breakfast on Saturday we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive in Glen Feshie in time for an evening meal and a chat about our plans for the coming week.
7 nights at the Steading
- Days 2-7 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Abernethy Forest, Dava Moor, the Cairngorms, the Moray Firth and West Coast
- Day 8 After breakfast we say our farewells and depart

Geraint Young: Pine Marten
Craig Round: Bottlenose Dolphin
Roy Atkins: Common Seal
Tim Drew: Otter
Jane Hope: Red Squirrel
Colin Scott: Mountain Hare
Andy Crofts: Badger at Hide



BOTSWANA



"Botswana regularly tops the list of favourite safari destinations in Africa. With wildlife riches beyond compare and remote but quality camps and lodges, it will be a holiday of a lifetime."
Darren Rees

Dates Thur 8 - Mon 19 Aug 2019

Price £8,755

Deposit £1,750 **Single Supp** £950

Leaders Darren Rees and camp guides

Flights British Airways/Air Botswana, scheduled
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Kasane
Inbound: Overnight, Maun-Heathrow
(Outbound and inbound via Johannesburg)

Weather Mostly warm dry and sunny, but can be chilly at night and on early morning game drives, when warm clothes are needed

Walking Is easy throughout over flat trails, so only a reasonable level of fitness is required. Bush walks are restricted to specified areas in the Parks/Reserves, always with an experienced guide

Agility A reasonable level of agility will be required as we shall be travelling in game vehicles and small charter planes

Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 11

Health Botswana is a low risk Malaria area. Please take advice from your local travel clinic/doctor about Malaria prophylaxis

Insects There will be few insects, but repellent is advisable

Accom Exclusive ensuite tented camps or chalets. Please note that single accommodation is not possible at the Sango Safari Camp or Delta Camp

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Elephant	Aardwolf
Lion	Aardvark
Cheetah	Kori Bustard
Leopard	Black Korhaan
Brown Hyaena	Pel's Fishing Owl
African Wild Dog	African Fish Eagle
Sable	African Skimmer
Puku Antelope	Wattled Crane
Blue Wildebeest	Tropical Boubou
Caracal	Meyer's Parrot

Soak up the atmosphere, as we watch herds of elephants, big cats and maybe even African Wild Dogs, in the iconic Okavango Delta and Kalahari Desert.

- Experience the unspoilt wilderness of the Delta and Desert
- View elephant herds in the world famous Chobe National Park
- Chance of seeing endangered African Wild Dog and Brown Hyena
- Pel's Fishing Owl, Rufous-bellied Heron and Wattled Crane
- Local guides who know the Okavango and Kalahari intimately
- Scenic flight over the Okavango and cruise on the Chobe River
- Stay in tented camps and chalets, right in the heart of the wildlife

1-3 Our holiday begins in the Chobe National Park, where the broad, meandering river draws numerous herds which come to drink here in the dry season. Sable and Puku Antelope, Cape Buffalo and large herds of Elephant are likely and with luck, African Wild Dog and Leopard too. The herds of buffalo that congregate on the floodplain are stalked by prides of Lion and Chobe has one of the highest Lion densities in southern Africa. Birdlife is abundant and on our river cruise we should see a plethora of kingfishers and bee-eaters, as well as African Fish Eagle, Yellow-billed Stork, Long-toed and African Wattled Lapwings, Collared Pratincole and African Skimmer.

4-6 We fly on to the wildlife region near the Khwai River, which forms a natural boundary between the Moremi Game Reserve

and the Khwai Concession, where game animals travel freely between the Reserves. We shall go out on game drives in open vehicles, on guided bush walks and on night drives. The riverside and floodplains, together with the mopane woodlands and palms, makes the Khwai area one of the most scenic in the Okavango and the river hosts a high density of Hippopotamus and some large Nile Crocodiles. We shall need to be lucky however to see the top predators: Lion, Leopard, Cheetah and Wild Dog, two packs of which frequent this area.

Other wildlife includes Giraffe, Zebra, Tsessebe and Red Lechwe (a swamp land specialist), while Roan and Sable Antelopes favour the more dry-land habitats. This is another of Botswana's birding Mecca's, with large raptors and waterbirds being particularly abundant.



"Okavango, Chobe and the Kalahari – legendary sites for the finest big game watching in the world and a bird list to treasure – I can't wait." Darren Rees



After dark we'll head out in search of nocturnal wildlife with spotlights and we shall also explore the surrounding wilderness on foot.

7-8 We'll wing our way to the heart of the Okavango, the largest inland delta in the world. The only way to view the vastness of the Delta is by air and our flight over the delta will be a highlight of the trip! Water from the Angolan highlands flow directly into the Kalahari Desert here, forming a sea of papyrus-lined waterways, and palm-studded islands and with no vehicles here, we shall be transferred to our lodge by boat.

We explore this wonderful area by motorboat, in mekoros (dugouts) and on bush walks on Chief's Island, accompanied by a local guide. The focus here is on peace and tranquillity (stalking game on foot provides all the excitement you could wish for). Birds encountered may include African Jacana, African Pygmy Goose, African Crane, Tropical Boubou and Meyer's Parrot and most exciting of all - Pel's Fishing Owl. Elephant are here, as are Hippo, Crocodiles and ever-present Red Lechwe. Ostrich, Kori Bustard and Northern Black Korhaan are the most prevalent of the larger birds in the Kalahari, but there are many other species including the beautiful Violet-eared Waxbill and its colourful parasite, the Shaft-tailed Whydah.

9-10 In complete contrast to the water dominated Okavango, is the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, the second largest protected wildlife area in the world. The Kalahari is characterised by vast open spaces,

endless horizons and sparse grasslands dotted with camelthorn trees. The wildlife is sparser here and more adapted to the dry habitat, but offers some unique sightings, including desert-adapted Gemsbok (Oryx), Red Hartebeest, Eland (Africa's largest antelope), Blue Wildebeest, Giraffe and Greater Kudu. We may see predators such as Lion, Cheetah, Leopard, Caracal and African Wild Cat and scavengers such as Brown Hyena, Spotted Hyena and Black-backed Jackal. Smaller animals include Springbok, Steenbok, Warthog, Grey Duiker, Slender and Yellow Mongoose, Honey Badger and Ground Squirrel and nocturnal species such as Aardwolf, Aardvark, African Civet, Small Spotted Genet, Porcupine, Springhare and Scrub Hare are found. All this will be seen on game drives in open 4x4 safari vehicles, night drives and walks with experienced guides, who will introduce us to the art of tracking. A special experience is meeting a small community of San Bushman who will enthusiastically share their culture, tracking and hunting skills, as well as their extraordinary knowledge of the veld and the animals that live there.

11-12 We shall have to tear ourselves away from the Kalahari and fly to Maun, for our onward flight to Johannesburg and overnight flight back to the UK, arriving on Day 12.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Fly overnight to Johannesburg, on to Kasane. Game drives and river cruise Chobe National Park
2 nights Chobe Elephant Lodge
- Days 4-6** Fly to Khwai. Bird and game viewing on night drives and bush walks in Moremi Reserve and Khwai Concession area
3 nights Sango Safari Camp
- Days 7-8** Fly to heart of Okavango Delta for game and bird viewing from boats, plus bush walks on Chief's Island
2 nights Delta Camp
- Days 9-10** Fly to Deception Valley in the Central Kalahari Reserve for tracking with the San Bushmen
2 nights Deception Valley Lodge
- Days 11-12** Fly to Maun for onward flight to Johannesburg, then overnight flight to UK, arriving on Day 12

Callan Cohen: White-fronted Bee-eaters, African Fish Eagle

Marje Hemp: Elephants, Zebra, Evening Cruise

Christine Maughan: Lioness



CANTABRIA



"The north western mountains of Spain, incredibly beautiful and scenic, are also home to the rare and endangered Cantabrian Brown Bear. These rugged peaks are their stronghold and we have a good chance of spotting them amongst the karst limestone rocks and lush broom vegetation."
Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 10 - Mon 19 Aug 2019

Price £2,995

Deposit £550 Single Supp £250

Leader Julian Sykes

Flights British Airways, scheduled,
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Bilbao
Inbound: Evening, Bilbao-Gatwick

Weather Probably a mixture of sun and showers
(15°-30°C), warmer in lowland areas
and on coast, but will be cooler in the
mountains and on the boat trip

Walking There will be some short easy walks
on level paths, but also possibly some
rough terrain and uphill, depending
on mammal sites

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1
to lunch on Day 10

Insects Biting insects are not usually a problem
but repellent may be useful

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 7

Just some of what we hope to see:

Cantabrian Brown Bear	Golden Eagle
Iberian Wolf	Short-toed Eagle
Wildcat	Little Bustard
Wild Boar	Great Skua
Southern Chamois	Sabine's Gull
Snow Vole	Black Woodpecker
Red Squirrel	Calandra Lark
Spoonbill	Snowfinch
Balearic Shearwater	Alpine Chough
Cory's Shearwater	Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush
Lammergeier	Iberian Chiffchaff
Egyptian Vulture	Western Bonelli's Warbler
Honey Buzzard	Wallcreeper
Montagu's Harrier	Alpine Accentor

Julian Sykes: Cantabrian Brown Bear, landscape,
Wildcat, Iberian Wolf, Rebeco

Tim Drew: Wallcreeper

Mary and Dave Braddock: Sooty Shearwater

A wonderful opportunity to combine the fantastic wildlife and scenery of the Cantabrian Mountains and the coastline of the Asturias Costa Verde.

- Rare mammals of Europe - Iberian Wolf and Cantabrian Brown Bear
- Good chance of European Wildcat in the meadows
- High mountains for Wallcreeper, Snowfinch and Alpine Accentor
- Breathtaking scenery in the Cantabrian Mountains
- Full day at sea chumming for seabirds from Gijón
- Spanish Ibex, Southern Chamois, Snow Vole, Red Deer
- Lots of wonderful reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and flora

Julian has been interested in Cantabria for a while, so we have put a recce visit together and we thought you'd like to join him. He knows exactly where he wants to go and what he expects to see, but he'll be exploring other unknown areas, so some days will be kept flexible. We know the scenery is beautiful, the birds are great and, given we've exclusive access to off-road sites with local experts who know their habits well, we hope the mammals will be spectacular too!

I Fly to Bilbao and drive straight along the coast, stopping off at the excellent Santona Marshes briefly to kick off the tour checklist with Little Egret, Western Yellow-legged Gull, Curlew and Common Redshank. With a bit of luck we might even find Spoonbill, Whimbrel, Ruff and Spotted Redshank, which should be making their way back south.



After lunch will continue to our accommodation in Riano, the heart of the Cantabrian mountains. Towards the end of the day we shall make our first (of many) visits to find the Iberian Wolf, which in reality takes a lot of patience and luck, however we shall be in one of the best positions to encounter one, due to our hosts local and invaluable knowledge. During our time watching and waiting we should also see other mammals including Fox, Wild Boar and Red and Roe Deer, some of the Wolf's known prey.

2-4 The next three days will be spent primarily searching for the Iberian Wolves at dawn and dusk, as this is the time when they are most active during daylight hours. The Sierra de Riano forms part of the Cordillera Cantábrica, which holds most of Spain's 3000+ wolves, a marked and welcome increase since the estimated lows of the 1970's.





"Despite a high density of Iberian Wolves here, they can be very difficult to see, being naturally shy and distrusting, following decades of persecution. Quietly waiting and watching for this elusive mammal at dawn and dusk can be very rewarding, as young animals leave the den and spend some time playing with their siblings, under the watchful eye of their mother – what an incredible experience." Julian Sykes

Off-road vehicles will be used to access the remote areas and local knowledge of their dens will be invaluable. Although seeing these beautiful canines will be our main priority, we shall also utilise the main daylight hours for other wildlife excursions, looking for Southern Chamois, Spanish Ibex and rare Broom Hare, found only in these mountains.

One day we shall drive back into the Picos de Europa National Park, where we shall take the 600m cable car ascent up to Fuente De, looking for scarce montane breeding wildlife such as Wallcreeper, Snowfinch, Alpine Accentor and Snow Vole. If we are really lucky a Lammergeier might be seen amongst the much commoner Griffon Vultures.

5-7 After another pre-breakfast visit to one of the watchpoints for Iberian Wolf, we shall return to the accommodation, collect our luggage and head off west through the mountains of Cantabria. Enroute we stop at an area of specifically developed, low-intensity agricultural land, which could yield some excellent steppe species such as Little Bustard, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Montagu's Harrier, Rock Sparrow, Lesser Kestrel, plus good numbers of larks and finches.

In the heat of the day we shall then make the transfer to Pola de Somiedo, where we shall spend our remaining three nights at a rural hotel, local to the major Cantabrian Brown Bear watchpoints.

The next two full days we shall drive and walk through this incredibly scenic mountain range in search of Cantabrian Brown Bears. This is a

sub-species of the much wider-spread Brown Bear, that occurs in Northern Europe, Russia and North America. Unfortunately through hunting and habitat destruction, they have been reduced to the edge of extinction in Spain. These mountains are the last great stronghold for the species and we have a good chance of spotting one amongst the karst limestone rocks and lush vegetation, along with Rebeco (Cantabrian form of Southern Chamois) and Red Squirrel. We shall try and find all these species and hopefully get very good views of the bears during our time here. Even if we don't, this very special place will have you in awe of its wonderful natural beauty.

8-9 After a final look for Cantabrian Brown Bear, we leave the mountains and drive north back to the 'Costa Verde', where we shall make our way to the beautiful harbour-town of Gijón. We are now in the perfect position for our final full day in north west Spain on a boat in the North Atlantic.

Specialist charters have been sailing out into these waters for several years now, with excellent results attracting seabirds. This pelagic will offer fantastic photographic opportunities, with shearwaters, petrels, skuas and other seabirds feeding at the back of the boat – making for a day to remember and a fantastic finale to the holiday.

10 Depending on the time of the return flight, we may have a chance for a stop at one of the coastal wetland sites enroute to Bilbao Airport. A great way to end the holiday.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly from Gatwick to Bilbao and transfer to our hotel in Riano
4 nights Hotel Presa
- Days 2-4** Three full days in the Cantabrian Mountains searching for Iberian Wolf and European Wildcat
- Day 5** Transfer to Pola de Somiedo for 3 nights at a rural hotel
- Days 6-7** Two full days searching for Cantabrian Brown Bear near Villablino
- Day 8** Transfer to our hotel near Gijón for 2 nights at a local hotel
- Day 9** Full day pelagic trip on board our boat from Gijón
- Day 10** Transfer to Bilbao for our evening flight home, stopping enroute if time allows





"The perfect day for wildlife watching? Try a morning with the bright warblers, vireos and flycatchers on Brier Island, followed by an afternoon in the company of gentle Humpbacks in the Bay of Fundy. You can't beat it!"
Darren Rees

Dates Sat 24 Aug - Sun 1 Sep 2019
Price £3,695
Deposit £700 Single Supp £400

Leaders Darren Rees and Julian Sykes
Flights Air Canada, scheduled
 Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Halifax
 Inbound: Overnight, Halifax-Heathrow
Weather Warm and sunny with a chance of showers
 Cooler on boats
 May experience coastal fog (15°-25°C)
Walking 1-2 miles on easy tracks
 Light footwear recommended
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1
 to dinner on Day 8 and are of
 good quality
Insects A few biting insects may be
 encountered, so bring repellent
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 10

Just some of what we hope to see:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Humpback Whale | Belted Kingfisher |
| Northern Right Whale | Ruby-throated Hummingbird |
| Fin Whale | Boreal Chickadee |
| Minke Whale | Red-breasted Nuthatch |
| White-sided Dolphin | Cedar Waxwing |
| Great Shearwater | Red-eyed Vireo |
| Sooty Shearwater | Northern Parula |
| Wilson's Storm Petrel | Black-throated Green Warbler |
| Bald Eagle | Black-and-white Warbler |
| Hooded Merganser | Blackburnian Warbler |
| Killdeer | American Redstart |
| Semi-palmated Sandpiper | Ovenbird |
| Least Sandpiper | Common Yellowthroat |
| Short-billed Dowitcher | Northern Waterthrush |
| Red-necked Phalarope | Eastern Chipmunk |
| Grey Phalarope | Beaver |

Get close-up with Humpback Whales, plus a good chance of rare Northern Right Whales. Great migrant birds, with flocks of shearwaters, petrels and phalaropes.

- Big whales close-up from short, sheltered boat trips
- Humpback, Fin and Northern Right Whales
- Fantastic migrant warblers, flycatchers and raptors
- Flocks of shearwaters, phalaropes and petrels
- Wild spruce forests running down to beautiful rocky shores
- Canada's Eastern Maritimes, only 6 hours away
- Small group, at a quiet shoreline lodge, on magical Brier Island

Arriving in Halifax mid-afternoon, we drive two-and-a-half hours south and west to delightful Digby, for an early evening meal overlooking the water. Afterwards we take two short ferry rides to arrive at our base for the week, the charming Brier Island.

