

# SPEYSIDE WILDLIFE

30th Anniversary 1991-2021

Bird and Wildlife Watching Holidays in the UK and Overseas **2021**







# 2021 holiday schedule

This is our 2021 schedule at a glance. Details of each holiday or experience are given in full here; just start turning the pages to find the destination that suits you. In addition, all holidays are 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 be downloaded from each holiday details web page. To ask about any of these, or for any other queries, don't hesitate to email us on [enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk) or phone us on +44 (0) 1479 812498.



Steve Batt, Greater Flamingos, Catalunya

## 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), so 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 guides are experienced and their enthusiasm infectious, always ensuring that you see the wildlife and always happy to explain what you are looking at, whilst our dedicated office team makes sure everything runs smoothly from the beginning to the end of your holiday.

*"Why would we choose anyone else! Speyside Wildlife tours are pitched perfectly for us in terms of level of comfort and level of birding. Your record has been consistently outstanding, so you are always our first choice for nature travel." Alison Cawley and John Scotford*



Alan Daniels, Harris, Hebridean Odyssey

## 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.

*"We choose Speyside Wildlife because of the quality of the leaders and the level of care on holidays, plus the level of service offered by the office team. Thought is given to the itinerary, with good accommodation and we have the knowledge that everything possible will be done to take care of the group." Brenda and Peter Wilson*

## 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.



*"Good knowledgeable guides who care about the guests and try to ensure you see everything, plus the organisation as a whole is very good."*

Val Lambert

*"The guides were great as usual; very knowledgeable and great fun. We were kept fully informed about everything."*

Marilyn Davidson

## Easy To Get To

If you're holidaying with us in the Cairngorms, 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 the Cairngorms, Inverness, Aberdeen, 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 and there are flights to Inverness, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

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.

## 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 the knack of finding birds and animals.



Steve Batt, Lammergeier, Catalunya



Chris Piper, Common Blue Butterfly, Yorkshire Summer



James Glover, Puffin, The Farnes

## 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.

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Email	<a href="mailto:enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk">enquiries@speysidewildlife.co.uk</a>
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# MEET OUR GUIDES

*"Roy is so knowledgeable; keen to pass on what he knows and enable all of us to see the wildlife, no matter how hard it is to pick it out!!"*  
Fiona Turner 2019



## 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, Tanzania, the Pantanal 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 Colorado, Finland and Norway, Namibia and Spitsbergen. 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'.



*"Darren kept everything running very smoothly. His knowledge of the area, the birds and what we should expect was top-notch."*  
John Beaty and Evie Malliris 2019

*"Excellent in all respects. Simon was a superb leader and gave us advance details every evening for the following day."*  
Margaret Moore 2019



## 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/Doñana and the Isles of Scilly.

## Craig Round

Craig loves Speyside and the Scottish Islands and has led tours in Scotland for 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.



*"I always learn lots about the birds we see from Craig and he never loses sight of the fact that we are on holiday."*  
Hazel Pickering 2018

*"Duncan was brilliant. Very well informed, on the ball, patient at all times and tried to make sure everyone saw everything."*  
Sue and Mike Jenkins 2019



## 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, Bhutan and Romania. 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!

## Stuart Housden

Stuart started birding at the age of seven, becoming a regular at Dungeness from nine onwards, ringing migrants and exploring southern England. His passion for birds and nature led to a 41-year career with the RSPB, 23 years as Director of the organisation in Scotland - few people know Scotland as well as Stuart! He has birded in over 50 countries around the world.



*"Excellent. Stuart was very knowledgeable about the area and tried so hard to make sure we saw as much as possible."*  
Joan Hunter, Wild Hebrides 2019



*"Excellent - Julian worked tirelessly throughout the trip and worked hard to make sure all the guests were happy!"*  
Jane Nickerson 2019



## 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, NE India and Wrangel Island. 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 23 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 co-leads a number of our Scottish holidays.



*"Sally and Kate were an outstanding team. Loved their rapport. Really excellent. Sally in particular was so knowledgeable and diplomatic."*  
Chrissie Edginton 2019

*"Kate and Sally were exemplary! They kept us informed; they kept an eye on the weather and organised the itinerary accordingly"*  
Rosemary Burke 2019



## 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 runs our Evening Mammal Hide in the Cairngorms, but also can be found Day Guiding and co-leading some of our Scottish Holidays.

## David Hull

David has a background in education and his roles as a wildlife guide and conservationist benefit from his enthusiasm for teaching and lifelong learning. He enjoys sharing his knowledge of Scottish plants, birds, mammals and butterflies during our Day Guides and he also guides our Evening Mammal Watching and Badger Photography experiences.



*"Excellent guide and very informative. Clearly a lot of time and effort had been put into the hide set-up."*  
Christopher Higson,  
Evening Mammal Hide 2020

*"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 Stephens

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, he can also be found leading some of our Day Guides in the Cairngorms.

## Adam Batty

Adam is passionate about nature, a keen birder and an experienced bird surveyor. He has travelled extensively to experience and witness the natural world and enjoys nothing more than sharing those experiences with others. Since moving to the Cairngorms from Edinburgh he has been enthusiastically expanding his knowledge of the birds, mammals, plants and insects of the area.



*"Adam was very nice and knowledgeable. He knows where all the good spots are and has very, very good eyes!"*  
Janet Chick, Day Guide 2019

*"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 information, deal with queries and keep the show on the road.

*"This is my sixth trip with you and I return because I know I will reliably have the type of holiday I like best, as a nature-loving traveller."*  
Andrew Dodd 2019



## 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 fifteen 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 hide and vehicle logistics, all of which help to keep her busier than ever!



*"Thanks so much for this, Lisa. Speyside sets the bar very high for standards of customer service. All best wishes for Christmas and the New Year."*  
Alison Cawley 2018

*"Thank you, by the way, for booking me such good seats on the flight to/from Buenos Aires - it was great to have the window seats at the front. It was a great trip."* Julia Bevan 2019



## 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, organising all our overseas trips, dealing with the complex logistics of the long-haul destinations, while still finding time to manage the European destinations.

## Susanne McCafferty

Susanne has been with us for over fourteen 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 leads on our marketing, deals with our design work and website and organises our presentations to bird clubs and exhibitions at birding fairs, plus our own events up and down the country. Her background in hospitality and marketing, means she is best placed to organise your tailor-made itineraries for individuals and larger groups too.



Malcolm Hopkins, Flying Flock, Outer Hebrides



# EVENING MAMMAL WATCHING



"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 make you want to come again"

Kate Mennie

Cost	£20.00 per adult, if booked online (£25.00 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	£150.00 per evening, if booked online (£200.00 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 10 people in the hide
Insects	Biting midges possible during summer
Walking	There is a short walk, less than 5 minutes on a wide track from the meeting point to the hide
Access	Although the hide is accessible to wheelchairs, the viewing windows will be out of reach. Bar stools are available if you can move from your wheelchair to use these
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	The hide is a short journey from Aviemore. A meeting point map and meeting times are provided on booking.
Toilets	Please note there are no toilet facilities at the hide.
Photos	The viewing windows do not open, so there are only some incidental photographic opportunities

Kate Mennie: Pine Marten, Jane Hope: Badger

Come and enjoy our comfortable hide on the edge of the Caledonian Pine Forest in the Cairngorms for Badger and Pine Marten plus Roe Deer and more.

- Comfortable hide in the Cairngorms National Park
- We regularly see Badgers at close quarters
- Pine Marten also visit
- The animals come right up to the windows
- You'll be accompanied throughout by our friendly, expert guide
- Hire exclusively and have the hide to yourselves
- Badger photography hide also available for exclusive hire

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 in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park. Your guide will meet you just before dusk, at the location just outside Aviemore on the edge of 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 Badgers and Pine Martens that are the most frequently anticipated night-time visitors, while you relax and await their appearance. Whilst the animals are free and untamed and appear when they wish, understanding their nocturnal habits every night has ensured reliable sightings.

Roe Deer may be seen whilst it's still light, but the visits by Badgers and Pine Martens 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.

The viewing windows do not open, so there are only some incidental photographic opportunities. Please note that flash photography is not permitted at any time and please turn any camera functions to mute so that electronic noises do not disturb the animals. We have a photographic hide on site for 1-2 people, which can be booked on an exclusive basis.

The main wildlife viewing hide can also be booked on an exclusive basis if you wish to bring your own group for the evening.



# SUMMER BADGER PHOTOGRAPHY HIDE



*"Sitting in the peace of a summer's evening, sunlight coming through the trees, with a family of badgers only a few feet away, snuffling and grunting as they search for food, is a real delight."*

Cost	£100
Exclusive Use	Only one booking per night, ideally for one person, but can accommodate two.
Group	A hygiene regime has been implemented, so we include a health form with all booking confirmations, that we need you to complete just prior to your viewing date and bring with you to give to our guide.
Times	Nightly during the summer months, to start approximately one hour before dusk. The animals are around for a maximum of three hours. The actual meeting time will be given on confirmation of booking.
Location	A meeting point map and timings are provided on confirmation of booking. Be aware that there are no toilet facilities whilst in the hide so apologies, no comfort breaks during the evening.
Transport	The hide is a short journey from Aviemore. Your meeting point map, provided on confirmation of your booking, will give taxis the precise location.
Access	There is a short walk, less than 5 minutes on a wide track and then a downhill path, from the meeting point to the hide. Please remember to bring a torch, as the walk back to your car may be in the dark.
Clothing	Warm, non-rustling, subdued outdoor clothing and walking shoes are preferable. Advice on the "how to do it" for this hide's location, is provided on confirmation of booking.
Insects	Can occur during the summer months, but not a problem when in the hide.

Jane Hope: Badgers

Our hide is dedicated to photographing badgers under natural conditions. During the summer months the nights are short, enabling you to photograph animals in daylight.

- Ideal for single photographer use, although hide can accommodate two people
- Photos are all in natural daylight in the summer months
- Hide is halfway down a woodland hill, so many shots potentially at eye-level
- Also potential for backlit pictures from the end of the hide facing the sunset
- Scrim netting is provided with slits for lenses
- Shelf and screw fitting for tripod head incorporated
- Our guide will meet you and walk you to the hide location

Our Badger photography hide is located a short distance from Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park within a peaceful woodland setting. This allows you to photograph and watch these timid creatures from a respectful distance, as they forage the woodland floor and interact with each other in the early evening light.

The hide is bookable on an exclusive basis for an evening. No artificial light is provided, so higher ISOs are needed because of the woodland shade. The consequence of this will depend on the camera being used, but some examples of pictures taken are shown in the website gallery, with the lens/speed/aperture details given on a selection. Flash cannot be used under any circumstances. Tripods can be used, but they are not ideal. We advise the use of beanbags, or you can transfer your tripod head to a screw provided in the shelf.

Scrim netting is provided with slits for lenses. You will be very close to the badgers, so it is essential to be very quiet, although there is carpet on the floor to deaden sound. It is also important to wear non-rustling clothing. A fleece is ideal and much better than a waterproof jacket. The usual advice applies about wearing hats and gloves to make you less visible; even with scrim net, if a low sun is shining directly into the hide, any movement will be noticeable to the Badgers.

Our guide will meet you at the appointed time and walk you to the hide and ensure you are settled. There is also accommodation close by for a maximum of four people in a two-bedroomed self-catering cottage. Please enquire if you'd like to incorporate this into your bookings.





# WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION COURSES



*"With a very basic knowledge and understanding of wildlife, accompanied by a non-existent knowledge of birds, I undertook this course knowing the only way was up – and what an upward journey it has been! The course is well structured, allowing time for teaching, discussion, personal research and shared learning."*  
Student on Wildlife Identification Qualification

*"Wow, it's been a year to remember – good sized group with excellent trainers and support to learn and appreciate the wonderful wildlife in The Cairngorms. Always wanted to be outdoors enjoying the varied habitats. Our knowledge has come a long way. Looking forward to volunteering in the area. Can't rate the course highly enough."*

Student on Wildlife Identification Qualification

*"I'd highly recommend this 2-day course to anyone interested in birds. I've learned lots and am looking forward to learning more."*

Student on Raptors Masterclass

*"This course has been life and career changing for the long-term. I have always had an interest in wildlife and the outdoors but since starting, it has been the first course I have fully committed myself to and learned a lot from. It will help me in my career path to be a ranger. I have met like-minded people who will remain friends for life."*

Student on Wildlife Identification Qualification

Jane Hope: Groups of students, field notebook pages

If you've always wanted to know what the bird calls are that you hear whilst out walking, or to feel confident that you can tell the difference between a buzzard and an eagle as you scan the hills, then our wildlife identification courses are for you. They teach you the 'how to do it' of wildlife identification, to work things out for yourself, either by sight or sound, whilst you're out and about – complete beginners welcome.

Our 'masterclasses' are designed for those who wish to gain more knowledge on particular families of birds; or you may wish to join our year-long course for personal career development, either as the start of a career as a wildlife tour guide or just for your own enjoyment.

## Wildlife Identification in the Cairngorms

Over the 12-month course participants attend five study weekends from March–December, with a final exam in April. In addition, in your own time, you will progress and practice your skills learnt, producing your own Field Notebook for assessment. By the end of the course, you should be able to correctly identify the major birds and mammals seen and heard in the Cairngorms; know what species are likely to occur in which habitats and at what time of year and also gain a basic appreciation of what wildlife guiding entails. This course is fully accredited by LANTRA.

## Wildfowl & Waterbirds - 2 Day Masterclass

By the end of the course, you should feel more confident in the identification of ducks, geese and swans, divers, grebes, Shag and Cormorant, in particular those seen in the Cairngorms National Park and surrounding area. As well as specific help with identification we shall cover the 'how to do it.' In this way, participants should see a way forward in how to improve their identification skills and have some useful hints and tips on telling difficult species apart. This course runs in November each year.

**Waders - 2 Day Masterclass** Running in March each year, by the end of the course you should

feel more confident in the identification of waders from all over the UK, but in particular, those seen in and around the Cairngorms National Park and coastal areas nearby. You should also feel that you can see how to improve your wader identification skills and that you have learned some useful hints and tips on telling difficult species apart using plumage, behaviour and other features.

**Raptors - 2 Day Masterclass** September can be the best time of year to see a variety of raptors and by the end of the course you should feel more confident in the identification of raptors, in particular those seen in the Cairngorms National Park and surrounding area. You should also feel that you can see a way forward in how to improve on your raptor identification skills and that you have learned some useful hints and tips on telling difficult species apart.

All our courses are based within the Cairngorms National Park, in a forest setting near Aviemore. Further details can be viewed online [www.wildlifeidcourses.co.uk](http://www.wildlifeidcourses.co.uk)



# DAY TRIPS IN THE CAIRNGORMS



*"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	£125 half day if booked online (£175 if booked manually via our office) £195 standard day if booked online (£250 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

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

The Cairngorms National Park is home to some of our most iconic species of wildlife. Our expert guides know the area intimately and can help you find the species you'd most like to see.

- 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 local accommodation or meeting place of your choice
- Combine this with an evening wildlife watching for Badger and Pine Marten
- 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 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 minibuses, 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 half days out last around four hours.

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*



**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.

**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.

**Woodland Walks** - Local woods provide tranquil locations 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. 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.

**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.

**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 have to walk into the Corries. The walk is on paths, but does require suitable clothing and walking shoes or boots, as the terrain is uneven. 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.

**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.

**Moorland and Moray Firth** - Explore vast open moorlands and windswept lochs for divers, 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. 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.

**The Black Isle** - Just north of Inverness lies the Black Isle, almost surrounded by water and visited by large numbers of waders, ducks and geese as autumn approaches and through the winter. Peregrine Falcons may dash through sending birds skyward - all viewable from a large comfortable hide. Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, divers and grebes spend the winter here and in autumn passing skuas and auks add to the excitement as we visit one of the best vantage points for Bottlenose Dolphins in the UK. We can also include a visit to nearby woodlands for crossbills and Crested Tits, plus dragonflies and butterflies in the summer.

### 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.



# BESPOKE TRIPS TO SUIT YOU



*"Lunga was magical! Unexpected highlights were the young Cuckoo being fed by the pipit; the adult Golden Eagle feeding a chick and the proximity of the birds on Lunga. Julian and Sally were excellent guides and always gave us briefings about the day ahead. They worked hard to find the target birds and were able to answer our queries. Every effort was made to ensure we all had good views of a bird before moving on."*

Robert and Kathy Dowsett, with Guildford RSPB Members' Group on Mull, June 2019

Dates	<p>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</p> <p>All 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</p>
Guides	<p>We have a pool of guides, each with specific knowledge and interests, covering birds, mammals, cetaceans, plants and insects, who have guided around Scotland and Overseas</p>
Cost	<p>All tailor-made tours are individually priced according to the number of guests and your specific requirements</p>
Included	<p>Your package can include any of the following: flights; ferries; trains; guides; accommodation; transport; meals; and any activities or entrance fees.</p> <p>We make all the arrangements, so you are left just to enjoy yourselves</p>
Info	<p>All necessary information regarding travel, walking, weather, insects, meals, clothing and accommodation will be provided in advance of the holiday, together with an appropriate species list, notebooks and pens</p>

Duncan Macdonald: Guests in Extremadura  
Perry Fairman: Arriving on Handa  
Simon Eaves: Slavonian Grebe  
Jane Hope: Road over the Cairngorms, Red Squirrel, Crested Tit  
Colin Scott: Ptarmigan

For bird clubs, tour operators, or just good friends!  
Take the hassle out of your group trip and let us arrange all the details, in Scotland or Overseas, 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
- Our guides have a wealth of knowledge in Scotland and around the world
- A range of accommodation to suit the size of your group
- Combine wildlife watching with culture and heritage
- 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 tours 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. We know the best places to go and wonderful places to stay, that are perfectly placed to enjoy the scenery and wildlife - and they know they will be well looked after by our excellent guides.

Within Scotland, enjoy the spectacular mountains, moorlands and pine forests of the Cairngorms National Park, looking for all the grouse species, plus Dotterel, Ptarmigan, Scottish Crossbill and Crested Tit, together with mammals such as Red and Roe Deer, Red Squirrel and Pine Marten; experience the majesty of the seacliffs 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 sea-watch for Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas on their spring passage.

Sample the delights of intimate seabird encounters on the islands off Mull, whilst looking for Golden and White-tailed Eagles, the latter at their highest breeding density in Europe, or combine island birdwatching for residents and migrants on the Orkney Isles, with the astounding prehistoric archaeology that the archipelago has in spades.

Why not combine some fantastic birding in Speyside with all the special birds and other wildlife this area has to offer with a few days on Mull, the







*"Having travelled with Speyside Wildlife before, we appreciate the quality of the product and the professionalism of the leaders and staff. Julian kept us well informed and we could tailor the plans to our needs. He was always good company."* Brenda and Peter Wilson, Orkney Exclusive 2018

Outer Hebrides or another part of the Highlands such as Sutherland - you might use our website with the selection of Scottish holidays listed there for inspiration!

Further afield, we can easily organise trips to Europe. Spain has so many possibilities; experience the hospitality of our long-standing beautiful hotel base in Extremadura, knowing that you'll be looking for all five Spanish eagle species, Great and Little Bustards, Roller, Hoopoe, Black-winged Kite and Eagle Owl; watch Lammergeiers and Griffon Vultures high over the Pyrenees with Wallcreeper, Citril Finch and Alpine Accentor in stunning scenery, or perhaps visit the Cota Doñana, or go in search of rare Iberian Lynx.

Other parts of Europe are equally enticing. You could chill out on a floating hotel in the Danube Delta, whilst searching for rare reedbed birds skulking in the shallows; or head to Hungary for superb birding with Imperial Eagle, Saker and tens of thousands of Common Cranes - or visit photographic hides to see birds such as Bee-eater; Roller; Hoopoe, Hawfinch and fabulous Red-footed Falcon, up close and personal! If you like islands, a visit to Corsica for endemic Corsican Nuthatch and Corsican Finch could be for you; or Cyprus for exciting east Mediterranean migration, or even Oland off the east coast of Sweden, with massive numbers of geese, cranes and raptors heading south in autumn might suit.

Why not go for something more exotic? Marvel at the majesty of Yellowstone National Park, home

to Gray Wolf, Bison, Black and Grizzly Bears and a host of birds - all of which could be new to you. Arizona, Texas, California and Vancouver Island where bears, Orcas and Humpback are amongst the spectacular scenery and are all possible, as well as India, South America and other destinations.

Let us know where you want to go and how many of you are travelling together; when you want to go; what type of accommodation you'd like; what other activities you'd like to include in your holiday experience and we'll do the rest. Or if you want to make it even easier; just ask us for our recommendations, based on our years' of experience and we'll put together the ideal holiday for you.

Our professional guides will take you through beautiful landscapes to show you the finest wildlife. We can find 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 minibuses or cars as appropriate.

We don't race around after big lists, preferring to enjoy the wildlife that we find, so ensuring your holiday is filled with 'magic moments' to bring home with you. We know that the quality of the accommodation and food and the chance to relax at the end of the day and relive the wonderful wildlife moments from the day, are just as important to you as the wildlife you'll see. The possibilities are endless; exciting birdwatching experiences await.

*"The structure and pace of the holiday were perfect for me. I have never been on a birding holiday before and I don't think I could manage anything too intense. This holiday was a really good balance."* Penny Blake



*"There were many highlights on the holiday. I had never seen a Golden Eagle and we were lucky enough to watch a Golden Eagle feeding its chick. We also saw them soaring overhead. The White-tailed Eagles were magnificent, flying over the landscape with such ease. The visit to Lunga was my real highlight as the Puffins stole my heart. To be able to sit with them and watch them going about their daily lives was such a privilege."*  
Rob Cooke, with Guildford RSPB Members' Group on Mull, June 2019





*"A fabulous introduction to the best wildlife Scotland has to offer, from the beautiful Mountain Hare to the magnificent Golden Eagle."*  
Sally Nowell

Dates	Sat 17 - Sat 24 Apr 2021
Price	£1695
Deposit	£300    Single Supp £200
Leader	Sally Nowell
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  Our Cairngorm walk is more steep and uneven, but low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed and walking poles may be helpful
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
Group	5

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 specialties
- 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 Grantown-on-Spey there is plenty to see close to home and we may start with a walk down the river or visit the beautiful 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. 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 Bay, where passage waders may include Knot,







*"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*

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 into the Cairngorms. At present there is no access to the top of the mountain by the Funicular Railway so we'll use lower level paths to search for Ptarmigan and other wildlife that can be seen on the mountain slopes.

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 Grantown-on-Spey in time for an evening meal and a chat about what we shall do for the coming week.  
7 nights at Kinross House
- 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



# SPRING BIRDS IN THE HIGHLANDS



*"This is Speyside at its most alive! Crested Tits nesting, crossbills in family groups, Redstarts, Tree Pipits and Wood Warblers are all back and Ospreys are well on their way to producing the next generation. It is utterly fabulous."*  
Kate Mennie

**Dates** Sat 01 - Sat 08 May 2021  
Sat 22 - Sat 29 May 2021  
**Price** £1,650  
**Deposit** £275    **Single Supp** £175

**Leader** Kate Mennie

**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 Cairngorm walk is more steep and uneven, but low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed and walking poles may be helpful

**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 May, biting midges occasionally occur on sheltered loch shores

**Accom** Double, twin and single ensuite rooms in a small hotel on the edge of the pine forest and close to the River Spey

**Group** Each group 5 guests and 1 guide

## 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 splendour of the Cairngorms
- An evening for Pine Martens and Badgers too
- Come by train or plane and enjoy the wonders of the Cairngorms National Park

Dinner together on Saturday evening starts the holiday, with plenty of time to discuss the coming days.

**2-7** We may start the week with walks in the local area, perhaps along the river, or around beautiful lochs surrounded by forest nearby. 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 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. Red Squirrels are still abundant in the forest with Redstart, Siskin, Tree Pipit and countless Willow

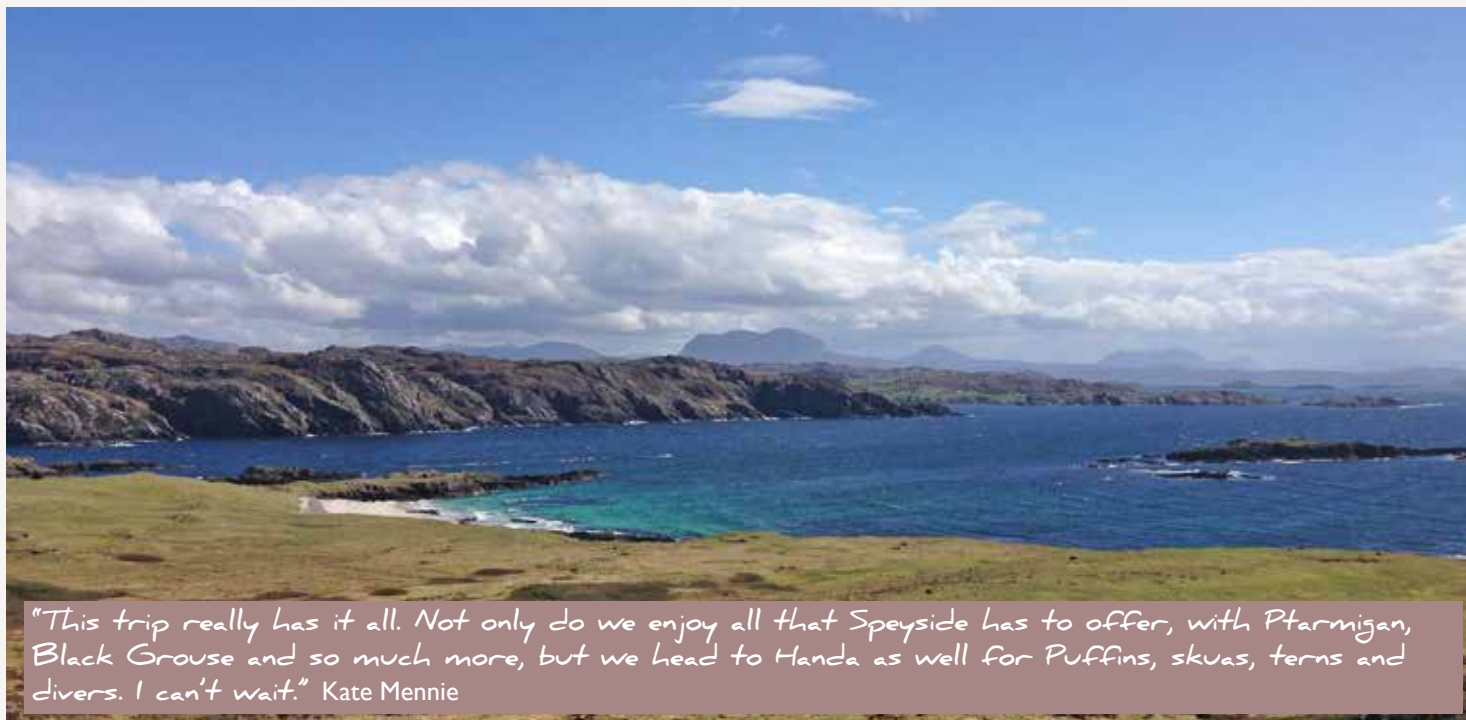
Warblers singing in the clearings. We'll also rise early to see Black Grouse as they 'bubble and coo' at dawn - a fabulous spectacle.

On one evening we'll look for Pine Marten and Badger, with Woodcock roding over the trees. Sparkling forest lochs hold exquisitely plumed Slavonian Grebe - a wonderful chance to see them in their breeding finery, whilst Ospreys will be nesting locally in forests and glens. Recently White-tailed Eagles have begun to nest and we'll look for these and Golden Eagles too.

The arctic-tundra plateau of the Cairngorms is unique in Britain and, weather permitting, we'll head into the hills to seek out camouflaged Ptarmigan as they feed quietly amongst the boulders. We may encounter beautiful Dotterel too and there is always a chance of Snow Bunting.







*"This trip really has it all. Not only do we enjoy all that Speyside has to offer, with Ptarmigan, Black Grouse and so much more, but we head to Handa as well for Puffins, skuas, terns and divers. I can't wait." Kate Mennie*

The River Spey winds its way through the strath, 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 Insh, Europe's largest inland fen and at Lochindorb, with its impressive castle rising on an island from the middle of the loch.

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 there, 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 Granttown on Spey in time for dinner and a chat about our plans for the coming week.  
7 nights at Kinross House Hotel
- 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  
**Craig Round:** View from Handa  
**Mary Braddock:** Golden Eagle  
**Jane Hope:** Black Grouse, Crested Tit  
**Mike Pearcey:** Great Skua  
**Simon Eaves:** Crossbill



# THE OUTER HEBRIDES



*"There is nowhere quite like the Outer Hebrides in the UK. These stunning islands have a unique and breathtaking beauty all of their own. With miles of deserted shell sand beaches and incredible birdlife that has been lost from much of mainland Britain, it is like stepping back in time; on these islands on the edge. I can't wait to get back there again!"* Craig Round

**Dates** Fri 7 - Sat 15 May 2021  
**Price** £2,215  
**Deposit** £400    **Single Supp** £250

**Leaders** Craig Round or 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** 10 - each group 5 guests and 1 guide

## 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:** Corncrake, Otter, Machair Flowers, Short-eared Owl

**Kate Mennie:** Balranald

**James Glover:** Red-throated Diver

**Chris Brookings:** Great Northern Diver

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 evenings the sunset 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 Ardvule, 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







"Our visit is timed to catch spring migration at its peak, when huge numbers of birds are on the move and the beaches can be alive with thousands of restless waders, feeding up before the next leg of their epic migrations. If the winds are right, rare Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas can be seen. Newly arrived Corncrakes 'crake' from nettle beds and iris patches and the islands are one of the best UK sites to see White-tailed and Golden Eagle, as well as Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl. Last year we watched an adult White-tailed Eagle circling overhead, its tail glowing 'Daz-white' against the blue sky, as a Short-eared Owl 'wing-clapped' in display right above the enormous eagle!" 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



# NORTH WALES



"Crossing the picturesque Menai Strait leads us to magical Anglesey and a change from the drama of Snowdonia. Busy with birds, the tern colonies of Cemlyn, the seabird cliffs of South Stack and the marshes and estuary of Malttraeth will keep us entertained!"  
Simon Eaves

Dates Sat 8 - Sat 15 May 2021

Price £1,695

Deposit £300 Single Supp £250

Leaders Simon Eaves or Julian Sykes

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 10 - each group 5 guests and 1 guide

## 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,

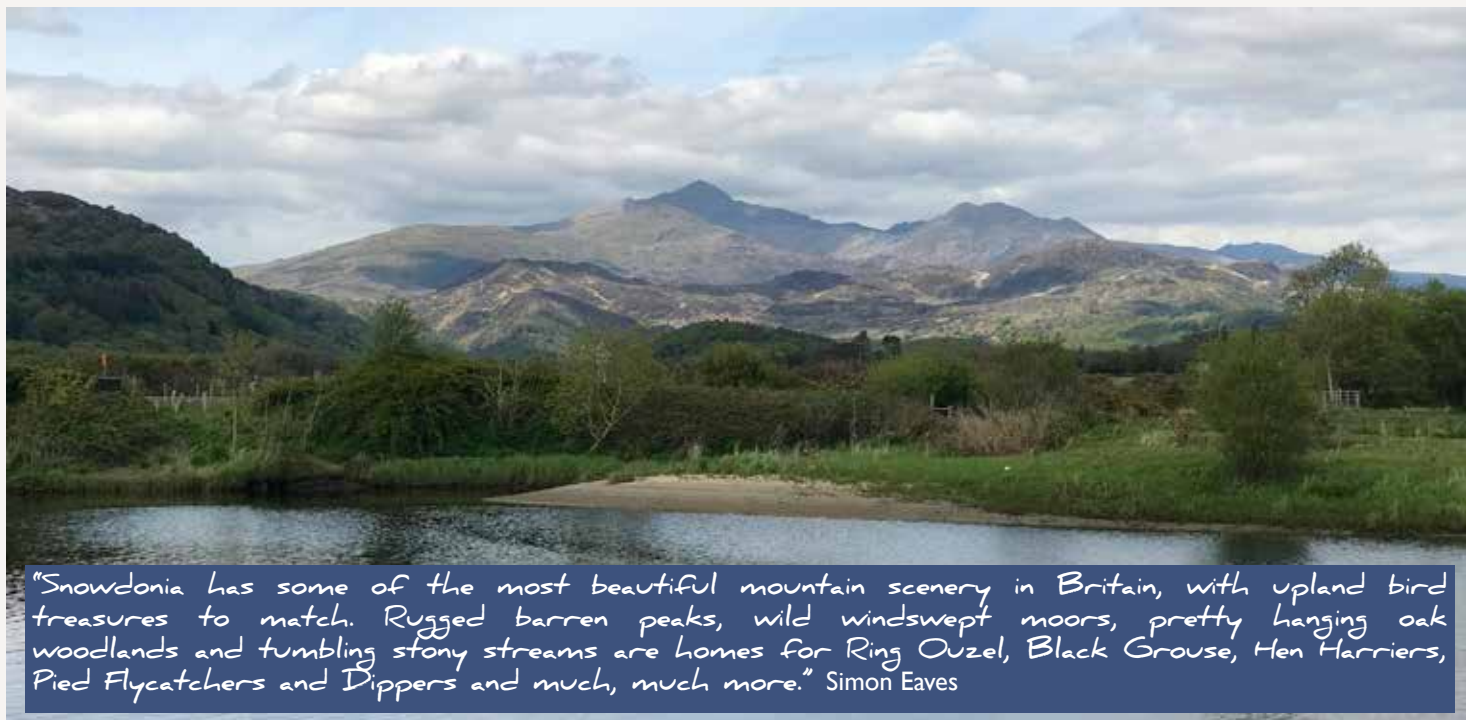
Ravens and sought-after Chough. Adders are also a possibility here, as we enjoy the coastal flowers such as Thrift, Sea Campion and the lovely Spring Squill.

