

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 10 - each group 5 guests and 1 guide

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.

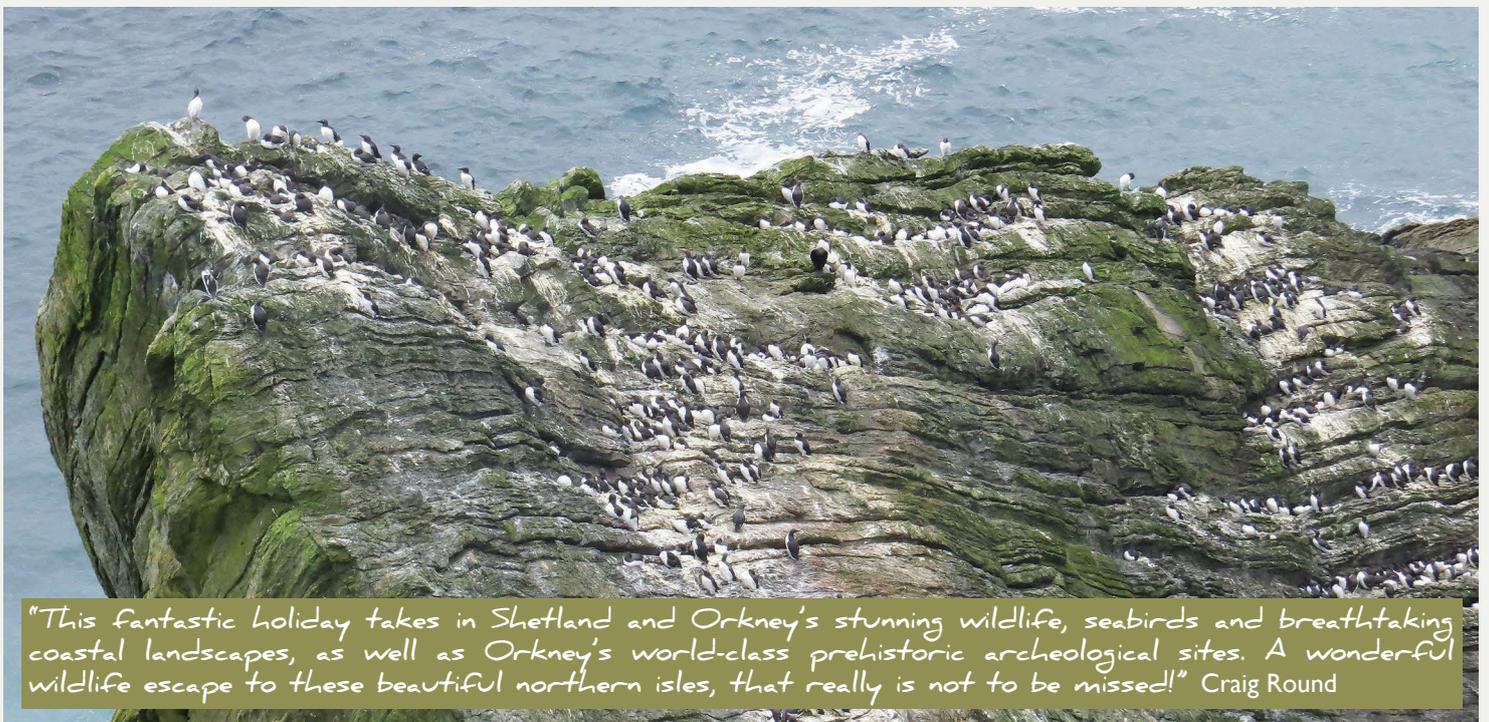
2-5 Fetlar, meaning 'the island of the fat land' in old Norse, is famous for the rare and confiding Red-necked Phalarope and on Loch Funzie these incredible arctic breeding waders can be found delicately spinning on the lochs surface, picking insects from the waterside stones. The tundra-like serpentine 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!

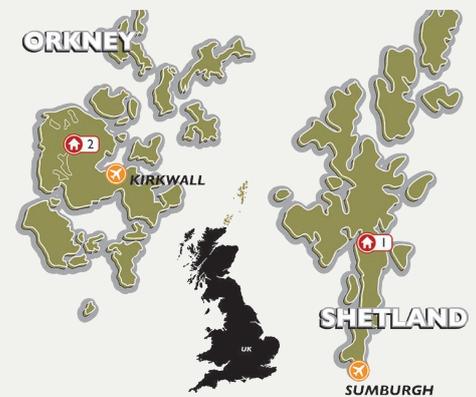
Finally, no trip to Shetland would be complete without a trip out in the 'Simmer Dim' of a Shetland night, to the island of Mousa, where inside the walls and stonework of the 2,000 year old iron age Broch, we are enveloped in silence, until the magical rhythmic 'churring' of tiny Storm Petrels amongst 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 Herrerislea 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