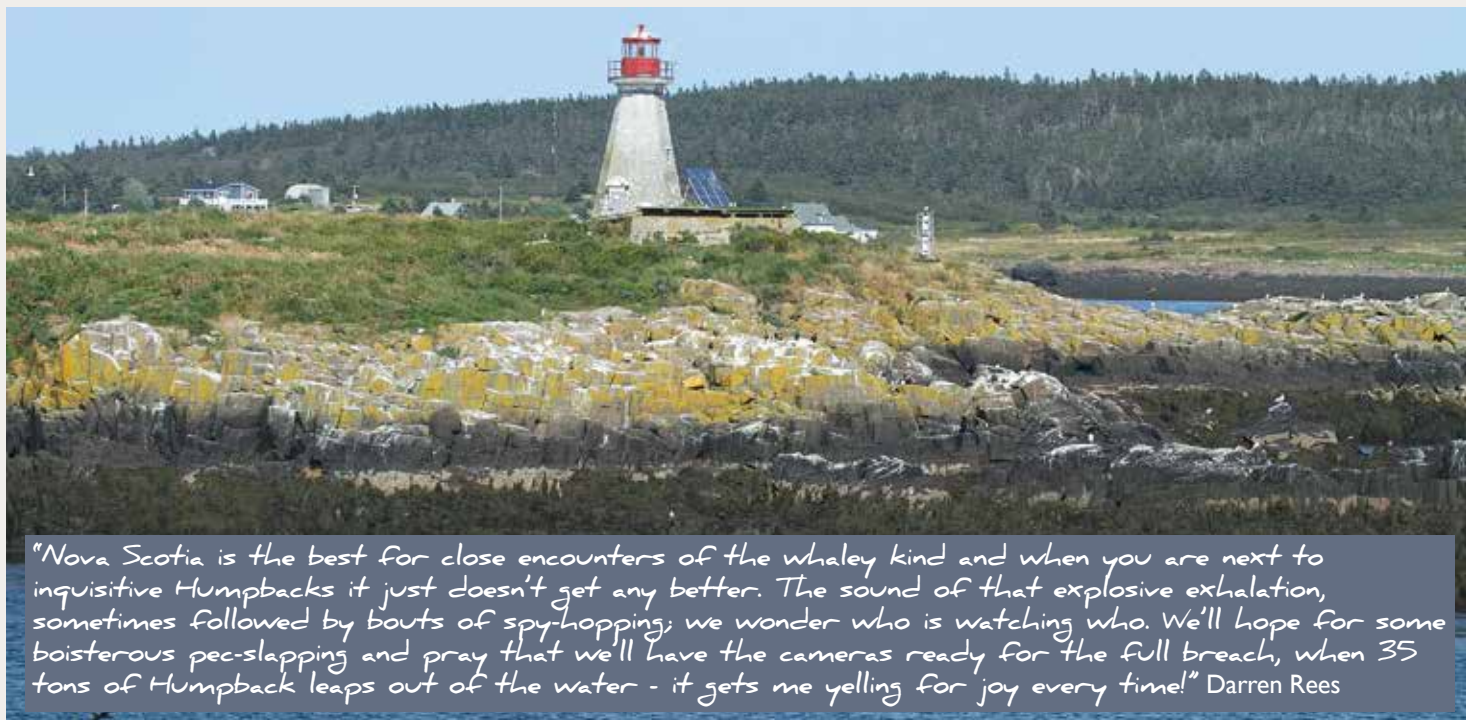
2-7 The small islands that poke from the mainland into the rich Bay of Fundy are truly magical and captivating. Beautiful spruce forests roll down to a rocky shore, marked with quiet bays and sleepy fishing ports. A delightful landscape of painted clapperboard houses; bright, bold lighthouses; wooden jetties with stacks of drying lobster pots and oh, foghorns. These sheltered waters see the rise and fall of the greatest tides on earth. Plankton, fish and sand lance in abundance, bring whales close to the shore – we've even seen them from the hotel!



We'll take three boat trips from Brier Island to see these magnificent mammals, two half-day trips and one longer 'survey' trip. The sea is likely to be calm, though boat trips are always weather dependent and we'll get close to big numbers of seabirds along with the great whales!

Minke Whales, up to 30-foot long, are generally the most fleet and unobtrusive, but Fin Whales - at 70-foot the second longest whale - are sleek, with a tall blow and a back that seems to roll on forever. Humpbacks are the star performers as they regularly raise their tail flukes when they dive. They often pound the surface with their huge white pectoral fins or, if we are fortunate, launch their 35 tons clear of the water! Sometimes acrobatic White-sided Dolphins come around the boat, but it will be enigmatic Northern Right Whales that we'll celebrate most over and we'll





"Nova Scotia is the best for close encounters of the whaley kind and when you are next to inquisitive Humpbacks it just doesn't get any better. The sound of that explosive exhalation, sometimes followed by bouts of spy-hopping; we wonder who is watching who. We'll hope for some boisterous pec-slapping and pray that we'll have the cameras ready for the full breach, when 35 tons of Humpback leaps out of the water - it gets me yelling for joy every time!" Darren Rees

take a full day boat trip to look for them. These are listed as critically endangered whales, with only around 300 individuals remaining in the world and we've enjoyed wonderful views in the past - fingers crossed!

Ocean-going seabirds will also be a big feature and we can expect close views of large numbers of Great, Sooty and some Manx Shearwaters. Wilson's Petrels patter their feet over the surface and great flocks of thousands of Red-necked and Grey Phalaropes pick delicately on mats of weed.

On Brier Island, we'll see some great bird migration. It's a bottleneck for dazzling migrating warbler flocks that may hold Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Canada, Parula, Chestnut-sided and more - we'll join our friends at the nearby banding (ringing) station and see some in the hand. There may be a variety of those confusing American flycatchers, plus Purple Finch and Eastern Kingbird. At Pond Cove, the stunted spruce forest sweeps out around the bay, where Common Eider and Black Guillemot loaf, whilst mighty Bald Eagle sweep low overhead. Least Sandpipers and Semi-palmated Plovers scurry along the seaweed and, on marshy pools, we may find Short-billed Dowitcher and White-rumped Sandpiper. Migrant Monarch butterflies drift by, Great Blue Heron stand in the shallows and Pine Siskins twitter in the trees.

The southern end of Long Island has weed-strewn bays that hold Solitary, Spotted and Semi-palmated Sandpipers and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.

Noisy Blue Jays may accompany us on our walk along the Balancing Rock Trail to the misty coast and mobile flocks of warblers may include Black-and-white, Northern Parula and American Redstart, plus Black-capped Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Elsewhere, in the lichen encrusted tamarack and spruce forests, we may see some of the specialities such as Boreal Chickadees and Gray Jays, with Palm Warbler and Hermit Thrush in the supporting cast.

Locally we can explore for more landbirds on Digby Neck. Each day we'll take the quiet roads and little ferries that link the islands. There can be a steady movement of southward bound raptors; Turkey Vulture teeter on raised wings, Osprey flap by and small spirals of hawks include Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned, with Goshawk, Merlin and American Kestrel amongst them. Belted Kingfisher, Spotted Sandpiper and Hooded Merganser are on local ponds, whilst Ruby-throated Hummingbird, American Goldfinch and Dark-eyed Junco inhabit nearby gardens. There are also Eastern Chipmunk and we've enjoyed views of lodge-building Beavers.

8-9 We reluctantly leave Brier, travelling first to Annapolis Royal, where a well landscaped wetland Reserve always turns up a new selection of birds: there's bright red Cardinals, beautiful Cedar Waxwing and ducks including Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy, Ring-necked and Wood. Finally, we arrive at Halifax for our evening flight, arriving back in the morning of Day 9.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Day 1 | Fly London to Halifax arriving mid-afternoon. Drive 2.5 hours to Digby for early evening meal
Final 1.5 hour transfer to base at Brier Island - 7 nights Brier Island Lodge |
| Day 2 | First boat trip out from Brier Island |
| Day 3 | Exploration of Brier Island including Northlight and Pond Cove areas |
| Days 4-7 | Flexible four days with further birding hikes; second full day boat trip in Bay of Fundy; one day exploration of Long Island (Boar's Light and Balancing Rock); third boat trip (half day) from Brier Island |
| Days 8-9 | Transfer day with birding stop at Annapolis Royal Marsh, arriving Halifax late afternoon for evening flight, arriving UK morning of Day 9 |

Roy Cowley: Humpback Whale, Bald Eagle, Greater Shearwater, Peter's Island Lighthouse,
Roy Atkins: Belted Kingfisher, Mega Nova boat





"Our village in the Carpathians is exquisite. There are Red-backed Shrikes everywhere and Fieldfares breed. The surrounding forests have Brown Bears and our visit to the bear hide will be a magical moment, as we watch these magnificent animals emerge from the trees."
Duncan Macdonald

Dates Sat 24 Aug - Sun 1 Sep 2019

Price £2,845

Deposit £550 Single Supp £250

Leaders Duncan Macdonald and Ecotours guide

Flights British Airways, scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow - Bucharest
Inbound: Afternoon, Bucharest - Heathrow

Weather Should be very pleasant temperatures around 14°-24°C with a chance of showers, may be cooler in the mountains

Walking Easy walking up to two miles on good tracks

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 9

Insects Mosquitos can be a nuisance in a few places, so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single ensuite rooms

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Brown Bear	Hobby
Dalmatian Pelican	Levant Sparrowhawk
White Pelican	Long-legged Buzzard
Pygmy Cormorant	Grey-headed Woodpecker
Black Stork	Syrian Woodpecker
Little Egret	Black Woodpecker
Great White Egret	Alpine Swift
Purple Heron	Nutcracker
Squacco Heron	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Little Bittern	Sombre Tit
Ruddy Shelduck	Paddyfield Warbler
Ferruginous Duck	Golden Oriole
Whiskered Tern	Black-eared Wheatear
White-winged Tern	Isabelline Wheatear
Marsh Sandpiper	Caspian Tern
White-tailed Eagle	Pallas's Gull
Lesser Spotted Eagle	Red-necked Grebe
Red-footed Falcon	European Siskin

Enjoy autumn migration in the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea Coast. Stay on a 'floating hotel' in the Danube Delta, plus an exciting visit to a Brown Bear hide!

- Stunning location in the Carpathian Mountains near Zarnesti Gorge
- Raptors including Lesser Spotted Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Levant Sparrowhawk
- Brown Bear from a comfortable, forest hide
- Visit to area of Dracula's spectacular cliff-top castle
- Chance of surprise migrants: Pallid Harrier, Marsh and Broad-billed Sandpipers
- Spectacular numbers of birds while exploring the mighty Danube Delta
- Pelicans, Pygmy Cormorant, Squacco Heron, Glossy Ibis and marsh terns

I We meet our guide at Bucharest Airport, then drive to our scenically located hotel in the southern Carpathian Mountains. The surrounding area is dominated by the view of the 8,000ft high Omul Peak and views from the hotel are just lovely.

2-3 A short walk from the hotel may produce migrant warblers, shrikes, Black Redstart and perhaps breeding Fieldfare. The towering rock walls of nearby Zarnesti Gorge make for a special walk, with Alpine Swift above the Marsh Tits and Nuthatch and maybe Nutcracker possible. We'll visit the beautiful wooded Stramba valley, where Lesser Spotted Eagle is likely, plus woodpeckers, with Grey-headed, Black, Middle Spotted and even White-backed possible. Golden Oriole and Nutcracker are likely, plus Honey Buzzard, Hawfinch and Red-backed Shrike.



As dusk falls we'll make an excursion for the real highlight of the trip - our visit to the bear hide. The Brown Bears come to feed on bait put out to attract them and we should get exceptional views.

The surrounding countryside is still farmed largely with horses and by hand. Red-backed Shrikes are everywhere and Bee-eaters swoop over the hedgerows, while wildflowers attract butterflies such as Silver-washed Fritillary and Cardinal. This is the homeland of the bloody figure of Vlad Tepes, better known as "Count Dracula". The "Dracula Castle" was built in 1378 atop a cliff and had a strategic role in protecting the pass. We shall make a short stop in the village below the castle and perhaps taste some of the local products.

4-5 We travel down to the Black Sea coast, birding on the way. The wetlands of Histria and Vadu offer fabulous birding





"It is hard to get one's head around the sheer size of the Danube Delta, it is extraordinary. It is also home to extraordinary numbers of pelicans, Glossy Ibis, Squacco Herons, Night Herons, Pygmy Cormorants, Garganey, Ferruginous Duck, White-tailed Eagles and so much more. We shall not want to leave our floating hotel, as this is birding at its blissful best." Duncan Macdonald

with muddy pools, ponds, extensive reedbeds, steppe and sandy scrub attracting many species. Both White and Dalmatian Pelicans are often seen, plus a host of waders including a chance of Broad-billed and Marsh Sandpiper. Lesser Grey Shrike, Roller and Bee-eaters are likely and migrants may include Red-breasted Flycatcher, chats, warblers, wagtails and maybe a late Paddyfield Warbler.

Butterflies abound and we'll look out for European Souseliks, a very cute ground squirrel. The extensive salt marshes of Vadu may hold a fine selection of waders, gulls and terns and orchards in the small villages are perfect for Syrian Woodpecker. We have had great views of Red-footed Falcons here and other possible raptors include Short-toed and Booted Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk and with luck even Pallid Harrier!

6-8 We move on to the Danube Delta - a huge area of divided river channels, reedbeds, lakes and woodlands, where we are welcomed aboard our delightful floating hotel. This is relaxed birdwatching, with two full days on rich waterways in the heart of the Danube Delta!

Breakfast is served on board and we shall leave our floating hotel on a small motor boat to explore the narrow channels and smaller lakes, or take a walk along the river bank. We shall seek Black-necked and Red-necked Grebes, Spoonbill, Great White Egrets and Purple Herons, Dalmatian and White Pelicans, Pygmy Cormorant, Squacco Heron, Glossy Ibis, Ferruginous Duck, Red-crested

Pochard, Caspian Tern, Kingfisher and more. In the reedbeds Bearded and Penduline Tits call and our journey along the river is accompanied by flocks of Whiskered Terns, with smaller numbers of White-winged and Black Terns possible.

The forests in the delta are good for Black Stork, White-tailed Eagle, Red-footed Falcon and woodpeckers, with Grey-headed the most common, but Lesser Spotted and Black Woodpecker also likely. Golden Oriole should still be around and plenty of Hobbies, as we spend some relaxing hours birding from the observation platform of our hotel, enjoying the beauty of this huge wetland, with no roads and traffic. Dinner will be served on board, while enjoying a tranquil sunset. Bliss!

9 After breakfast we leave the boat and head towards Bucharest Airport for our flight back to London.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Flight from London to Bucharest. Travel to our scenically located hotel in the Southern Carpathian Mountains 3 nights Villa Hermani
- Days 2-3** Birding in the Southern Carpathian Mountains and gorges including the beautiful Stramba valley, plus an evening visit to a bear watching hide
- Days 4-5** Travel down to the Black Sea Coast birding on the way. Spend time at Histria and Vadu wetlands where extensive reedbeds, steppe and sandy scrub attract many species 2 nights Grindul Lupilor Pension
- Days 6-8** Travel to the Danube Delta for wonderfully relaxed birding from our floating hotel amongst divided river channels, reedbeds, lake and woodlands 3 nights Floating Hotel
- Day 9** Return to Bucharest for our flight to the UK

Yves Gisseleire: Brown Bear, Pygmy Cormorant, Pelicans, Lesser Spotted Eagle
Roy Atkins: Paddyfield Warbler, Squacco Heron



FAIR ISLE



"Approaching the immense west cliffs on Fair Isle always takes your breath away. Seeing migrant chats, warblers and flycatchers dwarfed by the huge cliffs, is one of the unique sights of this magic isle at migration time!"
Craig Round

Dates	Sat 31 Aug - Sat 7 Sep 2019
Price	£1,825
Deposit	£350 Single Supp £50
<hr/>	
Leader	Craig Round
Flights	Loganair, scheduled Outbound: Morning Aberdeen-Sumburgh Inbound: Afternoon Sumburgh-Aberdeen
Weather	Cool to warm, with changeable weather, expect sun and squally showers, may be windy (8°-15°C)
Ferries	We shall travel from Shetland to Fair Isle by a small ferry with the potential for rough seas. Please be prepared for this
Walking	Walking is generally very relaxed and easy, with walks of up to 3-4 miles on roads and rough grassland
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
Insects	Biting insects will not be a problem
Accom	Comfortable double, twin and single ensuite accommodation. Most rooms are on the first floor
Group	7

Just some of what we hope to see:	
Sooty Shearwater	Ortolan Bunting
Storm Petrel	Mealy Redpoll
Wryneck	Lapland Bunting
Citrine Wagtail	Snow Bunting
Richard's Pipit	Short-eared Owl
Olive-backed Pipit	Long-eared Owl
Bluethroat	Merlin
Yellow-browed Warbler	Spotted Flycatcher
Barred Warbler	Pied Flycatcher
Lanceolated Warbler	Redstart
Red-backed Shrike	Ring Ouzel
Great Grey Shrike	Jack Snipe

A special welcome to the migration stepping stone, with plenty of common migrants and a good chance of something really rare turning up - an addictive island!

- A dot in the seas between Orkney and Shetland
- Plenty of pleasant walks amidst cliffs and crofting land
- The last of the season's lingering seabirds and skuas
- Famous for bird migration and rarities in easterly winds
- Traditional knitwear, local music, crafts and boat building
- All based at the comfortable Bird Observatory
- Fantastic scenery and possibly the Northern Lights

| We fly into Sumburgh on Shetland and take the ferry, the 'Good Shepherd' across to Fair Isle, or 'Fridarey' as it was known in old Norse, meaning 'the peaceful isle'.

Leaving Shetland behind, we pass under the imposing cliffs of Sumburgh Head, before heading out to sea towards Fair Isle some 25 miles to the south, with the possibility of seabirds such as Great and Arctic Skuas, Sooty Shearwater, Fulmar, Gannet, Puffin and Storm Petrels jinking low over the waves, plus cetaceans such as Minke Whale, Harbour Porpoise or White-beaked Dolphin. As the isle comes into view, we pass close to the North Lighthouse perched on top of the cliffs, arriving into the shelter of the harbour at North Haven, then make our way up to the Observatory, where we become part of the wider island community for the week.



2-7 The Observatory enjoys stunning coastal views across to the seabird cliffs of Sheep Rock and the headland of Bunness, with the beaches of the North and South Havens only a short walk away. Here, flocks of passage waders such as Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin and Turnstone can be seen feeding, whilst the Observatory gardens, vegetable patches and plantation will often hold migrant warblers, pipits, chats and flycatchers. This allows you to birdwatch from the comfort of the Observatory's lounge, dining room or even your bedroom! Their minibus will take us to the far reaches of the island, but we'll also enjoy plenty of walking, so be able to explore every nook and cranny, from seabird cliff, to cultivated garden and crofting land.

At dawn we can accompany one of the wardens checking the Heligoland traps, such as the famous



"Always one of the highlights of my birding year, Fair Isle is one of 'the' best places to witness bird migration at first hand. It can be a magnet for birds from all points of the compass at migration time and every day as you set out from the Observatory, there's always a sense of excitement, as you never really know what incredible birds might turn up! As well as the avian riches, it's a place where you really can leave the hustle and bustle of modern life behind, a unique island, rich in history, with stunning coastal scenery and simply fantastic wildlife!" Craig Round



Gully and Double-dyke, to discover which migrants may have arrived and we'll be closely involved with the study and ringing of any birds back at base, allowing us the privilege of seeing these incredible migrants up-close in the hand - and be sure not to miss any rarities caught.