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







*"Snowdonia has some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in Britain, with upland bird treasures to match. Rugged barren peaks, wild windswept moors, pretty hanging oak woodlands and tumbling stony streams are homes for Ring Ouzel, Black Grouse, Hen Harriers, Pied Flycatchers and Dippers and much, much more." Simon Eaves*

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

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Day 1</b>    | Arrive Betws-y-Coed.<br>7 nights at The Royal Oak Hotel  |
| <b>Days 2-7</b> | 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 |
| <b>Day 8</b>    | Depart after breakfast   |

**Chris Piper:** Black Grouse, Snowdonia  
**Mary Braddock:** Hen Harrier  
**Julian Sykes:** Pied Flycatcher  
**Kathy Sharman:** Razorbill  
**Steve Cullum:** Red Kite, Dipper  
**Sally Nowell:** Redstart



# WILD HEBRIDES



"The Western Isles are one of the nicest places for wildlife in Europe - on the very edge - a migration flyway that brings daily surprises! The pattern of land use, managed in a traditional way in harmony with nature, is rich in birds, wild flowers and rare bees."  
Stuart Housden OBE

Dates	Sat 22 May - Tue 1 Jun 2021
Price	£2,995
Deposit	£500    Single Supp £350
Leaders	Stuart Housden OBE or Julian Sykes
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	10 - each group 5 guests and 1 guide

## Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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 our Wild Hebrides trip - his expert knowledge and experience of the islands and their conservation issues adding enormously to the holiday. Our exploration will 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 the very north and west of 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 view her croft.

The RSPB Reserve at Balranald provides a 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.

We shall visit the remote, 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 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 Rodal, and its 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, eight 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 the UK's Puffins! We won't land on these uninhabited islands but we'll get close views of the birds and may see Manx Shearwaters, seals and perhaps dolphins. There were two White-tailed Eagle present in 2019! We shall get stunningly close to rafts of Puffins and other auks allowing fantastic photography opportunities.

Harris is conjoined to Lewis, but the habitat 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. On our final full day we shall explore the mountains in search of eagle, and more!

**10-11** We say goodbye to these wonderful islands and make our way back across the Minch, then on 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 Templeview Hotel  |
| 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:** Pomarine Skua, Whimbrel, Red-necked Phalarope  
**Kate Mennie:** Berneray  
**James Glover:** Puffin  
**Richard Stacey:** Short-eared Owl  
**Jane Hope:** White-tailed Eagle



# ÖLAND IN SPRING



"This will be our first visit to this delightful island in spring and I am especially excited at the prospect of seeing the renowned wildflower displays on the Alvar, with the riot of colour and mix of orchids to be found here – it should be stunningly beautiful!" Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 23 - Sun 30 May 2021  
Price £2,595  
Deposit £500 Single Supp £300

Leaders Roy Atkins and Jane Atkins  
Flights Scandinavian Airlines, scheduled  
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Kalmar  
Inbound: Afternoon, Kalmar-Heathrow  
(Outbound and Inbound via Stockholm)  
Weather Weather can be variable and unpredictable but we hope for pleasant warm weather. Cloud and rain is of course also possible, so dress as you would for an English spring (15°-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:

Collared Flycatcher	Black-tailed Godwit
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Ruff
Thrush Nightingale	Black Woodpecker
Barred Warbler	White-tailed Eagle
Icterine Warbler	Marsh Harrier
Marsh Warbler	Montagu's Harrier
Red-backed Shrike	Chance of rarities
Common Rosefinch	Lady's Slipper Orchid
Golden Oriole	Military Orchid
Wryneck	Fly Orchid
Red-necked Grebe	Elder-flowered Orchid
Common Crane	Pasque Flower
Barnacle Geese	Solomon's Seal
Avocet	Herb Paris

A relaxed holiday at the peak of spring migration, chance of a rarity and with some exciting breeding birds too - plus carpets of flowers including lots of orchids.

- Ottenby Observatory during spring migration, chance of something rare perhaps!
- Beautiful display of Alvar spring flowers including endemics such as Öland Rockrose
- Collared and Red-breasted Flycatcher, Thrush Nightingale, Icterine and Barred Warbler
- A host of orchids - including the stunning Lady's Slipper Orchid
- Chance to see ringing demonstration and stunning lighthouse-top view
- Relaxed pace birding and botany, with most sites close at hand and lots to see!
- Great mix of migrant and breeding waders, raptors and other birds

After our flight to Kalmar, via Stockholm, we then drive the short distance over the bridge to Öland and onward to our delightful hotel at Gammalsby, passing through some beautiful flower rich areas on the way. If there is time we might have a very quick stop!

**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 Ottenby Bird Observatory, set in meadows, scrub and heathland, surrounded by low boulder beaches and coastal bays. This will be a focus of some of our days as we make more than one visit to check out what migrants are passing through.

At this time of year there are plenty of possibilities, with the chance of Wryneck, Red-backed Shrike,



migrating raptors, warblers, waders or perhaps something rare!! Late May and early June is the best time for rarities from the south and east, with species such as Greenish Warbler, Red-rumped Swallow, Red-footed Falcon and Marsh Sandpiper turning up surprisingly regularly - but something even rarer is always possible here given suitable weather.

The Observatory staff regularly check the mist-nets and Heligoland traps and will bring out anything special to show any birders nearby. We'll also visit the Observatory to watch 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. Even common birds can look so beautiful when seen at such close quarters.





"It will be great to catch up with some of the breeding birds here that we don't get to see on our autumn visits - species such as Collared and Red-breasted Flycatcher, Thrush Nightingale, Marsh, Icterine and Barred Warbler, Montagu's Harrier and Red-necked Grebe - and of course there is always the chance of those rare migrants!!" Roy Atkins



Wet meadows north of the Observatory are rich in flowers, including several orchids species and can have nesting waders such as Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit, in their beautiful breeding plumage and perhaps Ruff too. The extensive oak and birch woodlands here are alive with birds at this time of year, with common nesting species such as Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Treecreeper and Nuthatch of the rather paler Scandinavian race. They are joined by much scarcer species such as Collared Flycatcher, Icterine and Barred Warblers, with a slimmer chance of Common Rosefinch. The soundtrack should include Golden Oriole and Thrush Nightingale and who knows with a bit of persistence perhaps we may even see one!

We'll check hotspots along the coast - such as Sebybadet, Ossby and Stenåsa Badet, where taller trees attract migrants such as flycatchers, warblers, chats and shrikes. The Swedish Ornithological Society runs a shop and Visitor Centre here, which is also well worth a look. Who knows what we shall find and a lot of the pleasure is in the looking. We shall also keep in touch with news of any rarities on the island, as we would not want to miss something special and in the past such exciting birds as Greater Spotted Eagle, Black-headed Bunting and Broad-billed Sandpiper have been found!

One striking feature of Öland is the Great Alvar Plain, a bedrock of limestone that breaks the surface over a huge area in the middle of the island. On our autumn trips there is little to be

seen here, but in spring we expect this whole area to be carpeted in flowers, including several species of orchid. Siberian, Arctic and Southern European flowers mingle here in a fascinating mix; there may be pink swathes of Birdseye Primrose, the last of the Pasque Flowers, yellow and pink Elder-flowered Orchids and carpets of the endemic Öland Rockrose. Early Purple, Green-winged, Fly, Early Marsh, Burnt-tip and others orchids are here and we'll search for beautiful Military Orchid.

We hope to find Montagu's Harrier here too and perhaps Red-backed Shrikes amongst the junipers. We shall also be looking for the stunning Lady's Slipper Orchid, surely one of the most spectacular of all Europe's flowers! Other scarce species such as Narrow-leaved Helleborine, May Lily, Solomon's Seal, Herb Paris and Twinflower can be found in more wooded sites. Black Woodpecker breed in these woodlands and a few Red-breasted Flycatchers too.

Wetlands along the coast or inland can have a selection of waders, ducks and passage terns, but we also hope for Red-necked Grebe, in stunning breeding plumage, Marsh Warbler and there is a slim chance the first Blyth's Reed Warblers could be arriving. Common Cranes, geese or other migrants may be passing through and we'll keep our eyes open for resident White-tailed Eagles.



After birding in the morning we catch an afternoon flight home.



## Outline Itinerary

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Day 1    | Fly to Kalmar via Stockholm and transfer to Gammalsby<br>7 nights Gammalsbygarden Inn                                    |
| Days 2-7 | Birdwatching and wildlife exploration including visits to the Ottenby Bird Observatory, with bird ringing demonstrations |
| Day 8    | Transfer to Kalmar for our flight back to the UK, via Stockholm  |

**Andrej Chudy:** Collared Flycatcher  
**Visit Öland:** Alvar  
**Strobilomyces:** Elder-flowered Orchid  
**Stephen Batt:** Montagu's Harrier  
**Roy Atkins:** Common Rosefinch  
**Phil Byle:** Lady's Slipper Orchid  
**Craig Round:** Thrush Nightingale





# SUTHERLAND AND SPEYSIDE



"Handa island is nearly always several people's favourite place on a Speyside trip, it is just a stunning place to visit and the 'bird cities' are a sight and sound to behold. All this, coupled with fabulous scenery, make this a day not to be forgotten."  
Sally Nowell

Dates	Wed 2 - Sat 12 Jun 2021
Price	£2,375
Deposit	£450    Single Supp   £150
Leader	Sally Nowell
Weather	Mixture of sun and showers(10°-25°C) although it can be cooler in the mountains and on the boat crossing
Walking	<p>Most walks are 1-2 miles on wide, sandy tracks, although there is the possibility of a forest walk of up to 4 miles</p> <p>Our Cairngorms walk is more steep and uneven but low-level unguided alternatives are available. Walking boots will be needed on the holiday and walking poles will be useful</p>
Boat trip	Our boat trip to Handa Island is over sheltered waters and lasts 15 mins
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11
Insects	Biting insects may be encountered, so bring repellent
Accom	Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite or private facilities
Group	7
Just some of what we hope to see	
Great Northern Diver	Osprey
Red-throated Diver	Red Kite
Capercaillie	Merlin
Black Grouse	Peregrine
Slavonian Grebe	Guillemot
Golden Eagle	Razorbill
White-tailed Eagle	Fulmar
Puffin	Arctic Skua
Dotterel	Great Skua
Crested Tit	Black Guillemot
Scottish Crossbill	Pine Marten
Snow Bunting	Badger

## To Handa Island and back - Speyside's speciality birds and mammals, plus spectacular seabird colonies in the north-west, all in Scotland's most incredible land and seascapes

- Fabulous long summer days when the sun barely sets
- Our favourite Speyside days, including the Scottish specialities
- Four days of stunning Sutherland birds and landscapes
- A full day on spectacular Handa Island in north-west Sutherland
- Durness and Balnakeil Bay on the northern edge of Scotland
- White-tailed Eagle, Greenshank and Rock Dove
- Black and Red Grouse, Ptarmigan and Dotterel

**I** We meet at our country house hotel in time for dinner and a chance to chat about the coming days.

**2-5** We'll start with a visit to a local glen or to the beautiful Caledonian Pine Forest. Here, Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill are amongst the breeding birds, Red Squirrels scamper through the branches and we'll look for elusive Capercaillie and go out early for Black Grouse.

Nearby lochans hold beautiful Slavonian Grebes and we'll visit nesting Osprey. We have our own places to find camouflaged Mountain Hare, with huge herds of Red Deer watching us from the skyline. Golden Eagle and Raven soar above the mountain slopes and Peregrine hunt in the valley, where Oystercatcher and Curlew have chicks and Common Gull nest on the shingle.



We'll also venture into the foothills of Cairngorm in search of Ptarmigan and Dotterel and with luck we may find Snow Bunting too. One evening we'll visit our hide for Pine Marten and Badger and the chance of a Tawny Owl or a roding Woodcock.

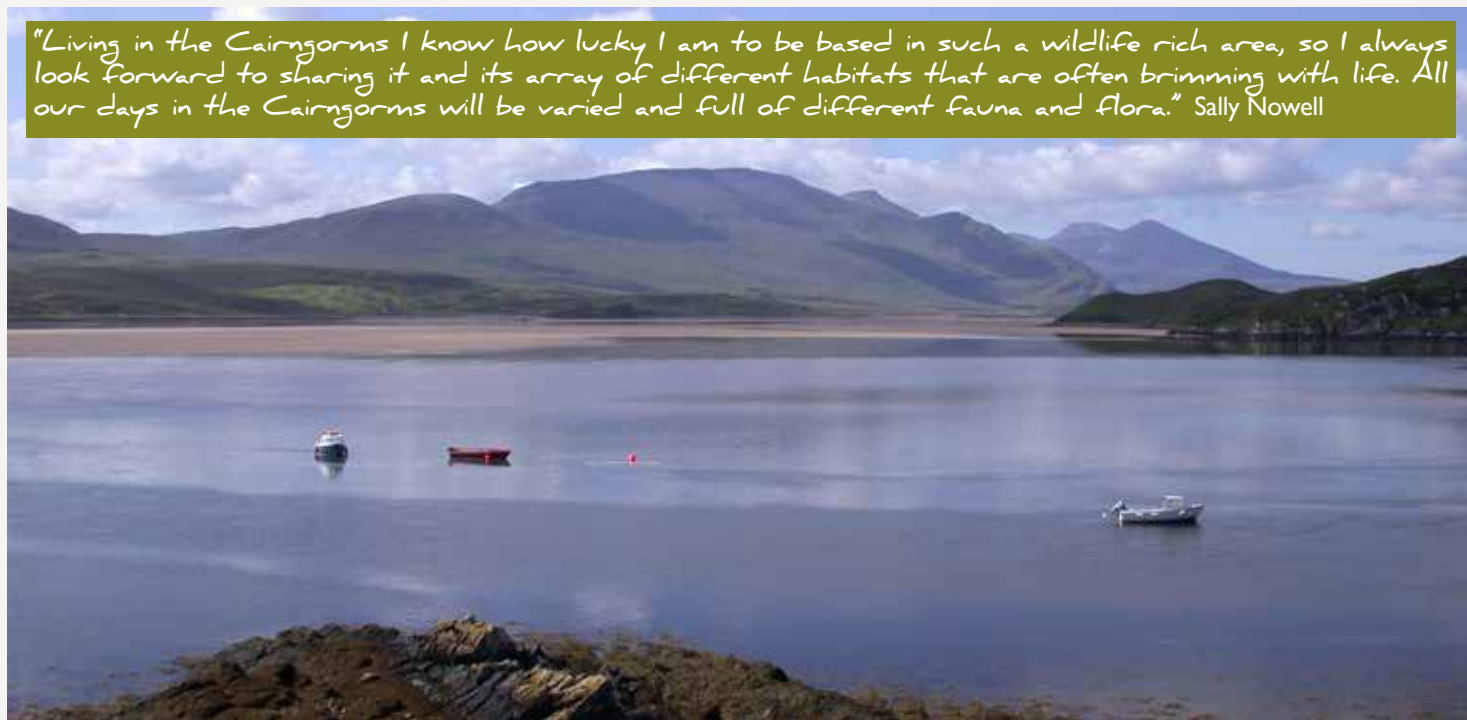
The meandering River Spey holds Dipper; Grey Wagtail and noisy Common Sandpiper; while waders display over marshes around Lochindorb and Insh. Goldeneye have delightful little black and white ducklings and 'proper' Scottish Greylag Geese are nesting. Red Kite circle above the rolling farmland of the Moray Firth, whilst tidal bays are busy with Eider and noisy Arctic, Common and Sandwich Tern. There may even be the odd non-breeding Scoter or Long-tailed Duck.

On the wild moors of Dava and the Monadhliaths, Merlin and Peregrine can be found and these are





"Living in the Cairngorms I know how lucky I am to be based in such a wildlife rich area, so I always look forward to sharing it and its array of different habitats that are often brimming with life. All our days in the Cairngorms will be varied and full of different fauna and flora." Sally Nowell



places where the plaintive notes of Ring Ouzel, the cackling of Red Grouse and the mournful piping of Golden Plover can be heard.

**6-9** We journey past deep-indented sealochs and dramatic peaks via Gruinard Bay, where we'll search for White-tailed Eagle and perhaps see a Black-throated Diver in stunning breeding plumage.

There is always a chance of Otter here and perhaps Golden Eagle as well, before we head for our hotel farther north at Rhiconich. This is wild country, feeling as spectacular and 'foreign' as it's possible to get in this land. It is open, ice-scoured and wild - the soaring mountains of Suilven and Stac Pollaidh standing in splendid isolation, interspersed with numerous peaty lochs and small patches of native broadleaves, while the coastline is dotted with sandy bays and skerries - for many this is the most beautiful part of Britain.

The most renowned birding location here must be Handa Island and taking a small boat to get there, we'll spend a full day enjoying the circular route around the island. Thousands of Guillemot, Razorbill, Fulmar and Kittiwake nest on the towering cliffs of the stack on the north coast, with smaller numbers of Puffin right on top, whilst Shag hiss from hidden nests.

Black Guillemots breed in the boulders at the base of the cliffs and we often get close views from the boat. The colonies are patrolled by Great and Arctic Skuas looking for a meal. Both nest on the

island, allowing close up views of these spectacular birds and Great Skuas often gather to bathe in lochans where Red-throated Diver may be nesting.

Summering Great Northern Divers are frequently found on the sweeping azure seas of Balnakeil Bay, at the edge of Scotland, next stop the Arctic! This northern coast is a beautiful mix of rocky coastline and gorgeous white beaches sweeping up to grassy slopes and moorland dotted with orchids. We may find tiny Scottish Primroses in short turf on the cliff-tops - especially at Strathy Point where viewing out to sea can be spectacular! Gannets dive offshore, while Kittiwakes, auks and Fulmars are constantly streaming by. This is a premier sight to scan for dolphins or even whales if it is calm.

There are more Puffin colonies along the north coast, plus wild Rock Doves and Twite and just inland are lochs where Black-throated Divers breed. Merlin and Greenshank also breed on these remote moorlands. At nearby Durness Corncrakes can sometimes be heard, though they are difficult to see in the tall vegetation and we'll look out for Golden Eagle as we journey around Loch Eriboll and Loch Assynt - truly wonderful places.

**10-11** On our last afternoon we enjoy more spectacular scenery as we take an inland route, birdwatching as we go, back to Speyside and our hotel for the last night. After breakfast the next morning we make our farewells.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in the Cairngorms  
5 nights Tigh na Sgiath Country Hotel
- Days 2-5** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration throughout Speyside including Abernethy Forest, Dava Moor, the Moray Firth coast and the Cairngorms
- Day 6** Travel north-west to Sutherland, via Gruinard Bay  
4 nights The Rhiconich Hotel
- Days 7-9** Exploration of the north-west corner of Scotland including Handa
- Days 10-11** Travel back to the Cairngorms  
1 night Tigh na Sgiath Country Hotel

**Kevin Tappenden:** Great Northern Diver  
**Ted Stevens:** Kyle of Durness  
**Mark Denman:** Dotterel  
**Simon Eaves:** Scottish Crossbill, Slavonian Grebe  
**Jane Hope:** Razorbills  
**Mary Braddock:** Black Guillemots



# ULTIMATE UISTS



The Uists in spring have intense blue sky with the sun reflecting off white beaches that look almost tropical in character! Searching this ancient landscape for birds is a thrill. Few places in western Europe have this number of breeding waders, add the raptors, calling Corncrakes, seabirds and moorland birds, and this trip will be something to savour! Stuart Housden OBE

Dates	Sat 4 - Sat 12 Jun 2021
Price	£2,275
Deposit	£450     Single Supp   £350
Leader	Stuart Housden OBE
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
Boat Trip	Our boat trip to Grimsay lasts 2 hours
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9
Insects	Biting insects unlikely to be a problem at this time of year
Accom	Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	7
Just some of what we hope to see	
Corncrake	Pomarine Skua
Red-necked Phalarope	Long-tailed Skua
Golden Eagle	Manx Shearwater
Hen Harrier	Black Guillemot
Merlin	Black-tailed Godwit
Short-eared Owl	Wheatears
White-tailed Eagle	Stonechat
Great Northern Diver	Redpoll
Black-throated Diver	Puffin
Red-throated Diver	Storm Petrel
Whimbrel	Twite
Little Tern	Golden Plover
Arctic Tern	Hebridean Orchid
Arctic Skua	Harbour Seal
Great Skua	Otter

This tour has been created by Stuart, who first visited the islands in 1978. As the former Director of RSPB Scotland his knowledge of the Uists and their conservation is exceptional.

- We visit North and South Uist, Benbecula and Berneray
- A chartered boat trip affords close views of skuas, raptors, Harbour and Grey Seals
- Corncrake and Red-necked Phalarope - we shall search for these elusive rarities
- Visit scenic Loch Druidibeg, looking for Short-eared Owls, waders and raptors
- Walk through beautiful machair flora hoping for the rare Great Yellow Bumblebee
- We shall keep a watchful eye open for Otters, and Golden and White-tailed Eagles
- Visit the RSPB Balranald Reserve for waders, duck, Twite, Corncrake and Corn Bunting

**1-2** We convene for dinner in Inverness, and set off next morning for our journey through the Great Glen, across the Isle of Skye to Uig where we board the ferry to Lochmaddy. On the crossing we shall go on deck to search for Puffins, Razorbills, Gannets and Manx Shearwater. With luck, we may see cetaceans and even a Storm Petrel. After docking we drive across North Uist to our hotel, enjoying the spectacular scenery.

**3-7** At this time of year the days are long, dawn breaks at 04.25 and the sun sets at 22.30! We shall pace ourselves to enjoy the mornings when birds are active, and take a more relaxed approach in the afternoons. Optional walks before breakfast shall be offered on some mornings.

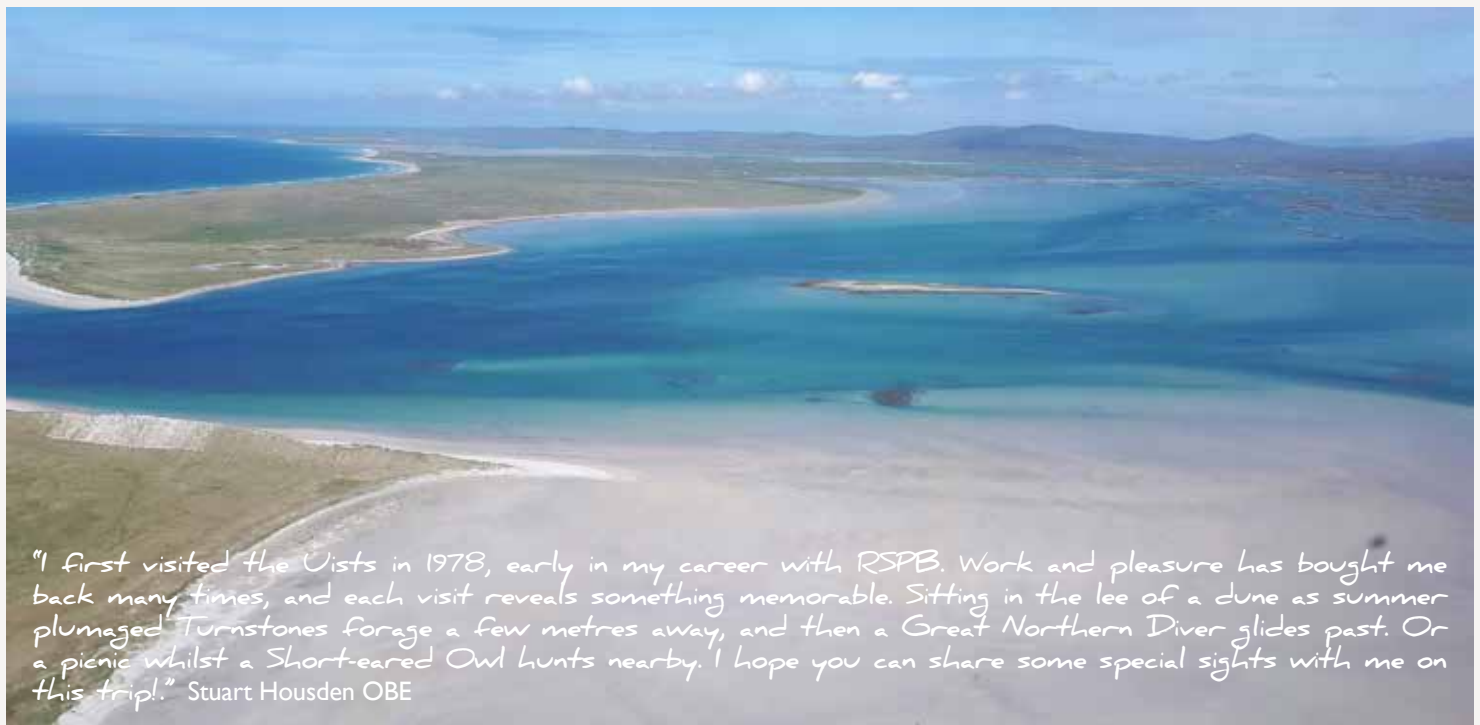
Making full use of Stuart's expert knowledge our exploration starts in the South where shallow lochs

fringed by Yellow Flag Iris, and rocky headlands emerge from beautiful stretches of shell-sand beaches. Behind the dunes that face the Atlantic is the machair; a sandy grassland rich in wildflowers used by crofters to grow crops and raise cattle. The stunning flora includes deep purple Northern Marsh Orchids, the wine red Early Marsh Orchids, and a succession of colourful pansies, clovers and Corn Marigolds. These flowers attract Moss Carder Bumblebees and with luck the Great Yellow Bumblebee, now confined to the far North of Scotland. The machair is alive with Skylarks, and calling waders, and we shall search shallow lochs for Snipe, Teal, Shoveler and Wigeon.

Migrant birds are still passing offshore, with Summer plumaged waders, and sometimes skuas heading up to the Tundra! We shall look for lingering Great Northern Divers, and Whimbrel, or Black-tailed







*"I first visited the Uists in 1978, early in my career with RSPB. Work and pleasure has brought me back many times, and each visit reveals something memorable. Sitting in the lee of a dune as summer plumaged Turnstones forage a few metres away, and then a Great Northern Diver glides past. Or a picnic whilst a Short-eared Owl hunts nearby. I hope you can share some special sights with me on this trip!" Stuart Housden OBE*

Godwits, which may drop into the fields bound for Iceland. Otters are widespread, and with luck we may see one during our visits to coasts or Lochs.

Along Loch Eynort the efforts of one landowner has transformed the north side of the Loch. Native woodland has been planted, and the shelter offers a home to warblers and Redpolls, and the occasional rare migrant. There is an excellent area to picnic, where we watch for divers, Harbour Seals and sometimes Otter. The ridge lines of the mountains form a wonderful backdrop, and we shall scan for Golden and White-tailed Eagles! Another highlight is Loch Druidibeg, where the local community and RSPB have a reserve good for moorland birds, including Short-eared Owls.

By special arrangement we shall take a chartered boat around the island of Grimsay exploring the channels and islands where seals haul out, and terns breed. The boat affords close views of eiders, mergansers and even Black Guillemots. With luck, we shall find Black-throated and Red-throated Divers, and hopefully catch a glimpse of a White-tailed Eagle!

With care we look for the Red-necked Phalarope which in some years nests here. There are only 30-40 pairs in the UK, and this tiny population winters in the seas off Ecuador! This dainty wader swims confidently, and it's the more dowdy male which incubates the eggs.

Our attention now switches to North Uist and Berneray, which have lovely Machair, and rolling moorland where Hen Harriers, Short-eared Owls,

and even Merlin can be seen. There are excellent viewpoints to scan for these species, with Stonechats and Wheatears to keep us entertained. Cuckoos often fly across the moorland searching for Meadow Pipit nests. The moorland is visited by hunting eagles, often mobbed by Ravens, and other raptors!

The RSPB Reserve at Balranald has ideal habitat for Corncrakes. This area is also the best place for Corn Buntings and Twite. In the fields we may see young Ringed Plover chicks following their parents. Little and Arctic Terns nest nearby and we should see them diving for fish just offshore.

We shall identify the three species of Marsh Orchids found on the Uists. The deep wine red of the Early Marsh, contrasts with the purple Northern Marsh. Hebridean Orchid which has a smaller flower spike, and deep black or brown blotches on its spear shaped leaves. It is found nowhere else in the world!

If time permits we shall visit Bernera for a walk beside Loch Bhrusda which can be good for waders, wildfowl and nesting terns.

