

# NOVA SCOTIA



*"I can think of no better mix for the perfect day watching wildlife - a morning with the bright gem-like warblers and migrant vireos, flycatchers and hawks, followed by an afternoon in the company of truly awesome Humpbacks in the Bay of Fundy. Simply the best."*  
Darren Rees

Dates Sat 23 - Sun 31 Aug 2025

Price £4,595

Deposit £900 Single Supp £485

Leaders Darren Rees and Simon Eaves

Flights Air Canada, scheduled  
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Halifax  
Inbound: Overnight, Halifax-Heathrow  
(transit stop on outbound and inbound)

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

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 (rare) 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.

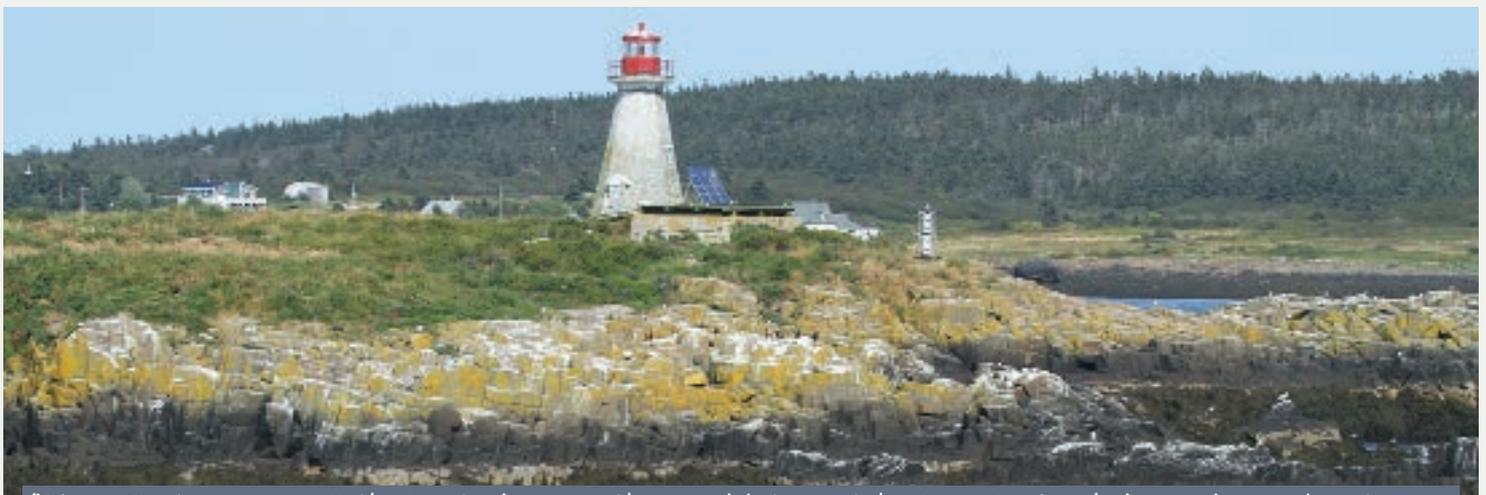
**2-7** The small islands that poke from the mainland into the rich Bay of Fundy are truly magical and captivating. Beautiful spruce forests roll down to a rocky shore, marked with quiet bays and sleepy fishing ports. A delightful landscape of painted clapperboard houses; bright, bold lighthouses; wooden jetties with stacks of drying lobster pots and 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 lodge!



We'll take three boat trips from Brier Island to see these magnificent mammals. 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.

Humpback Whales are the star performers and the population in the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine is well studied - they regularly raise their tail flukes when they dive and the black-and-white patterns on the underside are particular to each individual, just like a fingerprint. 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 (pec-slapping) or, if we are fortunate, launch their 35 tons clear of the water in a spectacular 'breach'.





*"Nova Scotia is one of the best places in the world to watch Humpback Whales and spending time with these inquisitive animals is one of my favourite things to do. It may start with an explosive exhalation when they rise from the deep, followed by the lifting of their tails when they dive; better still is the so-called 'spy-hopping' when we wonder just who is watching who. Maybe we'll see boisterous 'pec-slapping' when they beat the water with their long fins. We'll be hoping for the finale of a full 'breach' when 35 tons of whale leaps out of the water – you will be amazed."*

Darren Rees

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. Sometimes acrobatic White-sided Dolphins come around the boat, but it will be enigmatic Northern Right Whales that we'll celebrate most over – rare and elusive, they visit the Bay of Fundy each year in dwindling numbers. These are listed as critically endangered whales, with only around 300 individuals remaining in the world – fingers crossed.

Ocean-going seabirds will also be a big feature and we can expect close views of large numbers of Great Shearwaters (with smaller numbers of Sooty and Manx). Wilson's Petrels patter their feet over the surface and big flocks 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 American Goldfinch 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. Birds 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 specialities such as Boreal Chickadees and Gray Jays, with Palm Warbler and Hermit Thrush in the supporting cast.

Locally we can explore for more landbirds on Digby Neck. Each day we'll take the quiet roads and little ferries that link the islands. There can be a steady movement of southward bound raptors: Turkey Vulture teeter on raised wings, Osprey flap by and small spirals of hawks include Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned, with Goshawk, Merlin and American Kestrel amongst them. Belted Kingfisher, Spotted Sandpiper and Hooded Merganser are on local ponds, whilst Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Blue Jays and Dark-eyed Junco inhabit nearby gardens. There are also Eastern Chipmunk and we've enjoyed views of lodge-building Beavers.

**8-9** We leave Brier, via Annapolis Royal Marsh, which always turns up a new selection of birds: there's bright red Cardinals, beautiful Cedar Waxwing and ducks including Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy, Ring-necked, and Wood. Finally, we arrive in Halifax for our evening flight, arriving back in the morning of Day 9.



### Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Fly London to Halifax arriving mid-afternoon. Drive 2.5 hours to Digby for early evening meal  
Final 1.5 hour transfer to our base at Brier Island  
7 nights Brier Island Lodge
- Day 2 First boat trip out from Brier Island
- Day 3 Exploration of Brier Island including Northlight and Pond Cove areas
- Days 4-7 Flexible four days with further birding walks; second boat trip in Bay of Fundy; one day exploration of Long Island (Boar's Light and Balancing Rock); third boat trip (half day) from Brier Island
- Days 8-9 Transfer day with birding stop at Annapolis Royal Marsh, arriving Halifax late afternoon for evening flight, arriving UK morning of Day 9

Frances and David Perry: Humpback Whale  
Roy Cowley: Bald Eagle, Mega Nova boat, Fin Whale, Greater Shearwater, Peter's Island Lighthouse,