Fair Isle is one of 'the' best places to experience the thrill of bird migration and if the winds are right, we'll explore the gardens and crofts in the gentler south of the island, as well as the wild and dramatic west cliffs, with their numerous sea stacks and the moorland and hill ground in the north. On the sheer cliffs of the north and west, migrants can be found seeking the smallest patches of shelter, such as the stands of Angelica.

The meadows and fields can hold feeding waders, including Black-tailed Godwit, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Lapwing, Golden Plover and Ruff and with migration reaching its peak, in the right weather, the island can be alive with common migrants around every corner; birds dotting the top of every dry-stone wall and fence line! Regular migrants include Tree Pipit, Redstart, Spotted and Pied Flycatcher, Whinchat, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Sedge and Reed Warbler and numerous Willow Warbler and Northern Wheatears, plus hoped for rarities such as Bluethroat, Pallid Harrier, Red-backed Shrike, Wryneck, Common Rosefinch, Oortolan and Lapland Bunting and Citrine Wagtail and warblers such as Marsh, Arctic, Greenish, Booted, Subalpine, Icterine, Savi's and Barred.

With the island's grapevine, news of rarities will reach us anywhere - the Observatory minibus fly's a red flag to let everyone on the island know of a mega-rarity! Or we might just find that Arctic Warbler, Greenish Warbler or Citrine Wagtail ourselves! We are at the mercy of the winds, but in quieter periods, we shall soak up the atmosphere and enjoy the fascinating history, geology and culture of this wonderful island. The rocky coast around the South Harbour and Lighthouse often holds passage waders including Purple Sandpiper, Knot, Turnstone, Sanderling, Redshank, Dunlin and Curlew, whilst Rock Pipits, Northern Wheatears, White Wagtails and Fair Isle race Wrens can be found foraging amongst the seaweed on the beaches, with small flocks of Eider and Black Guillemots just offshore.

We'll also check some of the island's freshwater pools, marshes and wetlands, where scarcer waders can sometimes be found, such as Little Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Pectoral and Buff-breasted Sandpiper, along with flocks of newly arrived Wigeon and Teal and both Common and Jack Snipe. Some lingering Gannets and Fulmars may still be on ledges on the towering sandstone cliffs in the north, while breeding Great Skuas and maybe late breeding Arctic Skuas are still present on their territories on the higher moorland.

8 We return by ferry to Sumburgh for our flight back to Aberdeen.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Fly Aberdeen to Shetland then take the 'Good Shepherd' ferry across to Fair Isle passing Sumburgh Head enroute
- Days 2-7 Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of the island from our base at the comfortable Fair Isle Bird Observatory
- Day 8 Return back to mainland Shetland for our flight back to Aberdeen from Sumburgh

Craig Round: Jack Snipe, Bird Observatory, Barred Warbler

Roy Cowley: Spotted Flycatcher

Ian Smith: Lapland Bunting

Simon Eaves: Pied Flycatcher

David Kjaer: Wryneck



RAPTORS OF THE HIGHLANDS



"From the sleek Goshawk to the majestic White-tailed Eagle, the tiny Merlin to the awe-inspiring Golden Eagle, this is a great chance to see Birds of Prey in majestic surroundings, plus many more birds of the Scottish Highlands and Islands."
Kate Mennie

Dates	Sat 31 Aug - Sat 7 Sep 2019
Price	£1,595
Deposit	£300 Single Supp £150
Leaders	Two from our Speyside team
Weather	Mixture of sunshine and showers (15°-25°C). It could be cooler on the boat trip
Walking	Walks will be up to five miles on relatively flat gravel and forest tracks
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
Insects	It is coming to the end of midge season but it can still be warm, so they may be a nuisance
Accom	The Steading - double, twin and single rooms all ensuite Park Lodge Hotel - double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Boat trip	The boat trip from Ulva ferry lasts around 3 hours
Group	12
Just some of what we hope to see:	
Golden Eagle	Great Northern Diver
White-tailed Eagle	Red-throated Diver
Goshawk	Black-throated Diver
Sparrowhawk	Black Guillemot
Peregrine	Razorbill
Merlin	Guillemot
Kestrel	Gannet
Osprey	Twite
Red Kite	Dipper
Hen Harrier	Hooded Crow
Short-eared Owl	Rock Dove
Long-eared Owl	Mountain Hare
Barn Owl	Otter
Tawny Owl	Red and Roe Deer
Crossbill	Grey Seal
Crested Tit	cetaceans

The Cairngorms National Park and the Isle of Mull provide fabulous opportunities to see iconic raptors against a backdrop of mountains, moorland and ancient forest.

- Golden and White-tailed Eagles in stunning mountain and island locations
- A boat trip to see White-tailed Eagles up close
- Secretive Goshawks in ancient Caledonian Pine Forests
- Ospreys breeding on our doorstep and fishing in local lochs
- Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls quartering open moorlands
- Peregrine and Merlin hunting and dashing after their prey
- Evening trips to look for Long-eared, Tawny and Barn Owls

Dinner together on Saturday evening is followed by coffee and a run through of the week's itinerary.

2-3 The Cairngorms National Park is a spectacular land of mountains, bleak windswept moorlands and ancient forests, one of the best places in the UK to watch our iconic raptors.

We may start with a full day in Strathdearn, which follows the River Findhorn deep into the Monadhliath Mountains. Here, a wealth of different habitats from woodlands to moorland and exposed mountains, provide habitat for up to twelve species of raptor, including Golden and White-tailed Eagle, Goshawk, Peregrine, Merlin, Osprey, Hen Harrier and Red Kite.



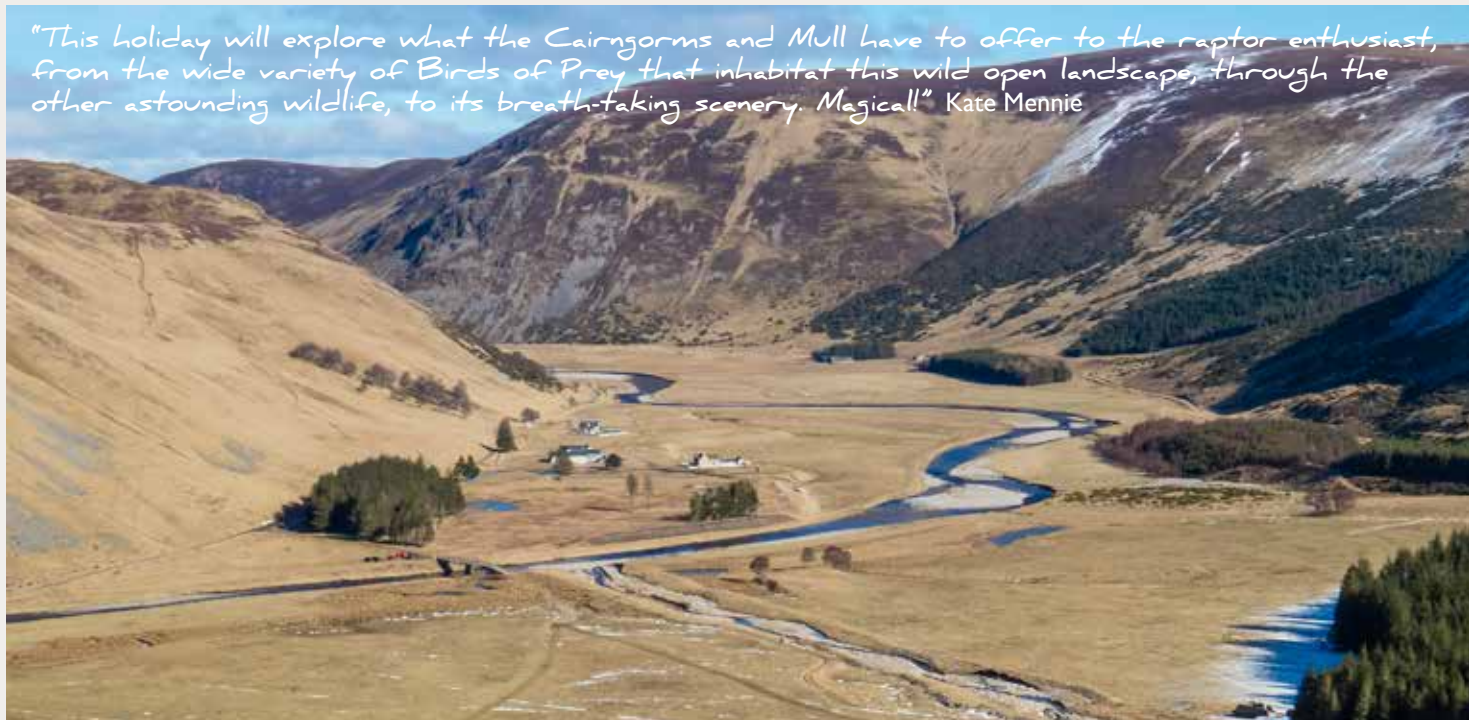
Weather permitting, we shall walk into the mountains on flat gravel tracks and explore the upper reaches of the glen on foot, which can be outstanding for Golden and White-tailed Eagles.

Merlin and Peregrine also hunt here and it's not unusual to watch fierce little Merlins mobbing massive eagles. Goshawk and Red Kite are possible and Ospreys regularly fish the river. The scenery in the upper reaches is spectacular and it is a truly wild place.

The RSPB's Reserve at Abernethy consists of ancient pine forest, open moorland and high mountain plateau. This is our best opportunity of finding the elusive 'ghost of the forest' - the Northern Goshawk. We shall keep our eyes peeled for this secretive and elusive raptor during our full day spent in Abernethy



"This holiday will explore what the Cairngorms and Mull have to offer to the raptor enthusiast, from the wide variety of Birds of Prey that inhabit this wild open landscape, through the other astounding wildlife, to its breath-taking scenery. Magical!" Kate Mennie



Forest exploring remote areas, where there are also chances for Capercaillie, as well as crossbills and Crested Tit.

The area is also good for eagles with Golden and White-tailed hunting over the Reserve. Abernethy is an exceptional habitat and if we explore the quieter areas of the forest it just might reveal its secrets to us.

In the evening, we shall venture out in search of owls. Long-eared, Tawny and Barn Owls are all possible and Short-eared Owls can be found quartering the moors. The days are long at this time of the year, giving us a good chance of finding owls as the sun sets.

4-6 After breakfast we shall depart for the west coast and the Island of Mull. Our journey will take us west to Fort William and past Ben Nevis to hug the shores of Loch Linnhe to Oban where we catch our ferry. The journey to Mull is not long and as we pass under the impressive walls of Duart Castle we might glimpse our first White-tailed Eagle.

Mull is famous for its populations of both Golden and White-tailed Eagles. With Golden Eagles breeding at a density higher than anywhere else in Europe and White-tailed Eagles numbering over 15 pairs now, it is for good reason that Mull is known as "Eagle Island".

We shall explore the glens and moors of this beautiful island and our years of experience will take us to the best places to look for soaring eagles. It is not unusual to see both species

in the air together and there are times when the sky never seems to be without an eagle. From our base in Tobermory we shall explore the island looking for other raptors as well. We shall be looking for Hen Harrier and Merlin around the moors and estuaries and with luck we may find Short-eared Owl. We shall look for Peregrine around sea cliffs while the croning calls of Raven will be a constant companion.

A highlight will be the boat trip we shall take from Ulva Ferry, in order to get close views of White-tailed Eagle. Watching one of the world's largest eagles delicately snatch fish from the surface of the water, with the majestic back drop of the mountains of Mull will be an experience not to be forgotten. Don't forget to bring your camera!

7 On our return from Mull we shall take a small ferry to Lochaline, in remote Morvern. Our road home winds through this quiet area of the mainland and we shall be looking out for Golden and White-tailed Eagle, Common Buzzard and Kestrel as we go. We shall arrive back at The Steading in time for our evening meal, followed by coffee and a look back over the holiday with a dram or two!

8 After breakfast on Saturday we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at Glen Feshie
3 nights at The Steading
- Days 2-3** Search for raptors and other wildlife in Speyside including Strathdearn and Abernethy Forest
- Day 4** Travel via Fort William and Ben Nevis, before catching the ferry to Mull birding and looking for raptors enroute
3 nights at Park Lodge Hotel
- Days 5-6** Search for raptors and wildlife amidst stunning scenery on Mull including a boat trip for White-tailed Eagle
- Day 7** Ferry back to mainland then drive to Speyside birdwatching enroute
1 night at the Steading
- Day 8** Depart after breakfast



Colin Scott: White-tailed Eagle, Osprey
Jane Hope: Strathdearn, Goshawk
Chris Brookings: Great Northern Diver
Craig Round: Otter



"Orkney's rolling landscape is not only beautiful, it is packed full of impressive archeology. Getting to visit world famous sites such as Maeshowe and Skara Brae is really breathtaking."
Jack Ward

Dates Sun 1 - Sun 8 Sep 2019
Price £1,945
Deposit £300 **Single Supp** £450

Leaders Jack Ward and Kate Mennie

Weather The weather can vary enormously. During a typical week in this season we would expect to experience mixed sun and showers with temperatures in the range 10-20°C. Around the remote coastline of Orkney we may expect cooler temperatures and though it is possible that we shall see unbroken sunshine and settled weather, Orkney can receive wet and windy squalls and occasionally fog. Having said all of that, it can often be warm and sunny and you may want to bring sunscreen.

Walking On Orkney the walking is generally very relaxed and easy, but on at least two of the days we may take walks of up to 3-4 miles on rough grassland and small coastal paths with some climbing.

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

Insects Biting insects should not be a problem

Accom Premier Inn, Inverness;
Lynnfield Hotel, Orkney;
Double, twin and single rooms
all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Hen Harrier	Pink-footed Goose
Short-eared Owl	Black Guillemot
Merlin	Golden Plover
Great Skua	Sanderling
Arctic Skua	Bar-tailed Godwit
Pomarine Skua	Ruff
Manx Shearwater	Lapland Bunting
Sooty Shearwater	
Red-throated Diver	

Enjoy the magic of Orkney – autumn bird migration, coupled with worldclass archaeological sites, on a holiday dedicated to both, on this delightful island archipelago.

- Autumn migration on Orkney - you never know what might turn up!
- Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier, Red-throated Divers and skuas
- Visit to Rousay, one of the many islands
- Tomb of the Eagles, via Churchill Barriers
- Maeshowe, Ring of Brodgar, Stones of Stenness
- The Loons RSPB Reserve
- Visit to ancient settlement of Skara Brae

We meet in Inverness in time for dinner in our overnight hotel, giving us time to discuss the coming week.

2-7 From Inverness, we follow the coast road through the eastern seaboard of Sutherland and Caithness, to catch our ferry from Scrabster to Orkney. Along the route, past historic villages such as Golspie and Helmsdale, the last Sandwich and Arctic Terns fish on their way south and some of the autumn's Eider and Common and Velvet Scoter can be seen. Buzzards are common and we may also 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, rightly famous for the strength of its tidal race. These waters provide rich pickings for wildlife,

cetaceans in particular and we shall be vigilant during the crossing and watch for Storm Petrel, Manx Shearwater, skuas and dolphins. We shall be travelling during the peak of migration and species such as Sooty Shearwater and Grey Phalarope could be seen. The ferry takes us past the impressive cliffs of Hoy and past the great sea stack of the Old Man of Hoy, to land us in the wonderful harbour of Stromness, where the great author George Mackay-Brown lived.

The landscape of Orkney has broad coastal vistas, interspersed with ancient archaeological wonders. The pastures are home to Brown Hare, with Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl quartering the moors and meadows. At this time of year there is also the good chance of migrants and we shall check through the





"Exploring Orkney by land and sea gives a great perspective of the islands, as well as lots of opportunities to see a huge variety of the wildlife that lives there, from seabirds and cetaceans to harriers and Otters." Jack Ward

passage flocks of waders for any rarities that might be amongst them, such as Pectoral Sandpiper. Over the years many exciting birds have been found on these northern islands, including Wryneck, Common Rosefinch and Red-breasted Flycatcher.

We shall also look out for Black Guillemot, Great Northern Diver, Twite and Rock Dove and of course Otter is always a possibility. There will be Red-throated Diver, often still in their breeding finery and Turnstone, picking at seaweed on the rocky shore. With the approaching winter, Greylag, Barnacle and White-fronted Geese begin to arrive too.

Orkney is an archipelago and although we are based on Mainland, we shall also travel to the island of Rousay, to the north. This island has a lot of heather moorland and we shall look for raptors such as Hen Harrier and Merlin. There will be waders on the shore and species such as Stonechat should be obvious. The gardens around the ferry point can be good shelter for migrants, so we shall work these to see what we can find! We'll also visit the chambered tomb and broch of Midhowe, whilst being observed by the curious Common Seals along the shore.

The archaeological sites of Orkney cannot be missed. Skara Brae is an absolute must - an entire prehistoric settlement with rooms, beds, dressers and pottery, all exposed by a storm some 5000 years after it was built. The Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar, where

36 of the original circle of 60 stones still stand, are both impressive, however it's the magnificent Maeshowe that steals the show, along with the Tomb of the Eagles, where we can see neolithic artefacts.

The Tomb of the Eagles is situated on South Ronaldsay and our journey here will take us over the Churchill Barriers that connect the southern islands, where the bays hold divers and waders and we shall look for Otters. This tomb holds the echoes of our past connections with the totemic wildlife around us, in particular the White-tailed Eagle that was once abundant here. Now, after an absence of nearly 200 years, a pair has established itself on the island of Hoy.

On our penultimate day we'll take the return ferry from Mainland back to Scrabster. There are some good wildlife locations near to Scrabster and we shall explore Dunnet Bay, as well as the most northerly point on mainland UK, Dunnet Head, where we could encounter Twite and Wheatear.

Just nearby is a freshwater loch with hide, where we may fill in some of the gaps in our list with species such as Tufted Duck, Little Grebe and the two Highland rarities Coot and Moorhen! We shall return to Inverness in time for dinner on our final evening.