**8-9** Today we head to Lochmaddy to catch our ferry. For those who wish to look for seabirds, we shall go on deck and watch the dramatic mountains of Harris to the north, and the mountains on Skye get close, as we journey across the Minch. Then it's a steady drive to Inverness. The woodlands seem so vivid after the near treeless landscape we have left! Then it's back to our hotel for dinner to reminisce over the great experiences we have enjoyed, before a good night's sleep and the journey home.



### Outline Itinerary

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Day 1    | Meet up in Inverness for overnight stay<br>1 night Premier Inn  |
| Day 2    | Travel down the Great Glen and across Skye, before catching ferry to Lochmaddy and making the journey to our hotel.<br>6 nights at Orasay Inn |
| Days 3-7 | Birdwatching, botany and wildlife exploration of North and South Uist, Benbecula and Berneray   |
| Day 8    | Travel back to Inverness<br>1 night Premier Inn   |
| Day 9    | Depart after breakfast  |

**Richard Stacey:** Short-eared Owl  
**Stuart Housden:** Uists from the Air, The Machair  
**Craig Round:** Otter, **Jane Hope:** Great Skua  
**Kate Mennie:** South Uist  
**Colin Scott:** White-tailed Eagle



# A HEBRIDEAN ODYSSEY



*"Travelling from bottom to top, you can take in the differences in landscape and wildlife of all the islands; miles of deserted shell sand beaches, moorland, towering mountains and the remote and rugged Atlantic coastline, with its dunes and flower-rich machair. With the wild calls of waders, sound of the sea and huge skies, you're transported to another world."* Craig Round

**Dates** Sun 6 - Fri 18 Jun 2021  
**Price** £2,925  
**Deposit** £500    **Single Supp** £400

**Leaders** Craig Round and Simon Eaves

**Walking** Coastal walks on uneven terrain of up to two miles.  
 Walking boots recommended with trainers suitable on some occasions.  
 Collapsible or telescopic walking poles could be useful 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	Greenshank
Great Northern Diver	Golden Plover
Red-throated Diver	Red Grouse
Black-throated Diver	Corn Bunting
Eider	Twite
Whimbrel	Otter
Arctic Tern	Grey and common seals
Little Tern	Dolphins and whales
Black Guillemot	Basking Shark

**Richard Stacey:** Corncrake  
**Kate Mennie:** Port na Long  
**Jane Hope:** Black Guillemot, Otter  
**Simon Eaves:** Red-necked Phalarope  
**James Glover:** Red-throated Diver  
**Tim Drew:** 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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





*"This incredible island chain on Britain's remote and wild Atlantic edge is a place of breathtaking beauty, home to some of Britain's best wildlife such as Golden and White-tailed Eagle, Corncrake, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Otter and thousands of breeding and passage waders. Last year we watched exquisite Red-necked Phalaropes, as a Golden and White-tailed Eagle sat on the ground next to each other! It is always a thrill to visit, surrounded by amazing wildlife. I can't wait to get back there!" Craig Round*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**13** After breakfast on Friday we say our fond farewells.



### Outline Itinerary

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



# HUNGARY IN SUMMER



"Hungary is a naturalist's dream, with so much to see - we include a dormouse nest box scheme, mist-netting for bats, fabulous butterflies and the highlight of the trip - the photography hides, allowing incredibly close views of exciting species such as Red-footed Falcon, Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Hawfinch and Roller!" Roy Atkins

Dates	Tue 08 - Thur 17 Jun 2021
Price	£3,125
Deposit	£625    Single Supp £200
Leaders	Roy Atkins and Ecotours guide
Flights	British Airways, scheduled Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Budapest Inbound: Afternoon, Budapest-Heathrow
Weather	Can be quite hot in the middle of the day, but pleasant in the morning and evenings 15°-28°C
Walking	Short easy walks on level, wide paths
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 10
Insects	Mosquitos can be a nuisance at dusk around wetlands, so bring repellent
Activities	Dinner within the old wine cellars of the Thümmerner family. Special access to photographic hides. Tour of Budapest and evening dinner on a boat on the Danube
Accom	Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	12

Just some of what we hope to see:	
Red-footed Falcon (from hide)	Collared Flycatcher Wryneck
Roller (from hide)	Lesser Spotted Eagle
Bee-eater (from hide)	Lesser Grey Shrike
Hawfinch (from hide)	Golden Oriole
Eastern Imperial Eagle	Penduline Tit
Saker Falcon	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler
Collared Pratincole	Marsh Warbler
Black Stork	Edible Dormouse
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	Forest Dormouse
Grey-headed Woodpecker	European Souselik
Syrian Woodpecker	Barbastelle Bat
Black Woodpecker	Leisler's Bat
Great Bustard	Whiskered Bat
	Fabulous butterflies

A host of eastern birds, butterflies and even bats – plus a visit to photo hides for incredibly close views of some very special birds, also wine tasting and a tour of Budapest.

- Three-centre holiday around Kiskunság National Park, Lakitelek and Bükk Hills
- Photo hides for Red-footed Falcon, Roller, Bee-eater and woodland birds
- Eastern Imperial Eagle, Saker, Montagu's Harrier and Honey Buzzard
- Opportunity to see bats in the hand at mist-netting session
- Savi's, Icterine and Barred Warblers, Golden Oriole and Lesser Grey Shrike
- Butterflies including Common Glider, Great-banded Grayling and many more
- Day sightseeing in Budapest plus a boat-ride and dinner on the Danube

**1-3** After arriving at Budapest Airport, we shall drive to our hotel near the Kiskunság National Park which lies between the Danube and Tisza Rivers. If time allows, we may fit in some birding, but we have a full day birdwatching in this fabulous place tomorrow, in search of Great Bustard, where they have their largest population in Hungary.

Wet meadows and fishponds hold breeding Savi's Warbler and Bearded and Penduline Tits. Red-crested Pochard and Ferruginous Duck are possible amongst the reed-fringed pools and we shall carefully check a colony of Collared Pratincoles as, in some years, Black-winged Pratincole has also occurred. A nearby alkaline lake is home to waders, including Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and Ruff - perhaps in breeding plumage. Stone Curlew inhabit the stony ridges, Nightingales sing from the bushes and we'll look out for Icterine and

Barred Warblers, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrike, Golden Oriole and raptors such as Saker, Red-footed Falcon and Montagu's Harrier.

On day three we become tourists for a sightseeing tour of Budapest. The city spans both banks of the mighty Danube River with Buda, on the western side, featuring the Gellért Hill Citadel, with its commanding city views, narrow cobbled streets lined with old houses, the grandiose St. Matthias Church, Fisherman's Bastion in Buda Castle and the Royal Palace. The eastern side, called Pest, showcases Baroque and Classicist architecture in the city's many houses, cathedrals and plazas. Highlights here are the Széchenyi Bath House, the Basilica of St. Stevens, the Hungarian State Opera House and the Chain Bridge. We'll go through the Jewish quarter, with beautiful orthodox synagogues and the "Silver Willow", a sculpture honouring Hungarian Jews who perished in the





*"We have added an extra day to the trip to enjoy the sights and sounds of Budapest, with a tour of the city on both sides of the river by day and an evening meal onboard a boat cruising the Danube, with views of the city as we eat! There is a wine tasting evening too." Roy Atkins*



Holocaust. We'll enjoy our evening meal cruising the Danube on a boat with views of the city - a delightful finish to the day!

**4-6** Pausing enroute to scan for Eastern Imperial Eagle and Saker Falcon, we move on to a wonderful area of wetlands in the Lakitelek area, where we can find nesting Pygmy Cormorant and Squacco, Purple and Night Herons, with a good chance of Spoonbill and Ferruginous Duck. In good years all three marsh terns are possible here, while Black Stork and White-tailed Eagle nest in the gallery forests, White Storks in nearby villages and we hope for scarce Long-legged Buzzard and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler.

Now for a real highlight of the trip - we have special access to several photo hides to gain super close views that are impossible on normal birding tours. Hides beside breeding Hoopoe, Roller, Bee-eater and Red-footed Falcon allow fabulous views, plus the chance of Hawfinch and woodland birds at a drinking pool hide - all from just a few metres! These hides are normally reserved for photographers and only take three or so people at a time, so we'll swap around so everyone gets a chance to try each hide. Most have easy access, though the Red-footed Falcon hide is accessed via a ladder with a hand-rail - don't forget your camera!

**7-9** From here we move to the Bükk Hills and our delightful hotel with great food and tasty regional wine. Morning walks may produce up to six species of woodpecker, including Syrian,

Middle Spotted, Black and Wryneck. We'll explore the attractive Hór Valley, where old beech woodland is home to elusive White-backed Woodpecker; plus Hawfinch, Wood Warbler and Collared Flycatcher.

Many butterflies can be found here, including Common Glider, Great-banded Grayling, Large Copper; Eastern Short-tailed Blue and many fritillaries and blues. Beautiful pasture woodland, where Hungarian Grey Cattle graze, is the hunting ground of Honey Buzzard, along with both Short-toed and Lesser Spotted Eagles. Barred Warbler lurk in dense shrubs and we hope for Golden Oriole, Short-toed Treecreeper; Red-backed Shrike and Woodlark.

We'll visit a nest box project for dormice nearby, where Edible, Forest and Hazel Dormouse are all possible and one evening we'll join a local expert monitoring bat populations with mist nets and hope to catch several species. Common British species such as Common Pipistrelle and Daubenton may be joined by scarcer Leisler's, Barbastelle, Bechstein's or one of the horseshoe bats - a great opportunity to see them in the hand.

We'll enjoy an evening meal in the old wine cellars of the Thümmmer family, famous for a variety of wines, but especially the so-called 'Bull's Blood'. We'll try a taste of this delicious wine, along with other fabulous reds and whites, as we do our final round-up of the trip.

**10** We transfer to Budapest airport for our flight home.



## Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Fly to Budapest airport then transfer to our hotel near the Kiskunság National Park, followed by a full day birdwatching here and on Day 3 we'll go sightseeing in Budapest, with our evening meal onboard a boat on the Danube enjoying views of the city  
3 nights at Forster Hunting Lodge
- Days 4-6** Birdwatching as we go, we transfer to Lakitelek. Birdwatching on the Reserve plus visits to bird hides for close-up views of some exciting species  
3 nights at Hotel Club Tisza
- Days 7-9** Transfer to the Bükk Hills National Park area for woodland birding, dormouse project, bat mist-netting and a wine tasting evening  
3 nights at Nomad Hotel
- Day 10** Transfer to Budapest airport for flight to UK

**Roy Atkins:** Red-footed Falcon, Lesser Grey Shrike, Forest Dormouse  
**Mary Braddock:** Rollers  
**Balazs Szigeti:** Saker Falcon, Eastern Imperial Eagle



# MULL AND KINTYRE



*"The wonderful island of Mull needs no introduction as a wildlife extravaganza. Every corner can produce something special, with White-tailed and Golden Eagle eyries, extensive moorland with Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl, beautiful sea lochs and coastline. Mull ticks so many boxes!" Julian Sykes*

Dates Sat 12 - Mon 21 June 2021

Price £2,450

Deposit £450 Single Supp £400

Leaders Julian Sykes and Darren Rees

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 10.

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

## 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!

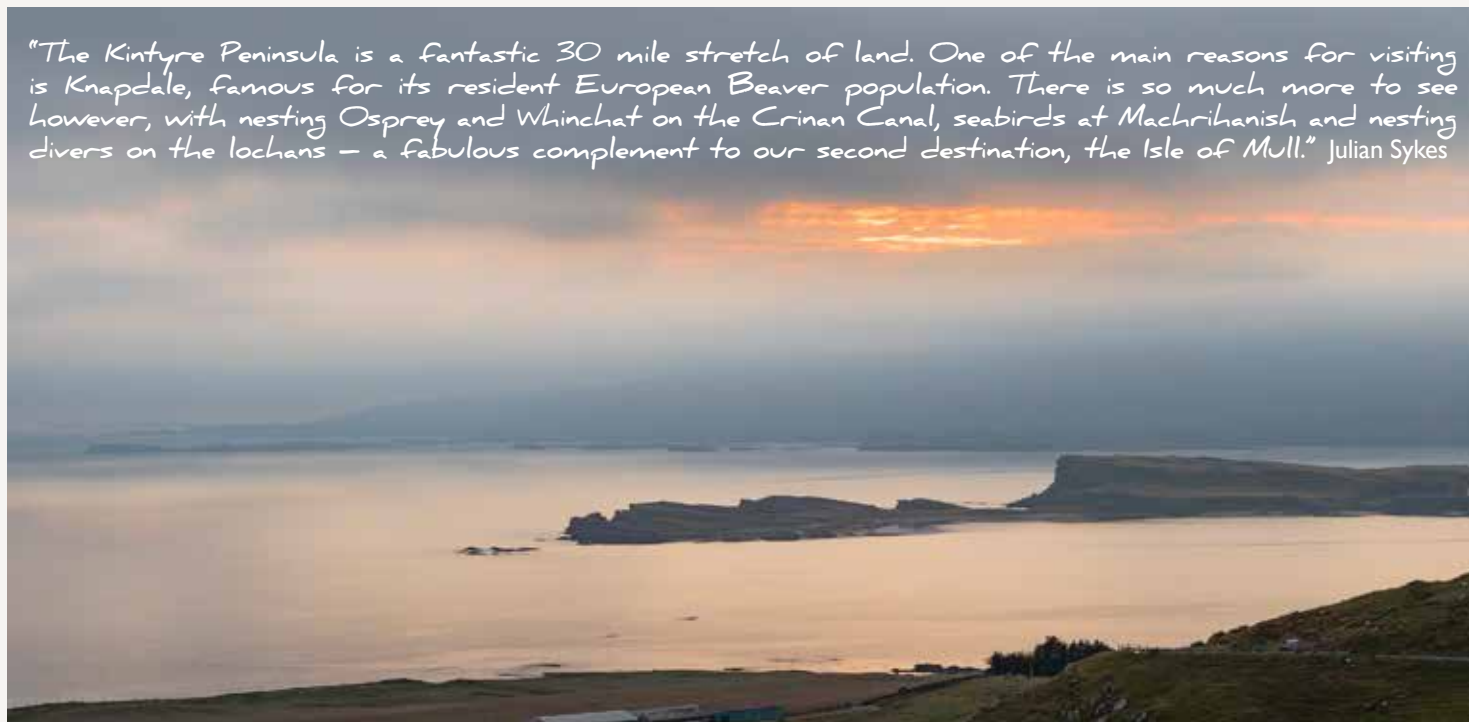
**4-8** We'll travel slowly up the west coast, stopping at inlets and coastal woodlands, then take the ferry from Oban to Craignure and our shoreside hotel base for the next five nights. From there, Gannets and Arctic Terns go by and nearby, meadows are sprinkled with orchids and play host to Snipe, 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 Kintyre Peninsula is a fantastic 30 mile stretch of land. One of the main reasons for visiting is Knapdale, famous for its resident European Beaver population. There is so much more to see however, with nesting Osprey and Whinchat on the Crinan Canal, seabirds at Machrihanish and nesting divers on the lochans – a fabulous complement to our second destination, the Isle of Mull." Julian Sykes*



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 'kleeping' 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!

**9-10** 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, travel West to Lochgilphead  
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 5-8** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration on Mull, including a boat trip to the Treshnish Isles
- Day 9** Ferry back to the mainland then drive to Loch Lomond  
birdwatching enroute  
1 night at the Inn on Loch Lomond
- Day 10** Leave Loch Lomond for Glasgow

**Jane Hope:** White-tailed Eagle,  
Sunset Loch na Kael  
**Andrew Hoyne:** Black-throated Diver  
**David Petts:** Hen Harrier  
**Tim Drew:** Otter, Puffin



# MULL IN SUMMER



*"A truly breathtaking island, with new views round each corner and wildlife in abundance. Somewhere I know so well and can't wait to visit every year."*  
Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 19 - Sat 26 June 2021

Price £2,095

Deposit £400 Single Supp £450

Leader Kate Mennie

Weather The weather can be mixed, so expect sun and showers, with temperatures in the range of 7-18°C. It can be cooler on our boat trip, but you may wish to bring sunscreen

Walking Coastal walks on uneven terrain of 1-4 miles. Walking boots recommended. Collapsible/telescopic walking poles could be useful for this trip

Boat Trip Our trip to Lunga lasts approximately six hours, including three hours ashore

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

Insects Biting midges will be encountered

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

Group 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

White-tailed Eagle	Common Sandpiper
Golden Eagle	Oystercatcher
Hen Harrier	Corncrake
Peregrine	Great Skua
Merlin	Storm Petrel
Short-eared Owl	Rock Dove
Manx Shearwater	Twite
Red-throated Diver	Shag
Great Northern Diver	Kittiwake
Puffin	Harbour Porpoise
Arctic Skua	Common Dolphin
Razorbill	Minke Whale
Black Guillemot	Common Seal
Gannet	Grey Seal
Raven	Otter
Greenshank	

Mull in summer - one of Britain's very best islands, with striking wildlife, including eagles, Otters and a boat trip for "up close and personal" views of Puffins and seabirds

- Amazing opportunities for White-tailed and Golden Eagle in spectacular habitat
- Otter spotting around the coast wherever we go
- Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier and divers
- A trip to Iona with a chance to hear and maybe see the elusive Corncrake
- Treshnish Isles boat trip for close-up Puffins, auks and loads more
- Shoreline hotel with views across the Sound of Mull
- Travel up and back through Loch Lomond, Rannoch Moor and Glencoe

**1-2** We shall meet up in Glasgow and travel the short distance to our overnight base on the shores of Loch Lomond.

In the morning we'll drive the length of Loch Lomond, over Rannoch Moor and through Glencoe, with time to birdwatch and marvel at the spectacular scenery, before catching a mid-morning ferry from Oban to the Isle of Mull.

We may see Black Guillemots in Oban Harbour and as we journey across the Firth Of Lorne, Common and Arctic Terns may be loafing and fishing off the island of Lismore. These are rich waters and there is always a chance of seeing Harbour Porpoise, Common Dolphin or even something larger. We'll be able to birdwatch immediately we arrive, as our hotel is on the shore, overlooking the Sound of Mull.



**3-6** Here, Gannets fly by, whilst just offshore Red-throated and Great Northern Diver linger and we'll watch for majestic White-tailed and Golden Eagles, now busy feeding young.

The White-tailed Eagle is the UK's largest land-based predator and the fourth largest eagle on Earth. They have recolonised Mull since the early 1980's and the breeding population is now more than 15 pairs, so we can encounter these enormous birds just about anywhere.

Mull's Golden Eagle population is one of the densest anywhere in Europe and after year's of experience watching them, we know the best places on the island to look for them. It is not unusual to see both species soaring together over the mountains and sea lochs of "Eagle Island".





*"From eagles over mountain tops, Otter on the coast, sitting close to Puffin on Lunga and white sandy beaches galore, Mull will leave you planning your return before you have even left. Choosing a highlight will be impossible!" Kate Mennie*



Although the island is rightly famous for its eagles, we shall be looking for other upland raptors as well. Hen Harrier, Merlin and Short-eared Owl frequent the moors, hillsides and estuaries, as they too have young to feed. Peregrine patrol the sea cliffs around Gribun, while family parties of Raven fill the air with their cronking calls. There are moments on this fabulous island when the sky can seem to be filled with raptors, especially eagles, so along with owls, we may come close to a double digit tally of species by the end of the trip!

Around the coast, Common Seals haul out on the offshore rocky islets and skerries, whilst the larger Grey Seals swim menacingly through the water; however much of our time will also be spent quietly seeking out some of the island's plentiful Otters. The rich rocky coastline provides a bountiful supply of food for these engaging animals and, with patience, we should be rewarded with great views, whilst Greenshank, Common Sandpiper and noisy 'kleeping' Oystercatcher; will keep us company on weedy rocks.

On one day we'll drive down the Ross of Mull, an area of surprising contrast for this small island and take the short ferry crossing to visit the stunning white shell-sand beaches and famous Abbey on Iona, where the ancient kings of Scotland were buried; the grave slabs a reminder of the island's rich history.

Here Corncrakes call from hay meadows full of wildflowers and from iris beds and gardens. With luck and some patience, we may see these

remarkable birds alongside a clear azure blue sea, but even if we only hear them, their rasping call is unmistakable.

A highlight of the holiday will be our day out on the Treshnish Isles. On the boat trip over to the islands, we'll be alert for Minke Whales and also watch out for Black Guillemot and the odd Great Skua, Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel. Long-tailed Skua is a possibility. We'll take in the island of Staffa and the astonishingly shaped basalt columns of 'Fingal's Cave', whilst listening to Mendelssohn's overture, before landing on the rocky shores of Lunga Island with its fantastic, approachable, seabird colony.

Rock Dove and Twite are here and we'll wander amongst hundreds of Puffins, green-eyed Shags, Guillemots and Razorbills on the Harp Rock. 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! Unlike some other seabird colonies, we shall be right in amongst the action and not just looking at cliffs from afar.

**7-8** On the penultimate day, we'll catch a morning ferry to Lochaline and travel inland through the majestic strath of Glencoe and over Rannoch Moor; before arriving on the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, for our last night.

In the morning we'll return you to Glasgow where we bid farewell.



## Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet in Glasgow and make our way to our base for one night on the shores of Loch Lomond.
- Days 2-6** Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of Mull, including a trip to Iona and a boat trip to the Treshnish Isles via Staffa, for Fingal's Cave and then time to explore the island of Lunga.
- Day 7** Catch the ferry to Lochaline and make our way back to Loch Lomond for 1 night.
- Day 8** Leave Loch Lomond for Glasgow

**Tim Drew:** Otter  
**Craig Round:** Landscape with divers, Hen Harrier  
**Simon Eaves:** Arctic Skua  
**Jane Hope:** Black Guillemots, Rock Dove, White-tailed Eagle



# YORKSHIRE IN SUMMER



*"I have been truly amazed and completely thrilled with what my home county offered us in 2019. The birds were amazing, but the plants and butterflies just excelled themselves!"*  
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 26 Jun - Sat 3 Jul 2021  
Price £1.795  
Deposit £350 Single Supp £250

Leader Sally Nowell

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 7

## 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 coastline and into the heart of the Yorkshire Wolds.

- Just being in Yorkshire!
- Varied habitats, coast, grassland, forest and moorland
- Comfortable accommodation and great food
- Possibility of Honey Buzzard, Turtle Dove, Bittern, Bearded Tit
- Visit Bampton RSPB seabird cliffs from above and below at the peak of activity
- 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 in particular birding. We shall be exploring a wide variety of habitats in the week ahead, from wetlands with extensive reedbeds, through coastal cliffs and estuaries and inland to some superb woodlands and the famous Yorkshire Dales.

**2-3** We shall visit RSPB Blacktoft Sands Reserve, a premier wetland with lagoons where Avocet nest on the islands and we'll look out for waders passing through. There are large reedbeds with nesting Reed and Sedge Warblers and which Marsh Harriers, once a rarity, have really made their home, so we hope

to get some great views of these fabulous birds, both here and at other sites elsewhere in the area. We may catch sight of Bearded Tit or Water Rail along the edges and Bitterns now breed here, though we would need to be lucky to see one. This is a favoured hunting ground for Barn Owl.

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 explore the town of Beverley and its magnificent Minster; an amazing feat of construction 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.

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, some of whom we may well get to observe.

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 accessing 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 we hope to get up close and personal below as we take a boat trip along the coast, weather permitting. 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 Beverley Arms, Hotel Beverley
- 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.

**Chris Piper:** Gannet, Wildflower Meadow, Little Owl, Marbled White Butterfly, Marsh Harrier  
**Frank Moffat:** Honey Buzzard



# SUMMER WILDLIFE BONANZA



*"If you want more than birds from a tour to the Highlands then this is for you. Rare butterflies, dragonflies and spectacular flowers such as Twinflower and One-flowered Wintergreen. This tour has it all."*  
Roy Atkins

Dates	Sat 3 - Sat 10 Jul 2021
Price	£1,495
Deposit	£250    Single Supp £120
Leaders	Roy Atkins 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	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 and walking poles may be useful.
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 in a small hotel on the edge of the pine forest and close to the River Spey
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 a small country house hotel on the edge of the pine forest
- The perfect holiday for the 'all-round' naturalist

Our action-packed week starts with dinner together on Saturday evening, with a chance to discuss the coming days ahead.

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 on the special Highland species of flowers, dragonflies and butterflies, 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 Common Hawker and Four-spotted Chaser, plus rare Northern Damselfly and White-faced Darter. Orchid meadows host Small White, Greater and Lesser Butterflies, 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. Large Heath and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary 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 love this trip for the variety of species that we look for. This quest takes us to some of the most beautiful locations in the Highlands, such as sitting next to flowering Alpine Speedwell with Ptarmigan croaking from the surrounding rocks. Pure magic." Roy Atkins*

Common and Parrot Crossbill now breed here. We'll also make an evening hide visit, 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 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 Rock Dove, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, 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 specialities. 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 Cairngorms 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.

8

We say our farewells after breakfast on Saturday.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive at our Victorian Villa in time for dinner and a chat about our plans for the coming week  
7 nights at The Pines House
- 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

**Roy Atkins:** Northern Brown Argus, Twinflower, Small White Orchid, **Jane Hope:** Crested Tit  
**Duncan Macdonald:** Above Loch Maree  
**Steve Dudley:** Azure Hawker  
**James Stevens:** Black-throated Diver



# THE FARNE ISLANDS



"Northumberland is one of my 'Top 10' counties in the UK - it's a cliché but it 'ticks every box'. It boasts one of the most beautiful, historic and rugged coastlines, offshore islands stacked with seabirds, rolling hills covered in forest and moorland and fantastic coastal nature reserves. Couple this with Northumbrian hospitality, a cracking hotel and great local cuisine and we have a holiday to be very proud of!" Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 3 - Sat 10 Jul 2021  
Price £1,975  
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:

Eider	auks
Manx Shearwater	Little Owl
Little Egret	Northern Wheatear
Osprey	Stonechat
Red Grouse	Tree Sparrow
Avocet	Common Crossbill
skuas	Yellowhammer
Kittiwake	Red Squirrel
Little Gull	White-beaked Dolphin
Arctic Tern	Bottlenose Dolphin
Roseate Tern	Common Seal
Little Tern	Grey Seal

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

- Full day on Staple and Inner Farne, experiencing a seabird spectacle - not to be missed!
- Day in the famous Kielder Forest for Red Squirrel, Osprey and Common Crossbill
- South of Newcastle for Common Seal, waders and wildfowl
- Beautiful coastline with long sandy beaches, jagged rocks and migrant waders
- Superb trip deep into the North Sea for seabirds and cetaceans
- A trip out to Coquet Island to see breeding Roseate Terns and Grey Seals
- A chance to 'hang out' at the superb 'Winter's Gibbet' in the Cheviots

We are based in the beautiful, historic town of Alnwick, perfectly placed to explore the wonderful scenery and fantastic wildlife of this fabulous north east county. This quaint hotel is noted for its excellent local and wholesome cuisine, with portions to satisfy the keenest of appetites. If time allows we might get a chance to venture out locally for a short walk along the disused railway, finding some of the commoner woodland species such as Whitethroat, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and possibly Garden Warbler.

**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 notable for Common Seals hauled out on the river's 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







"Seeing Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Shags and aggressive terns is astonishing, with every ledge and crevice being taken by one of these seabirds. We shall wander these small islands experiencing this arrest to the senses from sight, sound and smell. All around, large gulls look for an easy meal, as they prey on the auks, their eggs and hatchlings –this is nature. Seabird cities are special in the UK - one of our great avian spectacles. Staple and Inner Farne have them in spades!"  
Julian Sykes

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 Newcastle or The White Swan Hotel, Alnwick for a 7 night stay
- Days 2-7 Exploration of the coast, forest and moorland, including 3 boat trips for The Farne Islands, the Farnes Deepes and Coquet Island
- Day 8 We say our farewells and depart after breakfast

**James Glover:** Puffin, Bamburgh Castle, Roseate Tern  
**Simon Eaves:** Black-tailed Godwits  
**Jane Hope:** Bottle-nosed Dolphin, Red Squirrel  
**Chrissie Nicholson:** Lindisfarne Castle



# SHETLAND AND ORKNEY



"Shetland at mid-summer is a truly magical place, with some of the finest wildlife spectacles anywhere in Britain. On Orkney we'll look for Short-eared Owls and Hen Harriers amongst all the other fantastic wildlife these islands have to offer." Craig Round

Dates Sun 4 Jul - Tue 13 Jul 2021

Price £2,895

Deposit £550 Single Supp £350

Leaders Craig Round and Tim Drew

Flights Flybe, scheduled  
Outbound: Afternoon, Aberdeen-Sumburgh  
Inbound: Afternoon, Kirkwall-Aberdeen

Weather Cool to warm, usually windy with the chance of rain (10°-20°C)

Walking Easy walking with one 5 mile walk on hard tracks. Walking boots essential

Boat Trips Our Noss boat trip is 3 hours long. Our evening boat trip to Mousa is a short 15 mins crossing, but has a rocky, uneven landing. We also take some short inter-island ferries

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

Insects Biting insects are not a problem

Accom Herrislea Hotel, Shetland  
Merkister Hotel, Orkney  
Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Red-necked Phalarope	Long-tailed Duck
Whimbrel	Whooper Swan
Storm Petrel	Black Guillemot
Red-throated Diver	Arctic Tern
Hen Harrier	Common Tern
Short-eared Owl	Dunlin
Great Skua	Golden Plover
Arctic Skua	Twite
Puffin	Shetland Wren
Gannet	Rock Dove
Otter	Raven
Killer Whale	Minke Whale
Great Northern Diver	Harbour Porpoise
Merlin	Harbour Seal
Peregrine	Grey Seal

## Just 6° south of the Arctic Circle, far northern isles and incredible archaeological sites, with spectacular seabird colonies, Storm Petrels and Red-necked Phalaropes

- Two island groups 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 Hermaness, Noss and Sumburgh
- Maes Howe, Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar and Stenness
- Otters and offshore whales and dolphins
- Regular rarities and summering scarce breeders

I We fly into Shetland and drive to our hotel. At this time of year it will still be daylight when we arrive.

