

THE OUTER HEBRIDES



"The Outer Hebrides, timeless and simply stunning islands on Britain's wild Atlantic edge. They always reveal something new every time, with incredible wildlife, scenery and a rich human history. They are unique, a place to get away from it all, where time seems to stand still and wildlife thrives."
Craig Round

Dates Fri 2 - Sat 10 May 2025
Price £2,595
Deposit £500 Single Supp £500

Leaders Craig Round and Sally Nowell

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

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

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

Insects Biting insects are unlikely to be a problem, but you may wish to bring repellent

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite. The last single room is small therefore no supplement will be charged

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

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

Steve Batt: Corncrake

Jane Hope: Flock of Turnstone and Sanderling, Hen Harrier, Little Tern

Christine Maughan: Redshank

Roy Atkins: Red-necked Phalarope

Mark Phillips: Short-eared Owl

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 45 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 The Uists are one of the last strongholds for one of Britain's rarest breeding birds, the Corncrake and newly arrived

territorial males can be seen before the vegetation grows tall, as they give their incredible rasping calls from open cover. Here too Twite feed, Skylark sing and Corn Bunting still give their jangling songs from rusty fences.

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





"Our visit is perfectly timed to witness spring bird migration at its peak, and the beaches can be alive with thousands of Arctic-bound waders in summer plumage. Newly arrived Corncrakes can be easier to see, as the vegetation is often lower. Last year we had wonderful views as a male Corncrake crept stealthily out of a nettle patch, before calling and then crossing the road!" Craig Round

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.

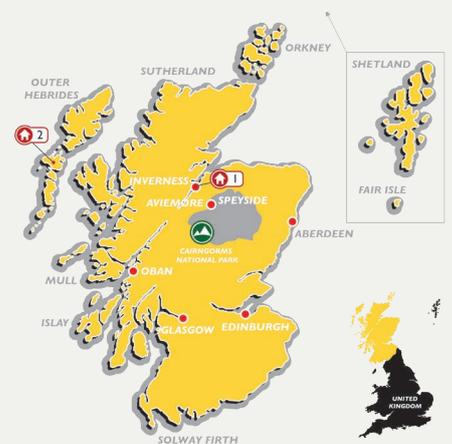
Eastward, the land sweeps up from sea level to moors, peaty pools and soaring mountains. Red-throated Divers give their mournful wail and truly wild Greylag Geese nest at Loch Druidibeg, joined by Common Sandpipers and Greenshank.



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 Orasay Inn
- 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