8 After breakfast we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive in Inverness
1 night at the Premier Inn
- Day 2 Travel up the north east coast of Caithness and Sutherland and take the ferry to Orkney
5 nights at the Lynnfield Hotel
- Days 3-6 Wildlife and archaeological exploration of Mainland and the islands
- Day 7 Take early morning ferry from Orkney and travel back down the coast to Inverness. 1 night at the Premier Inn
- Day 8 Depart after breakfast

Colin Scott: Arctic Skua
Chrissie Nicholson: Ring of Brodgar, Old Man of Hoy
Ian Tulloch: Golden Plover
Jane Hope: Sanderling
Chris Brookings: Great Northern Diver
Steve Batt: Raven





"I am delighted that Andrea Corso, Sicily's best known bird guide, is working with us on this exciting new trip! He gets rave reviews from his guests and I know he will make this a trip you won't forget."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 7 - Mon 16 Sep 2019
Price £2,495
Deposit £450 Single Supp £250

Leaders Sally Nowell and Andrea Corso
Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Catania
Inbound: Afternoon, Catania-Gatwick
Weather It may feel quite hot and humid at times with the chance of rain, so be prepared for a varied climate. In the mountains it is generally cooler, particularly at night, 15°-28°C
Walking Terrain will generally be easy and walking will be "birdwatchers pace" with plenty of stops and no long distances
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 10
Insects Mosquitoes may be present so repellent is recommended
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Sicilian race Rock Partridge	Lesser Kestrel
Italian Sparrow	Eleonora's Falcon
Eastern Subalpine Warbler	Honey Buzzard
Mediterranean Flycatcher	Pallid Harrier
Firecrest	Scopoli's Shearwater
Slender-billed Gull	Yellouan Shearwater
Sicilian-race Long-tailed Tit	Greater Flamingo
Penduline Tit	Spoonbill
Bonelli's Eagle	Glossy Ibis
Montagu's Harrier	Purple Heron
Stone Curlew	Curlew Sandpiper
Golden Eagle	Garganey

Roy Atkins: Bee-eaters, Bonelli's Eagle, Turtle Dove
Sally Nowell: Madonie Mountains
Simon Eaves: Rock Bunting
Brooke A Miller: Lesser Kestrel
Andrea Corso: Hoopoe

A relaxed tour of Sicily led by charismatic Andrea Corso, visiting Mount Etna, the Madonie Mountains, plus lowlands and wetlands in search of the island's birds.

- Superb internationally renowned Sicilian bird guide - Andrea Corso
- Visit Mount Etna plus some of the historic sites of Sicily
- Endemic subspecies - Sicilian Rock Partridge, Long-tailed Tit and Italian Sparrow
- Varied habitats in Sicily's top birding hotspots
- A great raptor list with the potential for Bonelli's Eagle and Eleonora's Falcon
- Visit Sicily at a quieter time for people but a busier time for birds
- Great hospitality with fabulous accommodation, food and wine

1 We arrive in Catania and transfer to our delightful hotel in Randazzo where we shall spend the first two nights of the trip. In our small agriturismo hotel, dinner will be of traditional and delicious Sicilian food.

2 After our first breakfast we'll visit the majestic Mount Etna, the tallest active volcano in Europe. Here, as well as marvelling at the dramatic landscape, we shall have good opportunities for birding, as we search for 'Etna' Crossbill, Short-toed Treecreeper, Firecrest, Rock Bunting, Golden Eagle, Eastern Subalpine Warbler, Sardinian Warbler and many other species.

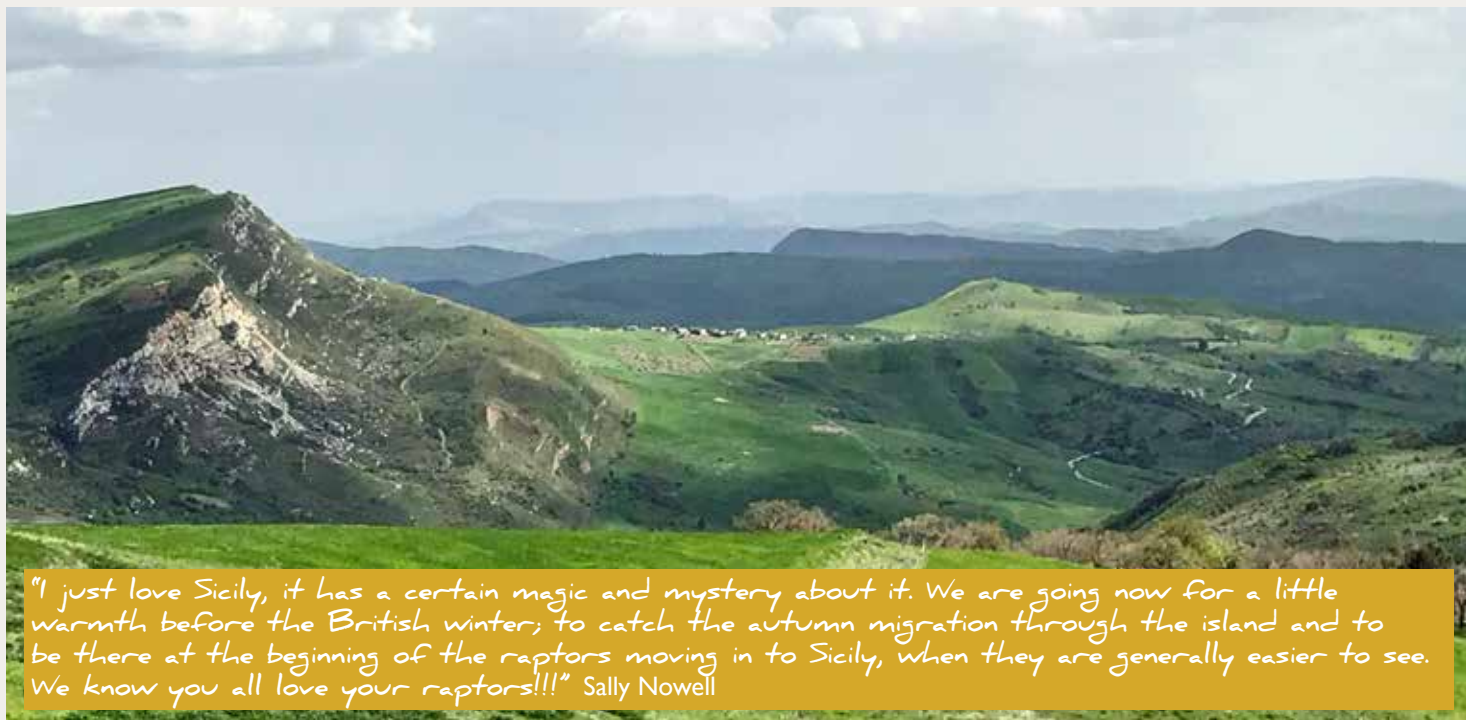
On either morning we'll head out early before breakfast in search of Rock Partridge. The race here, *whitakeri*, is considered by many worthy of species status, as it has been separated from other

populations of Rock Partridge for a considerable time, resulting in noticeable differences.

3-6 We head to our next destination, stopping enroute to savour some of Sicily's food specialities made with Pistachio nuts. Siracusa will be our home for the next four nights and makes an excellent base from which to explore the bird-rich south-eastern corner of Sicily which is Andrea's 'home patch'. We shall visit a range of habitats, including the salt-pans on the Golfo di Siracusa, where we shall search the reedbeds for Penduline Tit, Red-throated Pipit and Moustached Warbler. Yellow Wagtails of various races occur on passage in autumn.

Penisola Maddalena, a sparsely populated promontory covered with dense Mediterranean maquis and the Capo Murro di Porco, are





"I just love Sicily, it has a certain magic and mystery about it. We are going now for a little warmth before the British winter; to catch the autumn migration through the island and to be there at the beginning of the raptors moving in to Sicily, when they are generally easier to see. We know you all love your raptors!!!" Sally Nowell

renowned as major hotspots for migrants such as Woodchat Shrike, Pied and Collared Flycatchers, Eastern Subalpine and Sardinian Warblers and Black-eared Wheatear; with a chance of Eleanora's Falcon. Sea-watching from the point can be productive, with the chance of both Scopoli's and Yelkouan Shearwaters and Mediterranean, Audouin's and Yellow-legged Gulls, as well as skuas and European Storm-Petrel. If we are lucky, we might also spot Striped and Bottlenose Dolphins.

The Nature Reserve of Vendicari holds flocks of Greater Flamingo, which mingle with Shelduck, Garganey, Shoveler, Ferruginous Duck, Pochard and a good selection of passage waders, including Little and Temminck's Stints, Marsh Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Dunlin.

Inland we shall visit Cava Grande del Cassibile, a stunning Nature Reserve that surrounds the canyon formed by the Cassibile River. The exquisite small town of Palazzolo Acreide is worth a visit and we'll stop at the Necropolis of Pantalica, a collection of cemeteries with rock-cut chamber tombs dating from the 7th-13th centuries BC. We shall also go to the ancient town of Ortigia - one of the most beautiful in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to enjoy an ice cream in the Piazza Duomo.

7-9 We depart early towards the Madonie Mountains, in the western part of Sicily, the highest mountain complex on the island, where we shall stay at Polizzi Generosa. Here, Sweet Chestnut, Holm and Cork-oak woodlands

hold Mediterranean Flycatcher (a recent split from Spotted Flycatcher), Nuthatch, Firecrest and Italian Sparrow. We shall visit the historic town of Castelbuono and take lunch at Andrea's favourite restaurant in Sicily, which specialises in delicious dishes using local fungi.

The landscape here is stunning, with green woodland and freshwater rivers and torrents, limestone gorges and steep cliffs, valleys and high peaks. Cirl and Rock Buntings, Woodlark, Tawny Pipit and Whinchat prefer dry and stony areas, but the local Dippers love the torrents that cascade down the limestone hills.

In autumn, these high areas are attractive to migrants and we could well find Woodchat Shrike, plus Eastern Subalpine and Spectacled Warbler. High on the slopes we'll look for Alpine Chough (one of the very few remaining island colonies) as well as soaring Golden Eagle and with luck Bonelli's Eagle and Lanner Falcon too!

Some late butterfly species such as Sicilian Grayling, Italian Festoon and Mediterranean Skipper may be present, whilst amongst the reptiles, we hope for Sicilian and Italian Wall Lizards basking on rocks in the autumn sun.

10 We transfer to Catania Airport for our flight home.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Day 1 | Fly direct to Catania
2 nights Agriturismo Etna Quota Mille |
| Day 2 | Birding around Mount Etna and surrounding mountain range.
Optional early morning for Rock Partridge |
| Days 3-6 | Travel to Siracusa area, visit ancient town of Ortigia and bird the local area for migrant and resident species
4 nights Agriturismo Pozzo di Mazza |
| Days 7-9 | Transfer to the Madonie mountain area, where we shall be birding for high altitude species
3 nights Agriturismo L'Antico Casale |
| Day 10 | Transfer to Catania for our return flight to the UK |



BRITISH COLUMBIA



"Watching a Grizzly Bear walking along the bank of a river and peering into the water, you can't help get excited that it will dive in and catch a salmon; and so often that is exactly what happens!! It is spectacular and dead Salmon litter the shoreline, attracting gulls and other birds."
Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 7 - Sat 21 Sept 2019
Price £5,245
Deposit £1,000 Single Supp £950

Leaders Roy Atkins and Julian Sykes
Flights Air Canada, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Vancouver
Inbound: Overnight, Vancouver-Heathrow
Weather It varies across the island, with wetter conditions in the west around Tofino and Zeballos, drier on the east coast. Expect some rain (we sometimes have rain for a whole day or more) and fog is possible in the west, but generally warm and sunny with mild conditions (14°-22°C)
Walking There'll be some short easy walks on wide tracks in the forest, in some places with lots of steps. Nothing steep or strenuous, but a reasonable degree of fitness is required
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 14
Insects Biting insects are generally not a problem on Vancouver Island, but repellent is a good idea just in case
Boat trips Boats vary from larger boats with indoor seating areas that can hold over 50 people, to smaller uncovered boats with no facilities. Sometimes the groups may be split between two boats each with a guide. All boats are excellent
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Grizzly Bear	Humpback Whale
Dall's Porpoise	Heermann's Gull
Black Bear	Orca
Black Oystercatcher	Rhinoceros Auklet
Sea Otter	Gray Whale
Black Turnstone	Marbled Murrelet

On Canada's rugged west coast, Vancouver Island awaits – brimming with bears, birds, whales and more, as they seize the autumn bounty before the winter closes in.

- Boat trips in search of Orcas, Humpbacks and Gray Whales
- Grizzly Bears hunting salmon on spawning grounds
- Dall's Porpoise, Steller's Sea Lions plus, with luck, Pacific White-sided Dolphin
- Black Bear, Beaver, Sea Otter and chance of Raccoon
- West Coast special birds including shorebirds, seabirds, divers and scoters
- Beautiful Pacific Rim Rainforest and famous Long Beach
- Stunning scenery of lakes, fjords and forests, amidst towering mountains

1-2 Arriving in Vancouver we transfer to our hotel in Delta. The following day we enjoy a full day at George C. Reifel Bird Sanctuary, where Sandhill Crane, Wood Duck, dowitchers and yellowlegs, Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Harrier and Lincoln's Sparrow are all possible. It is a fabulous and very productive place alive with fabulous birds. We may take a walk along Boundary Bay, looking for more shorebirds in an area that can be great for birding - this may prove to be the most bird-rich day of the trip!

3-5 After checking the bays enroute to the Nanaimo ferry, we board the ferry and check the jetties for Black Turnstone and perhaps Surf-bird. We then have a long drive north to our ocean front lodge overlooking Johnstone Strait. The grounds are a haven for wildlife and we have watched Black Bears turning rocks on the

shore here and, with luck, even River Otter and Raccoons. We can relax, or wander in search of White-crowned and Fox Sparrows, warblers and woodpeckers in the surrounding woodland.

We shall be picked up from the jetty for a boat ride into rich waters covered in gulls, Common and Pigeon Guillemots, Rhinoceros Auklets and dainty Red-necked Phalaropes. Watched by tree top Bald Eagles, this is our best chance for Orcas and we hope to encounter resident groups at close quarters! Dall's Porpoise and Steller's Sea Lions are here too and, with luck, Pacific White-sided Dolphins. Even if we don't see Orcas, we'll be thrilled by great sightings of Humpback Whales!

Another day will be spent locally in search of more wildlife and visiting Telegraph Cove - a picturesque





"This is wildlife watching in the most stunning scenery - with whales, bears, sea lions, Bald Eagles and many seabirds, all in beautiful mountainous surroundings, coastal inlets, rivers, beautiful sweeping beaches and forested islands - spectacular places that add enormously to the pleasure of the holiday." Roy Atkins

village on the seafront nearby, with some nice shops and a wildlife museum, with the chance of Black-tailed Deer or perhaps even Elk enroute.

6-7 We move on to Zeballos on a scenic west coast inlet, an old Gold-rush village where Cedar Waxwing, Steller's Jays and migrant warblers such as Wilson's and Yellow-rumped are possible and we hope to find Beavers on a nearby pond. Sea Otters have a good population here and we'll explore the beautiful inlets and rocky shorelines by boat to enjoy great views, as they lie on their backs perhaps smashing shellfish on a stone on their belly! Black Bears are also possible along the shoreline, turning over boulders as they search for crabs.

8-10 After breakfast we head for Campbell River; a great area for birding, with shorebirds, Harlequin Duck, Bonaparte's Gull, grebes and divers, plus Red-breasted Sapsucker in the trees. We'll also visit the sub-alpine forest of Mount Washington in search of tame Gray Jay, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, woodpeckers and more.

There is lots to see, but we'll tear ourselves away because there's the lure of Grizzly Bears! We'll have a full-day boat trip to a picturesque inlet, where guides will take us to a purpose-built viewing platform. We hope for great close-up views as the bears walk the banks, or down the middle of the river; scanning the water for any hint of a fish to chase - then it's a mad dash, with the occasional bear even being successful!

11-12 It is a long and spectacular drive to Tofino on the west coast and we'll break the journey to enjoy the astonishing trees of Cathedral Grove and visit a beautiful river to watch Chinook Salmon migrate upstream and leap the falls! From our hotel near Tofino we'll visit Pacific Rim National Park - lush temperate rainforest, with cushions of moss on branches of towering Hemlocks, vast beaches and the ocean stretching off as far as the eye can see.

The forest can be quiet, with Pacific Wren, Steller's Jay and Chestnut-backed Chickadees often the only birds, but it is beautiful and well worth the visit! Beaches may hold flocks of Western Sandpipers, while offshore are Red-necked Grebes, Surf Scoter, Pacific Loons and Marbled Murrelet.

We'll go whale-watching too, heading into Clayoquot Sound for Gray Whales, or Humpbacks if the last Gray Whales have left. Amidst the maze of rocky islets, there'll be Harbour Seals and huge Steller's Sea Lions, plus Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, Heermann's Gull, Rhinoceros Auklet and Pigeon Guillemots and we'll check rocky islands for Wandering Tattler and Black Oystercatcher.

13-15 We head back to Vancouver, where we overnight in Delta again. On the following day we visit a different part of Boundary Bay, before dragging ourselves away for our flight home in the afternoon, arriving in London on Day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Fly to Vancouver. Full day birding local area and George C. Reifel Bird Sanctuary
2 nights Tsawwassen Inn
- Days 3-5** Ferry to Vancouver Island, then drive towards Port McNeill and our hotel overlooking Johnstone Strait.
Boat trip to look for Orcas
3 nights Hidden Cove Lodge
- Days 6-7** Drive to Zeballos on west coast to explore the coastal forest and inlets from our Sea Otter boat trip
2 nights Cedars Inn
- Days 8-10** Drive to Campbell River, then birding local area and a full-day boat trip to Grizzly Bear fishing grounds
3 nights Painter's Lodge
- Days 11-12** Transfer to Tofino on the west coast, with boat trip for Humpback/Gray Whales and walk in Pacific Rim Rainforest
2 nights Tofino Resort and Marina
- Day 13** Return to Vancouver
1 night Tsawwassen Inn
- Days 14-15** Birding Boundary Bay before flight back to London in afternoon, arriving in London on Day 15

Christine Maughan: Grizzly Bear, Sea Otter
Steve Batt: Rhinoceros Auklet, Orcas, Humpback Whale
Roy Atkins: Heermann's Gull



ORKNEY & NORTH RONALDSAY



"The lure of Orkney with its Hen Harrier, Bonxies and endless skies brought me back almost every year since 1990. It also introduced me to history and brought it alive. Orkney is the one place that has a magic about it, which often leaves you spellbound and wanting to return for more." Tim Drew

Dates Sun 8 - Wed 18 Sep 2019
Price £2,350
Deposit £400 Single Supp £450

Leaders Simon Eaves and Tim Drew

Weather During a typical week in this season we would expect to experience mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range 10-20°C. Around the coastline of Orkney and the island of North Ronaldsay, we may expect cooler temperatures, though it is possible that we shall see unbroken sunshine and settled weather, Orkney can receive wet and windy squalls and occasionally fog. However, it can be warm and sunny so you may want to bring sunscreen

Walking On Orkney and North Ronaldsay walking is generally very relaxed and easy, but on at least two of the days we may take walks of up to 3-4 miles on rough grassland and small coastal paths, with some climbing.