2-5 Fetlar, meaning 'the island of the fat land' in old Norse, is famous for the rare and confiding Red-necked Phalarope and on Loch Funzie these incredible arctic breeding waders can be found delicately spinning on the lochs surface, picking insects from the waterside stones. The tundra-like serpentine heath on the island supports outstanding numbers of breeding waders including Whimbrel, Dunlin and Ringed and Golden Plover and also breeding Arctic and Great Skua. Red-throated Divers will have young and we'll hear their weird courtship wailing from freshwater lochans. Shetland's coastline and harbours are favourite haunts of Otters and from inter-island ferries we'll see synchronised diving

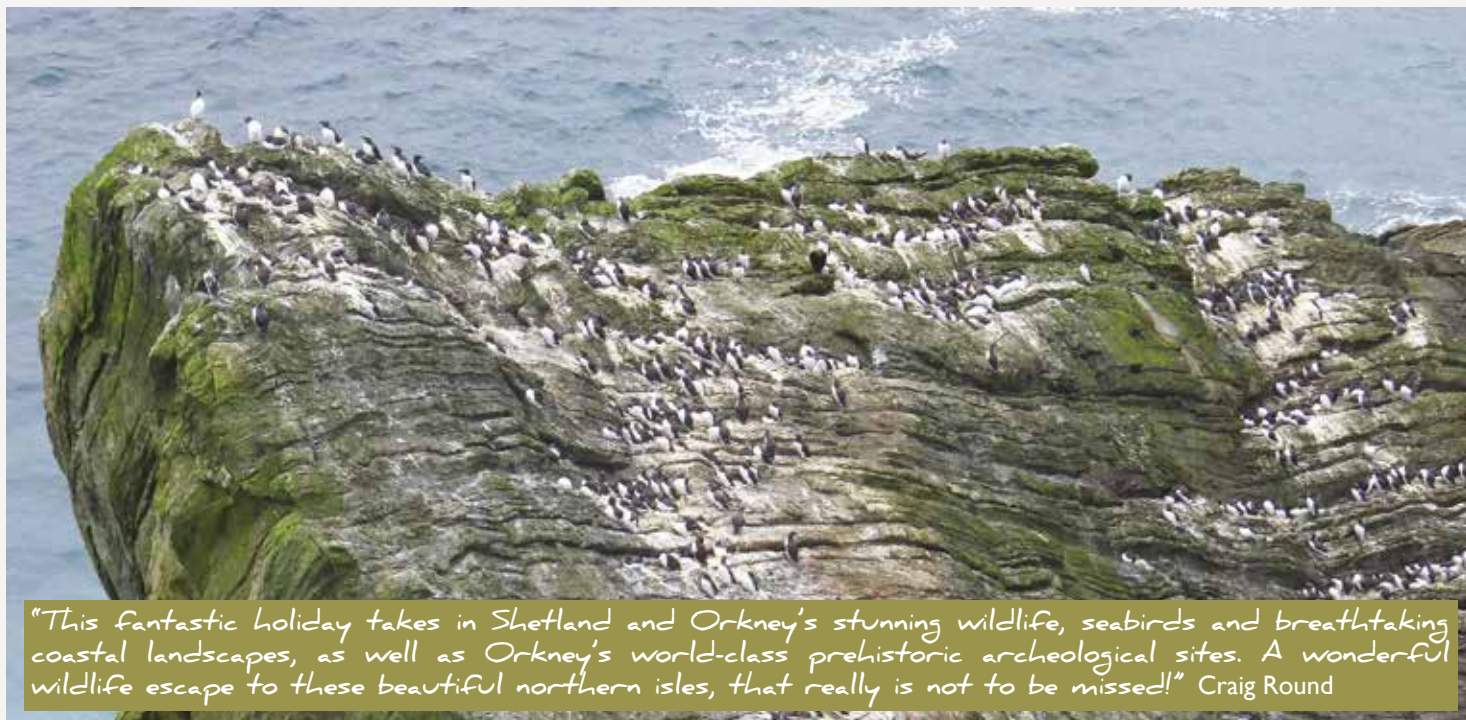
Gannets, Puffins escaping marauding Great and Arctic Skuas, Arctic Terns and streams of flying Puffin, Razorbill and Guillemot, commuting to and from their colonies to feed.

On Mainland at Tresta Voe, Loch of Spiggie and Loch of Hillwell we'll see Rock Dove and Raven, Wheatear and Twite. In recent years we've found occasional rarities such as Paddyfield Warbler, singing Marsh Warbler, Rose-coloured Starling, Hobby and Osprey and seen Lesser Grey Shrike, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Nightjar and Black-headed Bunting, Black Kite, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Red-throated Pipit and Surf Scoter. Great Northern Diver, Long-tailed Duck and King Eider all regularly over-summer and Whooper Swan breed in small numbers.

At Sumburgh Head we'll get up close with Puffins and keep a sharp eye out for cetaceans.







*"This fantastic holiday takes in Shetland and Orkney's stunning wildlife, seabirds and breathtaking coastal landscapes, as well as Orkney's world-class prehistoric archeological sites. A wonderful wildlife escape to these beautiful northern isles, that really is not to be missed!" Craig Round*

In previous years we've seen White-beaked and White-sided Dolphins, Harbour Porpoise and watched Humpback, Minke and predatory Killer Whales!

On our boat trip out around the island of Noss, we'll cruise right in under the incredible sheer seabird cliffs of the Noup, rising some 590ft above us, the largest cliffs on Shetland's east coast and home to almost 9,000 pairs of Gannet! Sheer seabird heaven! We'll also visit the island of Unst and walk out through dive-bombing colonies of Great Skuas, called 'Bonxies' in Shetland, meaning bad tempered person! Here we'll take in the breathtaking spectacle of more than 100,000 breeding seabirds, with vast throngs of noisy Gannet, Gulliemot, Razorbill, Kittiwake, Fulmar and Shag. The dramatic cliff top scenery and stunning views out to Muckle Flugga lighthouse and Out Stack are simply out of this world at this, the most Northerly point in Britain!

Finally, no trip to Shetland would be complete without a trip out in the 'Simmer Dim' of a Shetland night, to the island of Mousa, where inside the walls and stonework of the 2,000 year old iron age Broch, we are enveloped in silence, until the magical rhythmic 'churring' of tiny Storm Petrels amongst the stones brings it alive, as hundreds of these tiny ocean-going birds arrive from the sea in the gathering darkness.

**6-9** Early evening we take the eight hour ferry to Orkney - alert for Storm Petrel, Manx Shearwater, skuas, Minke Whales and

dolphins - sailing south by North Ronaldsay, Stronsay, Shapinsay, Copinsay and finally into Mainland. The softer landscape has broad coastal vistas and we'll see many Brown Hares in the pastures, with Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl quartering the moors and meadows.

The sounds of Reed Bunting and Sedge Warbler fill the air and a few elusive Corncrake sometimes occur. The seabird cliffs of Marwick Head are a delight and Skara Brae in the dunes is an absolute must - an entire prehistoric settlement with rooms and passages, beds, dressers and pottery, all exposed by a storm some 5000 years after it was built! The Standing Stones of Stenness have one stone over five metres high and the Ring of Brodgar, where 27 of a circle of 60 stones still stand, is impressive, but it's the walled, roofed chambers of magnificent Maes Howe that steal the show, along with the Tomb of the Eagles, where you can see and handle neolithic artefacts.

**10** After a morning's birding and a visit to Kirkwall, we catch our flight to Aberdeen where we say our farewells.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly into Sumburgh and drive to our hotel  
5 nights at Herrislea House Hotel
- Days 2-5** Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of Fetlar, Unst and Mainland, including night visit to Mousa
- Day 6** Take Ferry to Orkney, with wildlife watching enroute  
4 nights at the Merkister Hotel
- Days 7-9** Wildlife and archaeological exploration of Orkney
- Day 10** After a morning's birding, catch flight from Kirkwall to Aberdeen

**Craig Round:** Red-necked Phalarope, Arctic Tern, Great Skua, Storm Petrel

**Jane Hope:** Guillemots at Sumburgh Head

**Adam Moan:** Puffin

**Roy Atkins:** Gannets



# WRANGEL ISLAND



*"The cliches just keep coming 'trip of a lifetime', 'ultimate Arctic expedition cruise', 'boundless possibilities', but the astonishing reality is that we have an excellent chance of seeing lots of Polar Bears. The thought sends a tingle down my spine!"*  
Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 17 Jul - Mon 2 Aug 2021  
Price £12,445  
Deposit £2,485 Single Supp £7,350  
Price is for sharing a Superior Plus Twin cabin

Leader	Julian Sykes
Flights	Aeroflot, scheduled Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Moscow Inbound: Evening, Moscow-Heathrow Internal flights, Utair airlines Overnight, Moscow-Anadyr Afternoon, Anadyr-Moscow
Weather	Variable, may be mild and dry but also cool with showers (1°-15°C)
Walking	Easy to moderate walking on good tracks, some of reasonable length, but none too strenuous
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 17
Insects	Biting insects should not be a problem
Accom	Well appointed comfortable cabins on the ice-strengthened ship Spirit of Enderby. Holiday price is based on sharing a Superior Plus Twin cabin. Other cabin types available, please ask for details
Visa/Fees	Russia Tourist Visa required, approx £100. Must be obtained before travel in person at local visa centre. Gratuities on board are extra, approx \$15pp per day
Group	7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Polar Bear	Snowy Owl
Pacific Walrus	Snow Goose
Musk Ox	Harlequin Duck
Arctic Fox	Rough-legged Buzzard
Arctic Ground Squirrel	Sandhill Crane
Northern Pika	Tufted Puffin
Bowhead Whale	Pigeon Guillemot
Humpback Whale	Sabine's Gull
Grey Whale	Ross's Gull
Beluga Whale	Snow Bunting
Fin Whale	

A unique opportunity to join an expedition that crosses the Arctic Circle, visiting the pristine Wrangel and Herald Islands, along with the wild North East Siberian coastline.

- Polar Bears! – lots of them with a good chance of cubs
- Beluga, Humpback and possibly Bowhead Whales
- Snowy Owls on their breeding grounds
- Incredible, desolate landscape at the top of the world
- Musk Ox, Reindeer, Arctic Fox, Pacific Walrus
- Fantastic island cliffs full of breeding seabirds
- The ultimate in expedition cruising!

**1-3** Fly overnight London to Moscow then we have day rooms booked at an airport hotel. We then change airports and take an overnight flight to Anadyr, where we join our ship. However, before boarding we shall check the bay, where it's possible to find Beluga Whales close inshore, making a good start to the expedition.

**4-7** As we sail across Anadyrskiy Bay towards the Bering Strait, there will be introductory lectures and a series of compulsory briefings and drills, but we can relax and enjoy some birding and cetacean watching and settle into ship's life.

We arrive in Lavrentiya Bay the next morning and will explore the township and local museum, giving an insight into Yupik and Chukchi cultures. Sea conditions permitting, we shall land at Cape Dezhnev in the afternoon. This is the north eastern-most point of the Eurasian continent,

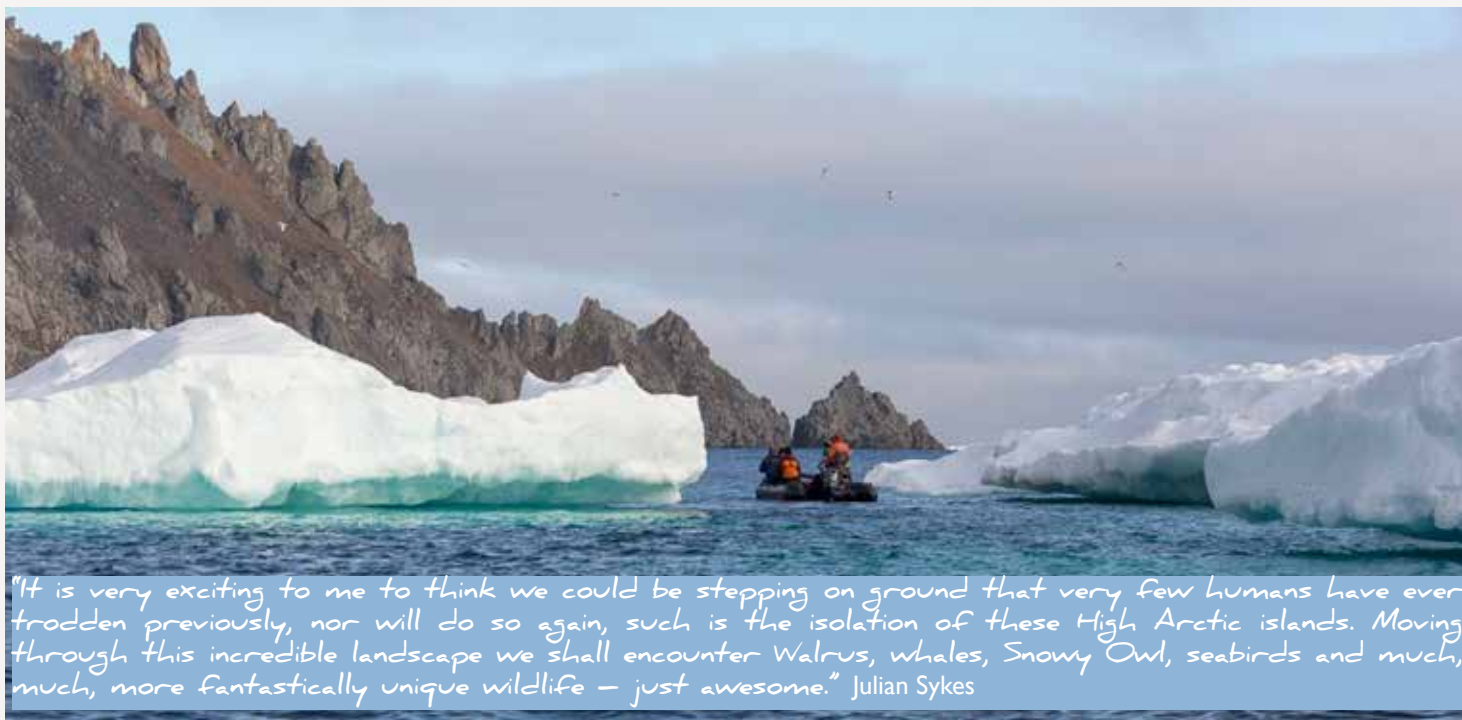
where it is sometimes possible to see the coast of America. It is also a historic landmark named after the Siberian Cossack, Semyon Dezhnev, who in 1648 became the first European to sail from the Arctic to the Pacific.

We head onwards to Kolyuchin Inlet, so huge it is visible from satellite photos! It contains vast numbers of waterfowl and migratory waders and we'll concentrate our visit on Belaka Spit near the mouth of the inlet. It is a wild, desolate landscape that is strangely beautiful. We'll search the dunes and tidal areas for rare species including Emperor Goose and Spoon-billed Sandpiper: Gray Whales frequent the area and are sometimes spotted feeding only metres offshore, with Bowheads and Humpbacks also possible, the latter sometimes in large groupings.

Later, we arrive at Kolyuchin Island; once an important Russian Polar Research Station, one







*"It is very exciting to me to think we could be stepping on ground that very few humans have ever trodden previously, nor will do so again, such is the isolation of these High Arctic islands. Moving through this incredible landscape we shall encounter Walrus, whales, Snowy Owl, seabirds and much, much, more fantastically unique wildlife – just awesome." Julian Sykes*

of a number dotted across the Arctic. Near the derelict buildings are some of the most spectacular bird cliffs in the Arctic, where Horned and Tufted Puffins, Brunnich's Guillemots and Glaucous Gulls nest. We then continue across the Chukchi Sea, with the possibility of sea ice to negotiate as we get closer to Wrangel Island. This could very well offer us our first opportunities to see Polar Bears, Larga Seals and Pacific Walrus.

**8-12** Ice and weather conditions permitting, we shall spend the next few days on Wrangel Island and will also attempt to include a visit to nearby Herald Island. There are many landings that can be made as we search out the wildlife, wild flowers and Arctic landscapes. Polar Bears will be high on our list and with a little patience we should be rewarded with several encounters, hopefully with cubs!

Musk Ox and Reindeer have been introduced to the island, though reindeer numbers remain low. Wrangel Island is a Russian Federal Nature Reserve of international significance, particularly as it is a major Polar Bear denning area. Also, each summer, thousands of birds migrate here to breed, including Snowy Owls, Snow Geese and Pomerine and Long-tailed Skuas, plus large groups of Walrus haul out on rock inlets.

**13-16** As we sail back through the Bering Strait we shall pass the Diomed Islands, sometimes called Tomorrow Island and Yesterday Isle, because they straddle the International Date Line. Here Russia and America are separated by only 2.3 nautical miles of ocean. We continue south, hugging the North

Siberian Coast. Bounded by narrow sand ridges with numerous lagoons and inlets, this area offers plenty of places to land and explore the extensive coastline. One afternoon we may visit Masik Village, an archaeological site at Mechigmen Bay which is part of Beringia National Park. This site consists of subterranean dwellings, food caches and possible ceremonial structures, where materials used in construction were whale skulls, ribs and jawbones.

Yttygran Island is home to the monumental ancient aboriginal site known as Whale Bone Alley. Whalebones stretch along the beach for nearly half a kilometre. Gray Whales are frequently seen around the island. We shall also cruise by Nuneangan and Arakamchechen Islands where seabirds nest and Walrus can be found.

On our last full day at sea, we shall be near Preobrazheniya Bay, with its outstanding 'bird cliffs' which we can cruise past by zodiac. The rock faces, ridgelines and soaring granite spires, are home to an abundance of bird life. Species that can be seen include Common and Brunnich's Guillemots, Least and Crested Auklets, Vega Gulls and Arctic Tern. Horned and Tufted Puffins are normally here in vast numbers, completing this seabird spectacle.

**17** After breakfast, back in Anadyr; it will be time to say farewell to the ship and board our flight back to Moscow, transferring airports again for the final leg back to the UK.

**Other cabin types are available; Superior Twin, Mini Suite and Heritage Suite. Please contact us for details if these are of interest.**



### Outline Itinerary

**Days 1-2** Fly overnight Heathrow to Moscow SVO, use day rooms at an airport hotel then transfer to Moscow VKO airport for an overnight flight to Anadyr

**Days 3-7** Arrive Anadyr, with maybe time to explore the town before we transfer to the ship. Sail across Anadyrskiy Bay towards the Bering Strait. Visit the Chukchi Region's administrative centre Lavrentiya. Possible landing at Cape Dezhnev. Spend time at Kolyuchin Inlet. View the spectacular bird cliffs of Kolyuchin Island. Sail across Chukchi Sea

**Days 8-12** We spend the next few days on and around Wrangel Island, with a visit to Herald Island. Polar Bears are high on the list and there should be many viewings

**Days 13-16** Visit Dragi Harbour then sail through the Bering Strait, pass the Diomed Islands, continue along the North Siberian Coast, with landings to explore the coastline. Visit Masik Village then on to Yttygran, Nuneangan and Arakamchechen Islands. Zodiac cruise past bird cliffs at Preobrazheniya Bay. Sail across Anadyrskiy Bay to Anadyr

**Day 17** Disembark in Anadyr for flight to Moscow, transfer between airports for flight to the UK, arriving late evening

**A Terauds:** Polar Bear, Arctic Fox  
**Agnes Breniere:** Wrangel Island  
**K Ovsyanikova:** Walrus, Horned Puffin, Snowy Owl



# SPITSBERGEN



"The pack ice is such an extreme environment - whiteness in all directions, with just the noise of the ship crunching its way forwards and the occasional Kittiwake... then out in all this nothingness are Polar Bears - huge predators that somehow survive in this extreme place!" Darren Rees

Dates Mon 19 - Fri 30 Jul 2021  
Standard cabin £7,695 SS £3,900  
Deposit £1,535  
Price for sharing a Standard cabin

Leader Darren Rees  
Flights Scandinavian Airlines, scheduled  
Outbound: Heathrow-Longyearbyen  
Inbound: Longyearbyen-Heathrow (overnight stay in Oslo, outbound and inbound)  
Weather Generally settled with little rain and light winds. A mixture of sun and showers (-5°-+15°C)  
Unlikely to be rough on the water  
Walking Generally easy, ½-1 ½ miles, occasionally boggy terrain and rocks. Wellingtons essential for landings, available to hire onboard. Lightweight shoes are suitable whilst onboard  
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12  
Insects No biting insects  
Accom Park Inn Hotel, Oslo Airport - double, twin and single rooms  
MV Plancius - double, twin and single cabins  
All rooms and cabins are ensuite  
Fees Gratuities on board are extra, approx EUR 5-10pp per day  
Group 11

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Polar Bear	Barnacle Goose
Arctic Fox	Pink-footed Goose
Walrus	King Eider
Bearded Seal	Long-tailed Duck
Ringed Seal	Little Auk
Harp Seal	Brünnich's Guillemot
Beluga Whale	Puffin
Minke Whale	Pomarine Skua
Fin Whale	Grey Phalarope
Svalbard Reindeer	Sanderling
Ivory Gull	Turnstone
Sabine's Gull	Purple Sandpiper
Glaucous Gull	Snow Bunting

Polar Bears (seen every time), Walrus, Beluga, Ivory Gull and millions of Little Auks in the Arctic wilderness - join us on this unforgettable cruise around the Svalbard archipelago.

- Get just 600 miles from the North Pole
- Aboard the ice-reinforced, small-group, MV Plancius
- Cruise right round the island of Spitsbergen
- Ivory Gull, Grey Phalarope and millions of Little Auks
- Arctic Fox, Reindeer and big white bears
- Ice-floes with Walrus, seals and Belugas
- Generally mild and settled weather and the sun doesn't set

Flying to Oslo, we'll stay overnight in an airport hotel

**2-10** Our flight to Longyearbyen, via Tromsø, arrives in the afternoon. Our bags will be transferred to the ship, which leaves us a short time to explore Longyearbyen, the archipelago's tiny capital. We can start the bird list: Purple Sandpiper, Snow Bunting, Glaucous Gull and Arctic Tern are all common place and we may see short-legged Svalbard Reindeer; while Arctic flowers are abundant here! Late afternoon we'll board our ship MV Plancius, an excellent, ice-reinforced modern vessel, 89 metres long, that can carry up to 116 passengers. Most days, using the ship's fleet of tough Zodiacs, we'll make safe, easy, shore landings and, in case we encounter a Polar Bear on land, which is a real possibility, we'll always be in the close company of our armed guides!



The following itinerary includes many of the likely places we shall visit, but will be influenced by weather and pack-ice conditions. Every trip is different; every trip is astonishing.

First stop may be Ny Ålesund, the world's northernmost permanently inhabited settlement, from where Amundsen and Nobile, in the airship Norge, made their flight to the North Pole. Local pools host Long-tailed Ducks, Barnacle Geese, Red-throated Divers and Arctic Terns. At the Husky pound we may encounter our first Ivory Gull! In Kongsfjorden there are dramatic glaciers, walls of ice where sections calve off and blue 'bergs' bob in the water. Grassy slopes, enriched with bird droppings, are full of fabulous arctic-alpine plants and seabirds include Razorbill, Brünnich's Guillemot and Puffin.





*"It is so hard to put into words what makes this trip so incredible - the sheer beauty of the surroundings, the feeling of being so privileged to see such special wildlife, the remoteness - this is a real adventure into a place so wild, it feels different to almost anywhere else. You have to be there!"*  
Darren Rees



Sailing into Liefdefjorden - great for Minke Whales and porpoising Harp Seals - we'll explore tundra islands at Andøya, where Common and King Eider breed, with maybe Pomarine Skua overhead. We'll cruise near the impressive Monaco Glacier, a favourite feeding spot for thousands of Kittiwakes, 'blue' Fulmars and Glaucous Gulls - and occasionally Polar Bears.

We'll head north to our first areas of pack ice, spending a day immersed in a wonderful white world like no other, reaching our northernmost point at around 81 degrees north, just 540 miles from the North Pole. Remote areas north of Hinlopen and around Nordaustlandet, may be locked in shifting pack ice, where Ringed and Bearded Seals haul out and there are great chances of seeing Polar Bears in their endless ice wanderings, often with Ivory Gulls in attendance. We may sit for several hours in the pack ice, taking in our spectacular surroundings.

We visit islands where herds of Walrus may congregate, getting close up to these huge animals as they 'sunbathe', grunting to each other. Sabine's Gulls have nested on these islands, as well as delightful Grey Phalaropes and we'll look out for delicate alpine flowers such as Tufted Drooping Saxifrage, White Arctic Bell-heather and Mountain Avenas.

Sailing into Hinlopen Strait, we'll keep our eyes peeled for whales. Fin Whales can be here in small numbers and we've also seen Blue and Humpback Whale. We'll explore the magnificent bird cliffs of

Alkefjellet, with tens of thousands of Brünnich's Guillemots and we'll scan for Arctic Fox - looking for a dislodged chick or egg.

Continuing south, we pass the islands of Barentsøya and Edgeøya, denning spots for Polar Bears. Our southernmost stop is the hauntingly beautiful fjord of Hornsund, where towering peaks show why Dutch explorers gave Spitsbergen its name - 'pointed mountains'. Here, the glaciers and shore-fast ice are great for bear encounters and Beluga Whales are a scarce but regular possibility too.

At Bellsund we should visit the spectacular cliffs at Ingerborgfjellet, where incredible numbers of Little Auk nest amongst the boulder fields, allowing close approach, their laughing cries filling the air. The tundra here is particularly lush, great for botanising and a favoured haunt for curious Svalbard Reindeer, as well as delightful Arctic Foxes.

**11** We return to Longyearbyen and make our sad farewells to our ship. We shall have the morning to explore more of Longyearbyen with its museum and galleries before our afternoon flight to Oslo, via Tromsø, where we have an overnight stay.

**12** We take a morning flight back to London.

**Standard cabin, with window - two lower beds.**

**Other cabin types are available; twin with porthole, twin deluxe with window, superior with window. Please contact us for discounts/supplements on these.**



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly to Oslo - 1 night Park Inn Hotel
- Day 2** Fly to Longyearbyen, via Tromsø, where we have some time to explore before we board our ship MV Plancius
- Days 3-10** The itinerary is dependent on the weather and where the pack ice is. We hope to circumnavigate Spitsbergen Island, heading out of Isfjorden and then north to Kongssjorden and Ny Ålesund before exploring the north coast perhaps visiting Liefdefjorden and Andøya. We may head into the pack ice north of the islands before passing through the Hinlopen Strait between Spitsbergen and Nordaustlandet. We are likely to visit Alkefjellet, Hornsund and Bellsund on our way back to Longyearbyen
- Day 11** Disembark in Longyearbyen, fly to Oslo in the afternoon, via Tromsø 1 night Park Inn Hotel
- Day 12** Fly back to London

**Roy Atkins:** Polar Bear, Grey Phalarope, Walrus, 14th July Glacier, Brünnich's Guillemot, Arctic Fox



"Etosha memories? It has to be the elephants, lions, giraffes and a parade of animals visiting water-holes throughout the day and night. I'll never forget the mother and calf Black Rhino that inched out of the darkness to take centre stage last time – I really can't wait to return." Darren Rees

**Dates** Mon 2 - Tue 17 Aug 2021  
**Price** £6,695  
**Deposit** £1,300 Single Supp £400

**Leaders** Darren Rees and Joe Grosel  
**Flights** Airline tbc, scheduled  
 Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Windhoek  
 Inbound: Overnight, Windhoek-Heathrow  
 (outbound and inbound via one stop)  
**Weather** Sunny and mild with the evenings cool  
 - occasionally cold at night  
 Rain is rare during this period (0°-22°C)  
**Walking** There will be regular short easy walks,  
 occasionally on sand dunes and  
 sometimes over rocks  
**Meals** All included from lunch on Day 2  
 to lunch on Day 15  
**Health** There is a low risk of malaria in the  
 areas we visit but please take advice  
 from your local travel clinic/doctor  
 about malaria prophylaxis  
**Insects** Mosquitoes and biting insects will  
 be rare  
**Accom** Lodges, guest houses and chalets,  
 all ensuite  
**Group** 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Lion	Kori Bustard
Cheetah	Lappet-faced Vulture
African Elephant	Verreaux's Eagle
Black Rhino	Secretary Bird
Giraffe	Damara Hornbill
Meerkat	Violet Wood Hoopoe
Heaviside's Dolphin	Crimson-breasted Shrike
Ostrich	Rockrunner

Christine Maughan: Black Rhino, Fur Seals,  
 Secretary Bird  
 Sarah Sharland: Southern Oryx on dunes  
 Callan Cohen: Lion, Kori Bustard

One of the best safari experiences, with incredible wildlife and stunning desert scenery. Red dunes, Skeleton Coast and famous Etosha NP, plus Oryx, Elephants, Rhinos and Lions.

- Red dunes of the Namib Desert
- Big game at Etosha National Park
- Floodlit water-holes for Black Rhino and more
- Rich birdlife from Ostrich to Scarlet-chested Sunbird
- Many endemics such as Damara Hornbill, Dune Lark and Herero Chat
- Fur Seal colony and dolphins along Skeleton Coast
- Great, comfortable lodges

**1-2** After an overnight flight from London, via one stop, we arrive in Windhoek. On arrival, we meet our experienced guide Joe Grosel and transfer to our hotel to freshen up and relax, before birding for the rest of the day.

**3-4** We travel south to the stunning Namib-Naukluft National Park, one of the world's most photographed desert areas, with red dunes towering 300m into the air – the perfect backdrop to striking Southern Oryx.

From the Weltevrede Guest Farm we can explore the dunes and gravel plains that support Ostriches, Mountain Zebra and Springbok, as well as a world of tiny mammals, reptiles and insects. Birds include colourful Bokmakierie, elegant Ruppell's Korhaan, huge Lappet-faced Vulture and the elusive Dune Lark.



**5-6** The road west leads us to Walvis Bay, taking us from mountains and dunes to rolling grass-covered hills, with scattered acacia and we're birding all the way, with species such as Black-chested Snake-eagle, Double-banded Courser and Pale Chanting Goshawk (last time we compared the Meerkats!).

Next, a tour highlight is our boat cruise from Walvis Bay, with the opportunity to see Cape Fur Seals, plus Heaviside's and Bottlenose Dolphins. At one of Africa's most important saltwater lagoons, expect White Pelicans, Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Kittlitz's Plover, an abundance of gulls, terns and migrant waders, plus endemic Cape and Crowned Cormorants. Inland, beyond Swakopmund, is the bewildering moon-like landscape of Welwitchia, home to primitive desert conifers, as well as Stark's Lark, Tractrac Chat and Ludwig's Bustard.





*"It's the stuff of African legend and I couldn't help but rub my eyes - striking Southern Oryx standing dwarfed by the giant red sand dunes of the Namib Desert. You have to see it!" Darren Rees*



**7** Leaving Walvis Bay, our route takes us to Cape Cross on the Skeleton Coast - a sliver of desert, renowned for winds, shifting sandbanks and rusting wrecks. It's also home to Namibia's largest Cape Fur Seal colony with 100,000 animals - attracting sharks offshore and scavenging Black-backed Jackals. Inland we head for Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain (home to Rock Hyrax, Verreaux's Eagles and Klipspringer) before our overnight stop at Uis.

**8** From Uis we cross the Ugab River that dissects an amazing, unpopulated desert wilderness, home to Violet Wood-Hoopoe, Damara Hornbill, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Hartlaub's Spurfowl and desert-dwelling Elephants! We'll arrive at Kamanjab in time to prepare for our night drive: nocturnal prizes may be Bat-eared Fox, Aardwolf, Aardvark or Brown Hyena.

**9-12** Etosha National Park is the jewel of Namibia and rivals any destination in Africa. From three bases we can explore the huge Etosha Pan, with its plentiful herds of Burchell's Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Southern Oryx and, with luck, Lion and Cheetah. During the dry season water-holes, like the one at Okaukuejo, are magnets for wildlife with Elephant, Giraffe, Kudu and Springbok visiting throughout the day.

The rich birdlife includes African Hoopoe, Grey Go-away-bird, Bateleur and Martial Eagle and Namaqua and Burchell's Sandgrouse. However, it's after dusk at the floodlit waterholes that the excitement is greatest: Double-banded

Sandgrouse come to drink, followed by ghostly Elephant and perhaps shy Black Rhino or elusive Leopard. East, at Halali and Mokuti there are Spotted Hyena, endemic Black-faced Impala and shy Damara Dik-dik. The more verdant grasslands have larger birds, such as Blue Crane, Kori Bustard, Red-crested Korhaan, Secretary Bird and a fine array of raptors. Again, after 'sundowners', exciting evenings can be spent at the waterhole!

**13-14** We travel to Waterberg Plateau Park, where 120m high, sheer orange sandstone cliffs rise above the acacia savanna. There's a high diversity of birdlife in the broad-leafed woodlands, thornbush and rocky screes: African Paradise Flycatcher, Monteiro's Hornbill, Rockrunner, Ruppell's Parrot and endemic Hartlaub's Spurfowl occur. Here we shall search for endearing Dwarf Mongoose, cackling Violet Wood-Hoopoe and Rosy-faced Lovebirds breeding in the cliff faces. In previous visits we've also seen cliff-dwelling Verreaux's Eagles.

Our extended stay here allows us one last game drive around the plateau - there's more Mountain Zebra, hopefully large Eland (the biggest of the antelope species), but perhaps the most prized animal will be the White Rhinos that find sanctuary here. It could be a grand ending to the tour.

**15-16** After an optional early morning bird walk, we breakfast, then return to Windhoek for our flight home, arriving in London on Day 16.



### Outline Itinerary

Days 1-2	Overnight flight from London to Windhoek (via one stop) 1 night Arebbusch Lodge
Days 3-4	Drive south to Namib-Naukluft National Park, birding enroute. Following day explore red dune field at Sossusvlei and desert birding 2 nights Weltevrede Guest Farm
Days 5-6	Drive to Walvis Bay birding enroute. Following day boat trip (am) and explore Swapokmund/Welwitchia area (pm) 2 nights Oyster Box Guesthouse
Day 7	Cape Cross and Skeleton Coast. Drive to Brandberg then onto Uis 1 night Brandberg White Lady Lodge
Day 8	Drive to Kamanjab and private game conservation area, includes night drive 1 night Rustig Toko Lodge
Day 9	Etosha National Park (west) Wildlife viewing from Okaukuejo 1 night restcamp in Park or just outside
Days 10-11	Etosha National Park (central) Wildlife viewing from Halali 2 nights Halali Restcamp
Day 12	Etosha National Park (east) Wildlife viewing from Mokuti 1 night Mokuti Lodge
Days 13-14	Travel to Waterberg birding enroute, followed by final game drive next day 2 nights Waterberg Restcamp
Days 15-16	Return to Windhoek for flight home, via one stop, arriving UK on Day 16



# INNER HEBRIDES



"This is going to be a real adventure. Basking Shark is our main target species on this trip, but there will be so much more to look out for both on land and sea."  
Sally Nowell

Dates	Wed 11 - Thu 19 Aug 2021
Price	£2,780
Deposit	£500    Single Supp   £425
Leaders	Sally Nowell and Kate Mennie
Weather	We can experience all the seasons during this trip and at times it can be windy and cold especially at sea, so please be prepared for all conditions and weather, with potential temperatures between (5°-25°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
Boat Trips	Be prepared for all weathers on our boat trips. Waterproof clothes including gloves are recommended. As a precaution, you may wish to bring seasickness medication with you. Toilet onboard
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9
Insects	Biting insects can be a problem at this time of year in certain conditions, so come prepared with insect repellent
Accom	Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	10
Just some of what we hope to see:	
Manx Shearwater	Hen Harrier
Storm Petrel	Arctic Skua
Gannet	Great Skua
Black Gulliemot	Basking Shark
Black-throated Diver	Bottlenose Dolphin
Red-throated Diver	Common Porpoise
White-tailed Eagle	Grey Seal
Golden Eagle	Common Seal
Corncrake	Otter
Short-eared Owl	Red Deer

This trip will take us to the outer edges of Scotland on a pelagic adventure in the hope of seeing Basking Shark, Minke Whale, Common Porpoise, Manx Shearwater and White-tailed Eagle.

- Basking Shark and Britain's cetaceans are our target species
- Venture into some of the more remote parts of the UK by land and sea
- Spend plenty of time at sea looking for shearwaters, petrels and other seabirds
- Visit the beautiful Ardnamurchan Peninsula
- Visit the islands of Rum, Eigg, Mull, Coll and Tiree
- Comfortable hotels throughout
- Convenient start time and location in Inverness

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

2 Today we take a relaxing drive alongside Loch Ness down towards Fort William on the west coast. We shall be stopping enroute to do some roadside birding and from Fort William we shall drive towards the delightful fishing village of Mallaig. We arrive in Mallaig in plenty of time for you to wander round the village, walk to the harbour and settle into our hotel.

3 We shall start the day with a short drive to Arisaig where we board our chartered boat and travel across the Sound of Sleat towards the community-owned island of Eigg and then on to the Island of Rum, the first place in the UK where White-tailed Eagles were released. As we sail we shall be scanning the oceans for fins of cetaceans, in particular Minke Whale and keeping

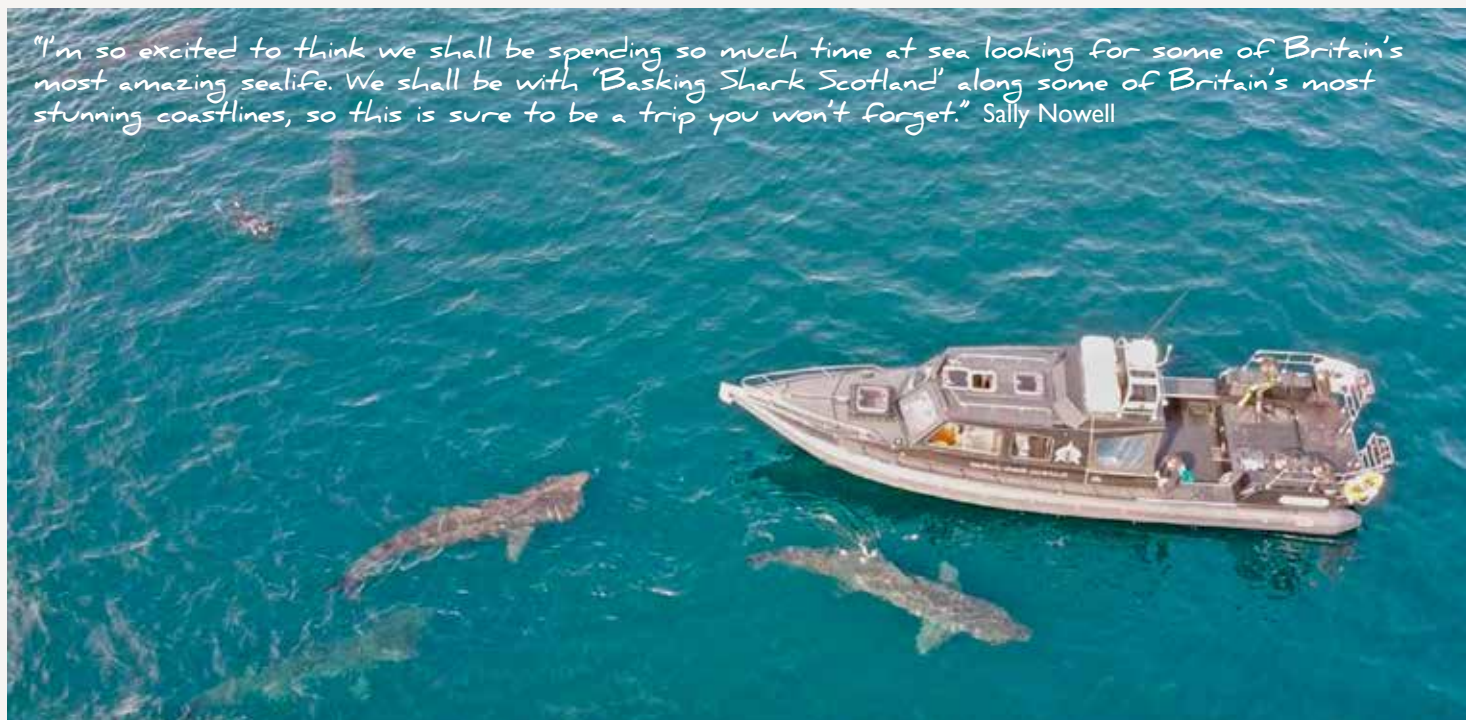
an eye on the skies for the massive wingspan of a White-tailed Eagle, as they soar over the peaks of Rum. We shall be hoping to stop off on both islands to stretch our legs.

After our day at sea, we shall be pleasantly relaxed and ready to head back to our hotel in Mallaig for dinner and a good night's sleep.

4 After a more leisurely start and breakfast, we shall begin a day's drive towards and across the Ardnamurchan peninsula. We shall stop at the stunning Sanna Bay, visit RSPB Glenborrodale and the Ardnamurchan Natural History Centre. As we drive, we shall be looking for Golden Eagle above and Otters along the shore and out to sea we might be lucky and catch a glimpse of a cetacean; Ardnamurchan can be a great place to spot Orca!! After leaving Ardnamurchan we shall weave our way down to Oban, all the time







scanning the shorelines and enjoying the stunning views this drive has to offer. We shall overnight in Oban.

**5-7** An early ferry today takes us across to the Island of Coll. Coll and Tiree are known to be some of the sunniest places in the UK, they are also some of the most remote. They are surrounded by stunning white sand beaches and are known for their peace and tranquillity. Not that easy to get to, we shall certainly feel 'away from it all' here! The air could not be clearer and the skies not much darker.

After transferring to our hotel and a briefing regarding our time onboard we shall have our first boat trip in search of the awesome Basking Shark.

Depending on weather conditions we shall head north to the offshore whale and dolphin grounds. We shall visit Common Seal colonies and look for a variety of bird species including rafts of Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrels and Arctic and Great Skuas. Shags and Cormorant colonies along the coast will be visible, along with Great Northern Divers and seaduck. We shall head south looking for Basking Sharks and Grey Seals and have a number of cetaceans on our target list which will include, Common Bottlenose and Risso's Dolphin, Minke Whale, Porpoise and if we are really lucky, we might even see Orca! We shall hope to get up close to diving Gannets in the tidal races.

Tiree and Coll both hold good populations of Corncrake and though we shall be visiting

late in the season, we shall be aiming to visit both islands on our full day's boat trip, in the hope of catching a glimpse or the sound of this bird. There are other birds here too though and we shall definitely be on the trail of the beautiful Hen Harrier. The wildflowers on both islands are legendary and there should still be evidence of some of the most healthy 'machair' in Scotland.

On our final day we shall sail to the Isle of Mull, with plenty of chances of cetacean sightings enroute. We shall also be hoping to glimpse White-tailed Eagles, as we stand good chances of great views from the sea. We arrive in the pretty harbour of Tobermory where we shall transfer to Craignure for our ferry back to Oban.

**8** We shall make our way back to Inverness, birding enroute, before spending our final night in Inverness.

**9** After breakfast we shall say our goodbyes and depart.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet at hotel in Inverness  
1 night Premier Inn, Inverness
- Day 2** Drive to Mallaig birding enroute  
2 nights West Highland Hotel, Mallaig
- Day 3** Drive to Arisaig, boat trip to Rum/Eigg
- Day 4** Travel to Oban via Ardnamurchan and Glenborrodale  
1 night Oban Bay Hotel, Oban
- Day 5** Early ferry to Coll, boat trip around the island for rest of the day  
2 nights Coll Hotel, Coll
- Day 6** Boat trip for the whole day including landing on Tiree
- Day 7** Boat trip for the day, landing at Tobermory. Evening ferry to Oban from Mull  
1 night Oban Bay Hotel, Oban
- Day 8** Drive back to Inverness  
1 night Premier Inn, Inverness
- Day 9** Depart Inverness

**Basking Shark Scotland:** Basking Shark, Basking Sharks  
**Jane Hope:** Black Guillemots, Great Skua  
**Craig Round:** Minke Whale  
**Kate Mennie:** Common and Grey Seals







"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 Sun 15 - Tue 24 Aug 2021  
Price £3,335  
Deposit £665 Single Supp £250

Leader Julian Sykes  
Flights British Airways, scheduled, Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Bilbao Inbound: Evening, Bilbao-Gatwick Second group will meet Julian in Bilbao  
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!

Fly to Bilbao and drive straight along the coast, stopping off at the excellent Santana 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.

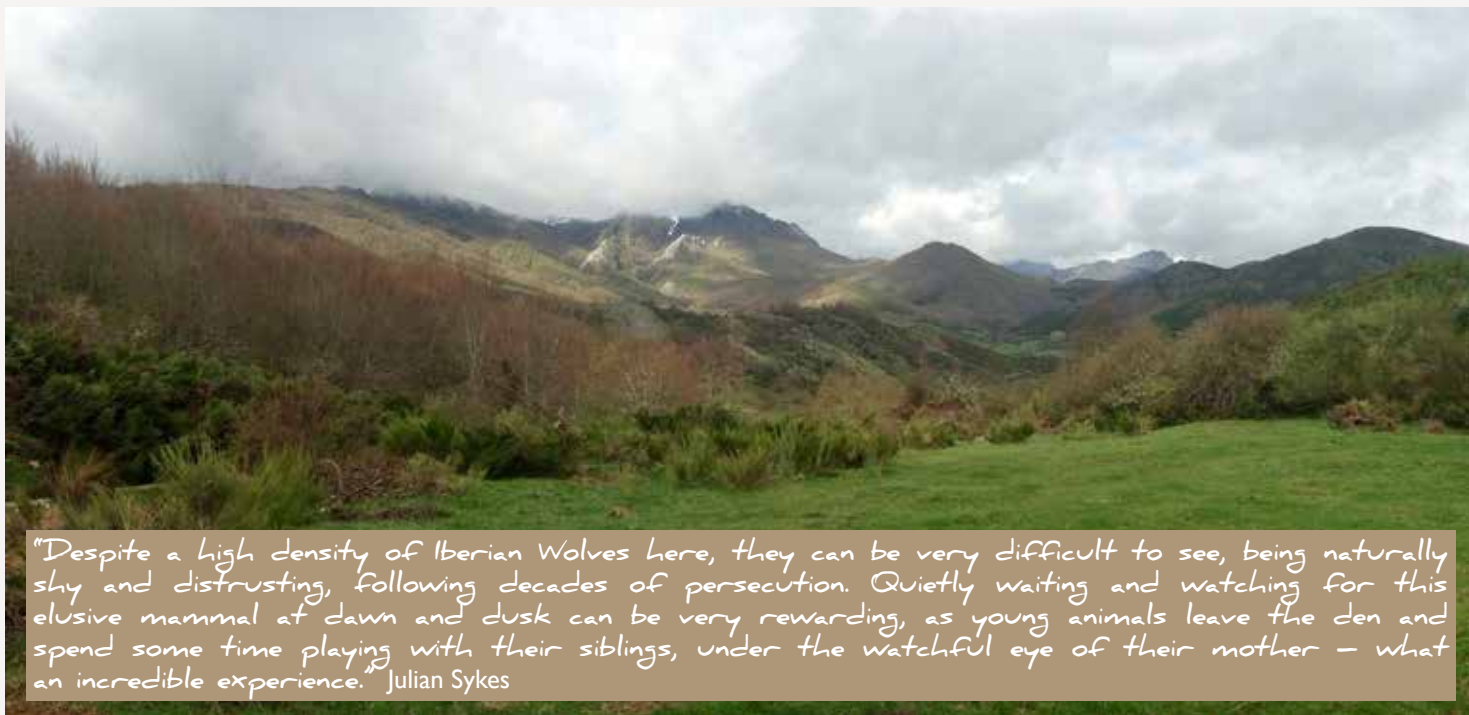


After lunch we'll continue to our accommodation in Riano, the heart of the Cantabrian mountains. Towards the end of the day we shall make our first (of many) visits to find the Iberian Wolf, which in reality takes a lot of patience and luck, however we shall be in one of the best positions to encounter 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 Hotel Castillo de Alba
- Days 6-7** Two full days searching for Cantabrian Brown Bear near Villablino
- Day 8** Transfer to our hotel in Gijón  
2 nights Hotel Asturias
- 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



# KOMODO DRAGONS



"I am thrilled to have the chance to visit this amazing area, the world's largest archipelago, as we cruise amongst the islands and coral reefs; and hope you can join me on this wonderful adventure, to see Asiatic seabirds, rare cetaceans and dragons, from Bali to Komodo NP and beyond!!" Roy Atkins

Dates Fri 27 Aug - Wed 8 Sep 2021

Price £7,095

Deposit £1,415 Single Supp £50  
(for single at hotel only)

Leaders Roy Atkins and Chas Anderson

Flights Singapore Airlines, scheduled  
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Denpasar  
Inbound: Overnight, Denpasar-Heathrow  
(outbound and inbound via Singapore)

Weather Tropical climate, usually calm and sunny but wind and showers also possible.  
Daytime temperatures 29-33°C,  
evening 25-27°C, the sea breeze keeps it feeling cooler, hot when no breeze.  
Pleasant sea temperatures for snorkelling

Walking Some short walks during island visits, inflatable tenders used to get ashore

Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to dinner on Day 12

Insects Biting insects can occasionally be a nuisance, insect repellent is recommended

Accom Mercure Bali Sanur Resort - double, twin and single rooms, all ensuite.  
MV *Mermaid* - double/twin standard cabin, double/twin superior cabin (supplement applicable), double no window cabin (reduction applicable).  
All cabins ensuite and air-conditioned

Group 13

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Komodo Dragon	Rough-toothed Dolphin
Manta Ray	Blue Whale
Melon-headed Whale	Sperm Whale
Pilot Whale	Dwarf Sperm Whale
Spinner Dolphin	Yellow-crested Cockatoo
Spotted Dolphin	Red-footed Booby
Risso's Dolphin	Brown Booby
Bottlenose Dolphin	White-tailed Tropicbird
Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	Streaked Shearwater
Fraser's Dolphin	Bulwer's Petrel

These islands become more arid the further east we go, crossing the famous Wallace's Line, where Asian wildlife gives way to Australasian, making for a very diverse selection.

- Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa and on to Komodo National Park
- Melon-headed, Sperm, Blue and False Killer Whales
- Spinner, Spotted, Fraser's and Rough-toothed Dolphins
- Brown, Red-footed and perhaps Abbott's Boobies
- Lesser, Great and possibly Christmas Island Frigatebirds
- White-tailed Tropicbirds, Bulwer's Petrel and Streaked Shearwaters
- The largest lizard in the world - the famous Komodo Dragon!

**1-2** After our overnight flight we transfer to our hotel, with a chance to relax and perhaps enjoy some birding in the grounds.

**3-4** At the bustling port of Benoa we board our exclusively chartered 28m liveaboard safari vessel, M.V. *Mermaid*. We cruise out into the Lombok Strait (which forms part of the famous Wallace Line, dividing the faunas of Asia and Australasia) looking out for cetaceans, including Sperm Whales, Melon-headed Whales and Fraser's Dolphins, plus flying fish and seabirds. Our exact itinerary will stay flexible and depends on species that we encounter. There will be opportunities for snorkelling on the coral reefs and for an island visit. Our first snorkel may be at Angel Reef, a shallow coral outcrop, packed with dense coral growths and crowded with colourful reef fishes. We continue eastward, off the north coast of Sumbawa, in search of more cetaceans, including Spinner, Spotted and Bottlenose Dolphins and

possible Blue Whale. Among the seabirds, Brown Boobies give way to Red-footed Boobies as we travel further east and other species including dainty Red-necked Phalaropes start to appear too, as we get closer to Komodo.

**5-8** Cruising through the night will bring us to the edge of Komodo National Park at dawn, which will give us plenty of time for an island visit and snorkel, perhaps at Gililawa Darat, home to Ospreys and White-bellied Sea Eagles, before continuing on to Rinca Island. This is one of the two big islands (the other being Komodo itself) which are home to the emblematic Komodo Dragon.

Landing on Rinca Island, we shall be met by Rangers from the Island Station, who will accompany us throughout our walk, firstly up the appropriately named Look-out Hill, for a view over to Komodo, then down into the scrubby woodland. Komodo Dragons nest here, with maybe a large female slumbering nearby, guarding her eggs and





*"This will be a thrilling yet relaxing trip, being looked after by the friendly crew of our 28m vessel M.V. Mermaid, as we cruise through the Indonesian Archipelago, including the famous Komodo National Park, home to the largest lizard in the world - the iconic Komodo Dragon! Seabirds can include Christmas Island Frigatebirds, White-tailed Tropicbirds, Wedge-tailed and Streaked Shearwaters, Bulwer's Petrels and Swinhoe's and Wilson's Storm-petrels." Roy Atkins*



sharing the site with Orange-footed Scrubfowls, a species of Megapode. On this walk, land birds that we haven't yet encountered could include Helmeted Friarbird, Yellow-crested Cockatoo and Blue-tailed Bee-eater.

Our next day within the National Park gives us another opportunity to cruise for seabirds and cetaceans. We can also snorkel around Komodo Island where the coral reefs are home to Octopus, Hawksbill Turtles and Blue-spotted Rays.

Back on Mermaid we'll cruise into the Linta Strait, between Rinca and Komodo, where family groups of Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphins reside. Birds here can include hundreds if not thousands of Red-necked Phalaropes, Bulwer's Petrels on their southward migration, plus Great Crested, Lesser Crested, Bridled, Black-naped, Common and White-winged Terns. At the very southern tip of Komodo Island we have the chance to snorkel with Manta Rays.

After this we may continue south, out into deeper waters of the Indian Ocean, on the lookout for more cetaceans, before heading back to Rinca Island for more encounters with Komodo Dragons, as they patrol the beach at Horseshoe Bay.

**9-11** When we finally leave Komodo National Park we shall pass Sangeang, a large volcanic island, offering more wonderful snorkelling. Among the cetaceans to encounter are Spinner, Spotted, Rough-toothed and Fraser's Dolphins, plus Melon-headed Whales. Brown Boobies become commoner as we head further west and other seabirds could include Bulwer's Petrels, Wilson's Storm-petrels, Bridled

Terns, Arctic Skuas, Pomarine Skuas, Great Crested Terns and Frigatebirds.

One of our last nights should be spent at Satonda. This classic cone-shaped volcanic island has a central crater lake. After anchoring we head ashore for a walk to the lake. Among the birds here can be Little Grebe, Wallacean Drongo, Collared Kingfisher, Brown-capped Woodpecker and Sooty-headed Bulbul, as well as Bronze Skinks and Macaques. Fruit Bats roost here, often in their thousands, commuting nightly to Sumbawa, right over our anchorage.

Satonda is also a wonderful snorkelling site and we shall enjoy one or two more coral reef snorkels as we press further westward. All the time we shall be looking out for whales, dolphins and seabirds.

At the very end of our cruise we again sail along the Wallace Line back to Bali. During our final evening on board, we shall enjoy a chance to relive our exciting encounters during a farewell dinner. Our exact docking time at Benoa port will depend on tides, but may happen during the night.

**12-13** After our final breakfast onboard and sad farewells to the Mermaid crew, we shall transfer to the international airport in good time for our evening flight back to the UK.

**Superior cabin supplement: £800 per person**  
**No window cabin reduction: £400 per person**

## Outline Itinerary

**Days 1-2** After an overnight flight to Denpasar, we stay in a nearby hotel  
1 night at Mercure Bali Sanur Resort

**Days 3-11** In Benoa, Bali we board our comfortable boat, for nine nights.  
We slowly work our way eastwards, cruising out into the Lombok Strait, looking out for whales and dolphins, flying fish and seabirds, heading towards Komodo National Park.  
There will be opportunities for snorkelling on the coral reefs and for island visits.  
We plan to have three full days within the Komodo National Park. There will be time within the Park to see the impressive Komodo Dragons and other wildlife. We shall snorkel on some of the superb coral reefs and hope to encounter Manta Rays.  
We then travel on back along the coast of Sumbawa, with plenty more time for whale and dolphin watching and snorkelling, arriving back in Bali during our last night aboard.

**Days 12-13** We disembark at Benoa port and transfer to the international airport, ready for our overnight flight back to the UK

**Chas Anderson:** Komodo Dragon, Manta Ray, Melon-headed Whales, landscape, Red-footed Booby, Spotted Dolphins, Short-tailed Shearwater



# NOVA SCOTIA



"The ideal combo for the perfect week watching wildlife? Try a morning with the bright warblers, vireos and flycatchers on Brier Island, followed by an afternoon in the company of truly awesome Humpbacks in the Bay of Fundy. You can't beat it!"  
Darren Rees

Dates Sat 28 Aug - Sun 5 Sep 2021

Price £3,850

Deposit £750 Single Supp £500

Leaders Darren Rees and Simon Eaves

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	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Northern Right Whale	Boreal Chickadee
Fin Whale	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Minke Whale	Cedar Waxwing
White-sided Dolphin	Red-eyed Vireo
Great Shearwater	Northern Parula
Sooty Shearwater	Black-throated Green Warbler
Wilson's Storm Petrel	Black-and-white Warbler
Bald Eagle	Blackburnian Warbler
Hooded Merganser	American Redstart
Killdeer	Ovenbird
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	Common Yellowthroat
Least Sandpiper	Northern Waterthrush
Short-billed Dowitcher	Eastern Chipmunk
Red-necked Phalarope	Beaver
Grey Phalarope	
Belted Kingfisher	

Get close-up with Humpback Whales, plus a 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 boreal forests running down to beautiful rocky shores
- Canada's Eastern Maritimes, only six 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!

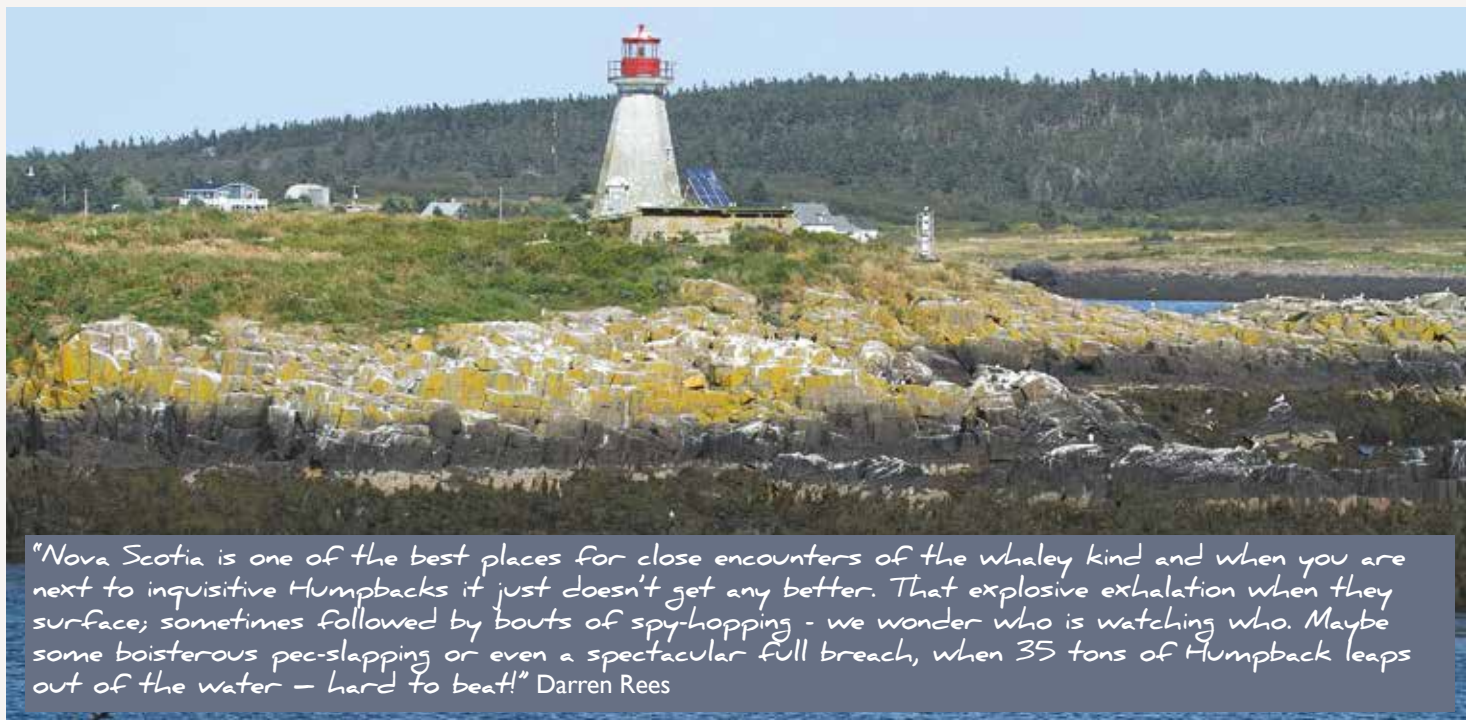


We'll take three boat trips from Brier Island to see these magnificent mammals, two half-day trips and one longer 'survey' trip. The sea is likely to be calm, though boat trips are always weather dependent and we'll get close to big numbers of seabirds along with the great whales!

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 are curious animals and often approach the boat spy-hopping when we wonder who is watching who. They also 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







*"Nova Scotia is one of the best places for close encounters of the whale kind and when you are next to inquisitive Humpbacks it just doesn't get any better. That explosive exhalation when they surface; sometimes followed by bouts of spy-hopping - we wonder who is watching who. Maybe some boisterous pec-slapping or even a spectacular full breach, when 35 tons of Humpback leaps out of the water - hard to beat!" Darren Rees*

around the boat, but it will be enigmatic Northern Right Whales that we'll celebrate most over and we'll 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 Northern Parula, American Redstart and Black-and-white, plus Black-capped Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Elsewhere, in the lichen encrusted tamarack and spruce forests, we may see some of the specialties 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, Wood and Ring-necked. Finally, we arrive at Halifax for our evening flight, arriving back in the morning of Day 9.



## Outline Itinerary

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Day 1</b>    | Fly London to Halifax arriving mid-afternoon. Drive 2.5 hours to Digby for early evening meal<br>Final 1.5 hour transfer to base at Brier Island - 7 nights Brier Island Lodge                               |
| <b>Day 2</b>    | First boat trip out from Brier Island  |
| <b>Day 3</b>    | Exploration of Brier Island including Northlight and Pond Cove areas   |
| <b>Days 4-7</b> | 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 |
| <b>Days 8-9</b> | 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, Mega Nova boat  
**Roy Atkins:** Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers



# AN ORKNEY ODYSSEY



"We watched in awe as the setting sun create glowing colours over the great cliffs of Hoy amongst the Gannets and Bonxies and then as it sank below the waves, we saw the mythical 'green flash'. It was all so fleeting, but that moment has stayed with me and gives me a great big smile inside."  
Tim Drew

Dates Sat 28 Aug - Mon 6 Sep 2021

Price £2,375

Deposit £450 Single Supp £350

Leaders Tim Drew and Craig Round

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

**Walking** Walking will generally be very relaxed and easy. On one of the days there is the option of walking to the Old Man of Hoy, which is a 5½ mile fairly easy return walk along a well maintained footpath. On some days walking will be minimal.