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11

Insects Biting insects should not be a problem

Accom Premier Inn, Inverness; Bird Observatory, North Ronaldsay; Lynnfield & Standing Stones Hotel, Orkney;

Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite. The Observatory has simpler accommodation than the hotels on Orkney

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Great Northern Diver	Golden Plover
Red-throated Diver	Grey Plover
Hen Harrier	Black-tailed Godwit
Short-eared Owl	Wryneck
Merlin	Lesser Whitethroat
Great Skua	Yellow-browed Warbler
Arctic Skua	Common Rosefinch
Sooty Shearwater	

A wonderful archipelago awaits – combining fantastic autumn migrants, worldclass archaeological sites and three nights at the North Ronaldsay Bird Observatory.

- Autumn Migration on Orkney - you never know what might turn up.
- Three nights on North Ronaldsay - a migrant hot-spot
- Possibility of migrants such as Yellow-browed Warbler, Bluethroat and Wryneck
- Maeshowe, Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar
- Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier, divers and skuas
- Italian Chapel, Churchill Barriers and the Southern Isles

We meet in Inverness in time for dinner in our overnight hotel, giving us time to discuss the days ahead.

2-3 From Inverness, we follow the coast road through the eastern seaboard of Sutherland and Caithness, to catch our ferry from Scrabster to Orkney. Along the route, the last Sandwich and Arctic Terns fish on their way south and some of the autumn's Eider, Common and Velvet Scoter can be seen. Buzzards are common and we may also 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, rightly famous for the strength of its tidal race. These waters provide rich pickings for wildlife, cetaceans in particular and we shall be vigilant for Storm Petrel, Manx Shearwater, skuas and dolphins. We shall be travelling during the

peak of migration and species such as Sooty Shearwater and Grey Phalarope could be seen. The ferry takes us past the impressive cliffs of Hoy and the great sea stack of the Old Man of Hoy, to the wonderful harbour of Stromness, where the great author George Mackay-Brown lived. We are only a short distance from our hotel, where we shall spend our first night on these remarkable islands.

From the main town of Kirkwall we board our ferry to the island of North Ronaldsay, the island time forgot. Our journey takes us north past islands such as Shapinsay, Eday and Sanday. We shall have over two hours to look for both Great and Arctic Skua, Black Guillemot and cetaceans. North Ronaldsay is the most northerly island of Orkney and lies further north than the southern tip of Norway. Its location is perfect for migrating birds at this time of year. Our accommodation is in the Bird Observatory that was established on the island in 1987.





"If you want to witness bird migration, then you can't get much better than an autumn visit to Orkney and especially the far flung isle of North Ronaldsay. You will find your heart skips a beat, as your binoculars are glued to every wee bird you see, for it could have come as far as Asia, Southern Europe or even America. I feel in complete harmony on this fantastic island and just writing this makes me want to walk out of the office and be there right now!" Tim Drew

We shall have time to explore after checking in. The island is small and low-lying with grazing land, freshwater lochs and shingle foreshore. It is also famous for the seaweed eating sheep that inhabit the foreshore.

4-5 Our next two days are spent exploring. We shall work all the main habitats looking for migrants, as well as enjoying the ambience of this remote island. Regular migrants include Yellow-browed Warbler; Red-backed Shrike, Bluethroat, Wryneck, Common Rosefinch, Lesser Whitethroat and Pied Flycatcher; to name a few of the large number of song birds that pass through now. The freshwater lochs and surrounding fields attract waders in good numbers, including Golden Plover; Curlew and Whimbrel. American waders are annual visitors, so we shall scan the flocks for Pectoral Sandpiper; Buff-breasted Sandpiper or even White-rumped Sandpiper. From headlands we'll scan for seabirds, as this is peak passage, with species such as Sooty Shearwater in good numbers given the right conditions, we may not know which way to look first!

6-9 We take a lunchtime ferry back to Mainland Orkney and our hotel to the south of Kirkwall. We'll birdwatch around Scapa Bay, where Bart-tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Turnstone and Dunlin may be feeding, with Great Northern Diver offshore amongst the plunging Gannets. The archaeological sites of Orkney cannot be missed. Skara Brae is an absolute must - an entire prehistoric settlement with rooms, beds, dressers and pottery, all exposed by a storm some 5000 years after it was built. The Standing Stones of Stenness and the

Ring of Brodgar; where 36 of the original circle of 60 stones still stand, are both impressive, however it's the magnificent Maeshowe that steals the show, one of the most impressive tombs in the world.

We'll explore these sites, as well as taking in north and east mainland and the southern isles down to South Ronaldsay, now linked via the Churchill Barriers. Created in WWII, they were built by prisoners of war, who have left behind one of the most beautiful sites on the islands - The Italian Chapel. We'll visit this remarkable place whilst exploring freshwater, sandy bays, moors and farmland for flocks of waders, ducks, Stonechat, Wheatear and more. Pastures are home to Brown Hare, with Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl quartering the moors and meadows. There is always the chance of migrants, so we shall check through the flocks for any rarities, such as Pectoral Sandpiper. Over the years many exciting birds have been found on these northern isles, including Red-breasted Flycatcher; Wryneck and Common Rosefinch.

10 We take the morning ferry back to the Scottish Mainland. There are some good wildlife locations nearby and we shall explore Dunnet Head, the most northerly point on mainland UK. We could encounter Twite and Red Grouse on the way. There is a freshwater loch nearby with a hide, where Tufted Duck, Little Grebe, Coot and Moorhen could fill in the gaps of our list. We then return to Inverness in time for dinner on our final evening.

After breakfast on our last day we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Inverness
1 night at the Premier Inn
- Day 2** Travel up the north east coast of Caithness and Sutherland and take the ferry to Orkney
1 night at Standing Stones Hotel
- Day 3** Take the ferry to North Ronaldsay
3 nights North Ronaldsay Bird Observatory
- Days 4-5** Exploration of North Ronaldsay
- Day 6** Ferry back to Mainland Orkney
4 nights at Lynnfield Hotel
- Days 7-9** Wildlife and archaeological exploration of the Mainland
- Day 10** Take early morning ferry from Orkney and travel back down the coast to Inverness
1 night at the Premier Inn
- Day 11** Depart after breakfast

Richard Stacey: Short-eared Owl
Tim Drew: North Ronaldsay Lighthouse, Otter, Yellow Browed Warbler
Duncan Macdonald: Grey Seal
Ian Smith: Lapland Bunting



YELLOWSTONE AUTUMN



"The return of the wolf to Yellowstone has been a fantastic conservation success story and it's now well documented that they are helping to restore a balance to this quite astonishing wilderness. Time and time again we've had great looks at these top predators and I look forward to memorable encounters again." Darren Rees

Dates Sat 14 - Sat 28 Sept 2019
Price £5,695
Deposit £1,100 Single Supp £1,250

Leaders Darren Rees and Duncan Macdonald
Flights United Airlines, scheduled
Outbound: Morning Heathrow-Jackson Hole (via US stop)
Inbound: Overnight, Jackson Hole-Heathrow (via US stop)
Weather It can be cool (even cold), but daytime temperatures rise to warm and sunny (0°-15°C), with a chance of showers and some snow possible at high altitudes
Walking There'll be some short, easy walks on wide paths with optional short, easy walks off tracks in the forest. Note that Yellowstone National Park is at high altitude. Most of the National Park is above 7,500 ft / 2,275 m and the Beartooth Highway ascends to nearly 11,000 ft / 3353 m, where we shall take a very short walk
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 14
Insects Biting insects are rarely a problem
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Gray Wolf	Least Chipmunk
Coyote	Trumpeter Swan
Grizzly Bear	White Pelican
Black Bear	Bald Eagle
Moose	Ferruginous Hawk
American Elk	Prairie Falcon
Bighorn Sheep	Great Horned Owl
Mountain Goat	American Dipper
Beaver	Mountain Bluebird
River Otter	Horned Lark
Pika	Black Rosy Finch

A favourite time to visit two of the finest National Parks in America, Grand Teton and Yellowstone, resplendent with fall colour, plus wolves, bears, bison, beavers and birds.

- Legendary wildlife of the Yellowstone wilderness
- Bison, Pronghorn and Gray Wolf in the Lamar Valley
- Fabulous encounters with Grizzly and Black Bears feeding before hibernation
- Crazy critters: Beaver, Moose, Pika, Chipmunks and River Otters
- Lots of migrant wildfowl, shorebirds and passerines
- Spectacular Grand Teton National Park with breathtaking autumn colours
- Geothermal wonders of geysers, bubbling mud and multi-coloured pools

1-3 Arriving early evening there is a short transfer to our hotel in Jackson Hole. From here, we explore the breath-taking Grand Teton National Park, a land of jagged peaks soaring above a sagebrush plain dotted with herds of Bison and Pronghorn. With the changing of seasons, flocks of American Robins, Audubon's Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows and Brewer's Blackbirds will be on the move, but perhaps the mammals will be greater prizes: willows along the Snake River are great places to look for Moose – the males will be looking magnificent with 'racks' of antlers. We'll also visit at dusk, when Beavers will be tending to their lodges.

Wildfowl numbers at Jackson Lake are increasing, so expect Trumpeter Swan, Cinnamon Teal and Lesser Scaup, as well as Western Grebe, White

Pelican and migrant shorebirds. The historic barns at Mormon Row will have you reaching for the cameras and we'll be alert for birds of the sagebrush such as Vesper Sparrow, Prairie Falcon, and maybe Sage Grouse. There'll be our first Coyote and who knows what else? We may see our first bear - bushes full of choke-berries are favourites for Black Bears, keen to pile on the calories before winter.

4-6 We'll travel north to the world's first and most famous National Park - Yellowstone. We shall stay near the shores of Yellowstone Lake at 7,700 feet, hosting Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Loon and Bufflehead. Here, we are in the middle of a vast wilderness, realm of both Grizzly and Black Bears and at nearby Hayden Valley we've often seen Gray Wolf. There



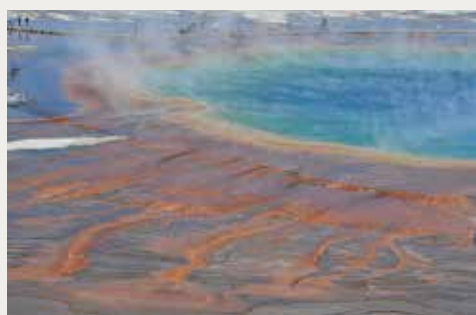
"Many choose autumn to watch wildlife in Yellowstone as the landscape is at its most colourful and the animals are looking their best. The mountains may have their first dusting of snow and rusting cottonwoods and glowing yellow aspens light up the land. Bears are filling up before the coming winter hibernation and both Elk and Moose are sporting full racks of antlers." Darren Rees



may be lingering Harlequin Ducks and raptors include Northern Harrier, Red-tailed and Bald Eagle. We'll explore lofty Dunraven Pass, hopefully finding wildlife of the higher altitudes: Golden Eagle, Clark's Nutcrackers, Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel and perhaps a lazy Yellow-bellied Marmot reluctant to start its hibernation. We'll visit the mighty Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, where the Yellowstone River has carved a stunning landscape of colourful eroded pillars and spectacular waterfalls. Early mornings and evenings at Pelican Creek and Fishing Bridge are good for River Otter, Beaver and Belted Kingfisher.

7-9 We move to the beautiful north-east section of Yellowstone, to Cooke City. Dawn excursions will target Gray Wolves: a successful re-introduction programme started in 1996 and now there are numerous packs, particularly in the scenic Lamar Valley. Here, colourful stands of aspens and cottonwoods and herds of bison and pronghorn, provide the perfect backdrop for watching wolves. We'll hope for Grizzly Bears too - these often follow wolf packs to scavenge on the carrion from wolf kills. The spectacular Beartooth Pass leads out of the Park through spruce forests and higher, to peaks over 12,000ft. We'll look for more specialities of the high country such as Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goat, Pika, Pine Grosbeak and Black Rosy Finch.

10-11 Wildlife abounds as we travel through the scenic northern section of Yellowstone to our next base at Gardiner.



From here we can visit the Mammoth travertine terraces that spectacularly mark the volcanic activity of the region. Around the town square Elk will be grazing and in September the males 'bugle' to round up their harems - confrontations between rival bulls and their ritual calling can go on through the night! Birds include American Dipper, Williamson's Sapsucker, Fox Sparrow, and Gray Jay.

12-13 We journey to the centre of the geothermal wonders of Yellowstone at Old Faithful - 70% of the world's geysers are here! As its name suggests, the historic, timber Old Faithful Inn is next to the planet's most well-known geyser and it's the perfect place for marvelling at the expulsion of steam and water in the cool air. Neighbouring geysers are even more spectacular and there are the bubbling mud-pools of Fountain Paintpots, plus the largest multi-coloured pool at Grand Prismatic. On our last full day in the field we travel south, where we return to Jackson Hole for one night, watching for birds and mammals as we go. We're sure to stop at Oxbow Lake and Willow Flats, now ablaze with the fall colours from quaking aspens.

14-15 Leaving Jackson Hole, we fly home, arriving in the UK on the morning of Day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly to Jackson Hole, via US stop, arriving in the evening - 3 nights 49er Inn
- Days 2-3** Two days exploring Grand Teton National Park, including Elk Refuge, Mormon Row and Ox Bow Bend
- Days 4-6** North, via Jackson Lake, to Lake Yellowstone - 3 nights. Explore Hayden Valley, north shore of Lake Yellowstone and Grand Canyon of Yellowstone
- Day 7** Relaxed day transfer, via Dunraven Pass, to Cooke City 3 nights Soda Butte Lodge
- Days 8-9** Two days to explore north-east section of Yellowstone, including Lamar Valley and Beartooth Pass
- Days 10-11** Drive via Slough Creek to north-west gate at Gardiner. Visit Mammoth travertine terraces and Blacktail Plateau 2 nights Absaroka Lodge
- Day 12** Geothermal features at Norris and Midway Geyser Basins - 1 night Grant Village
- Day 13** Geyser gazing at Old Faithful then south for last night at Jackson Hole 1 night 49er Inn
- Days 14-15** Overnight flight back to the UK, via US stop, arriving on Day 15

Lin Gregory: Grizzly Bear, Bison, Elk, Grand Prismatic Lake
Duncan Macdonald: Mountain Bluebird, Coyote



Roy Cowley

Marsh Harrier, EYorkshire. Holiday details page 106



Chris Brookings

Greylag Geese at Sunset, Orkney. Holiday details page 92

*Just a few of the images
guests and guides have taken
on Speyside Wildlife trips*



Jan Tulloch

Y-B Marmot, Yellowstone. Details page 100



Steve Batt

Turkey Vultures, British Columbia. Holiday details page 96



Christine Maughan

Hidden Cove, British Columbia. Holiday details page 96



Mike Hems

Pine Martens at our hide. Details page 12



Roy Cowley

Fin Whale, Nova Scotia. Holiday details page 84



John Osborne

Roe Deer, Autumn Wildlife. Holiday details page 104



Lyn Gregory

Cedar Waxwing, Yellowstone. Details page 100



Steve Osborne

Firecrest, The Isles of Scilly. Holiday details page 108



Edward and Christine Bray

Long-tailed Tit, Oland. Holiday details page 110



Christine Maughan

Pacific White-sided Dolphins, British Columbia. Holiday details page 96

AUTUMN WILDLIFE IN SPEYSIDE



"Autumn in the Highlands is a great time of year to visit. In the hills the Red Deer rut is underway and the wild and evocative sound of Stags roaring across the mountainsides, can be heard all around on still frosty mornings, as the forests below take on the fiery colours of autumn." Craig Round

Dates Sat 28 Sep - Sat 5 Oct 2019
Sat 5 - Sat 12 Oct 2019

Price £1125

Deposit £200 **Single Supp** £100

Leaders Craig Round and Kate Mennie

Weather The weather can vary enormously. Snow can occur in the mountains at any season with sunny warm weather also possible. During a typical week in autumn we would expect to experience mixed sun and showers with temperatures in the range 8-18°C. You may want to bring sunscreen

Walking Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 4 miles

We take groups on to the Cairngorms plateau from the funicular railway summit to see Ptarmigan, therefore may be necessary to take a walk on paths over uneven and occasionally undulating rocky terrain. Low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed on the holiday

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

Insects Biting midges are rare at this time of year

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms at our very special, delightfully furnished converted barn, the Steading.

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Golden Eagle	Velvet Scoter
White-tailed Eagle	Rock Dove
Ptarmigan	Crested Tit
Black Grouse	Scottish Crossbill
Capercaillie	Snow Bunting
Pink-footed Goose	Red Squirrel
Long-tailed Duck	Pine Marten
Scaup	
Common Scoter	

The season of golden colours, roaring stags, hunting eagles, seaduck and rarities - this is a wonderful time to be in glorious Speyside, within the Cairngorms National Park.

- Capercaillie, Black Grouse and Speyside specialties
- Includes a West Coast 'White-tailed Eagle' trip
- Seaduck, geese and thrushes arriving from the north
- Regular rare skuas, ducks and white-winged gulls
- Young Golden Eagles above roaring Red Deer stags
- Ptarmigan parties in the Cairngorms
- An evening for Pine Marten, Badger and more

Dinner together on Saturday evening followed by coffee and a run through the coming week starts the holiday.