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

**Insects** Biting insects should not be a problem

**Accom** Double, twin and single ensuite rooms

**Group** 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

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

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

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

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

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

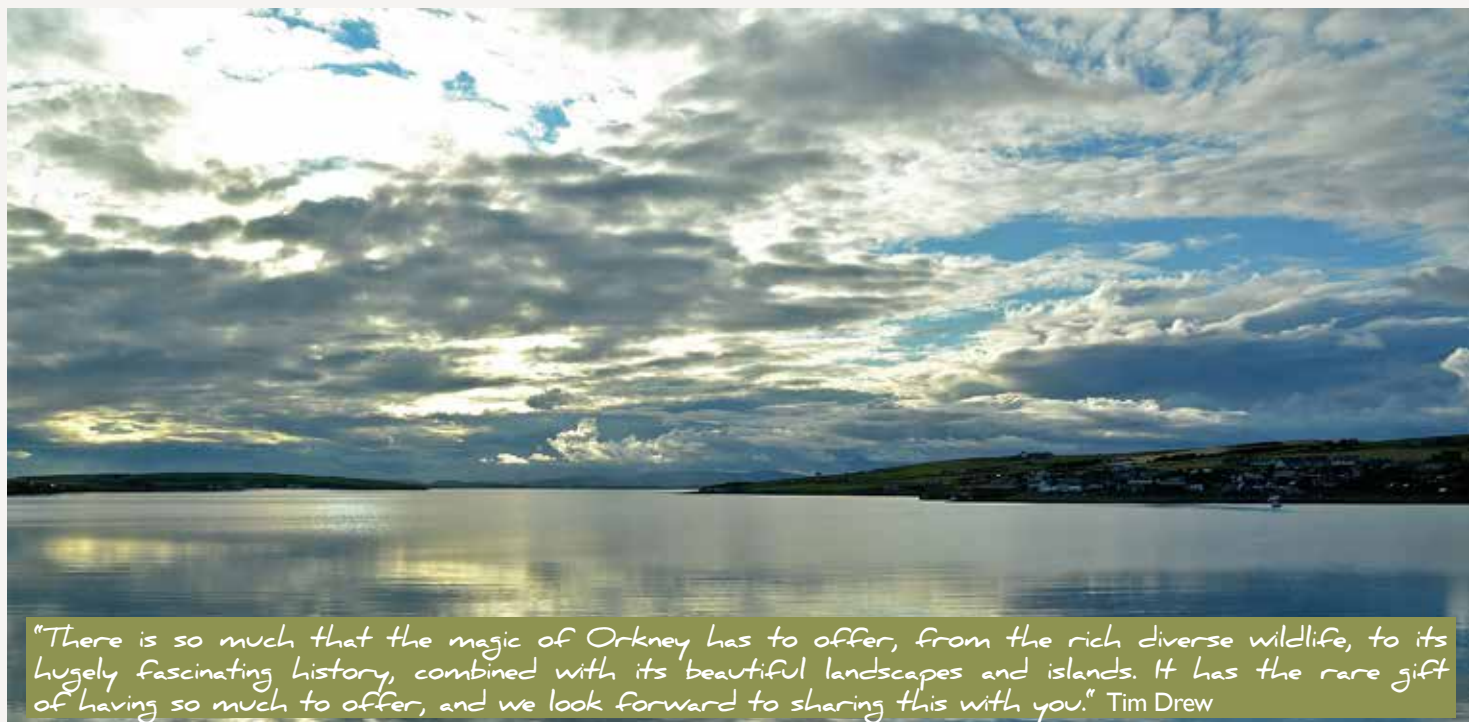
The crossing, on a large modern, fully equipped ferry, takes us across The Pentland Firth, famous for its tidal race and its wildlife and we'll look out for cetaceans, Storm Petrel, Manx Shearwater, skuas and dolphins with Sooty Shearwater and

Grey Phalarope possible at this time of year. The ferry passes the impressive cliffs of Hoy and we shall get a sneak preview of the Old Man of Hoy, prior to visiting it later in the week. We land at the picturesque harbour of Stromness, where the great author George Mackay-Brown lived.

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







*"There is so much that the magic of Orkney has to offer, from the rich diverse wildlife, to its hugely fascinating history, combined with its beautiful landscapes and islands. It has the rare gift of having so much to offer, and we look forward to sharing this with you." Tim Drew*

Any visit to Orkney would not be complete without including the many astonishing archaeological treasures the islands are so famous for. Several are exceptional, including Maes Howe - a Neolithic chambered cairn and passage grave built around 2800BC and still in excellent condition. Perhaps the most famous is Skara Brae - Europe's most complete Neolithic village, consisting of eight clustered houses, occupied around 3180 to 2500BC.

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

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

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

Like our Westray trip, our visit to Hoy is also a first for Speyside Wildlife. There is a half hour ferry crossing to Orkney's most 'mountainous' island and we shall cross with the minibus - with eyes to the skies for the possibility of Great Skua, or gigantic White-tailed Eagle which now breeds on Hoy.

The newly refurbished Scapa Flow Museum, dedicated to the history of Scapa Flow during the two world wars, is worth visiting and we'll make the half mile walk out to the Dwarfie Stone, a megalithic chambered tomb carved from a titanic block of old red sandstone. There is also the optional walk to the Old Man of Hoy, who needs no introduction!

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

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

**10** After breakfast we say our farewells.



### Outline Itinerary

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

**Craig Round:** Great Skua, Short-eared Owl  
**Chris Brookings:** Scapa Flow  
**Jane Hope:** Black Guillemots  
**Tim Drew:** Golden Plover, Sanderling



# RAPTORS OF THE HIGHLANDS



*"Raptors quicken the pulse with their power, grace and precision. From the diminutive Merlin to the massive White-tailed Eagle, we shall go in search of them all."*  
Kate Mennie

Dates	Sat 4 - Sat 11 Sep 2021
Price	£2,095
Deposit	£400    Single Supp £300
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Leader	Kate Mennie
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. Bring repellent
Accom	Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite or with private facilities
Boat trip	The boat trip off Mull will be in relatively sheltered waters
Group	7
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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 to find 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 Forest, exploring remote areas,





*"What a tour! The best of the Cairngorms National Park as well as beautiful Mull, with its numerous eagles. If you have a passion for raptors then this is for you." Kate Mennie*



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 leave for the Island of Mull. Our journey will take us past Loch Laggan, before passing beneath the towering bulk of Ben Nevis to Fort William. We continue south, along Loch Linnhe to the harbour town of Oban from where we shall catch our ferry. We should encounter both Common and Arctic Terns from the ferry and there is always the chance of Harbour Porpoise or Common Dolphin.

Once on Mull we shall explore the best the island has to offer. The scenery on Mull is spectacular, with high mountains, sea cliffs, rocky shore and estuary. Mull is famous for raptors, particularly both species of eagle, with one of the highest breeding densities of eagles anywhere in Europe.

Golden Eagles and White-tailed Eagles could turn up anywhere, but we know some great locations and have enjoyed remarkably close views regularly. We shall explore the dramatic cliffs at Gribun for

Peregrine and Raven while through the moorlands and estuary edge we hope to encounter Hen Harrier, Merlin and Short-eared Owl. As well as raptors, Mull has a large population of Otters and we shall scan the sea lochs for these endearing mammals, where Common and Grey Seals haul themselves out onto the rocks.

One of the highlights of our stay on Mull will be an exclusive trip on a comfortable boat to look for White-tailed Eagles. They can be seen very close from the boat and we may see the birds gliding in to pick fish off the surface, potentially giving great photo opportunities. We may also encounter dolphins and other marine animals and birds.

**7** On our return from Mull we take a smaller ferry to the Morvern peninsula. This is a little visited part of the Highlands and we could easily encounter more eagles as we make our way through rugged country to Loch Sunart and the Corran Ferry.

We shall arrive back in Speyside in time for our evening meal, followed by coffee and a look back over the week.

**8** After breakfast on Saturday we say our farewells.



## Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in the Cairngorms National Park  
3 nights at Tigh-na-Sgiath Hotel
- Days 2-3** Search for raptors and other wildlife  
in Speyside, including Strathdearn and  
Abernethy Forest
- Day 4** Travel to Mull via Fort William  
and the ferry from Oban, birding  
and looking for raptors enroute  
3 nights at The Tobermory Hotel
- Days 5-6** Search for raptors and wildlife amidst  
stunning scenery on Mull, including  
the Gribun Cliffs and a boat trip  
for White-tailed Eagle
- Day 7** Travel back to the Cairngorms,  
via Ardnamurchan and the Corran Ferry  
1 night at Tigh-na-Sgiath Hotel
- Day 8** Depart after breakfast

Colin Scott: White-tailed Eagle, Osprey  
Jane Hope: Strathdearn, Goshawk  
Chris Brookings: Great Northern Diver  
Craig Round: Otter





*"You will love our hotel in the Carpathians. Beautiful views, great birds and delicious food. The forests nearby hold Brown Bears and our experience with these awesome animals will be a magic moment."*  
Sally Nowell

Dates	Sat 4 - Mon 13 Sep 2021
Price	£3,495
Deposit	£695    Single Supp £250
Leaders	Sally Nowell and Ecotours guide
Flights	British Airways, scheduled Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow - Bucharest Inbound: Afternoon, Bucharest - Heathrow
Weather	Should be very pleasant temperatures around 15°-30°C with a chance of showers, will be cooler in the mountains
Walking	Easy walking up to two miles on good tracks. The walk in Zarnesti Gorge is steadily uphill and rough in places
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 10
Insects	Mosquitos can be a nuisance, especially in the Delta so bring repellent
Accom	Twin and single ensuite rooms
Group	12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Brown Bear	Levant Sparrowhawk
Dalmatian Pelican	Long-legged Buzzard
White Pelican	Grey-headed Woodpecker
Pygmy Cormorant	Syrian Woodpecker
Black Stork	Black Woodpecker
Great White Egret	Alpine Swift
Purple Heron	Nutcracker
Squacco Heron	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Little Bittern	Sombre Tit
Ruddy Shelduck	Golden Oriole
Ferruginous Duck	Pied Wheatear
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 Sopslik
Hobby	

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
- Impressive Brown Bears 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 and driver at Bucharest Airport before driving the short distance to our hotel for the first night.

**2-4** After breakfast we drive to our hotel in the Carpathian Mountains. Enroute we shall pass the highest mountain in Romania, Omul Peak. At over 8,000 metres it looms over the surrounding, forest-clad landscape.

Breaking our journey may provide us with opportunities to look for Crag Martin, Black Redstart and raptors overhead. Our accommodation is perfectly positioned for exploring the magnificent Zarnesti Gorge and the beautiful Stramba Valley where we shall look for Honey Buzzard, Lesser-spotted Eagle, Red-backed Shrike, Nutcracker and Middle-spotted Woodpecker. Butterflies are in profusion and there are chances of Black and Grey-headed Woodpeckers also.



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. Ravens and Red Fox are also attracted, as are Wolf occasionally.

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.





*"The Danube Delta is a vast expanse of channels, lakes and woodland absolutely stuffed with birds. From our blissfull floating hotel we shall be amazed by the number of pelicans, herons, Marsh Terns, Glossy Ibis, White-tailed Eagles, Hobbys and so much more." Sally Nowell*



**5-6** We travel down to the Black Sea coast, stopping on the way. The wetlands of Histria and Vadu offer fabulous birding 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. We shall search out the impressive Pallas's Gull here. Lesser Grey Shrike, Roller, Golden Oriole 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 Souslik, 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!

**7-9** 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. Red-footed Falcons are migrating through, 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!

**10** 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, drive to our nearby hotel  
1 night Hotel Vienna House
- Days 2-4** Travel to our scenically located hotel. Birding in the Southern Carpathian Mountains and gorges including the beautiful Stramba valley, plus an evening visit to a bear watching hide  
3 nights Villa Hermani, Zarnesti
- Days 5-6** 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 Hotel Mondial, Sinoe
- Days 7-9** 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 10** Return to Bucharest for our flight to the UK

**Stephen Batt:** Brown Bears, Booted Eagle, Squacco Heron, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Bran Castle  
**Attila Steiner:** White Pelicans



# BRITISH COLUMBIA



*"Does it get any better than this? Watching three species of whale, two species of bear, plus Sea Otters and lots of other fabulous mammals and birds, in some of the most beautiful scenery – this is a joy of a trip that is, in my opinion, on a par with Yellowstone for excitement."*  
Julian Sykes

Dates Thu 9 - Thu 23 Sept 2021  
Price £5,900  
Deposit £1,180 Single Supp £1,000

Leaders Julian Sykes and Simon Eaves  
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 10

## 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 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.





*"Looking back at the wonderful sightings I have had on this trip - from Orcas right under the boat to breaching Humpback and Grey Whales, hundreds of Pacific White-sided Dolphins, some exceptional birding, thousands of Sooty Shearwaters and Red-necked Phalaropes and of course those exceptional close up Grizzly and Black Bears - I can't wait to be back!" Julian Sykes*



**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, heading across by boat to a picturesque inlet, where guides will take us to purpose-built viewing platforms. 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 in 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
- 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

**Roy Atkins:** Grizzly Bear, Heermann's Gull  
**Christine Maughan:** Humpback Whale, Sea Otters  
**Julian Sykes:** Orcas  
**Stephen Batt:** Rhinoceros Auklet



# SOUTH WEST IRELAND



"South West Cork in mid-September sees bird migration in full flow and with the right winds tracking across the North Atlantic, literally anything could turn up and we shall do our best to connect with something out of the ordinary." Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 11 - Sat 18 Sept 2021  
Price £2,695  
Deposit £500 Single Supp £400

Leader Roy Atkins  
Flights Aer Lingus scheduled  
Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow-Cork  
Inbound: Morning, Cork-Heathrow  
Weather Can vary enormously, expect sun and showers, with temperatures of 10°-20°C. It may be cooler round the coast and can be very windy, but we may get an 'Indian Summer' with a warm spell and sunshine  
Walking Will generally be very relaxed and easy, but some coastal walks may be a bit more rugged underfoot, with steeper sections, so bring walking boots  
Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8  
Insects Unlikely to be a big problem at this time of year but bring repellent in case  
Boat trips Excellent boat with a toilet on board and a spacious wheelhouse with passenger seating  
Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite, apart from Cape Clear Island where some rooms share facilities with one other room  
Group 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Fin Whale	Sooty Shearwater
Minke Whale	scarcer shearwaters
Common Dolphin	Storm Petrel
other cetaceans	Black Guillemot
Chough	American waders
Peregrine	Grey Phalarope
Hen Harrier	Ring-billed Gull
Short-eared Owl	Yellow-browed Warbler
Merlin	common and rarer
skuas	autumn migrants

With its rugged coastlines and colourful villages, West Cork is a beautiful destination, with fabulous birding in autumn and the chance of mighty Fin Whales!

- Two boat trips to search for mighty Fin Whales with chance of other cetaceans too
- Beautiful scenery around the south and western Irish coast
- Great seabirds with a variety of shearwaters, skuas, petrels and other species possible
- Visit Reserves on the south coast for exciting waders, ducks, raptors and migrants
- Chough, Peregrine, Hen Harrier, Black Guillemot, Sooty Shearwater, Storm Petrel
- Stay on the famous Cape Clear Island - with a great chance of finding rarities
- Plenty of bars with traditional Irish music and great craic!

**1-2** Arriving at Cork Airport we head to Kinsale, where we are staying for two nights. We'll spend the following day around the Old Head of Kinsale where Chough is likely, as well as raptors such as Peregrine, Merlin, Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl. We'll scan the seas for passing seabirds as Manx and Sooty Shearwater may be passing and perhaps scarcer shearwaters and Storm Petrels or skuas. We'll check 'The Plantation', a small patch of trees good for migrants, with the chance of Yellow-browed Warbler or perhaps Pied Flycatcher or Firecrest if we are lucky - but much scarcer species have also turned up here, so if the winds are right anything could happen!

**3-4** The estuary at Clonakilty can hold a good mix of waders at this time of year and we'll search through flocks of Dunlin,

Redshank, Black and Bar-tailed Godwits, Curlew and other species to see what is amongst them. Spotted Redshank, Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint are likely, but we'll be alert to the chance of something from America! North American waders can get blown right across the Atlantic as they head south and an astonishing number of vagrants have occurred, including White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers and Lesser Yellowlegs, while Pectoral Sandpiper are annual. We'll also check through the flocks of ducks and any gulls, as Mediterranean Gull is regular here now and Yellow-legged and Ring-billed Gulls have occurred many times.

Many of the same species are likely at Rosscarbery Estuary and we may find big flocks of Knot and Golden Plover here (we'll check for American Golden Plover amongst them), plus Sanderling,







"At the south-western tip of Europe, this part of Ireland boasts great wildlife, including the immense Fin Whale, villages full of character and abundant bars overflowing with traditional music and great craic. A stop to kiss the Blarney Stone will enable recitation of the memories of the trip with humour and wit." Roy Atkins

Ringed Plover and Greenshank. Little Egret is regular here and the whole area can be good for raptors. If time permits we may get out to Galley Head, where again migrants can sometimes include scarce species.

**5** We head to Baltimore from where we'll take a boat trip in search of mighty Fin Whale! The second largest animal on the planet somehow eluded detection in these waters for a long time, but they have become a regular sighting here now and dedicated boat trips take you out in the hope of connecting with this sleek whale. They are a fast-moving whale, but in good feeding areas you can get fabulous views of these and sometimes a variety of other cetacean species too. Minke Whale may often be feeding in the same areas and Common Dolphins too - even Humpback Whale is possible and several other cetacean species have been seen. Where there is food for whales expect a variety of seabirds too, such as shearwaters, Gannets, skuas and petrels and at this time of year there is still a chance of Cory's or Great Shearwater and Wilson's Petrels have been seen amongst the Stormies!

Our boat trip will drop us off on the famous Cape Clear Island with its Bird Observatory. We shall be staying for two nights on the island.

**6** Cape Clear Island will need no introduction for many birders, for whom its reputation for astonishing rarities is well known. The list of rarities found here rivals the Scillies, with an array of American birds including warblers, vireos and

tanagers. Although peak time for rarities can be October, September can be superb for migration with plenty of scarce species amongst the more common birds passing through and all sorts of rarities have turned up in this month. Choughs, Ravens and Peregrines are along the coast and sea-watching can be exceptional, with a good chance of Grey Phalarope at this time of year. We cannot take our vehicle over, so we shall be walking the quiet lanes whilst checking gardens, small plantations and the coastline.

**7-8** We'll enjoy more birding on the island before being collected for our second boat trip in search of more cetaceans and seabirds, providing a second chance to look for Fin Whales, or whatever else might be out there! We overnight in Baltimore and after our evening meal we'll reminisce about the highlights of the trip, before heading back to Cork for our flight home the next morning - making a stop at the famous Blarney Stone on the way. Kissing the stone endows you with the 'Gift of the Gab' - Blarney being said to be 'flattery sweetened by humour and flavoured by wit' - so who wouldn't want to be endowed with that!



### Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Fly from Heathrow to Cork and drive to Kinsale. Full day birding around Old Head of Kinsale  
2 nights Actons Hotel, Kinsale
- Days 3-4** Birding around Clonakilty and Rossbarry Estuaries  
2 nights Celtic Ross Hotel, Rossbarry
- Days 5-6** Whale watching boat trip from Baltimore then head over to Cape Clear Island, followed by full day birding on the island  
2 nights Cape Clear Cottages  
We have two self catering cottages, each have one double ensuite room and two single/twin non-ensuite rooms
- Day 7** More birding on the island, then whale watching boat trip back to Baltimore  
1 night Casey's of Baltimore
- Day 8** Travel back to Cork, pausing to kiss the Blarney Stone enroute, for flight back to London

**Craig Round:** Minke Whale  
**Wikipedia:** Cape Clear Island  
**Mary & David Braddock:** Sooty Shearwater, Black Guillemot  
**Simon Eaves:** Chough, Common Dolphin





"Mighty whales and cute critters, including adorable Sea Otters; huge-winged California Condors, whacky woodpeckers and dainty hummingbirds. Lots of my favourite things on one tour!"  
Darren Rees

Dates	Sat 11 - Sun 26 Sep 2021
Price	£6,550
Deposit	£1,300    Single Supp    £1,500
Leaders	Darren Rees and David Wimpfheimer
Flights	British Airways, scheduled Outbound: Morning Heathrow-San Francisco Inbound: Overnight San Francisco-Heathrow
Weather	Warm (20°- 30°C) but can be cooler at sea and in the mountains
Walking	Maximum of 2-3 miles on easy trails. Walks from our bases at Yosemite and Mono Lake may involve some at altitudes above 8000ft. These will be on well maintained paths at an easy pace but please consult with your GP if you think this may be an issue
Meals	All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 15
Insects	Occasional, but not a nuisance
Accom	Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Blue Whale	Burrowing Owl
Humpback Whale	California Quail
Risso's Dolphin	Black Oystercatcher
Sea Otter	Black Turnstone
Northern Elephant Seal	Wandering Tattler
Black Bear	Surfbird
Black-footed Albatross	Nuttall's Woodpecker
Buller's Shearwater	Acorn Woodpecker
Pink-footed Shearwater	White-headed Woodpecker
Black Storm Petrel	Yellow-billed Magpie
Rhinoceros Auklet	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
California Condor	Wrentit
Bald Eagle	California Thrasher
White-tailed Kite	California Towhee
Prairie Falcon	
Great Gray Owl	

Spectacular California, the most varied state in America, with wildlife to match! Includes the Monterey coast, Yosemite National Park, boat trips and hawk-watching at the Golden Gate.

- Monterey Bay for whales and dolphins
- Shearwaters, Storm Petrels, albatrosses and pelagic species
- Condors and Sea Otters along the Big Sur coastline
- Yosemite National Park's granite cliffs and giant Sequoias
- Phalaropes, grebes and desert birds at scenic Mono Lake
- Migrant shorebirds at Point Reyes Seashore
- Hawk-watching at the Golden Gate, San Francisco

**1-5** In September, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary has fantastic numbers of whales, dolphins and birds and we've two boat trips lined up: our first day-long voyage will focus on the huge variety of seabirds in the area – these include Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, plus Ashy, Black and Fork-tailed Storm Petrels to name a few. Amongst the thousands of Sooty Shearwaters we shall look for Buller's and Pink-footed Shearwater and, with luck, a Black-footed Albatross may sail across our wake. The boat operator has pioneered pelagic birding tours from Monterey, with over 30 years' experience, so they'll make sure we won't miss a thing!

Our second half-day whalewatch may include Humpback Whale, Orca, Dall's and Risso's Dolphins, or even mighty Blue Whales.



Elsewhere, fantastic California Condors are now back and soaring over Pinnacles National Monument. We'll look for these, the largest bird in North America, in this inspiring landscape of volcanic spires and chaparral. Golden Eagle, Canyon Wren and Phainopepla are also present and west coast specialities include Yellow-billed Magpie, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Oak Titmouse, Wrentit, California Thrasher and Lawrence's Goldfinch.

Birding the beautiful Big Sur coastline south of Monterey, we'll look for species found along the rocky shores, such as Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Surfbird and Wandering Tattler. Stars of the show are sure to be the delightful California Sea Otters, that frequent the tangle of kelp beds in the coves and bays.







*"A land of superlatives and such variety, with the wild coastline of Big Sur and Point Reyes; the desert beauty of Mono Lake and the eastern Sierras; and the grandeur of Yosemite National Park. California has the lot." Darren Rees*

**6-8** We visit famous Yosemite National Park after the Labor Day crowds and we've two full days to enjoy this stunning landscape. We'll search for Red-breasted and Williamson's Sapsucker and Black-backed, White-headed and Acorn Woodpeckers, amongst many others. If we're lucky, we may encounter Coyote, Black Bear or Great Gray Owl, but perhaps the natural landscape will be the highlight – the giant Sequoia trees have to be seen to be believed and then there are the spectacular waterfalls and the mighty granite peaks of Half Dome and El Capitan.

**9-11** Beyond Yosemite we climb from the Merced River at 2500ft to almost 10,000ft at Tioga Pass, where birds of the high mountain include Mountain Chickadee, Blue Grouse, Townsend Solitaire, Clark's Nutcracker and Steller's Jay; arriving at Lee Vining, next to Mono Lake, for the next three nights.

Mono Lake may be referred to as the Dead Sea of California, but it's anything but – this rich ecosystem is a vital staging post for huge numbers of migrant birds: tens of thousands of grebes and phalaropes share the water with a billion brine flies! The setting is remarkable, with the dramatic Sierra Nevada as backdrop, rising abruptly from the arid sagebrush of the Great Basin. A different avifauna awaits here, with Pinyon Jay, Sage Thrasher, Lewis's Woodpecker, Green-tailed Towhee and Mountain Bluebird. At Bridgeport Lake, there are big numbers of wildfowl, that attract Bald Eagles as well as Prairie Falcons and we're sure to visit

the historic deserted town of Bodie – the miners and townfolk have long gone, but the Sage Grouse remain!

**12-14** Our final base is the wild Point Reyes National Seashore, a renowned migration hotspot. We'll explore the estuaries, windswept beaches, coastal grasslands and thickets, that have made this a world famous preserve. There is a large staging of Western and Least Sandpipers and coastal scrub should hold Chestnut-backed Chickadees, California Quail, California Towhee and migrant passerines such as Hutton's Vireos and Hermit and Townsend Warblers.

Our last full day will be at the Marin Peninsula, north of San Francisco and the aptly named Hawk Hill. Raptor migration is at a peak and, given favourable weather conditions, large numbers of accipiters, buteos, harriers and falcons pass south over Golden Gate Park. Amongst the Merlins and Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, we may encounter Swainson's or Ferruginous Hawk. If the winds are wrong, we'll still have the view over the iconic Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco!

**15-16** On our last morning, we'll have a half-day tour of San Francisco – the city by the bay, before we return to the airport for our late afternoon flight, arriving in the UK on Day 16.



### Outline Itinerary

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Day 1      | Fly to San Francisco, transfer to Monterey<br>5 nights Best Western Monterey Inn       |
| Days 2-5   | Wildlife exploration in and around Monterey and Big Sur coast with two boat trips      |
| Day 6      | Transfer to Yosemite National Park<br>3 nights Yosemite Valley Lodge                   |
| Days 7-8   | Wildlife exploration around Yosemite National Park                                     |
| Days 9-11  | Transfer to Mono Lake<br>3 nights Lakeview Lodge                                       |
| Day 12     | Transfer to Point Reyes<br>birdwatching enroute<br>3 nights Tomales Bay Resort         |
| Days 13-14 | Wildlife exploration around Point Reyes  |
| Days 15-16 | Half-day visit to San Francisco, then flight to UK, arriving back in morning of Day 16 |

**Mary Braddock:** Sea Otter  
**Mark Denman:** California Condor, Acorn Woodpecker  
**Darren Rees:** California Quail, Mono Lake  
**Roy Atkins:** Humpback Whale



# THE BRAZILIAN PANTANAL



"Iguazú Falls is surely the most spectacular waterfall in the world. Not as many people come for the superb birding – yet the trails nearby can hold a fabulous array of species, from toucans and tanagers to hummingbirds and manakins – it is a wonderful place!"  
Roy Atkins

Dates Thu 30 Sep - Thu 14 Oct 2021  
Price £7,400  
Deposit £1,480 Single Supp £700

Leaders Roy Atkins and local guides

Flights Latam, scheduled  
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Sao Paulo  
Inbound: Overnight, Sao Paulo-Heathrow  
Internal, local airlines: Sao Paulo -Cuiabá-Foz do Iguaçu-Sao Paulo

Weather In the Pantanal it is the dry season, but there could be showers. Temperatures could be around 30°C but are not entirely predictable and can sometimes be chilly in the early morning and very hot at midday (20°C at night to max of 36°C during day). Iguazú is in an area of rainforest, so showers can be expected, with temps around 25°C, (18°C at night to max 30°C during the day) but again unpredictable

Walking Pantanal walks will be on easy forest trails with some birding and evening drives from open vehicle and Jaguar watching from boat trips on the river. In Iguazú, the walkways at the waterfalls are wide and elevated, built on metal grid plates with solid handrails and some steps. We shall also be on wide forest trails that, depending on rains, might be muddy

Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 14

Insects There will be biting insects in some of the areas visited, so repellent is essential

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Jaguar	Red-legged Seriema
Giant Otter	Toco Toucan
Brazilian Tapir	Plush-crested Jay
Giant Anteater	Sungrebe
Hyacinth Macaw	Greater Rhea
Jabiru	Black-collared Hawk

Good chance of Jaguar in this famous seasonal wetland, plus Giant Otters, Brazilian Tapir and with luck, Giant Anteaters too - and Hyacinth Macaw - the biggest parrot in the world!

- Jaguars! Your best chance of seeing this stunningly beautiful big cat
- The incomparable Iguazú Falls with fabulous views - we spend two days here
- Around 300 species of birds likely, plus many mammals
- Watch Great Dusky Swifts as they come to roost behind a curtain of water
- Hyacinth Macaws - the biggest and perhaps most beautiful parrot in the world
- Brazilian Tapir, Giant Otter, Capybara and with luck - Giant Anteater
- Toco Toucan, Red-legged Seriema, Jabiru, Southern Screamer and lots more

**1-2** After an overnight flight we arrive at Sao Paulo early in the morning. We then take an onward flight to Cuiabá, arriving in time for lunch. Well fed, we drive to our delightful lodge in the Chapada dos Guimaraes, looking out for parrots, macaws and toucans along the way. We should have time to sample the excellent birding around the lodge before sunset.

**3** The dry savannah, with gnarled trees of the Chapada dos Guimaraes National Park, provides a complete contrast to the coming Pantanal - and a completely different selection of birds. Amongst many species special to this area we hope to find Peach-fronted Parakeet, Red-shouldered Macaw, Curl-crested Jay, Cliff Flycatcher, Guira Cuckoo, Black-faced Saltator, Shrike-like Tanager and with luck Horned Sungem! Red-legged Seriema, South America's answer to the Secretary Bird,

is possible here, as are gorgeous Campo Flickers, various macaws and there is always the chance of an Armadillo!

**4-6** After more birding in the Chapada, we drive towards the famous Pantanal - a vast area of seasonal wetland covering roughly 142,500 sq. kilometres - bigger than England!! As the flood waters dry up, the huge flocks of birds are concentrated around the remaining water and we'll pause to enjoy spectacular mixed flocks of herons, egrets and ibis, plus Roseate Spoonbill, Maguari and Wood Storks, Rufescent Tiger Herons, Limpkin and enormous Jabiru. Snail Kites, Savannah Hawks and Black-collared Hawks are common and we'll look out for Whistling and Capped Herons and Sunbittern. Large-billed Terns and Black Skimmer fish in the channels, White-headed Marsh-Tyrants perch on wires, rare







*"The masses of birds around some of the shrinking pools as we travel the Transpantaneira have to be seen to be believed – you have never seen so many Jabiru in your life – along with hundreds of egrets, Roseate Spoonbills, Limpkins and Wood Storks, with Snail Kites and Black-collared Hawks and dozens of Yacare Caiman on the banks - it is truly spectacular!" Roy Atkins*

Marsh Deer are possible and there'll be astonishing numbers of Yacare Caiman.

This whole area is worth exploring, with an impressive bird list including Nanday Parakeets, Chestnut-eared Araçari, Golden-collared Macaw, Bare-faced Curassow and stately Greater Rheas among many others. Dryer areas covered in termite mounds provide our best chance for Giant Anteater and we hope to see Brazilian Tapir and other mammals such as Crab-eating Fox or Collared Peccary.