2-7 As colder weather grips northern Scandinavia, thousands of birds stream south to warmer waters, many spending the winter off our shores. Like grains from a pepperpot, seaduck, grebes and divers are scattered across the sea like nowhere else in Britain. Rafts of Common and Velvet Scoter can be found in Findhorn Bay and we'll search through them for rare Surf Scoter which are annual here - lost birds from North America. Long-tailed Duck are in beautiful winter plumage and we'll check through flocks of Eider just in case a rare King Eider is amongst them. There will be Slavonian Grebe, Red-throated and Black-throated Divers, Scaup and the chance of passing Great and Arctic Skuas - even Red-necked Grebe is possible.



Purple Sandpiper, Ringed Plover and Turnstone pick around sea-weedy rocks and we'll visit estuaries alive with waders. Knot, Dunlin, Oystercatcher and Bar-tailed Godwit, which may hide something more unusual and we'll find big flocks of Wigeon plus Teal and Pintail. Skeins of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese are constantly on the move and may be arriving in their thousands.

If winds come from the north we'll check through the flocks of gulls, as there is always the chance of stray Glaucous or Iceland Gulls. Red Kite drift over farmland on the Black Isle and we'll visit a spot where Bottlenose Dolphins frequently come surprisingly close to the shore and hope for some acrobatics as they chase salmon coming in on the rising tide!

At Insh Marshes, Icelandic Whooper Swans quietly feed and Goosander and Goldeneye dive in small pools, where furtive Teal skulk in the margins.





"October - vast waves of migrating birds from the high north and Scandinavia are on the move, as the last of the summer visitors leave. After the quiet of summer, the coasts come alive again with seaduck, divers and waders, all arriving to spend the winter and at night you can often hear the thin 'seep' of migrating Redwing and the calls of unseen skeins of Pink-footed Geese, as they pass overhead through the glens in the darkness. Pure magic!" Craig Round

Towards dusk, Hen Harriers fly buoyantly in from the moors to roost in the long grasses here, sometimes Merlin too. Golden Eagle and Peregrine hunt the higher glens and we'll search for Mountain Hares - now moulting into their winter coat and starting to go white in patches. A real highlight can be watching the Red Deer. This is the time when they are rutting and the roar of rutting stags echoes across the valley. Occasionally we see a real confrontation, as stags meet head to head, or we may see males that have adorned their antlers with grass and heather!

Open moorland holds parties of Red Grouse and, weather permitting, we'll explore the Cairngorms for cryptically camouflaged Ptarmigan - so much easier now with the funicular railway to help us get to higher ground!

In the ancient pines of Abernethy Forest, Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill are found and flocks of Siskin, Goldcrest, Coal Tit and Treecreeper weave through trees that flank the mountains. There is always the chance of Common and Parrot Crossbill too and we'll keep alert for elusive Capercaillie and Black Grouse - though neither species are easy at this time of year. Golden Eagle are possible and there is now a resident pair of White-tailed Eagles here, so keep your fingers crossed!

Flocks of winter thrushes, Redwing and Fieldfare, or even scarce Waxwing may appear on berry bushes. One night we'll visit our comfortable baited hide for the chance of close up views

of delightful Pine Martens and Badgers!

We shall also venture to the remote west coast through the dramatic peaks and sea lochs of wildest Wester Ross. The scenery gets more and more spectacular as you head west and the coastal beaches around Laide and Mellon Udrigle are beautiful too, with stunning mountain views towards Sutherland.

Wild Rock Dove may be found here along with Raven, Twite, Stonechat and Golden Eagle, but it's imposing White-tailed Eagle that may steal the show. We'll search for Red-throated and Great Northern Divers amongst more numerous Black-throated Divers that winter here, along with Black Guillemots, Eider and Shags.

Common Seals may be hauled out on the rocks and we'll scan the water and rocky shore for Otters. These wonderful animals are more linked to tide than time of day here, allowing the chance of animals out in daylight. We have enjoyed some wonderful views of them here - especially when they catch something they need to bring to shore to deal with!

8 After breakfast on Saturday we say our farewells.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Glen Feshie in time for an evening meal and a chat about our plans for the coming week. 7 nights at the Steading
- Days 2-7** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Abernethy Forest, Dava Moor, the Cairngorms, the Moray Firth and West Coast
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells and depart

Dave Braddock: Red Deer Stag
Duncan Macdonald: View over Uath Lochans, Wigeon
Sue & Bill Gill: Ptarmigan
Mark Denman: Snow Bunting
Jane Hope: Red Grouse
Mary Braddock: Crested Tit



EAST YORKSHIRE



"Although I am a Yorkshire girl I hadn't realised until I led our first East Yorkshire trip in 2017 just how lucky I was to grow up surrounded by so many amazing birding locations. I am so pleased this holiday showcases so many fabulous Reserves, varied habitats and great British birds."
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 5 - Sat 12 Oct 2019
Price £1,750
Deposit £300 Single Supp £175

Leaders Sally Nowell and Julian Sykes

Weather Can be extremely variable at this time of year, so come prepared for everything from rain and wind, to calm autumnal sunshine!

Walking Mostly easy walking on level paths up to 3 miles, with perhaps a little more if rarities require it!

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

Insects Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
A lovely rural venue in the heart of East Yorkshire in a stunning location. A transfer can be arranged from York train station

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Brambling	Velvet Scoter
Winter thrushes	Gannets
Redstart	Arctic Skua
Marsh Harrier	Dunlin
Sooty Shearwater	Scarce migrants such as..
Pomarine Skua	Yellow-browed Warbler
Little Gull	Red-Backed Shrike
Jack Snipe	Ring Ouzel
Spotted Redshank	Firecrest
Black Redstart	Wryneck
Barn Owl	Lapland Bunting
Little Owl	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Short-eared Owl	
Water Rail	
Red-throated Diver	
Pink-footed Goose	

Yorkshire's iconic birding hotspots for early autumn migration. Seabirds, waders and wildfowl move along the North Sea coastline, where passerines make landfall, with maybe a rarity or two.

- Visit Yorkshire's autumn migration hotspots - Spurn, Flamborough and Filey
- Scarce migrant species can occur any day!
- Visit Wildlife Artist, Andrew Fuller's gallery in the stunning Yorkshire Wolds
- See ringing first hand at the new Spurn Bird Observatory
- Take a 4x4 trip to the end of famous Spurn Point
- Visit famous Yorkshire reserves such as Blacktoft Sands and Bempton Cliffs
- Comfortable accommodation and Yorkshire hospitality with great birding on the doorstep!

We meet up at our hotel in time for dinner and a chance to discuss the coming week. Our 'well placed' accommodation means that most of the sites we shall visit are an hour or less away.

2-7 Early Autumn along the Yorkshire coast can be a thrilling place, if the weather conditions are favourable with literally 1000's of migrant birds on the move. To have a chance to witness this mass migration as birds head south along the coast is simply a wonderful experience and we have timed this trip accordingly. However, this can be weather dependent and needs suitable winds to have our best chance of this avian spectacle with common migrants making landfall in good numbers, but also the chance of something a bit rarer – who knows what we might encounter!

East Yorkshire has a very enviable network of birdwatching sites and Nature Reserves, with

the Spurn Peninsular being perhaps the most famous - its unusual shape acting as a funnel, which concentrates birds as they move towards the point. Every Autumn, large numbers of common migrants such as pipits, thrushes, finches, chats and crests leave the continent to winter in the UK and this is where they arrive. Searching through these can be interesting as we try to find scarcer species such as Yellow-browed Warbler, Ring Ouzel, Wryneck, Red-backed Shrike, Lapland and Snow Bunting. To enhance this, we shall also get an insight into how migration trends are researched as we see some of these tiny birds in the hand. A ringing demonstration at the new Spurn Bird Observatory will be one of the highlights of the week.

At Bempton Cliffs, the huge seabird colonies will have departed, but some of the thousands of Gannets that nest here will still be present at this time of year. This spectacular place can also



"It is such a thrill heading off in search of a rarity in some corner of East Yorkshire and then the buzz of finding it after a patient search and wait. It was a real team effort tracking down birds such as the Rose-coloured Starling and Red-backed Shrike and then to get Red-breasted, Pied and Spotted Flycatcher, all on the same day, gave us all such a sense of achievement!" Sally Nowell



provide the chance to see migration and amongst the common migrants, we'll be on the lookout for shrikes, flycatchers, or scarcer warblers. We shall cast our eyes out towards the North Sea from Flamborough Head and maybe even visit the new hide that can provide excellent opportunities to watch seabirds flying past the headland. We'll look out for Manx and Sooty Shearwaters, Arctic, Great and Pomarine Skuas, divers, auks and flocks of seaduck.

This peninsular is also renowned for its migration possibilities with good chances of seeing winter thrushes and finches coming in off the sea and all three sites have had more than their fair share of national rarities. Each day we shall be keeping an eye on 'what's about' and will be in touch with local birders, so plans may alter rapidly if something very special is found.

Anything can turn up, but some years are incredible, such as 2016 when Siberian Accentor, White's Thrush, Eastern Crowned Warbler, Isabelline Wheatear and Black-browed Albatross were exceptional finds. We can't promise the same, but we can promise an exciting time searching for the unexpected, with the opportunity to polish our skills when it comes to our less familiar UK birds.

Yorkshire has some fabulous Reserves and habitats, wetlands, cliffs, forest, coast and estuarine marsh. We'll visit Blacktoft Sands, where the wetlands and reedbeds can be superb at this time of year. Waders should include common species such as Dunlin, Common Redshank, Common Snipe

and Ruff but could also include Spotted Redshank, Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwit. Marsh Harriers hunt over the reeds, where 'pinging' flocks of Bearded Tits can be possibly seen on calm days and if we are very lucky, perhaps a Water Rail or Bittern will appear.

This visit to south of the River Humber is always completed by a drive across the famous bridge, which is quite an experience. East Yorkshire is a varied county, with rich agricultural land providing ideal feeding grounds for large numbers of Lapwing and Golden Plover. The subtly rolling hills of the Yorkshire Wolds, providing habitat for Barn Owls, Skylarks, Red Kite and Brown Hare feature in a lot of great artist's work.

We plan to visit Robert Fuller's wildlife art gallery and get a 'behind the scenes' tour of some of the ingenious ways he spies on his local wildlife, which is astonishing. His paintings sell all over the world and his trademark, highly-detailed images, have been adopted by the RSPB and the National Trust but this is part of his story as a walk around his wonderful garden proves.

8 After breakfast on our final day we say our farewells. You may wish to extend your holiday by spending time in Yorkshire's historic county town, or explore further up Yorkshire's east coast, to places such as Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet at our hotel in time for our evening meal
7 nights at Tickton Grange Hotel
- Days 2-7** Exploration of the migration hotspots of Spurn Point, Flamborough Head, Filey Brigg and Bempton Cliffs. We'll also seawatch from headlands and visit Blacktoft Sands for wetland and reedbed birds, plus visit the Yorkshire Wolds and the David Fuller Art Gallery
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells and depart

Mark Denman: Red-backed Shrike
Frank Moffat: East Yorkshire
Craig Round: Gannets **David Kjaer:** Wryneck
Roy Atkins: Spotted Redshank
Tim Drew: Yellow-browed Warbler
Simon Eaves: Dusky Warbler



ISLES OF SCILLY



"Yellow-browed Warbler, Rosy Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Isabelline Wheatear, American Golden Plover and Spotted Crane were just some of the highlights from one trip. I am itching to get back."
Duncan Macdonald

Dates Sat 5 - Sat 12 Oct 2019
Price £1,995
Deposit £350 Single Supp £250

Leaders Simon Eaves and Duncan Macdonald

Ferry Penzance to St Mary's

Weather The weather can vary enormously in the autumn. The Isles of Scilly can be wet and windy, however we may also expect some warm weather as well! During a typical week in this season we would expect to experience mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range 10-25°C

Walking We shall be on foot most of the day making medium length walks between stops on easy paths and roads over even ground, but on occasion we may walk on slightly rough coastal paths. We shall cover an overall distance of about 3 to 4 miles during the day. Walking boots are recommended on wet days, with trainers being fine when the weather is dry. Don't bring wellingtons – it's unlikely to be muddy and in most places they are unsuitable. Collapsible telescopic/walking poles could be useful for this trip

Boat Trips We shall take short boat trips to the smaller islands from St Mary's

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8

Insects Biting insects are unlikely to be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Manx Shearwater	Firecrest
Balearic Shearwater	Wryneck
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Rose-coloured Starling
Jack Snipe	Common Rosefinch
Short-toed Lark	Lapland Bunting
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Plus rarities!!
Yellow-browed Warbler	

Famous for scarce birds, we return to this scattering of tranquil islands on the south west limit of Britain, at the best time of year for the greatest variety of migrants to turn up!

- Scarce bird migrants from all points of the compass
- Walking quiet lanes amidst sub-tropical plants
- Dazzling seascapes and a patchwork of little fields
- Following up all the latest news each day
- Inter-island boat trips
- All from a small hotel on the main island of St Mary's
- Excellent local knowledge from our guides

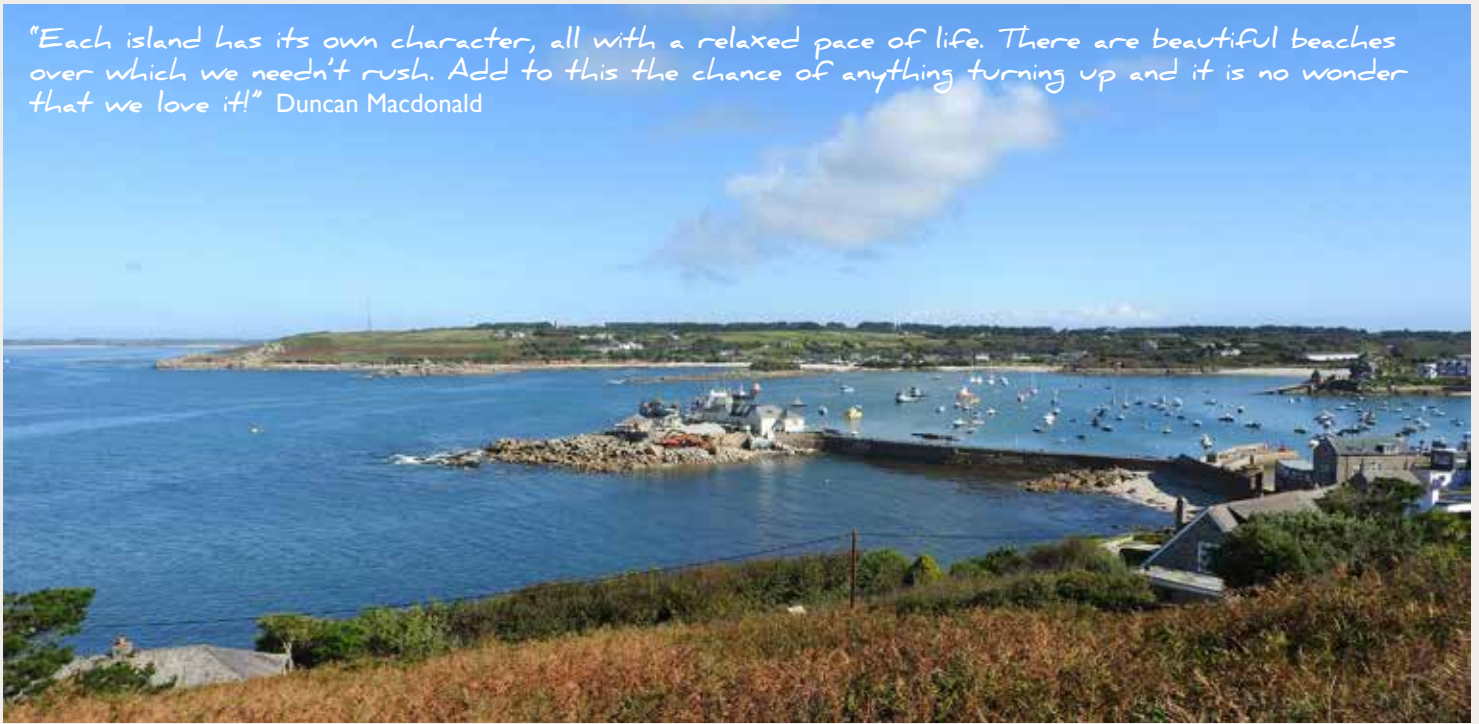
We meet together in Penzance at the harbour before taking the ferry out to Scilly. Birds and wildlife will be apparent from the moment we leave the bay, with several species of seabird on the 28 mile crossing to the islands. Gannets and Fulmars cruise the open waters, along with a really good chance of seeing the rare Balearic Shearwater, which move into these British waters in late summer. Common Dolphins are increasingly common here and we hope to have some good sightings from the ship. Landing on St Mary's we can walk the short distance to our island hotel. The rest of the first day we are likely to explore the main island of St Mary's, with its diverse habitats of woodland, farmland and coastal trails.

2-7 The islands have recorded over 400 species during their birding history, having a reputation as being a must visit place for all British birders. Autumn migration will be in full swing

as we arrive, with the last of the common species passing through such as Redstarts, Chiffchaffs, Wheatears, with swallows and martins still occurring at this time of year. Along with these common migrants and depending on the preceding weather and wind directions, we can hope for rarities. If transatlantic low pressure sweeps in we may see something arrive from America, whilst easterly winds may produce birds from Europe such as Wryneck and Bluethroat. In the right conditions, eastern rarities from even further afield in Asia such as Yellow-browed Warbler and Dusky Warbler can appear. It's impossible to give a firm itinerary - let's just say that our guides will take you to where the best birds are! Migrants can turn up anywhere; on the south pointing Peninnis Head, on grassy airfields, golf courses, sheltered coves and the shelter belts which protect the bulb fields - and indeed on any of the islands. Any boat trips we need



"Each island has its own character, all with a relaxed pace of life. There are beautiful beaches over which we needn't rush. Add to this the chance of anything turning up and it is no wonder that we love it!" Duncan Macdonald



to make are included in the holiday. This is prime time for scarce birds such as Short-toed Lark, Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike, but expect the unexpected, as Scilly is famed for attracting vagrant waders, ducks, warblers, pipits and even birds of prey from all corners of the compass, which rarely occur elsewhere in the UK. Anything can turn up - on our last trip we found Common Scoter; American Golden Plover; Wilson's Snipe, Short-toed Lark, Rose-coloured Starling, Cedar Waxwing and Isabelline Wheatear:

During our trip we shall alternate between exploring the main island of St Mary's, with days out to visit two or three of the other inhabited islands using the colourful little inter-island boats. Even St Mary's is only 2.5 by 1.75 miles, so exploring on foot is easy, wandering between the different habitats of tiny bulb fields sheltered by tall pitted hedges, maritime heath and boggy moorland, with muddy freshwater pools, rocky headlands and sandy coves that pepper the coastline. The unique mild maritime climate has created a fascinating landscape, with special plants adapted to this environment

The Scillies are made up of around 150 islands with just five of the largest islands being inhabited. All of these five offshore islands are distinctly different in character and habitat. We shall almost certainly visit Tresco, the second largest, which is famed for its exotic Abbey Gardens created in 1834 around the remains of the 12th century St Nicholas Priory. Its sweeping sandy beaches and rocky tidal bays attract waders, gulls and terns and the dense vegetation and wooded areas provide

shelter and feeding for common migrants and rarities alike, as they pause to refuel on their long journeys. The Great Pool almost divides the whole island, offering the chance of some wildfowl, with regular rarities such as Ring-necked Duck and Spotted Crake turning up in some years. St Agnes, the most south-westerly of the inhabited islands, is in the prime position for first landfall of any transatlantic migrants, so it is another island we are likely to visit. It has a rugged southern coastline and more sheltered bays in the north. Its narrow winding lanes and tiny fields give it a totally different feel to the other islands and with Wingletang Down - an area of open scrub and gorse which stretches down to the Atlantic coast, it's an island of contrasts in a tiny area.

Rare birds can turn up on any of the other islands, with visiting birders searching all over. We shall try to see as many as we can, so depending on where the birds are found, we may visit St Martin's, a long thin island with beautiful white sandy beaches, downland and a small farming community. Alternatively, we may visit Bryher, which shelters Tresco from the Atlantic and is home to Hell Bay, where there is nothing between us and the eastern seaboard of America!

O We can spend the morning birding, then after lunch we board our ferry for the sea crossing back to Penzance, with a chance of more seabirds and cetaceans on the way.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Ferry from Penzance to St Mary's and transfer to hotel.
7 nights at St Mary's Hall Hotel
- Days 2-7** Normally 3 days spent exploring the different parts of St Mary's, the main island and 3 day trips to other islands, usually Tresco, St Agnes and Bryher, but the occurrence of unusual birds will determine the exact itinerary
- Day 8** Return ferry to Penzance

Simon Eaves: Buff-breasted Sandpiper,
View from St Mary's, Subalpine Warbler
Duncan Macdonald: St Mary's, Wagtail
Steve Osborne: Firecrest
David Constantine: Yellow-browed Warbler





"There is such a sense of anticipation on this trip, you really never know what will happen and sometimes rarities can change the day's plans completely! The locals are happy to share news, or perhaps we might be the ones who find the rarity ourselves!"
Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 6 - Sun 13 Oct 2019
Price £2,195
Deposit £400 Single Supp £300

Leaders Roy Atkins and Darren Rees
Flights Scandinavian Airlines, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Kalmar
(via Stockholm)
Inbound: Afternoon, Kalmar-Heathrow
(via Stockholm)
Weather Expect a mixture of sun and showers,
with cool winds (10°-20°C)
Walking 2-3 miles on wide tracks, which may
be muddy after rain
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1
to lunch on Day 8
Insects Unlikely to be a problem
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Whooper Swan	Hooded Crow
Common Crane	Eider
Avocet	Robins!
Bearded Tit	Goldcrests!
Barnacle Goose	Tree Sparrow
Bean Goose	White-tailed Eagle
Red-breasted Goose	Hen Harrier
Eiders!	Rough-legged Buzzard
Little Stint	Goshawk
Long-tailed Tit	Yellow-browed Warbler
(White-headed race)	Pallas's Warbler
Caspian Gull	Brambling
Northern Grey Shrike	Twite
Long-eared Owl	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Black Woodpecker	Elk

Autumn migration at its best; masses of cranes, geese, seaduck and raptors, enormous numbers of Goldcrests, Robins and other common migrants.

- Ottenby Bird Observatory at peak migration - Goldcrests everywhere
- Raptors including Rough-legged Buzzard, Goshawk and White-tailed Eagle
- Chance of rarities such as Gyrfalcon and Pallas's and Dusky Warbler
- Huge Barnacle Goose flocks with chance of Red-breasted Goose
- Spectacular Common Crane migration
- Chance to see ringing demonstration and stunning lighthouse top view
- Relaxed pace birding, with most sites close at hand and lots to see!

After our flight to Kalmar, via Stockholm, we then drive the short distance over the bridge to Öland and our delightful hotel at Gammalsby.

2-7 Wooden windmills and burial mounds dot the charming open landscape of this remarkably flat island. We stay just a short distance from the famous Bird Observatory at Ottenby, set in meadows, scrub and heathland, surrounded by low boulder beaches and coastal bays. We need to check everything as we drive down to the lighthouse, as birds can be passing through in large numbers. In the right conditions the trees and bushes can be alive with Brambling, Chaffinch, Tree Sparrow, Twite, Redpoll and Siskin. Woodpigeon and Stock Dove pass overhead and flocks of Golden Plover dot the fields. All around the lighthouse and even around our feet, tiny Goldcrest flutter in the weedy plants. Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs,



Treecreepers, Robins and thrushes are all heading south and gather for a final feed before heading out to sea - perhaps joined in the Sycamores by scarce Pallas's or Yellow-browed Warbler and we've seen Red-breasted and Collared Flycatchers here. The Observatory staff make regular checks of the mist-nets and will bring out anything special to show any birders nearby. We'll also visit the Observatory to watch the ringing in action and learn about the research and results of many years of work here, one of the oldest bird ringing stations in the world.

The coast can be dotted with ducks of several species, along with shorebirds and Brent Geese, sometimes with Black Brant amongst them. The fields can hold big flocks of migrant Barnacle Geese, with occasionally other species such as Bean and White-fronted Goose. Common Cranes add to the spectacle, often in their thousands and



"I love the spectacle of migration happening in front of your very eyes and on this trip it is more obvious than any other. Masses of birds are passing through and whether it be raptors gathering over the forests, tiny Goldcrests at our feet, or thousands of seaduck passing offshore - it is all amazing to witness." Roy Atkins



we frequently hear them passing over our hotel at the start of the day as they head out to feed. The trees around the lighthouse may hold Long-eared or with luck, even a Tengmalm's Owl and Great Grey Shrike perch in the bushes nearby.

The number of birds can be astonishing - over a thousand Goldcrests have been ringed in one day! Swedish birders excitedly scan all that goes by and there is a tremendous sense of anticipation. If the winds turn to the east, then our thoughts will turn to Richard's Pipit and Pallas's, Radde's and Dusky Warblers. If the winds blow from the north, then we'll be thinking of larger, more spectacular birds - we've seen Snowy Owl, Hawk Owl and Gyrfalcon in previous years.

We'll check other hotspots along the coast - places such as Seby Badet and Stenåsa Badet, where taller trees attract migrants such as flycatchers. The Swedish Ornithological Society runs a shop and Visitor Centre here. Who knows what we shall find and a lot of the pleasure is in looking with excited anticipation. We shall also keep in touch with news of any rarities on the island, as we would not want to miss something special!

Wherever we are on the island, small clusters of Rough-legged Buzzard drift lazily south, along with Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Hen Harrier and in recent years the occasional Pallid Harrier! Wandering immature Golden Eagle can pop up over the trees and White-tailed Eagles patrol the coast or follow the geese.

At Sandvik, we'll check the waders for anything

unusual amongst the Dunlin, Knot and other species - we've seen Buff-breasted Sandpiper here! More waders are at Bejershamsvik, with a chance of Bearded Tit in the reeds here too. Peregrines menace the waders and offshore, tremendous numbers of Eider may be on the move, 10,000 a day have been recorded. Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Scaup, Common Scoter and even King Eider are possible, Black and Red-throated Diver pass south and there may be Arctic and Pomarine Skuas if conditions are right.

On the grazing meadows at Kastlosa and Eckelsudde there may be thousands of Barnacle Geese and smaller numbers of Greylag and White-fronted Geese, with the chance of Bean Goose too. It is always worth a careful check as vagrant Red-breasted Goose is always a possibility.

There are dense woods, small ponds and clearings near the Observatory, which have roving flocks of Goldcrest that are worth checking through, as an elusive Pallas's Warbler just might be amongst them! We'll look for Black Woodpeckers in the pines, where passing Nutcracker or Parrot Crossbills sometimes turn up and deciduous woodlands have Scandinavian race Nuthatch, Bullfinch and lovely white-headed Long-tailed Tit. A few Elk (or Moose) inhabit Öland and we may make an early start one morning to search for them too.

8 After a morning's birding we catch an afternoon flight home.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Fly to Kalmar via Stockholm and transfer to Gammalsby
7 nights Gammalsbygarden Inn
- Days 2-7 Birdwatching and wildlife exploration including visits to the Ottenby Bird Observatory. Bird ringing and mist netting opportunities
- Day 8 Transfer to Kalmar for our flight back to the UK, via Stockholm

Mark Denman: Long-tailed Tits, Goldcrest
Roy Atkins: Gyr Falcon, Common Cranes, White-tailed Eagle, Barnacle Geese
Mary Braddock: Great Grey Shrike



FORTH 'N' FIFE



"We stand at the seawall overlooking the River Forth. Small flocks of seaduck bob about on the water; mainly Velvet Scoter, but also Eider and Long-tailed Duck. We find Red-necked Grebe, along with several Slavonian Grebes and a Red-throated Diver. Let's see if we can find a Surf Scoter!" Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 26 - Sat 2 Nov 2019
Price £1,550
Deposit £300 Single Supp £200

Leaders Julian Sykes

Weather Can be extremely variable at this time of year, so come prepared for every thing from cold, rain and wind to calm autumnal sunshine!

Walking Mostly easy walking on level paths up to 2 miles, or perhaps a little more if rarities require it! We may be on our feet for a lot of the day even if not walking far

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

Insects Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year

Accom Double, twin and single ensuite rooms

Group 7

Just some of what we hope to see:

Red-throated Diver	Common Redstart
Great Northern Diver	Yellow-browed Warbler
Slavonian Grebe	Barred Warbler
Sooty Shearwater	Firecrest
Pink-footed Goose	Wryneck
Barnacle Goose	Lapland Bunting
Velvet Scoter	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Long-tailed Duck	Purple Sandpiper
Marsh Harrier	Water Pipit
White-tailed Eagle	Curlew
Purple Sandpiper	Little Stint
Curlew Sandpiper	Jack Snipe
Whimbrel	Spotted Redshank
Great Skua	Golden Eagle
Arctic Skua	Red Kite
Pomarine Skua	Goshawk
Mediterranean Gull	Peregrine
Little Gull	Rarities - anything could turn up!
Black Tern	European Beaver
Short-eared Owl	

Late Autumn in the Kingdom of Fife can be incredibly rewarding, with wintering wildfowl, seabirds moving out of the North Sea and a good chance of something scarce turning up amongst them.

- Visit the famous Fife Ness headland and St Andrews coastline
- Cross the new Forth Road Bridge to Musselburgh Lagoons
- Divers, grebes, shearwaters, skuas and terns offshore
- European Beaver at the excellent Loch of the Lowes SWT Reserve
- Skeins of Pink-footed Geese from the hotel plus Taiga Bean Geese
- Yellow-browed Warbler, Lapland Bunting and Ring Ouzel
- Massive numbers of waders in the lagoons and estuaries

We meet in Edinburgh and head to our comfortable accommodation in Kinross, situated on the edge of Loch Leven. Vane Farm RSPB Reserve is part of this huge inland water and every winter it hosts 15,000+ Pink-footed Geese, which is wonderful to see each day flying out to the nearby fields.

2-7 Like the rest of the British east coast, at this time of year, this is a thrilling and unpredictable experience, which can be very weather and wind dependent!! Thousands of birds are on the move and to witness this mass migration as birds head south along the coast is a wonderful sight.

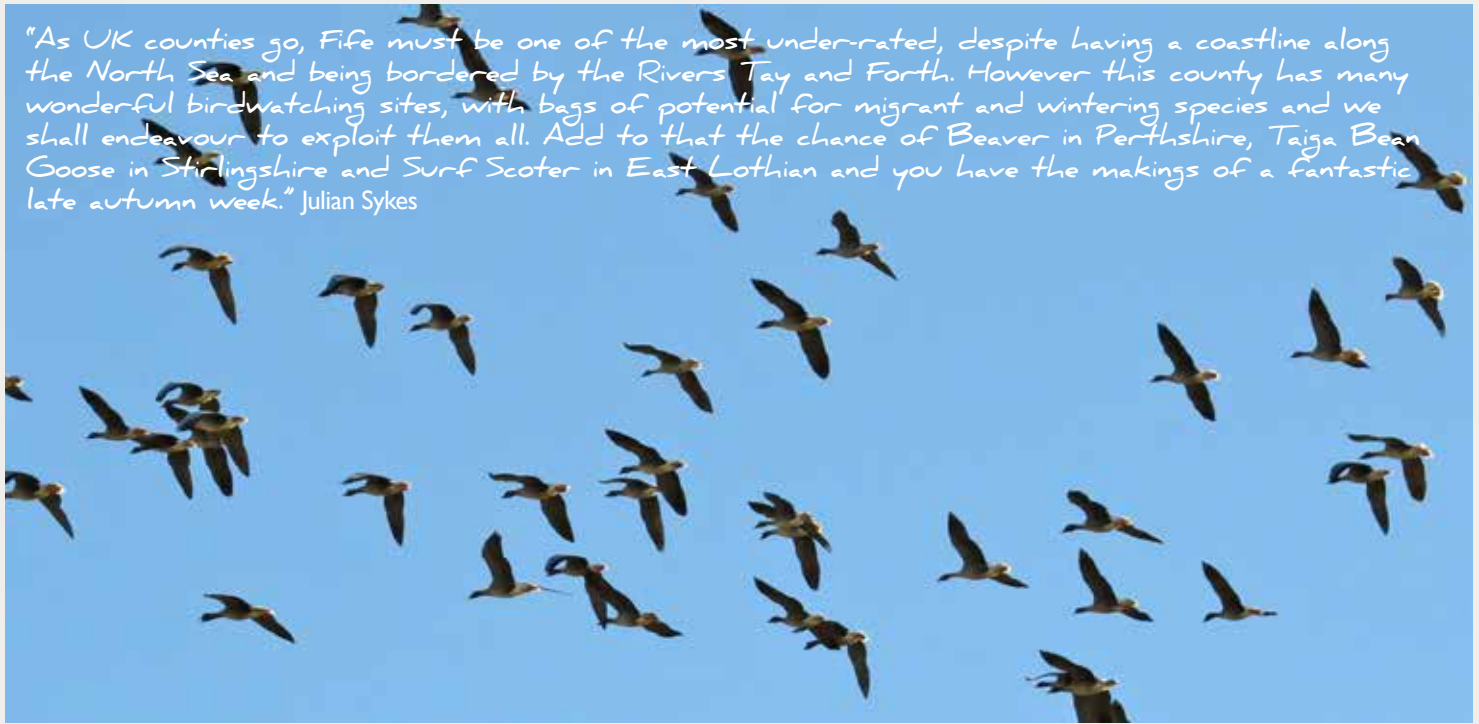
We have timed this trip to enjoy migration in action, with common migrants still passing through in good numbers, but also the chance of something a bit rarer making landfall. Pipits, thrushes and finches

are sometimes joined by scarcer birds, with a good probability of Yellow-browed or Barred Warbler; along with the chance of Red-breasted Flycatcher; Firecrest, Wryneck, Lapland Bunting and more. We could literally see (and hear) birds dropping out of the sky making landfall on Scotland's East coast.

We shall cast our eyes seawards from the comfort of a hide at Fife Ness and nearby car park, as both provide excellent opportunities for passage seabirds, looking out for seaduck, Sooty Shearwater, Arctic, Great and Pomarine Skuas. There will be passage gulls and terns, with Little and hopefully Sabine's Gull amongst the 100's of Kittiwakes moving south. Red-throated Divers should now be making their regular passage, sometimes in impressive numbers, with a possibility of a Great Northern Diver as well.



"As UK counties go, Fife must be one of the most under-rated, despite having a coastline along the North Sea and being bordered by the Rivers Tay and Forth. However this county has many wonderful birdwatching sites, with bags of potential for migrant and wintering species and we shall endeavour to exploit them all. Add to that the chance of Beaver in Perthshire, Taiga Bean Goose in Stirlingshire and Surf Scoter in East Lothian and you have the makings of a fantastic late autumn week." Julian Sykes



The historic home of golf – St Andrews, needs no introduction and can be very productive, as a walk along the rocky shoreline could produce Purple Sandpiper and possibly Water Pipit amongst the much commoner Rock Pipts. Nearby is the Eden Estuary and at the large comfortable hide it is possible to see groups of regular wintering waders, along with the possibility of a Curlew Sandpiper or Little Stint.

We cross the Forth Road Bridge to East Lothian, where we visit the wonderful Musselburgh Lagoons, which can be excellent at this time of year. Waders will include Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, Redshank and Curlew but there's always a chance of a Jack Snipe or Spotted Redshank. From the seawall we shall scan for Common and Velvet Scoter, hoping to find a Surf Scoter that can winter here annually, along with possibly Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes.

One day will be spent searching the Carron Valley for the wintering flock of Taiga Bean Geese, which is not always easy and local information is always useful. This will be combined with the Forth high tide roosts at Kinneil and Skinflats where it's possible to see 1000's of waders such as Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Golden Plover and Dunlin. In 2018 we were lucky enough to find a drake Ferruginous Duck at this latter site, so you never know your luck.

No trip to this part of the Central Belt would be complete without calling in on one of Scotland's newest landmarks – The Kelpies, which could actually be one of the unexpected highlights of this tour.