**7-9** We move on to the end of the road and Porto Jofre, where raucous Hyacinth Macaws feed around our lodge, but our big target here is that most mythical and enigmatic of cats - the Jaguar! During the dry season, this beautiful cat can frequently be found along the scrubby river banks and it will be with baited breath and crossed fingers that we take four boat trips along the Cuiabá River, where chances are high, especially now that the boats are all in radio contact. Keep your cameras at hand, as even if no Jaguars appear, there is plenty of other wildlife to keep us happy - Giant Otters, Capybara and plenty of birds including Sungrebe, Pied and Collared Plovers, Great Black Hawk, White Woodpecker, Orange-backed Troupial, Vermillion Flycatcher and enormous Southern Screamers! At dusk, spectacular Greater Bulldog Bats and Band-tailed Nighthawks skim the water.

**10** We bid farewell to the Pantanal and drive back to Cuiabá, birding enroute.



**11-13** Our early flight takes us to Foz do Iguaçu (Brazil), where we cross the border into Argentina. We'll visit a fabulous hummingbird garden, where feeders attract Black Jacobin, Guilled Sapphire, Purple-crowned Woodnymph, Versicolored Emerald and Planalto Hermit, amongst others. Over the next two days we'll enjoy myriad colourful birds in Iguazú's rainforests - trogons, manakins, noisy flocks of parrots and parakeets, antwrens, antshrikes, toucans, woodpeckers and tanagers just for starters!

Iguazú Falls are 1.7 miles long and considered by many the most spectacular collection of waterfalls in the world!! Numerous islands divide it into between 150 and 300 separate waterfalls depending on the flow - with half the river's flow falling into a single long, narrow chasm called the Devil's Throat. This spectacle can be enjoyed from different walkways reached by road and a narrow-gauge railway and we shall have plenty of time to take it all in. Plush-crested Jay are tame here and around picnic sites we may be very close to Southern Coati and Tufted Capuchin Monkeys - hold onto your sandwich! At sunset, we hope to witness Great Dusky Swifts dive through the foaming water to roost behind the falls - an incredible sight.

**14-15** We take an afternoon flight to Sao Paulo to connect with the flight back to London, arriving in the afternoon of Day 15.



### Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Overnight flight to Sao Paulo, then onward flight to Cuiabá and transfer to Chapada dos Guimaraes  
2 nights Pousada Quinta dos Quintais
- Days 4-6** Transfer to Transpantaneira.  
Two full days wildlife watching in this excellent area - great birding plus perhaps Tapir and Giant Anteater  
3 nights Pousa Alegre
- Days 7-9** Transfer to Porto Jofre.  
Boat trips on the river in search of the big cat, Giant Otter and birds  
3 nights Hotel Porto Jofre
- Day 10** Transfer to Cuiabá  
1 night Hotel Taina
- Days 11-13** Morning flight to Foz do Iguaçu.  
Visit Iguazú Falls. Two full days in the area with superb birding  
3 nights La Cantera Jungle Lodge
- Days 14-15** Afternoon flight to Sao Paulo then flight back to UK, arriving Day 15

**Roy Atkins:** Jaguar, Transpantaneira Wetlands, Sungrebe  
**Evelyn Moorkens:** Toco Toucan  
**Jean & Chris Parrott:** Giant Otter, Hyacinth Macaws

# AUTUMN WILDLIFE IN THE CAIRNGORMS



*"The Highlands are at their most picturesque in autumn, with fresh snow on the mountains and the birch leaves golden. What a great backdrop for Red Deer, Golden Eagles, migrating geese and us."*  
Craig Round

Dates Sat 2 Oct - Sat 9 Oct 2021

Price £1,645

Deposit £300 Single Supp £200

Leader Craig Round

**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 in to the Cairngorms to see Ptarmigan, therefore it will 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 and walking poles helpful

**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 in a small hotel on the edge of the pine forest and close to the River Spey

**Group** 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Golden Eagle	Rock Dove
White-tailed Eagle	Crested Tit
Ptarmigan	Scottish Crossbill
Black Grouse	Snow Bunting
Capercaillie	Red Squirrel
Pink-footed Geese	Pine Marten
Long-tailed Duck	
Scaup	
Common Scoter	
Velvet 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 to start the holiday, is followed by coffee and a run through the coming week.

**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 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.







*"This tour is all about spectacle. The roaring of stags echoing through a valley, thousands of returning Pink-footed Geese, Golden Eagles honing their skills, Fieldfares and Redwings pouring in from Scandinavia. It is my favourite time of year, anything can happen!"* 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 - a walk into the foothills will bring us in to their domain

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 go out 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 - 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 time for dinner and a chat about our plans for the coming week.  
7 nights at Kinross Guest House
- 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  
**Roy Atkins:** Loch Garten  
**Sue & Bill Gill:** Ptarmigan  
**James Stevens:** Snow Bunting  
**Craig Round:** Whooper Swans  
**Jane Hope:** Red Grouse  
**Mary Braddock:** Crested Tit



# ISLES OF SCILLY



"On the trip last year we saw some great birds with an eclectic mix of species including Wryneck, Firecrest, Honey Buzzard, Spotted Crake and Red-eyed Vireo but it was the quality of views and the time we can afford to spend with each bird which makes this place really special. Even though this will be my 9th visit to the islands I still can't wait to go back." Simon Eaves

Dates Sat 2 - Sat 9 Oct 2021  
Price £1,995  
Deposit £350 Single Supp £350

Leaders Simon Eaves and Darren Rees

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





*"Every autumn visit to the Scilly Isles is completely different and that's one of the things I really love about the islands. The excitement of not knowing what you might see each day, or where on the islands you might end up, makes every day interesting. Aside from the birdwatching, just walking around a wonderfully scenic, peaceful and friendly place makes this one of my favourite places in the country." Simon Eaves*



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 - in 2019 some birds we saw included Wryneck, Red-eyed Vireo, Red-backed Shrike, Short-toed Lark, Red-throated Pipit (among other things.)

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!

**8** 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, Jacksnipe, Wryneck  
**Duncan Macdonald:** St Mary's  
**Steve Osborne:** Firecrest  
**David Constantine:** Yellow-browed Warbler



# EAST YORKSHIRE



*"Yorkshire is fast becoming one of the best wildlife watching counties in the UK! With Reserves such as Blacktoft, Spurn and Bempton Cliffs, there's great birding throughout the year."*  
Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 9 - Sat 16 Oct 2021  
Price £1,895  
Deposit £350 Single Supp £250

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	Water Rail
Winter thrushes	Red-throated Diver
Redstart	Pink-footed Goose
Bearded Tit	Velvet Scoter
Marsh Harrier	Scarce migrants such as..
Sooty Shearwater	Yellow-browed Warbler
Pomarine Skua	Red-Backed Shrike
Little Gull	Ring Ouzel
Jack Snipe	Rose-coloured Starling
Spotted Redshank	Firecrest
Black Redstart	Wryneck
Barn Owl	Lapland Bunting
Little Owl	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Short-eared Owl	
Woodcock	

An excellent chance to visit birding hotspots and witness the autumn migration. Thousands of birds on the move - from waders and warblers, to pipits, thrushes and seabirds - and rarities too!

- Visit Yorkshire's autumn migration hotspots - Spurn, Flamborough and Filey
- Visit key Yorkshire birding sites such as Blacktoft Sands and Bempton Cliffs
- Yellow-browed Warbler; Red-Backed Shrike, Red-Breasted Flycatcher and Wryneck
- Visit Wildlife Artist Robert Fuller's gallery in the stunning Yorkshire Wolds
- See ringing first hand at a Spurn Bird Observatory demonstration
- Take a 4x4 trip to the end of famous Spurn Point
- Great accommodation and Yorkshire hospitality with 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** The Yorkshire coast at this time of year is a thrilling place!! Thousands of birds are on the move and to witness this mass migration as birds head south along the coast is a wonderful experience. 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 - or with luck - very rare indeed!!

East Yorkshire has become renowned as the place to witness autumn migration and has several sites from which to experience this massive annual movement of birds. Spurn Point is perhaps the most famous - its unusual shape acting as a funnel,

which concentrates birds as they move towards the point. Whilst this can be weather dependent, the birding here can be astonishing, with large numbers of common migrants such as pipits, thrushes, finches, Robins and Goldcrests and often plenty of scarcer species too, with double figure numbers of Yellow-browed Warblers and the chance of species such as Richard's Pipit, Firecrest, Wryneck, Shorelark, Lapland Bunting and more. What is more, we shall get an insight into how research on migration is carried out and see birds in the hand, with a ringing demonstration at Spurn Bird Observatory.

We shall also cast our eyes seawards as, at this time of year, Filey Brigg and Flamborough Head provide excellent seawatching opportunities. We'll look out for Manx and Sooty Shearwaters, Arctic, Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas, divers and flocks of seaduck and geese. Like Spurn, these





"Autumn is a great time of year to visit East Yorkshire. We shall be slap bang in the middle of some of the UK's migration hotspots, so will have everything crossed for some exciting birding!" Sally Nowell



sites can also be the first landfall for high numbers of birds, with thrushes and Bramblings 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 rarities necessarily, 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 warblers, whilst looking out for gems including Pallas's and Dusky Warbler.

Yorkshire has some fabulous Reserves and habitats, wetlands, cliffs, forest, coast and estuarine marsh. We'll visit Blacktoft Sands, where the wetlands and reedbeds are superb at this time of year. Wader passage will include common species such as Dunlin, but should also include Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Ruff. Marsh Harriers hunt over the reeds, where 'pinging' flocks of Bearded Tits can be seen and if we are very lucky, perhaps a Water Rail or Bittern will appear.

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

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 also introduce you to some newer and less well known, but equally impressive, birding hot spots on our daily outings.

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 David Hockney's recent 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. His paintings sell all over the world and his trademark, highly-detailed images, have been adopted by the RSPB and the National Trust.

8 After breakfast on our final day we say our farewells. You may wish to extend your holiday by spending time in one of Yorkshire's historic towns such as York or Beverley, 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, Beverley
- 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 Robert Fuller Art Gallery
- Day 8** After breakfast we say our farewells

**Chris Piper:** Marsh Harrier  
**Julian Sykes:** Spurn Point, Hobby  
**Roy Cowley:** Gannet  
**Mark Denman:** Red-backed Shrike  
**Roy Atkins:** Spotted Redshank  
**Tim Drew:** Yellow-browed Warbler



# ALLADALE WILDERNESS RESERVE



*"A truly amazing opportunity for a small group to stay on the spectacular Alladale Wilderness Reserve, acknowledged by National Geographic as one of the best six places to rediscover nature in 2021." Sally Nowell*

Dates Sat 9 - Sat 16 Oct 2021  
Sat 23 - Sat 30 Oct 2021

Price £2,750

Deposit £550 Single Supp £200

Leader Sally Nowell

Weather During a typical week in autumn we would expect to experience mixed sun and showers, with temperatures in the range 5-25°C. It can be wet and windy or we can be lucky and have lovely warm weather, warm layers including an effective waterproof jacket and trousers are advised. Hats and gloves are also recommended

Walking We shall take regular but short walks, generally on easy tracks over even ground, but occasionally on rougher paths of between 1-5 miles. Walking boots are strongly recommended. Bring walking poles if you think these would be helpful

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

Group 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

White-tailed Eagle	Black Guillemot
Golden Eagle	Gannet
Hen Harrier	Great Skua
Peregrine	Snow Bunting
Black-throated Diver	Pomarine Skua
Red-throated Diver	Arctic Skua
Slavonian Grebe	Bottlenose Dolphin
Whooper Swan	Grey Seal
Long-tailed Duck	Otter
Common Scoter	Red Deer
Scaup	Red Squirrel

This is a privileged experience you will never forget. An autumn spectacular in the remote Northern Highlands, to immerse ourselves in the some of the best wildlife Scotland has to offer.

- Stay in the midst of the Red Deer rut
- Based in Alladale Wilderness Reserve
- Luxurious accommodation at remote Alladale Lodge
- Visit the Moray, Cromarty and Dornoch Firths
- Great opportunities for Golden and White-tailed Eagles
- Experience true wilderness, with no sound or light pollution
- Visit the fascinating Scottish Wildcat Project

1 After your journey to Inverness we shall meet at our hotel to talk about the week ahead and enjoy our first meal together.

2 After breakfast we make our way to a local Reserve along the banks of the Moray Firth, looking for Kingfisher; Water Rail, resident waders and seaduck. We shall also be looking out for Otter and Bottlenose Dolphin. Depending on the tide times we shall move on to Chanonry Point, surely one of the best places in the UK to see dolphins feeding. Here we have the largest Bottlenose Dolphins in the world; they frequently come in close to shore as the tide rises, to catch salmon as they move up the Firth.

We shall have lunch enroute and then in late afternoon will start to make our way to the fabulous Alladale Lodge, where we shall be spending our next five nights.

We arrive at Alladale in time to acquaint ourselves with our accommodation and settle in, before enjoying a meal in our splendid dining room. Depending on the weather, we shall sit outside one night around the open fire, listening to the bellow of the Red Deer stags and enjoying the otherwise silent night. On clear nights we should have spectacular skies with no light pollution for miles.

3 This is a real escape into the depths of the remoter part of the Scottish Highlands and the hills in autumn can look quite magical.

On our first morning after breakfast, we shall be taken by the Alladale team out by Land Rover onto the Reserve. We shall hear about the innovative approach to land management and restoration taking place on this spectacular piece of land. Once a hunting Estate, now this 100 square kilometre Wilderness Reserve is ours to explore.





"Just driving up the road to Alladale is a thrill, but being based in this remote Lodge during the Red Deer rut is going to be unforgettable." Sally Nowell



Along with hundreds of deer, also resident in beautiful Glen Mor are Golden Eagle and White-tailed Eagles are regular visitors.

We shall lunch out on the Estate and have a chance to hear about the Scottish Wildcat Project, run by the Royal Zoological Society but supported by Alladale. This captive breeding programme to establish a viable population of Scottish Wildcat, includes two male and two female cats and with luck, some kittens may be around at this time of year as well.

**4-6** Over the next days we shall be visiting some of the best local birding hotspots. In October we stand good chances of some excellent seawatching, with possible Manx and Sooty Shearwater, Pomarine Skua, Red and Black-throated Diver and Slavonian Grebe. In the shelter of the firths wintering ducks may have arrived, such as Long-tailed Duck and Common Scoter.

Geese will also be arriving from further north, so we'll hope for large numbers of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese and with luck even rarities such as Snow Goose can turn up. Whooper Swans will be arriving, as well as other winter visitors such as Brambling, Redwing and Fieldfare.

We shall visit Udale Bay and Loch Fleet, where large numbers of Eider gather; also Tarbet Ness and some of the small coastal towns along the wild Sutherland coasts. Often at this time of year Snow Bunting can be found along the shores and we may stand chances of early Glaucous and Iceland Gull amongst the mixed gull flocks.

Over on the west coast a spectacular drive will take us into Otter and White-tailed Eagle territory. Eyes will be on the skies and water's edge as we head towards Ullapool and Gruinard Bay. Great Northern Divers and Black Guillemot in their beautiful winter plumage can be present here.

We shall also spend more time on the Reserve, this time on foot, again looking and listening for Red Deer in combat on the high-sided valleys, where we might see Black Grouse. Red Deer can be remarkably trusting at Alladale and they too come around the building. Red Squirrels frequent the feeders outside the Lodge, giving some great photo opportunities. If time allows we may visit the delightful town of Dornoch and its ancient Cathedral.

**7** Sadly we shall be leaving Alladale this morning after breakfast. We shall stop enroute at the famous Glenmorangie Distillery and return via Udale Bay and the Cromarty Firth, back to our hotel in Inverness in time for dinner.

**8** After breakfast we shall say our goodbyes and depart.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet at our hotel in time for dinner  
1 night at Palace Hotel & Spa, Inverness
- Day 2** Visit local Inverness Reserve and on to the Black Isle, before heading to Alladale  
5 nights Alladale Lodge, Sutherland
- Day 3** Spend time exploring Alladale Reserve by Land Rover
- Days 4-6** Explore the Sutherland and north west coast wildlife watching
- Day 7** Leave Alladale travelling to Inverness, via Glenmorangie Distillery  
1 night at Palace Hotel & Spa, Inverness
- Day 8** We say our farewells

**Jane Hope:** Red Deer, White-tailed Eagle  
**Roy Atkins:** Golden Eagle  
**Mary Braddock:** Red Squirrel  
**Pete Helme:** Wildcat, Drawing Room  
**Max Milligan:** Alladale Lodge



# FORTH 'N' FIFE



*"From migration at Fife Ness, waders on the lagoons at Musselburgh, raptors on the mountains and moors, to Beaver in Perthshire, this holiday has a mix of everything – just superb!"*  
Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 16 - Sat 23 Oct 2021  
Price £1,795  
Deposit £350 Single Supp £250

Leader Julian Sykes

Weather Can be extremely variable at this time of year, so come prepared for everything 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	Whimbrel
Great Northern Diver	Great Skua
Slavonian Grebe	Pomarine Skua
Red-necked Grebe	Mediterranean Gull
Manx Shearwater	Little Gull
Sooty Shearwater	Short-eared Owl
Whooper Swan	Water Pipit
Taiga Bean Goose	Common Redstart
Brent Goose	Yellow-browed Warbler
Velvet Scoter	Barred Warbler
Surf Scoter	Firecrest
Long-tailed Duck	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Marsh Harrier	Twite
Golden Eagle	Corn Bunting
Red Kite	Lapland Bunting
Peregrine	European Beaver
Purple Sandpiper	European Otter
Curlew Sandpiper	Red Squirrel
Little Stint	
Spotted Redshank	

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
- The rolling mountains of Perthshire for raptors

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, 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 and 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,





"In 2018 we were rewarded with an American White-winged Scoter amongst Velvet Scoters, Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes, Little Gulls offshore and an unexpected drake Ferruginous Duck, but one of the real highlights was our impromptu visit to The Kelpies – fantastic 30m high heads of water horses on the edge of the Falkirk canal." Julian Sykes



sometimes in impressive numbers, with a possibility of a Great Northern Diver as well.

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 Pipits. 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 sea wall 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 shall 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 shall 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  
**Morag Rea:** Mixed Wader Flocks, Kelpies  
**Julian Sykes:** Taiga Bean Geese, Pink-footed Geese, Velvet Scoter  
**Duncan Macdonald:** European Beaver



# ISLAY AND JURA IN AUTUMN



*"Wildlife nestled in every corner of these unique islands, from sheltered coastal bays to large expanses of heathland, with hunting raptors and geese galore."*  
Kate Mennie

Dates Sat 16 - Sat 23 Oct 2021  
Price £1,945  
Deposit £350 Single Supp £275

Leader Kate Mennie

Weather Autumn in The Hebrides can be anything from gloriously calm and sunny to quite cool, wet and windy, with weather quickly changeable.  
  
Come prepared for everything from cool, rainy and breezy through to dry, warm and sunny weather (0-15°C)

Walking Mainly short walks on good tracks, with longer coastal walks on rougher ground. Lightweight walking shoes and boots are advisable. You may also wish to bring walking poles

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 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Barnacle Goose	Common Seal
Greenland White-fronted Goose	Great Northern Diver
Red Deer	Hen Harrier
Chough	Merlin
Twite	Peregrine
Otter	Twite
Golden Eagle	Rock Dove
'Wild' Canada Goose	Glaucous Gull
Pink-footed Goose	Iceland Gull
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	
Long-tailed Duck	
Scaup	
Red-throated Diver	
Grey Seal	

Experience thousands of wintering geese, Chough and seaduck on Islay, with a day on Jura's rugged coastline watching thousands of Red Deer in their autumn rut, plus soaring Eagles and Otter.

- Spectacle of thousands of Barnacle and Greenland White-fronted Geese
- Red Deer rutting with the Paps of Jura as a backdrop
- Hunting raptors including Hen Harrier, Peregrine, Merlin, Golden Eagle
- Chough, Divers, seaduck, Twite and Rock Doves
- Abundance of historical sites round every corner
- Explore Islay and Jura's rugged coastlines, lochs and bays for a chance of Otter
- RSPB Reserves Loch Gruinart and Oa, with a richness of wildlife to enjoy

We shall meet in Glasgow and begin our journey towards the Mull of Kintyre and Kennacraig. Passing the picturesque shores of Loch Lomond, we shall travel west past Loch Fyne and Lochgilphead, taking our time to stretch our legs and birdwatch along the way. We shall then reach our hotel at Stonefield Castle, where we spend our first night.

**2-6** We'll begin the next leg of the journey from Kennacraig as we wait to board the ferry. From the harbour, we shall scan for Black Guillemot, Seal, and gull species. The two-hour ferry journey will give us time to search the seas for Great Northern Diver, cetaceans, seabirds such as Gannet and possibly even a Great Skua.

Arriving on Islay, we'll explore for the remainder of the first day, before arriving at our accommodation for the next five nights, the Bowmore Hotel with views into the bay. We may not even have to go far

from the door to see Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper and divers.

Our next three days on Islay will be spent exploring the best wildlife spots and most famously the spectacle of arriving wintering geese. Thousands of Barnacle Geese and Greenland White-fronted Geese arrive here from the arctic to feed on this milder coastline and the view is utterly breathtaking. A highlight of our visit will be the RSPB Reserve of Loch Gruinart, where a sea of geese will cover the landscape, a treat for both our eyes and ears. We shall of course scan for other species such as Pink-footed, Greylag and Pale-bellied Brent Geese. More scarce species such as vagrant 'wild' Canada Goose, Lesser Canada Goose, also known as Cackling Goose and Snow Goose will also be searched for.

Machir Bay dunes and Ardnave Point give us a great opportunity to look for Red-billed Chough, with





*"Islay and Jura in autumn are like no other islands, with the famous arrival of thousands of wintering geese onto fields and lochs. The rugged Jura is home to thousands of Red Deer, as they perform their annual rut, whilst eagles fly overhead." Kate Mennie*



Scotland's largest population here on the island. Loch Gorm will give us more concentrations of geese, Whooper Swan, Snipe, Redshank, Shoveler and Brown Hare. We shall also be on the look-out for raptors here, such as Hen Harrier, Merlin and Peregrine.

Down on the south west point of the island, the rugged Rhinns of Islay peninsula is a good place to look for Golden Eagle and other raptor species with Rock Dove, Linnet and Twite all possible too. The point is a great place to look out to sea for cetaceans, Eider and Gannet. Looking onto Loch Indall from the west side, we shall keep a look out for divers, wintering seaduck such as Long-tailed Duck and Otter on the rocky shore.

The Oa peninsula on the south east corner is an RSPB Nature Reserve in a remote and rugged environment with a good concentration of wildlife. Looking out towards the American Monument, we enter the Reserve with grazed grassland, heath, lochs and cliffs. We shall search for Hen Harrier; Short-eared Owl, Golden Eagle, and Buzzard over the land and possibly have a further walk towards the point. We should find Stonechat, Twite and Chough, but we'll look out for any migratory birds that may be passing through. If it is a clear day, we should be able to see Northern Ireland from the point.

Islay has a richness of medieval history, Celtic crosses and warrior grave slabs which we shall pass on our travels. Islay's name is famously linked to its whisky export, so there may be a chance to stop by a distillery or two. Loch Indall near our hotel is a perfect place to check for gulls such as

Glaucous and Iceland as well as all three species of diver, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter and Scaup. As the light fades, flocks of geese drop into the bay to roost and we may even be treated to a sunset.

We shall choose a day to go over on the ferry to Jura to explore this rugged and remote island, its single road hugging the east coastline. With only 200 human inhabitants, the island is home to 6,000 Red Deer and autumn is the time when these magnificent mammals will be bellowing in the annual stag rut. With the Paps of Jura mountain peaks as a backdrop, we shall also look out for White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle and Merlin amongst other species. Along the rugged coastline a keen eye may also spot Otter and seals out on the rocks.

**7-8** After breakfast we shall say a fond farewell to this beautiful island as we take the ferry back to the mainland. On our final day we shall explore the Mull of Kintyre peninsula and the wildlife it has to offer. We shall spend this time exploring inland lochs, coastal lookout spots for any passing migratory birds and possibly even have a visit to Tainish National Nature Reserve.

Our final night will be spent at The Grey Gull hotel, where we shall spend the evening reliving our highlights of the trip. The next morning, we shall continue our travels back through stunning landscape to Glasgow, where we shall say our farewells.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Meet in Glasgow and drive to Tarbert  
1 night Stonefield Castle Hotel
- Days 2-6** Travel to Kennacraig for the 2 hour ferry to Islay. Walking and birding on Islay with a day on Jura  
5 nights at Bowmore Hotel, Islay
- Days 7-8** After breakfast we take the morning ferry back to Kennacraig and travel to Lochgilphead, then travel back to Glasgow the following morning.  
1 night Grey Gull Hotel

**Pauline Greenhalgh:** Red Deer  
**Ian Tulloch:** Sanaigmore Bay, Common Seals, Whooper Swans, Lesser White-fronted Geese  
**Simon Eaves:** Barnacle Geese  
**Jane Hope:** Wigeon



# MULL IN AUTUMN



"Mull is one of my favourite places on earth and it's the place I first wanted to get to having been 'confined to barracks' for the spring and summer. Do come and join me on this exquisite island for a relaxed holiday and wonderful wildlife watching."

Sally Nowell

Dates Sat 23 - Sat 30 Oct 2021  
Price £1,995  
Deposit £350 Single Supp £400

Leader Sally Nowell

Weather The weather can be mixed, so expect sun and showers, with temperatures in the range of 3-18°C.

Walking Coastal walks on uneven terrain of 1-4 miles. Walking boots recommended. Collapsible/telescopic walking poles could be useful for this trip

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

Insects Biting midges may be encountered

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

Group 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

White-tailed Eagle	Raven
Golden Eagle	Greenshank
Hen Harrier	Oystercatcher
Peregrine	Great Skua
Merlin	Storm Petrel
Short-eared Owl	Rock Dove
Black-throated Diver	Twite
Red-throated Diver	Shag
Great Northern Diver	Kittiwake
Slavonian Grebe	Harbour Porpoise
Whooper Swan	Common Dolphin
Common Scoter	Minke Whale
Eider Duck	Common Seal
Razorbill	Grey Seal
Black Guillemot	Otter
Gannet	

The combination of wildlife, colour and landscape will surely make Mull one of the best places in Britain to spend autumn, relaxing and watching some of the country's most spectacular wildlife.

- Scotland's wild places look at their most glorious in their cloak of autumn colours
- There will be fantastic opportunities for White-tailed and Golden Eagle
- Good chance of Otters throughout the trip
- Great Northern, Black and Red-throated Divers
- Possibilities of passage migrants and early arrival of winter visitors
- Stay in a comfortable hotel with spectacular views
- Travel up and back through Loch Lomond, Rannoch Moor and Glencoe

**1-2** We shall meet up in Glasgow and make our way to our overnight base on the shores of Loch Lomond.

In the morning we'll drive the length of Loch Lomond and make our way through some beautiful scenery to Oban before catching a ferry from Oban, to the Isle of Mull.

We may see Black Guillemots in Oban Harbour and as we journey across the Firth Of Lorne. These are rich waters and there is always a chance of seeing Harbour Porpoise, Common Dolphin or, with luck, something even larger.

We'll be able to birdwatch immediately we arrive, as our hotel is on the shore, overlooking the Sound of Mull.

**3-6** We shall spend the next four days exploring the beautiful island of Mull enjoying the fresh air, open spaces and wild

landscape, but most of all we shall be looking out for Mull's amazing wildlife.

From our recently renovated hotel, we shall be taking daily drives out to different locations across the island. Our travel will be slow and sedate, given the narrow roads we shall be exploring, whilst looking out for eagles above, Harriers alongside and Otters below on the shorelines.

At this time of year we shall be hoping for good views of all three divers and perhaps a few wintering seaduck might be starting to arrive. Early Whooper Swans may be arriving as well as Slavonian Grebe, who spend the winter in sheltered bays.

Out to sea we shall be looking for Gannets and other seabirds, including a real favourite, the Black Guillemot.





*"For many of us, the dream of being in wild open spaces has been at the forefront of our minds over the period of lockdown. This trip will fill your lungs with fresh Highland air, give you those dreamed for open spaces and it should provide some pretty fabulous wildlife too." Sally Nowell*



Mull is now a stronghold for White-tailed Eagle and we hope for regular sightings, as they never ever fail to impress, their huge wingspan and tolerance of our presence often gets us some incredible views of these breath-taking birds.

Mull's Golden Eagle population is also excellent so, although they tend to be a little more elusive, we shall be hoping for good views of adults and juveniles at this time of year.

It is not unusual to see both species of eagle soaring together over the mountains.

Mull is famous for its eagles, but there are other spectacular raptors to be had too. The bird we all want to see is a male Hen Harrier and seeing one of these beautiful pearl grey birds in the late autumn light is a sight never to be forgotten.

The rapid flight of the Merlin and the slow stealthy Short-eared Owl are what we shall be looking for over the moors, hillsides and marshes. Young birds of both species should be around if we are lucky.

As we travel from one corner of the island to another, we shall be driving through steep-sided mountain valleys, across open bog land and best of all along the rocky shoreline that surrounds Mull. Along the shoreline at this time of year we shall be looking for waders such as Redshank, Greenshank and Bar-tailed Godwit.

We shall also be hoping to see Common and Grey Seals hauled out on the offshore rocky islets and skerries. Of course, the jewel in the crown of these coastal areas is the European Otter.

It will be all eyes open as we drive slowly along the coast hoping for a glimpse of one swimming, but best of all one resting up on a rock eating a crab or sunfish. These Otter views are undoubtedly the holiday highlight for any trip to Mull, so we shall be working hard to find that special view for us all to enjoy.

On our travels we shall visit the pretty town of Tobermory, the Mull Cheese Factory for a guided tour and a special tasting of their delicious cheese and also the White-tail Gin Distillery for a special tasting of their delicious Gin.

**7-8** On the penultimate day, we'll catch a morning ferry to Lochaline and take a fabulous drive inland and ultimately through the majestic strath of Glencoe and over Rannoch Moor, before arriving at our hotel on Loch Lomond, for our last night.

In the morning we'll return you to Glasgow where we bid farewell.



## Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Meet in Glasgow and make our way to our base for one night on the shores of Loch Lomond. Travel to Oban to catch the ferry to Mull  
1 night at the Inn on Loch Lomond
- Days 3-6** Birdwatching and wildlife exploration of Mull, including a visit to the White-tail Gin distillery and the Mull Cheese Factory  
5 nights at the Isle of Mull Hotel
- Days 7-8** Catch the ferry to Lochaline and make our way back to Loch Lomond travelling back to Glasgow the following morning  
1 night at the Inn on Loch Lomond

**David Petts:** Hen Harrier  
**Jane Hope:** Loch na Keal, Otter, Common Seal  
**Kevin Tappenden:** Great Northern Diver  
**Richard Stacey:** Short-eared Owl  
**Roger Forder:** White-tailed Eagle



# NORTH NORFOLK



"North Norfolk doesn't need any introduction, it has been, and still is, arguably the best, most productive county in the UK for birdlife. We are not just talking rare and scarce species, but also the sheer numbers and diversity, with a winter visit being just as memorable as spring or autumn."  
Julian Sykes

Dates    Mon 1 - Mon 8 Nov 2021  
Price    £1,985  
Deposit £350    Single Supp £150

Leaders    Julian Sykes or Roy Atkins  
Weather    Can be unpredictable. It might be lovely with plenty of sunshine, but can also be cold. There is always a chance of rain, so bring waterproofs and warm clothes just in case. Likely temperature 0°-12°C  
Walking    Short walks on easy terrain. Walking boots or strong shoes are recommended, as some paths may be uneven or muddy  
Meals    All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8  
Insects    Biting insects will not be a problem  
Accom    Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite  
Group    Each group 5 guests and 1 guide

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Common Crane	Barn Owl
Merlin	Little Owl
Taiga Bean Goose	Red-throated Diver
White-fronted Goose	Slavonian Grebe
Whooper Swans	Long-tailed Duck
Bewick's Swans	Velvet Scoter
Egyptian Goose	Shorelark
Brent Geese	Cetti's Warbler
Bittern	Bearded Tit
Avocet	Brambling
Spotted Redshank	Hawfinch
Black-tailed Godwit	Water Pipit
Hen Harrier	Snow Bunting
Marsh Harrier	Rarities
Peregrine	Chinese Water Deer

Norfolk has exceptional birding any time of year, but winter can be especially wonderful, with thousands of geese, swans, waders, raptors and the chance of something rare too!

- Famous birding sites - Titchwell, Cley, Holkham and Welney
- Huge flocks of geese with chance of scarce species such as Tundra Bean Geese
- Resident Barn Owl, Bittern, Bearded Tit, Cranes, Firecrest and more
- Staying at delightful Briarfields Hotel – a warm welcome with great food
- Chance of scarce birds such as Shorelark, Rough-legged Buzzard, Water Pipit
- Spectacular flocks of Whooper and Bewick's Swans at feeding time at Welney
- One of the only wintering flocks of Taiga Bean Geese in the UK

Dinner together on Saturday evening starts the holiday, followed by a chat about the coming week.

2-7 Norfolk is rightly acclaimed as one of the best birding areas in the UK, with fabulous birdwatching all year round. In winter it is simply fantastic, with a range of habitats producing exciting goose flocks, waders, seaduck and a whole bunch of specialities such as Common Crane, Bean Goose, Chinese Water Deer, Bittern and Bearded Tit, plus Shorelark, Egyptian Goose and the chance of something rarer such as Rough-legged Buzzard.

The vast majority of the north Norfolk coast is either Reserves or great habitat for birding and we could probably spend the entire week just on the coast! Titchwell and Cley are two of the best



known sites and shallow lagoons host a fabulous mix of waders and wildfowl in winter and their surrounding reedbeds are excellent for Bittern, Bearded Tit and Cetti's Warbler. Hen and Marsh Harriers winter here in good numbers and other raptors such as Peregrine and Merlin hunt the marshes, along with ghosts such as Short-eared and Barn Owls. Both sites regularly get wintering Spotted Redshank, Avocet and flocks of Brent Geese and there is the chance of Jack Snipe or Water Pipit in the margins.

The bird feeders by Titchwell Visitor Centre sometimes attract Bramblings or one of the rarer species of Redpoll and if we are lucky a Water Rail may be lurking beneath! We'll spend some time checking the coast, with Common Scoter flocks holding a few Velvet Scoters and the chance of





*"East Anglia can be cold in winter, with sub-zero temperatures and a biting wind, but after a day out around its iconic, wonderful Reserves, there is nothing better than getting back to warm, comfortable and friendly accommodation. Staying at the Briarfields Hotel is as much a part of the week as are rafts of seaduck, flocks of geese and a murmuration of waders!" Julian Sykes*



Long-tailed Duck, divers and grebes. The beach at Titchwell may have a small flock of Snow Bunting and if not, then Holkham Beach may prove more reliable, with the chance of Shorelark and Twite too. Holkham is fabulous for geese and we'll check through enormous flocks of Pink-footed Geese to see what is amongst them – perhaps Tundra Bean Goose or White-fronted Goose is possible, or even something rarer!

Inland we may visit the Yare Valley, where a flock of Taiga Bean Geese spends the winter – one of only two such flocks in the UK. The Broads can also prove exciting and we'll look for resident Common Cranes here, with more chances for harriers and Barn Owls which hunt the reedbeds. Strange looking Chinese Water Deer can also be seen, the males with their obvious tusks that look so out of place on a delicate deer. Strumpshaw Fen is a good spot for these and can provide further chances of Bittern, wildfowl and maybe Kingfisher. If we stay until dusk a harrier roost can hold quite a few birds.

Also inland are some interesting woodland sites and we may go in search of Firecrest and Hawfinch at Lynford Arboretum, though neither are easy. Woodlands here hold typical species of the area with Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Long-tailed Tit, Green Woodpecker and a chance of Crossbill but Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is a rare sight here these days.

Welney Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Reserve with its heated hide can be a wonderful spot on a cold winter's day... why aren't more hides heated!! The number of wildfowl in winter here is remarkable, with thousands of Wigeon and Teal, hundreds of Shoveler and Pintail and up to a thousand Pochard! This alone makes for quite a spectacle, but the reason most people visit is to enjoy the huge flocks of swans, with thousands of Whoopers and Bewick's Swans wintering here. We'll make sure we are there at feeding time when the viewing is spectacular! Black-tailed Godwit is likely amongst the waders and there may be flocks of Golden Plover. Rough-legged Buzzard have wintered here, but they are also likely on the coast and it is a matter of checking the websites for recent sighting – but we hope to find one of these, or perhaps Great Grey Shrike or Waxwings ourselves, during the week.

Depending on recent sightings there are so many other sites we could visit. At this time of year Glaucous or Iceland Gulls are possible, there may be rare geese such as Red-breasted or Snow Goose, or perhaps a Ferruginous Duck. Last year an exceptionally rare Eastern Yellow Wagtail spent the winter here and of course egrets such as Cattle and Great Egret may turn up too. Keep your fingers crossed for something exciting.

8 After breakfast on Saturday morning we say our farewells.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrive for a 7 night stay at Briarfields Hotel, Titchwell
- Days 2-7 Wildlife and birdwatching exploration of the North Norfolk coast, Welney, the Broads and other sites
- Day 8 Depart after breakfast

**James Stevens:** Shorelark  
**Frances & David Perry:** Flocks at Snettisham, Bearded Tits, Dark Bellied Brent Geese, Snow Bunting  
**Simon Eaves:** Marsh Harrier  
**Margaret & John Tester:** Merlin





# SOLWAY FIRTH



*"This little corner of Scotland often gets bypassed by people on their way further north, but it is truly delightful with some excellent birding. There is so much to see in such a small area, from waders to raptors and those huge goose flocks."*  
Darren Rees

**Dates** Sat 6 Nov - Sat 13 Nov 2021  
**Price** £1,695  
**Deposit** £300    **Single Supp** £100

**Leaders** Darren Rees and Kate Mennie

**Weather** The weather can vary enormously at this time of year. Typically we can expect a mixture of sunshine and showers with temperatures in the range 0-15°C. Some sites are exposed, so wind will be a factor

**Walking** We shall walk on a variety of wide and narrow paths, generally in good condition. Some walking will be on boardwalk and some will be on rough coastline. Walking boots are recommended

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

**Insects** Not a problem

**Accom** A comfortable former Coaching Inn offering double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

**Group** 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Red-throated Diver	Short-eared Owl
Slavonian Grebe	Pintail
Black Guillemot	Scaup
Hen Harrier	Long-tailed Duck
Red Kite	Barn Owl
Golden Plover	Willow Tit
Turnstone	Crossbill
Purple Sandpiper	Black-tailed Godwit
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Roe Deer
Barnacle Goose	Red Squirrel
Pink-footed Goose	
Whooper Swan	
White-fronted Goose	
Goosander	
Peregrine	
Merlin	

A bird-rich winter retreat, with thousands of geese, swans, raptors and waders, plus a fabulous Red Kite feeding station in this beautiful, historic, but often ignored part of Scotland

- Six species of goose, including Greenland White-fronted Goose
- Great close up views of Whooper Swans being fed
- Chance of Golden Eagle, Merlin, Hen Harrier and Goshawk
- Visit to Threave Castle, plus look at Caerlaverock Castle and Sweetheart Abbey
- Impressive flocks of Barnacle and Pink-footed Geese on coastal marshes
- Red Kite feeding station giving spectacular views
- Diversity of waders, gulls, ducks, divers, auks, grebes and more at Loch Ryan

We meet at our hotel in Castle Douglas, with time before dinner to chat about the week ahead.

**2-7** The Solway now hosts approximately 40,000 wintering Barnacle Geese - the entire Svalbard population!! This astonishing number is all the more remarkable when you realise numbers crashed to just 400 in the 1940s, before WWT bought land at Caerlaverock, instigating the start of their recovery. We hope to see several thousand on our visit to this iconic Reserve, alongside other species such as Greylag, Pink-footed and perhaps even rarities such as Snow Goose, that have occurred here.

The trumpeting of Whooper Swans is a constant soundtrack, but becomes especially loud just before feeding time and as they fly in to the

feeding pool - expect ridiculously close views! In the hides we'll get good views of duck such as Pintail, Gadwall, Wigeon, Teal and maybe even Green-winged Teal, which has returned for several winters. Waders include Golden Plover, Lapwing, Oystercatcher and Black-tailed Godwit and distant flocks of Knot and Dunlin on the coast, where Peregrine, Hen Harrier or Merlin may fly through.

Along the coast, the RSPB Reserve at Mersehead is another fabulous spot for wintering wildfowl, with flocks of Wigeon, Teal, Shoveler, Shelduck and Pintail and more fabulous flocks of Barnacle and Pink-footed Geese. Perhaps we'll find one of the small number of leucistic Barnacle Geese here - almost white, but with faint markings just visible. There is a good chance that Hen Harrier or Short-eared Owl are using the area to winter. Nearby coastal areas such as Southernness Point







*"If you enjoy seeing your wildlife up close and personal, then there are a couple of wonderful experiences on this trip. Watching the Whooper Swans just the other side of the glass at Caerlaverock, where they are just a few feet away, is remarkable - and if you have never been to a Red Kite feeding station, then you are in for a treat at Belynmack Farm, it is spectacular!" Darren Rees*

and Carsthorpe Bay, can be a good sites to see wintering waders, with flocks of Oystercatchers, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwits and Grey Plover, while rocky areas host Turnstone and a few Purple Sandpiper. This is a good place to look for Scaup and there may be flocks of Pintail offshore and perhaps a few Common Scoter. We may pop in at Sweetheart Abbey and hear of its rather lovely story.

We'll visit Loch Ken and RSPB Ken Dee Marshes, to search for the small number of Greenland White-fronted Geese that winter here. This is one of the few places where Willow Tit are still doing well, perhaps coming to the feeders, while Red Kites soar overhead. Nearby is a Red Kite feeding station and we'll time our visit to see these fantastic aerial birds swooping down for tit-bits of meat and eating on the wing, almost within touching distance.

Nearby, the imposing tower of Threave Castle was built by Archibald the Grim, Lord of Galloway, in the 14th century. Peregrines now nest on the tower and stay on territory all winter, while the neighbouring Nature Reserve is a wonderful location to look for wintering Pink-footed, Greylag and Greenland White-fronted Geese. There should be a variety of duck, including Pintail and Wigeon, while Hen Harrier regularly quarter the ground in search of prey.

Travelling further afield, the sheltered waters of Loch Ryan may be teeming with birds. Waders include Dunlin, Redshank, Ringed Plover and

Turnstone alongside feeding Light-bellied Brent Geese. This is one of the best sites for Scaup and we'll check through them for Eider, Red-breasted Merganser and Common Scoter. Red-throated Diver and Slavonian and Great Crested Grebes winter here, plus Black Guillemot and small numbers of Long-tailed Duck. Black-necked Grebe used to winter and occasionally still appear. If we have time, we may visit Corsewall Point, where Gannets are often close to shore. We may also visit West Freugh for more chances of Greenland White-fronted Geese and the chance of Hen Harrier or Barn Owl coming to roost if we can time it right.

The interior of Dumfries and Galloway is a bit like Scotland in miniature, with expanses of rolling, rugged hills, forests and moorland. We shall visit sites with high hills where, if luck is with us, we may see Golden Eagle soaring and there should be Ravens galore and perhaps Peregrine or Merlin, but Red and Black Grouse have become much harder to find here these days. Red Deer may still be rutting and we'll listen out for their loud roaring. The extensive forestry has Common Crossbill, Siskin, Redpoll and Redwings, Fieldfares and Bramblings will have arrived from the north. Buzzards are a common sight and we shall keep a sharp eye out for soaring Goshawk, while marvelling at the drama of this beautiful, historical landscape.

**8** After breakfast we'll say our farewells before setting off on our journeys home.



## Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive in Castle Douglas in time for our evening meal, followed by a chat about our plans for the coming week.
- Days 2-7** Wildlife and birdwatching exploration including Caerlaverock WWT Reserve, Ken-Dee Marshes RSPB Reserve, Cairnmore of Fleet NNR and Red Kite feeding station
- Day 8** After breakfast we shall say our farewells

**Duncan Macdonald:** Barnacle Geese, Corsewall Point Lighthouse, Shoveler and Teal  
**Chrissie Nicholson:** Pale-bellied Brent Geese, Golden Plover  
**Jane Hope:** Purple Sandpiper  
**Morag Rea:** Caerlaverock Swans



# MORAY FIRTH IN WINTER



"One of my favourite things to do in winter is to head up to the Moray coast to seawatch. 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

Dates Sat 20 - Sat 27 Nov 2021

Price £1,895

Deposit £350 Single Supp £250

Leader Sally Nowell

Weather The weather will be mixed (-5° - +10°C). Expect sun and showers plus frosts, with snow likely in the mountains and gusty winds 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 8

Insects Biting insects will not be a problem

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 7

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Long-tailed Duck

Scaup

Eider

Common Scoter

Whooper Swan

Red-Throated Diver

Black-Throated Diver

Great Northern Diver

Red-breasted Merganser

Pink-footed Goose

Pale-bellied Brent Goose

Golden Eagle

White-tailed Eagle

Peregrine

Red Kite

Bar-tailed Godwit

Knot

Purple Sandpiper

Snow Bunting

Crested Tit

Waxwing

Red Deer

Red Squirrel

Mountain Hare

Bottlenose Dolphin

Need to get away for a relaxing week in the Scottish Highlands? We have just the thing for you. Fabulous winter seawatching on the Moray Firth and the Cairngorms National Park in its 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 charming and confiding Snow Bunting
- Mountain Hare, Red Deer, Bottlenose Dolphin and much more
- Charming hotel to ourselves, in woodland on the edge of Forres

We meet at our hotel 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 backs on to woodland on the edge of Forres, so we can stroll outside if we wish and we'll keep the itinerary flexible throughout the week, to maximise our birdwatching opportunities.

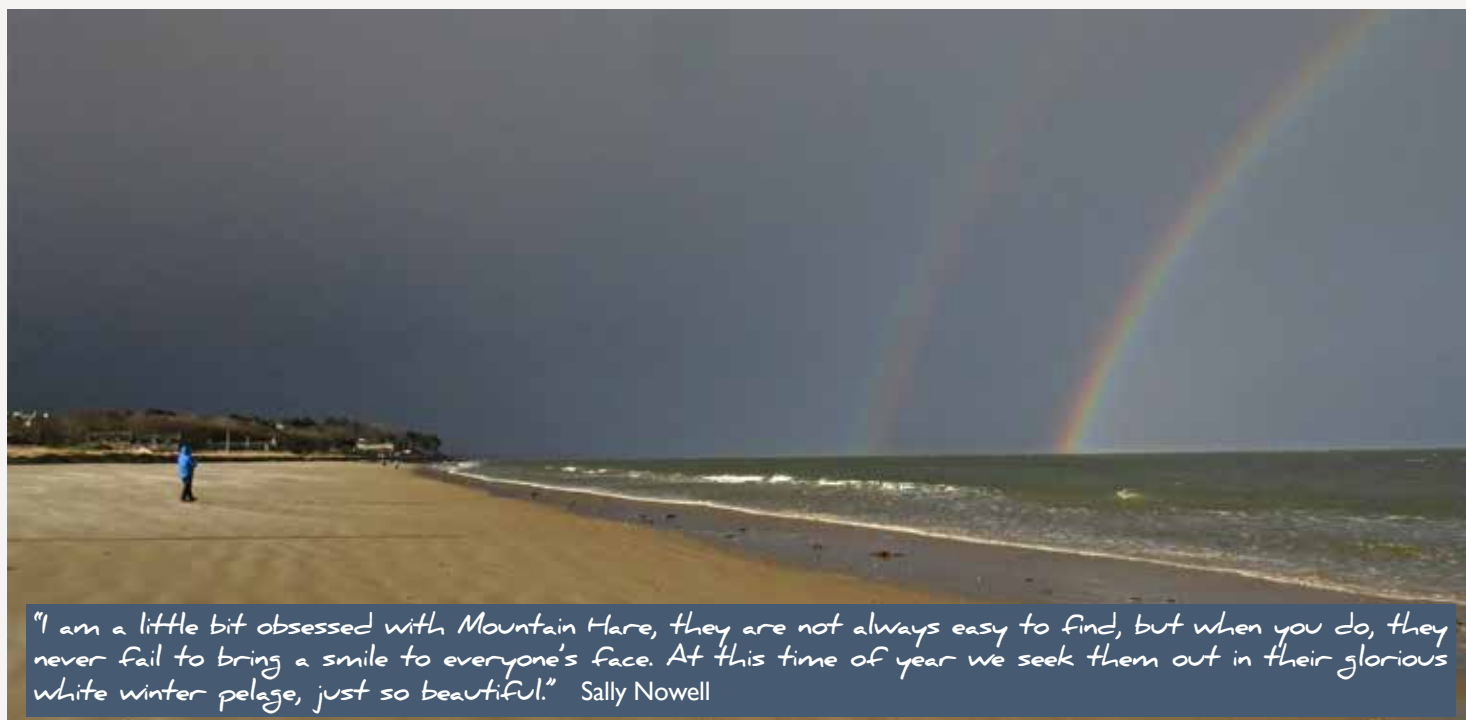
**2-7** On the Moray Firth, Britain's finest gathering of seaduck can be seen - vast rafts of Eider, Common with Velvet Scoter and parties of Scaup and Red-breasted Merganser. Long-tailed Duck and Eider are common and there'll be Slavonian Grebe and Red-throated and Black-throated Diver.

Each day out will take us in a different direction. 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 Purple Sandpipers can be seen. We'll be scanning the gull flocks for rarities such as Glaucous and Iceland Gull, which often follow the fishing boats. Sometimes the tiny Little Auk can be driven down from the north and spotted off-shore.







*"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, just so beautiful."* Sally Nowell

Venturing further north along the firth, we'll spend time on 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, close inshore, as they hunt for salmon on the turn of the tide. We'll visit the vast, internationally important inlet that is Udale Bay, where waders, 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 and Velvet Scoter.

We'll venture to 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 and we shall scan for white Ptarmigan and Mountain hare amongst the snow covered boulders further up the slopes. We shall also spend time in the beautiful Caledonian Pine Forest which, at this time of year, can look like a magical winter wonderland if we have a covering

of snow or frost. We'll be listening out for the calls of Crested Tit and Scottish Crossbill.

Insh Marshes is a great place for Whooper Swans and with luck, we might even catch sight of a Hen Harrier drifting over the vast reedbeds. On the moors Red Grouse form small parties, 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.

Wildlife isn't the only attraction in this part of Scotland. You will be in the heart of whisky country so we shall also be taking you to one of our local distilleries, where you will get a chance to savour their wares.

8 After breakfast on our last day, we shall say our goodbyes.



## Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Arrive Forres  
7 nights at Cluny Bank Hotel
- Days 2-7** 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, forests and glens  
Visit to local distillery
- Day 8** Depart after breakfast

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



# WINTER IN NORTHUMBERLAND



*"Northumberland has always had a reputation for fantastic castles, rugged coastline and huge numbers of wintering wildfowl. It is not so well known for its migration potential, superb coastal wetlands and extensive coniferous forest - this incredible county has it all."*  
Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 20 - Fri 26 Nov 2021  
Price £1,450  
Deposit £250 Single Supp £200

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 7  
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.

**2-6** With long sandy beaches, rocky headlands and historic sites such as Lindisfarne Priory and 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.







*"Late Autumn in Northumberland is superb. With an extensive network of excellent wildlife Reserves, with hides and visitor centres, we shall never be far away from some of the best areas this wonderful county has to offer" 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 we'll 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 the 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 because of him that laws 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.

**7** 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

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Day 1</b>    | We meet in Seahouses or Newcastle station. 6 nights at the Bamburgh Castle Inn, Seahouses  |
| <b>Days 2-6</b> | 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 |
| <b>Day 7</b>    | We depart after breakfast  |

**Simon Eaves:** Eiders  
**Morag Rea:** Bamburgh Castle, Lindisfarne Castle  
**Julian Sykes:** Brent Geese  
**Mike Shaw:** Golden Plover and other waders, Grey Plover  
**Duncan Macdonald:** Long-tailed Duck





# ANTARCTICA ECLIPSE



*"I was last in Antarctica in 2007 and it still stands out as my most memorable trip ever! It is impossible to put into words the scale and wonder of this place - the scenery, the wildlife, the feeling of just being there! The phrase 'holiday of a lifetime' gets trotted out all too easily - but this time it really is!"*  
Roy Atkins

Dates	Sat 20 Nov - Tue 14 Dec 2021
Price	£16,625
Deposit	£3,325 Single Supp £9,150 Price for sharing a Twin Window Cabin
Leader	Roy Atkins
Flights	British Airways, scheduled Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Buenos Aires Inbound: Overnight, Buenos Aires-Heathrow Aerolíneas Argentinas: Buenos Aires-Ushuaia-Buenos Aires
Weather	Obviously, it can be very cold!! Temps further south -6°C to 1°C, may be up to 6°C in the Falkland's. On deck there can be a wind chill too. There might be snow or strong winds but equally the weather can be beautiful with clear skies and glorious sunshine
Walking	Walking is generally not difficult, though the optional walk from Fortuna Bay is fairly steep and strenuous. For most visits ashore there is little walking on easy flat ground. Must be fit enough to get in and out of zodiacs. Wellingtons essential for landings, available to hire
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 24
Insects	Not a problem
Accom	Hotels and M/V Plancius - double, twin and single rooms/cabins. All rooms and cabins are ensuite
Fees	Gratuities on board are extra, approx EUR 5-10pp per day
Group	12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

Total Solar Eclipse	Magellanic Woodpecker
Wandering Albatross	South Polar Skua
Grey-headed Albatross	Snow Petrel
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross	Giant Petrel
King Penguin	Snowy Sheathbill
Adélie Penguin	Steamer Duck
Gentoo Penguin	Leopard Seal
Rockhopper Penguin	Southern Elephant Seal
Southern Right Whale	Commerson's Dolphin
Antarctic Minke Whale	Tabular Icebergs

## The ultimate trip - the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, with a total eclipse of the sun in the Weddell Sea - a once in a lifetime opportunity!!

- Experience a Total Eclipse of the Sun amongst the ice in the Weddell Sea!
- Seven species of penguins, including vast King Penguin colonies on South Georgia
- Wandering, Royal, Grey-headed, Black-browed and beautiful Light-mantled Sooty Albatross
- Jaw-dropping scenery in South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula
- Visit Shackleton's Grave and walk part of his route over South Georgia
- Comfortable ship with superb food and cabins, plus zodiac shore trips
- Whales, Elephant Seals, penguins, petrels, seals and much more - a wildlife spectacular!

**1-3** We take an overnight flight to Buenos Aires, then another flight to Ushuaia, the 'end of the world'. We spend a day birding around Tierra del Fuego. Magellanic Woodpecker, Austral Parakeet, White-throated Treerunner and delightful Thorn-tailed Rayadito amongst many others make a wonderful start to our trip.

**4-5** We board the ship in the afternoon and set off down the Beagle Channel looking for Chilean Skuas, Steamer Ducks and Antarctic Terns as we travel. By morning we are on our way to the Falklands with Giant Petrels and Black-browed Albatross, Soft-plumaged, Cape and other petrels, prions, and other seabirds all around us.

**6-7** The Falklands offer an abundance of wildlife with colonies of Black-browed Albatross and Rockhopper Penguins plus Magellanic and Gentoos too. Upland and Ruddy-headed

Geese are here and endemic Falkland Steamer Duck, plus Striated Caracara, Blackish Cinclodes and Cobb's Wren. We shall look out for Peale's and Commerson's Dolphins offshore - sometimes even off Port Stanley, the capital of the islands, with its well-tended gardens and English-style houses and pubs.

**8-9** On the way to South Georgia we cross the Antarctic Convergence. The temperature cools and nutritious water rises to the surface due to colliding water columns. This attracts many seabirds including albatross, shearwaters, petrels, prions and skuas - with a good chance of whales such as Humpback, Southern Right, Antarctic Minke and Fin Whales.

**10-13** South Georgia is like part of the Antarctic Peninsula pushed out to sea. The rugged snow-capped peaks and sheltered bays are a stunning backdrop to our wildlife watching as we visit some exceptional sites.





"I am in love with albatross - but Wandering Albatross is perhaps the best of them all and watching them behind the ship and at a breeding colony was a massive highlight for me last time. Add to that the jaw-droppingly vast King Penguin colonies on South Georgia, beautiful Snow Petrels in front of huge icebergs and so much more - then there is the Eclipse!" Roy Atkins



The itinerary is weather dependent - but we hope to visit Salisbury Plain where vast King Penguin colonies numbering hundreds of thousands will blow you away! Southern Elephant Seals breed here - four-ton bulls keep a constant vigil (and occasionally fight) over territories, where females have just given birth or are about to deliver. Light-mantled Sooty Albatross cruise overhead in synchronous courtship flights and we hope for endemic South Georgia Pipit, Pintail and Shags. We may visit Cooper Bay with its Macaroni Penguin colony and at Grytvicken we'll visit the abandoned whaling station, the South Georgia Museum and pay respects at Shackleton's grave. From Fortuna Bay we can walk the final leg of Shackleton's route, over a pass to 'Shackleton's Waterfall', looking down to Stromness - imagining how Shackleton felt at this spot!

**14-15** We head south towards the Antarctic Peninsula and the Weddell Sea. There may be sea-ice and chances of South Polar Skua and delightful Snow Petrels amongst the seabirds trailing the vessel. Then - on Day 15 in the Weddell Sea - the big event takes place! The ship will position itself in the centre of the path of the total eclipse, in time for the big event. Pray for clear skies as the moon gradually moves between us and the sun and we witness this astonishing event as the daylight vanishes. A Solar Eclipse can be astounding to witness, from the famous 'Diamond Ring', when the last dot of sun is still visible, to the corona of light reaching out into space, surrounding the dark circle of the silhouetted moon. You may even see smaller orange solar flares - it can be an emotional experience and what a place to see it!



**16-17** We push on towards the Antarctic Peninsula, passing enormous icebergs, with good chances for more whale sightings and we'll keep alert for the chance of Antarctic Petrel, or if we're very lucky even Emperor Penguin is possible.

**18-20** We arrive at last at the Antarctic Peninsula, where our itinerary is as flexible as the weather. If the ice conditions permit, we sail into the Weddell Sea where we'll find colossal tabular icebergs. We may visit Paulet Island, with its large population of Adélie Penguins or perhaps Brown Bluff, to set foot on the Antarctic Continent itself. We may set course for Elephant Island and head into the Bransfield Strait and we hope to visit Deception Island, where we plunge through Neptune's Bellows into the flooded caldera, where hot springs, an abandoned whaling station and thousands of Cape Petrels can be found. There will surely be penguins, whales, seals and other seabirds such as Snowy Shearwater and more skuas, terns and albatrosses. Whatever we do it will be another huge highlight to visit Antarctica itself and an unforgettable experience!

**21-25** Time will disappear far too quickly before we return across Drake's Passage to Ushuaia, enjoying our last seabirds as we go. We fly back to Buenos Aires for an overnight stay, then take an overnight flight back home, arriving in the UK on Day 25.

Standard cabin with window - 2 beds. Other cabin types are available; Quad Porthole, Triple Porthole, Twin Porthole, Twin Deluxe, Superior:



### Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2 Fly to Ushuaia via Buenos Aires  
2 nights Hotel Tolkeyen
- Day 3 Visit Tierra del Fuego National Park
- Day 4 We board our ship in the afternoon and set off into the Beagle Channel  
19 nights M/V Plancius
- Day 5 At sea, on our way to the Falkland Islands
- Days 6-7 Visit albatross and penguin colonies in the Falklands
- Days 8-9 At sea, on our way to South Georgia
- Days 10-13 Explore South Georgia, walk part of Shackleton's route and visit grave
- Day 14 At sea, heading south towards the Weddell Sea and Antarctic Peninsula
- Day 15 The Big Day, total eclipse!
- Days 16-17 Continue journey to Antarctic Peninsula
- Days 18-20 Explore Antarctic Peninsula
- Days 21-22 Make our way back to Ushuaia
- Day 23 Fly to Buenos Aires for an overnight stay  
1 night Buenos Aires airport hotel
- Days 24-25 Overnight flight home, arrive UK Day 25

**Jane Atkins:** King Penguins, zodiac landing, Antarctica Peninsula  
**Roy Atkins:** Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Elephant Seal, Adélie Penguin

# 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. For some holidays the balance due date may be more than 10 weeks before commencement, if we are obliged to confirm final details prior to that point with our agents. The date the balance is payable will be advised by Speyside Wildlife when we confirm your booking. Unless notice of cancellation is received from you 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 after the balance due date, 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 four weeks prior to the balance monies being due on your existing booking. Again any transfer costs must be borne by you. An administration charge of £100 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. 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. 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. 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 all monies paid will be refunded in full.

7. In the event of Speyside Wildlife cancelling your holiday prior to commencement all monies will be returned promptly to you in full. If however, in the unlikely event that your holiday is curtailed once it has started, due to circumstances completely beyond our control, we shall return you to the UK and cover any expenses incurred in making that return, but we cannot be responsible for any additional expenses incurred by you, nor are we responsible for the return of any monies for the period of curtailment and so are unable to make any refunds, or pay any compensation for that period. Please therefore ensure you have adequate travel insurance in place to cover any such eventuality.

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 losses 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.

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 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 finished. No information will be passed to a third party, except our Ground Agents (as applicable). If 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'. All non-ATOL holiday deposit and balance payments made, are secured by way of a Trust Account administered by Masson Cairns & Co, 36 High Street, Grantown-on-Spey, Cairngorms National Park, PH26 3EQ.

12. 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. 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. If flight timings are not yet confirmable with the airline, the flights section will state TBC. For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: [www.atol.org.uk/ATOLcertificate](http://www.atol.org.uk/ATOLcertificate). (Civil Aviation Authority ATOL Standard Term 1.1).



Lesley Gadsden, Puffins, The Farnes





#### 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)





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Front Cover Jane Hope: Gannet  
Inside Covers Jane Hope: Curlew, Red Squirrel  
Back cover: Jean Brown: Scarlet Macaws  
Mike Hems: Pallid Harrier  
Steve Batt: Griffon Vulture  
Adam Moan: White Stork  
Rob Martin: Crested Tit