In contrast one afternoon we'll cross the Tay River and head for Perthshire, where we will spend some time between Dunkeld and Crieff looking for raptors. With a bit of good luck and some decent weather conditions we have a possibility of finding Golden Eagle, Red Kite, Goshawk and Peregrine, which would be some foursome! Late afternoon we will move on to the Loch of the Lowes SWT Reserve where we'll stay until dusk, in the hope of seeing one of the European Beavers that grace this wonderful site, along with possibly Red Squirrel and good numbers of wildfowl.

8 There may be the chance for some final birding before we head back to Edinburgh and say our fond farewells to the Kingdom of Fife.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet in Edinburgh and transfer to our hotel 7 nights at Kirklands Hotel, Kinross
- Days 2-7** From our base in Kinross we shall cover the migration hotspot of Fife Ness, the historic town of St Andrews and the adjacent Eden Estuary. We'll explore the Tay River reedbed and visit Perthshire for European Beaver. We shall cross the Forth River to Musselburgh Lagoons Reserve and possibly Torness
- Day 8** Travel back to Edinburgh

Mark Denman: Long-tailed Duck
Roy Atkins: Pink-footed Geese
Duncan Macdonald: Eurasian Beaver
Simon Eaves: Red-breasted Flycatcher
Stuart Gillies: Surf and Velvet Scoter
David Kjaer: Wryneck
David Constantine: Yellow-browed Warbler



WINTER IN NORTHUMBERLAND



"Having spent the past three years guiding trips to Northumberland in July, including visits to 'The Farnes', Coquet Island and deep into the North Sea, I am relishing this late autumn tour. With a plethora of wintering wildfowl, waders, gulls and migrants, I cannot wait to spend some quality time along this beautiful scenic northeast coastline" Julian Sykes

Dates Thu 7 - Tue 12 Nov 2019

Price £1,125

Deposit £200 Single Supp £0

Leader Julian Sykes

Weather Hard to predict and likely to be variable with chance of some sunshine, but may also be cold and wet (8°-15°C) bring waterproofs and good boots.

Walking Walks of up to two miles on mainly level tracks though perhaps a little more strenuous on the moorland day

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 6

Insects Unlikely to be a problem at this time of year

Accom Twin and single ensuite rooms

Group 7

Just some of what we hope to see:

Purple Sandpiper	Barnacle Goose
Turnstone	Merlin
Oystercatcher	Hen Harrier
Red-throated Diver	Short-eared Owl
Slavonian Grebe	Barn Owl
Red-necked Grebe	Goshawk
Long-tailed Duck	Dipper
Velvet Scoter	Grey Wagtail
Common Scoter	Goosander
Snow Bunting	Common Crossbill
Lapland Bunting	Siskin
Shorelark	Lesser Redpoll
Bar-tailed Godwit	Godwit
Dunlin	Redshank
Common Redshank	Curlew
Ringed Plover	Pale-bellied Brent Goose
Golden Plover	Purple Sandpiper
Whooper Swan	Rock Pipit
Pink-footed Goose	Eider Duck
Greylag Goose	Red Squirrel

Fabulous birdwatching and stunning scenery as we explore the coastlines, forests and moorlands of this corner of historic north-east England, including Lindisfarne and Kielder Forest.

- Divers, scarce grebes and seaduck
- Kielder Forest for Red Squirrel, Dipper, Common Crossbill
- Beautiful coastline with long, sandy beaches, rocky headlands and islands
- Full day on historic Lindisfarne with chance of scarce migrants
- Impressive flocks of ducks, geese and waders on estuaries
- Inland to the Redesdale upland moors for raptors
- Largest Pale-bellied Brent Goose flock in the UK

Meeting up at our lovely hotel in Seahouses, we shall hopefully have time to take a walk along the coast, where we can kick start our holiday with a variety of gulls loafing on the beach, with Eider and possibly some waders, such as Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone and Oystercatcher around the harbour. We shall return to the hotel in good time to freshen up ahead of our first evening meal together.

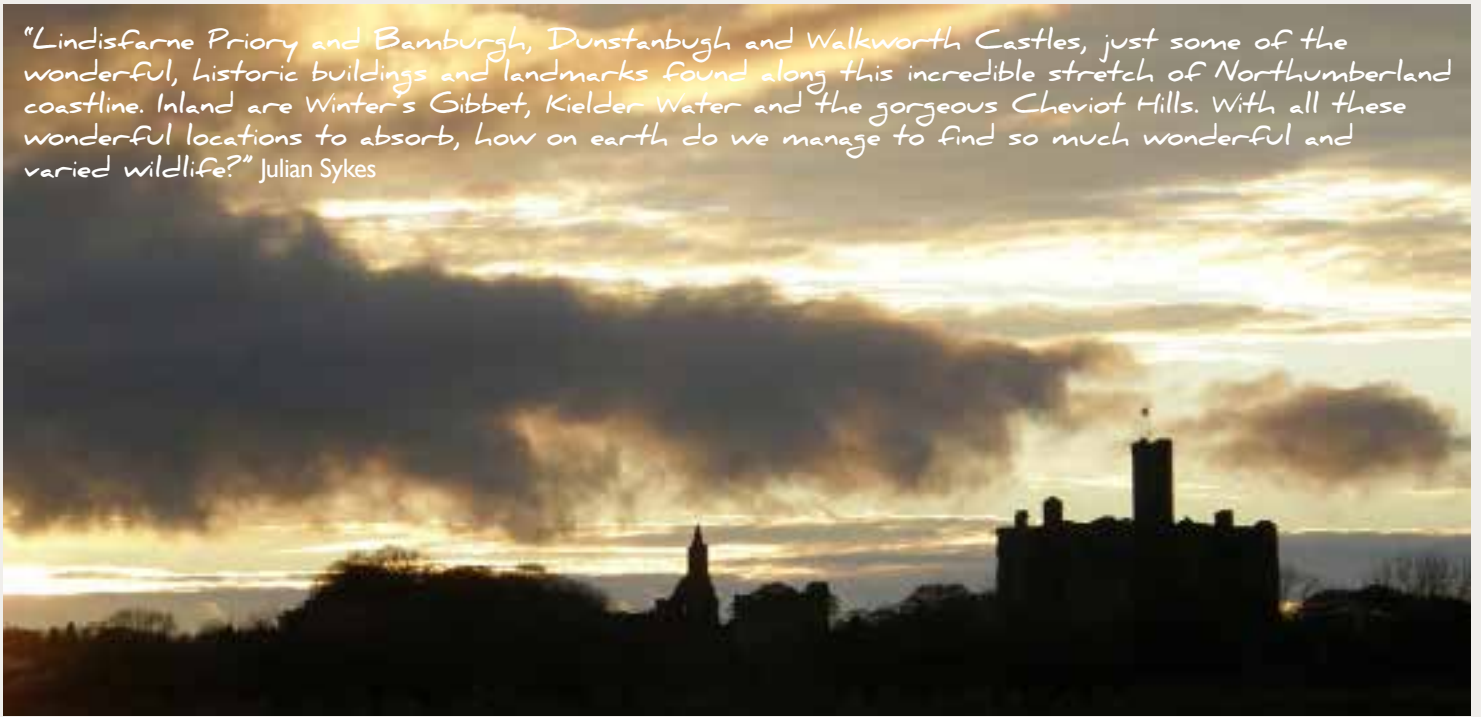
2-5 With long sandy beaches, rocky headlands and historic sites such as Lindisfarne Priory, Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh Castles, the Northumberland coastline is a wonderful area to explore - but for the birdwatcher it is even more so! From key locations we shall scan the sea for Red-throated and Great Northern Divers, Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes, Long-tailed

Ducks and hope for a few Velvets amongst the flocks of Common Scoter which annually winter here. Along the golden, windswept beaches and saltmarsh, we shall search for Snow Buntings and possibly something better such as Lapland Bunting or Shorelark.

Druridge Bay is famous for a network of reserves with hides overlooking freshwater pools along this stretch of coastline - all home to flocks of Wigeon, Teal, Pintail and Shoveler, along with other wildfowl and waders such as Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Dunlin, Common Redshank and Ringed and Grey Plovers. Flocks of Golden Plover can be found in nearby fields along with Whooper Swans and Pink-footed and Greylag Geese and we'll be on the lookout for a Greenland White-fronted or Barnacle Goose in amongst them.



"Lindisfarne Priory and Bamburgh, Dunstanburgh and Walkworth Castles, just some of the wonderful, historic buildings and landmarks found along this incredible stretch of Northumberland coastline. Inland are Winter's Gibbet, Kielder Water and the gorgeous Cheviot Hills. With all these wonderful locations to absorb, how on earth do we manage to find so much wonderful and varied wildlife?" Julian Sykes



We'll spend a day heading inland where, with luck, we might chance on a Merlin speeding past, or a Hen Harrier quartering the extensive moorland and maybe, with luck, a Short-eared or Barn Owl will be seen hunting for voles. We shall make a short detour to the edge of Redesdale where a pair of Goshawk breed in the adjacent coniferous forest and will check the fast-flowing rivers and streams for Dipper, Grey Wagtail and Goosander, which reside here all year round.

Around Kielder Water the vast coniferous forest is home to Common Crossbill, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll and many more species, along with a special mammal – Red Squirrel. Feeding stations have been created to attract these very attractive animals and we hope for good views of these normally shy pine forest dwellers.

One day (tide dependent), will be spent on Holy Island in the shadow of the wonderful and iconic Lindisfarne Priory, which is worth the visit alone. Here, thousands of waders follow the rising and retreating tide with godwits, redshanks and curlew probing the newly exposed mud. Gorgeous and diminutive Pale-bellied Brent Geese spend their winter here, in reputedly the largest flock in the UK and so shouldn't be a struggle to find. Purple Sandpiper and Rock Pipits roost on the rocky shore at high tide but it's the chance of something unusual which is an attraction.

In recent years rarities such as Pallas's Warbler, Greater Yellowlegs and Eastern Black Redstart

have been found, along with Barred and Yellow-browed Warblers. We could experience huge numbers of winter thrushes passing through and a sea-watch may produce a passing Pomerine Skua or Little Gull.

The holy relics of St Cuthbert were buried in the Priory and pilgrims still come to pay homage to his memory. It is his laws that protect the local Eiders for their down, resulting in the name St Cuthbert's Ducks or Cuddy Ducks, as many Northumbrians still know them today. We shall find a few offshore, plus Long-tailed Ducks and Common Scoter.

Depending on what is around, we may venture further north towards Berwick upon Tweed, or head south to Teesmouth, where the complex network of pools, reedbeds and headlands can also provide a superb day's birding.

6 Our final morning will be relaxed and after our final hearty breakfast we say our fond farewells to this beautiful corner of Northumberland.



Outline Itinerary

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Day 1 | We meet in Seahouses or Newcastle station. 5 nights at the Bamburgh Castle Inn, Seahouses |
| Days 2-5 | Exploration of the coast, forest and moorland of the area around Seahouses, including a full day on Holy Island and time inland around Kielder Water |
| Day 6 | We depart after breakfast |

Simon Eaves: Eiders
Morag Rea: Warkworth Castle, Lindisfarne Castle
Mike Shaw: Golden Plover and other waders and ducks, Grey Plover, Red Squirrel.
Mark Denman: Whooper Swan



OUR TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please take a few minutes to read the following, that often gets overlooked. We pride ourselves on safeguarding not only you on your holidays, but also your payments made to us. In return, we have to comply with certain legal requirements, that means we need some information from you. All this is designed to take the worry and hassle out of your holidays with us.

1. A reservation is made once a booking form, together with deposit, has been received from you and confirmed in writing by us or; when booking through our website, you receive your booking confirmation by email. Provisional reservations may be made by telephone or email, as long as a completed booking form follows within 10 days. For reservations within 10 weeks prior to the commencement of the holiday a completed booking form and full payment must follow within 48 hours of a provisional booking.

2. The balance must be paid not less than 10 weeks prior to the commencement of the holiday. The date the balance is payable will be advised by Speyside Wildlife when we confirm your booking. Unless notice of cancellation is received prior to the balance payment date, balance monies will remain due and payable.

3. If you book a place in a twin ensuite we shall endeavour to find you a fellow guest to take the other place. If we fail to do so, we shall contact you before the balance is due on the holiday, to let you know how much the single supplement would be to have the room to yourself and keep the booking. If you don't want to pay the supplement, you may cancel your booking and your deposit will be returned.

4. No increase will be made to the prices in respect of these holidays. The price you see is the maximum price you will pay. Speyside Wildlife holidays are fully inclusive of meals, accommodation, transport and entrance fees as detailed. Not included are travel insurance and items of a personal nature. Where guests incur expenditure for telephone calls, drinks etc, this bill must be settled by you, prior to departure. Last minute discounts may be available through the office. Any change in price in respect of these will be detailed on an individual basis, prior to your booking being made.

5. If you cancel a booking the deposit is non-refundable. If you cancel any holiday less than 10 weeks prior to commencement, all balance monies will be forfeit. Once balance monies have been paid, rather than cancelling, you are at liberty to transfer your booking to another person, provided sufficient notice is given to us and it is possible for us to make the substitution. In this event any transfer costs arising must be borne by you. In addition, you are at liberty to transfer an existing booking to another holiday within the same year; any time up to 4 weeks prior to the balance monies being due. Again any transfer costs must be borne by you. An administration charge of £50 will be levied on each and any transfer.

6. Speyside Wildlife will do everything possible to ensure that your holiday runs as described. In the unlikely event this is not possible we shall advise you at the earliest opportunity of any significant alterations. Any alterations so made will be of a similar quality to those described. No responsibility can be held by Speyside Wildlife for any holiday altered or cancelled due to reasons beyond our control, under circumstances which could not be avoided and where alternative arrangements cannot be made. In the event of cancellation all monies will be returned promptly to you in full. We do, however, reserve the right to cancel any holiday up to 10 weeks prior to departure, should insufficient reservations have been made. In this instance again all monies paid will be refunded in full.

7. Speyside Wildlife cannot be responsible for any loss or damage to personal items, or for personal accident or injury. Guests are therefore strongly recommended to take out personal insurance against cancellation charges and other loss or injury. To this end, we have arranged suitable cover. If you wish this to apply, please contact Arthur J Gallagher of Fort William on 01397 705 858.

Clients booked on flight-based holidays must have sufficient personal cover prior to travel. If you do not wish to use our insurer; then a copy of the policy you take out must be provided to us. We shall take responsibility should the services detailed in the holiday descriptions not be of a suitable standard. We shall also take responsibility for any acts or omissions by ourselves which result in any loss or injury to you. We cannot however take responsibility for any loss or injury resulting from any act or omission by persons over whom we have no control.

8. If you have a complaint, would you please notify us as soon as possible in order that the matter can be dealt with promptly.

9. Speyside Wildlife complies with GDPR May 2018. All personal details on our mailing list are held securely on computer. These are automatically deleted after 3 years if no booking is made. Guest information is kept on the following basis: Standing data such as address/email/passport details/dietary/health/annual insurance information etc. will be held on an ongoing basis, unless you specifically ask us to delete any or all of this. Transitory information, such as holiday emergency contacts/single trip insurance details etc. will be deleted once your holiday/experience has been completed. No information so stored will be passed to a third party, except our Ground Agents (as applicable). If however, you object to your details being stored, please inform us and we shall remove them.

10. All clients booked on a non-UK holiday must be in possession of a valid passport. Full details of requirements for a specific holiday will be sent when we confirm your booking.

11. Speyside Wildlife complies with the requirements set out in Statutory Instrument 1992 No 3288 'The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tour Regulations 1992'. Speyside Wildlife also holds an ATOL (Air Travel Organisers Licence) No 4259, issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in the name of Suzanne Dowden trading as Speyside Wildlife.

12. Your Financial Protection. All passengers booking a non-flight based holiday with Speyside Wildlife are protected against the loss of all monies paid to us in advance (and repatriation if applicable) in the event of our insolvency, by way of a Trust Account, administered by Masson Cairns Ltd, Solicitors & Estate Agents, Strathspey House, 36 High Street, Grantown-On-Spey, PH26 3EQ. 01479 874800

All our flight-inclusive holidays are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOL_certificate. (Civil Aviation Authority ATOL Standard Term 1.1).

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY ATOL STANDARD TERMS

When you buy an ATOL protected flight or flight inclusive holiday from us you will receive an ATOL Certificate. This lists what is financially protected, where you can get information on what this means for you and who to contact if things go wrong. (Civil Aviation Authority ATOL Standard Term 1.5)

We, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL Certificate, will provide you with the services listed on the ATOL Certificate (or a suitable alternative). In some cases, where neither we nor the supplier are able to do so for reasons of insolvency, an alternative ATOL holder may provide you with the services you have bought, or a suitable alternative (at no extra cost to you). You agree to accept that in those circumstances the alternative ATOL holder will perform those obligations and you agree to pay any money outstanding to be paid by you under your contract to that alternative ATOL holder. However you also agree that in some cases it will not be possible to appoint an alternative ATOL holder; in which case you will be entitled to make a claim under the ATOL scheme (or your credit card issuer where applicable). (Civil Aviation Authority ATOL Standard Term 1.7A)

If we, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL certificate, are unable to provide the services listed (or a suitable alternative, through an alternative ATOL holder or otherwise) for reasons of insolvency, the Trustees of the Air Travel Trust may make a payment to (or confer a benefit on) you under the ATOL scheme. You agree that in return for such a payment or benefit, you assign absolutely to those Trustees any claims which you have or may have arising out of or relating to the non-provision of the services, including any claims against us (CAA), the travel agent (tour operator), or your credit card issuer where applicable. You also agree that any such claims may be re-assigned to another body, if that other body has paid sums you have claimed under the ATOL scheme. (Civil Aviation Authority Standard Term 1.7B)





enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk
+44 (0)1479 812498
www.speysidewildlife.co.uk

Front Cover Jane Hope: Staff on Machir Bay, Islay
Inside Covers Roy Cowley: Snow Geese
Back Cover
Roy Atkins: Red-lored Parrot
Sally Nowell: Redstart
Duncan Macdonald: American Beaver
Julian Sykes: Knapweed Fritillary
Julian Sykes: Blue-headed Yellow Wagtail



